The Stours Parish Council

MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF

THE STOURS PARISH COUNCIL on the 22nd of May 2025

 **7.00pm at Stour Row Village Hall, Stour Row**

Meeting minutes are not verbatim records of everything said in a meeting. Instead, they offer a summary of key points, decisions, and actions.

Present: Cllr J Watkins, Cllr P Bowe, Cllr C Wilkins, Cllr A Stagg and Cllr P Patrick, Cllr P Matcham, Cllr D Amlot MBE, Cllr E Edwards and Cllr R McConnell

In attendance: Mrs N Phillips (Parish Clerk) - There were three members of the public and Dorset Councillor Carl Woode

25/1. Election of Chairman and signing of Declaration of Office

Cllr Stagg proposed Cllr Watkins for Chairman 2025-2026 this was seconded by Cllr Bowe, all members were in favour. Cllr Watkins signed the acceptance of office form.

RESOLVED: for Cllr Watkins for Chairman for The Stours Parish Council for 2025-26 (25/1, no budgetary provision required)

25/2. To receive and accept apologies of absence and declaration of interest

Cllr J Uden, Cllr P Stride and Cllr P Mitchell and Cllr R King and Dorset Councillors, Cllr B Ridout and Cllr V Pothecary and Cllr J Somper sent their apologies.

There were no declarations of interest.

25/3. Election of Vice Chairman.

Cllr P Matcham proposed Cllr Bowe for vice-chairman, this was seconded by Cllr P Patrick, all members were in favour. Cllr Bowe signed the acceptance of office.

RESOLVED: for Cllr Bowe for Vice-Chairman for The Stours Parish Council 2025-26 (25/3, no budgetary provision required)

25/4. Parish Council legal documents

* To consider if the Parish Council have met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 will be agreed. It was confirmed that all Councillors are elected members and therefore Cllr Patrick proposed that the Parish Council adopt the General Power of Competence, this was seconded by Cllr Amlot, all in favour
	+ RESOLVED For the Stours Parish Council to adopt the General Power of Competence for 2025-2026. (25/4 no budgetary provision required)
* To confirm no changes to the adopted policies and procedures for 2021/2022- it was confirmed that the policies in place have not been changed. It was noted that the Financial Regulations is being updated ready for approval at the next Parish Council meeting.

25/5. To approve the minutes of the AGM 6th of March 2024

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Bowe and seconded by Cllr Amlot all agreed that the minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: that the minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman (25/5 – no budgetary allocations required)

25/6. Approval the governance statement and annual accounts.

The Clerk tabled the following:

* The annual governance statement 2024/25
* The end of year accounting statements 2024/25
* The Asset Register 2024/25
* The Bank reconciliation 2024/25
* Confirm the date for the Public Rights notification
* Confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP
* The internal auditor had no concerns or actions

These were proposed by Cllr Bowe and seconded by Cllr Amlot, all members agreed to approve the end of year accounts and the governance statement for the external auditor. The Chairman duly signed the governance statements.

RESOLVED: to approve the governance statement, relevant forms and there no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP for 2024-2025 (25/6 no budgetary requirements).

25/7. Reports from Dorset Councillors

Full reports from Dorset Councillors will be published on the Parish Council’s website or a copy can be obtained from the Clerk.

25/8. Reports from Councillors from each Parish

West Stour –

 • Planning - Land North of Church House. Non material amendment - to enclose the carport and use the attic space with roof lights to planning permission P/FUL/2024/05295 (Erect 1 No. dwelling and garage). Granted.

Elmstead Garage Demolition and replacement. Granted.

Change use and conversion of stables building to dwelling (C3). Erect screen wall. Erect garage. (without Compliance with condition 3 of planning permission P/FUL/2021/04411 - remove occupancy restriction).

Concerns raised to the councillors centre around the continued justification for the creation of new C3 class dwellings in West Stour on either green field sites or in this case agricultural buildings erected with restrictions then subsequently applied to be overturned. In spite of the opinion made by the planning consultant on this application, West Stour is still designated an unsustainable village in the current and valid local planning policy. There is a reliance on private vehicles to safely access the facilities in the village and beyond, (there are no footpaths to do so). There are also no public transport services to access services in nearby Shaftesbury and Gillingham. The designation is not expected to change in the next Local Policy and it is expected to be reinforced in the West Stour Neighbourhood Plan under creation. The exiting permission does not prevent occupation of the building. It was specifically approved “solely for letting and shall not be used for the purpose of providing permanent residential letting”. As Parish Councillors we are concerned that this proposal would set a precedent by inaccurately categorising West Stour as a sustainable location. This could lead to further inappropriate planning in the future. If the Dorset Council go against the Parish Council’s views, it will be suggested that the property remains tied to Weir Lodge and a restriction be placed not to be sold as a separate property. West Stour PCs will submit response to Clerk for submission post meeting encase any further representations are made.

*At this point standing orders were removed to allow the applicant for this application to speak*

The residents that have submitted the above application gave details of why they are requesting the removal of the occupancy restriction and what impact it would have on their income and offering a longer residential stay will help with those people who need longer term housing, either for families that need housing for no fault of their own, or workers that are contracted for long term works in the surrounding area. Full detailed information was given to West Stour Councillors for their consideration before sending their response to this application to Dorset Council.

*Standing orders were re-instated*

• Church Street Tree Cutting IVO Phone Box - Update requested from Clerk to North Dorset Council, still awaiting a response. The Clerk will forward this matter to Dorset Council Cllr C Woode for him to also chase up.

• Neighbourhood Plan - Third meeting held in April with members of the Parish who wished to contribute to the work. Subject was the creation of a draft questionnaire as to what should be included in a West Stour Neighbourhood Plan. Next meeting expected in June to finalise ahead of circulation.

• SID - Replacement batteries received, and it was agreed to order two more for spare for West and East Stour and Todber SID’s. Battery installed by Cllr Amlot and erected by Mr William Sealy who agreed to stand in for West Stour until a person is appointed to manage West Stour and East Stour SID’s. The Clerk to advertise this position. It was agreed that East Stour and West Stour will pay for this service. Cllr Amlot has removed and handed over East Stour SID to Cllr Uden.

• Stiles: Decision taken at West Stour Parish Meeting to use some of the carry over precept from FY 23/24 to replace the first two stiles with gates. After consultation with the West Stour footpaths officer chose Footpath N75/2 two stiles either side of the Sleeper Bridge GR ST78072307. Action Requested Clerk to instruct Graham Stanley to begin the process of engaging with the landowners, the Clerk confirmed that Graham Stanley from Dorset Council has been instructed to contact the necessary landowners.

• Unauthorised Footpath Diversion: West Stour Footpath Officer (Mr Andrew Marshall) will seek an update from Dorset Council on the action being taken to correct the unauthorised footpath diversion at the North end of the Church Farm estate.

• 20 MPH Speed Limit: Update Requested from the clerk on the progress of the application for a 20 mph speed limit – Clerk was to speak to the traffic safety officer. The Clerk confirmed that details have been sent to the traffic safety officer to establish if the Village reaches the criteria for applying for a 20MPH scheme.

• Parking in Church Street. Parish councillors were asked to approach the Village Hall Committee about the use of the Village Hall car park for routine parking to reduce the incidences of poor parking on Church Street. Post the West Stour Parish Meeting, Village Hall Committee meeting confirmed that the covenant remains in place that limits the use of the car park to Hall and Church events only. The car park is available for hire with the Village Hall should residents have large numbers of guests staying at their property. A polite notice reminding people to park appropriately on Church Street was produced and distributed to residents of Church Street.

• Rat Infestation of footpath bank adjacent to Church Street. Reported to the West Stour Footpaths officer and on to the Cllrs by a nearby resident. Investigations by Cllr Amlot revealed that Dorset Council no longer offer any services to deal with an infestation like this on a public footpath. Instead, advice on the website is to try and remove the nearby source of food.

East Stour

* Play Area/Recreation – the annual play inspection has been completed, and Cllr R McConnell and the Clerk will look at the works that need to be completed to obtain quotes. A dog order ban is being sort for the whole of the Play Area/recreation area, the Clerk is just waiting for confirmation from Dorset Council that the Parish Council can adopt their Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order 2024, as Dorset Council have the powers to issue fines if the order is not complied with.
* Road Safety – the village are in the process of producing a petition for a controlled crossing across the main road, outside the Village Hall. Once the Parish Council receive the petition, the Clerk can request that Dorset Council traffic safety officer look at the petition and if the area complies with the regulations to provide a crossing.
* Telephone box – the telephone box in the village needs to be painted. The Chairman confirmed that there is left over paint from the renovation of Stour Row’s telephone box that East Stour can have. The Clerk will organise it to be dropped off.
* Blocking of public right of way – the Clerk confirmed that a complaint that a resident had sent in regarding a gateway being locked across a public right of way has been forwarded on to the Rangers at Dorset Council for their action.

Todber

* Millennium Green – work is continuing to be undertaken on the Millennium Green ensuring that there are mowed footpaths for easy access for the general public. The wildflowers have grown and in the autumn, works will take place to help the re-growth of meadow grass.
* Todber Church – community hub – it was reported that the Church has received a substantial donation for the roof repairs and the bat surveys are underway. Once the roof has been repaired the project for the Church to be used for a community hub will proceed forward.
* Broken Village Sign – the Chairman will chase the contractor up, who has agreed to repair and re-fit the broken sign.

Stour Row- Stour Provost

* Traffic safety project – Cllr Matcham, Cllr Partick and a volunteer have been working hard on producing a document that will be sent to Dorset Council traffic safety team for them to consider a change in speed limits within the village and on the B3092 from East Stour crossroad to Marnhull. Whilst this document was being produced, Dorset Council traffic safety team had already been looking at concerns that had already been raised and have agreed to place 20MPH speed limit within the village and to reduce the speed limit from national speed limit to 40 MPH along the B3902, just in the area of the 4-way junction at Stour Provost. Cllr Matcham is in talks with the traffic safety officer, with reference to the proposal to have the B3092 40MPH from the East Stour crossroads all the way to Marnhull. Cllr Matcham will ensure that this proposal will not delay the already agreed traffic management for Stour Provost..
* Planning – Concerns were raised over the amended plans for Summerfield Farm, Stour Provost, to erect a rural workers dwelling. The amended plans show the building even larger than the original application. The Parish Council object to the amended plans and details will be sent to Dorset Council planning team for their information.
* Pavilion Stour Provost – a request from the Cricket Club to investigate ways to modernise the Pavilion to bring it up to date with the necessary guidelines for use and to be able to open it up to other organisations so it is used more often. The Cricket Club are happy to lead this project, obtaining quotes and looking for funding. At the Stour Row/Stour Provost parish meeting, it was noted that before anything is done, the residents of the Parish need to be informed about this proposal, and they also need to support it before any progress can be taken. A notice has now been produced and circulate to the residents for their comment. The notice is from the Parish Council, so all responsse will be sent to the Clerk. The cutoff date is the 30th of May.

*At this point the Chairman closed the AGM and opened the Parish Council meeting.*

Parish Council Meeting

Public Consultation – A member of West Stour Parish raised the recently produced and distributed Polite Notice about parking on Church Street. At the West Stour Parish Meeting another member of the Parish requested that an updated version of an old Church Street Parking polite parking notice be distributed after consultation with the Village Hall Committee about the use of the Village Hall Car Park for overflow parking. The consultation occurred, the notice was produced and distributed to those that park on Church Street. The member present at the meeting asked why this had not included speeding, driving on verges and gone to all members of the village. Whilst that was not the intent of the original parking notice, Cllr Amlot agreed to create a further notice for the noticeboard and the village newsletter also pointing out that notices wouldn't catch delivery drivers or those passing through the village. Cllr Amlot also updated the member on the application for a 20mph speed limit in the village.

25/9. Approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 6th of March 2025

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Watkins and seconded by Cllr Bowe, all agreed that the minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: that the minutes were approved and singed by the Chairman (25/9 – no budgetary allocations required)

Actions in progress report from the Clerk – The Clerk had circulated and tabled an update on the to-do list for each Parish.

25/10. Finance

To record: Payments paid between meetings – The Clerk had circulated payment schedule since March’s meeting, these had been approved via email.

To agree: Payment Schedule for April 2025- The Clerk had tabled the Payment Schedule for April 2025 for the sum of £5804.06. This was proposed by Cllr Bowe and seconded by Cllr Patrick all agreed for the payments on the payment schedule be paid, the schedule was duly signed Chairman.

 

RESOLVED: to pay the payment on the schedule to the total sum of £5804.06 and confirm the bank reconciliation for April 2025 (25/10 current account)

25/11. Planning: review of applications received

An up-to-date list of planning application are available to see on the Parish Council website.

Application no Address Description PC decision

P/HOU/2025/01975 - White Post Trill TB Erect two storey extension No objection

P/CLP/2025/02121 - Half Acre ES Land for Mobile home No objection

P/FUL/2025/01757 - Meadows SP Erect car port No objection

P/HOU/2025/02122 - Hermitage ES Convert garage into playroom No objection

P/HOU/2025/02123 - Meadowside ES Erect side extension No objection

P/PAPA/2025/02342 - Duncliff Hill Farm Form new farm track No objection

P/VOC/2025/02202 - Weir Lodge WS Change of use convert stables dwellings Objection

P/LBC/2025/02415 - Antells Farm SP Install through floor loft No objection

P/HOU/2025/02377/02378 - Manor Farm SP Install dormer windows No objection

P/FUL/2025/00376 - Summerfield Farm SP Erect rural workers dwelling Objected

P/TRT/2025/02671 - Meadow Side ES Various Tree works No objection

P/HOU/2025/02860/LBC 02681 Nonnas Cottage/Japonica Cottage SP - Erect ground & first floor extension. To be considered

25/12. Chairman’s report –

The Chairman did not give a written report. The following was tabled to the Clerk that was not covered in the meeting:

* Apologies for missing some of the Parish meetings
* The bus shelter at Stour Provost is in the process of having new acrylic panels fitted
* Look forward for new Councillors to join East Stour parish
* thank you to fellow Councillors and Clerk

25/13. Parish and officers’ reports

All reports have been given.

More information on each Parish can be seen on the Parish Meetings minutes on the website.

25/14. Clerk Report – correspondence

All correspondence had been circulated.

25/15. Items for next agenda and date of next meeting. Co-option for new Councillor

The Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 3rd of July 2024 at Stour Provost Village Hall at 7pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.15

Signed…………………………………………………………………………………………

Website address http//: [www.stours-pc.gov.uk](http://www.stours-pc.gov.uk) - Should you wish to contact any Councillor please us the address clerk@stours-pc.gov.uk