West Stour Parish

Minutes of West Stour Parish meeting

Held on the 9th of October 2025 at 7.30pm

at West Stour Village Hall

Present: Cllr J Watkins – Chairman Stours Parish Council, Cllr P Mitchell, Cllr E Edwards, Cllr D Amlot MBE and 14 elected members of the Parish

In attendance: Mrs N Phillips - Clerk

**1/25. Apologies for Absence**

Dorset Council B Ridout, Cllr C Woode, Michelle Cox, John Parker and Pat Fowler

**2/25. Welcome by the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3/25. To agree the Minutes of the meeting dated the 9th of April 2025

It was agreed they are a true and accurate record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman

RESOLVED: that the minutes were approved and signed (3/25 no budgetary requirements)

4/25. Matters arising from the minutes dated the 22nd of May 2024 and new matters arising

Report from public meeting regarding Neighbourhood Plan for the Village – a draft questionnaire is being prepared to circulate to residents for their feedback. No committee has yet been appointed. A follow up meeting will be arranged in due course,

20 MPH scheme for Church Street - Cllr Mitchell reported that West Stour have also considered extending the 30MPH on the A30 past the garages to the bridge at West Stour. Dorset Council have been instructed to commence their survey on the A30 for the 30MPH request and Church Street for the 20MPH request. Dorset Council are waiting for the road works to be completed on the A30 before commencing the surveys,

Dorset Local Plan Consultation including proposed Traveller Sites – Some residents have sent their own comments on to Dorset Council regarding the proposed Local Plan. The Councillors from West Stour will produce a report that will be sent from the Parish Council expressing their concerns and comments. Dorset Council have extended the cut off date from the 13th of October to the 30th of October for comments. Please have a look at the proposed Local Plan and have your say; <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan>

Speed Indicator Devices including funding requests – it was reported that West Stour had sent a letter out to local organisations asking for them to consider donating funds towards replacing the SIDs. One out of five companies have offered to give a donation, one has declined, and nothing has been received from the three other companies to date. Going forward the Parish Council agreed the quote for Dorset Council to manage the SID’s for West and East Stour, so no volunteers are needed for these villages. West Stour Village Hall trustees and West Stour Church confirmed that they will not be applying for annual grants from the Parish Council for this financial year, so that the funds can be allocated to the SID’s projects and maintainace.

Extension of West Stour A30 30mph speed limit to the of bridge - this was discussed under 20MPH details above.

Street furniture reporting – it was confirmed that Dorset Council solar Slow Down indicator sign on the main road as you approach West Stour from the west has been reported as not working but nothing has been done. This will be monitored. Cllr Amlot confirmed that he has reported worn and damaged road signs around the village to Dorset Council.

Near miss reporting – if anyone witnesses any near misses or dangerous driving, please report information directly to Dorset Council <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/road-safety>. The more reports Dorset Council receives the more we can use as evidence to request additional road safety measures.

Footpaths / Stiles – it was confirmed that Dorset Council rangers have been instructed to replace two styles with gates in the village. The Parish has a service level agreement with Dorset Council Rangers to cut back footpaths in the village. It was noted that this has been done to a good standard. It was reported that a footbridge along one of the footpaths is broken. The resident reported this to the Rangers, as they were on site cutting the footpath. The footbridge has been taped off. Cllr Amlot will also report the broken footbridge to ensure it is on the Rangers schedule of work.

Web Site Security – Cllr Amlot requested that the Clerk contact the Parish Councils website provider, to add an SSL certificate to the website for security reasons. This has been added to the annual subscription for the website.

Precept Funding requests. To include an update on current financial position from the Village Hall and Church Committees and their precept bids (to include an explanation as to what it will be used on) Due to both organisations not requesting funding for 20226-2026 this matter was not discussed.

To agree: budget/precept for 2026-2027 for Parish - The Clerk tabled a proposed budget for West Stour Parish. After debate, it was agreed to increase the budget from £2070.00 to £2300.00 for 2026-2027.

RESOLVED: to increase the Parish budget from £2070.00 to £2300.00 for 2026-2027 (4/25)

Any other matters and reports for organisations

* The matter of no white lines along the road at the entrances of the Garage was raised. The Clerk had contacted Dorset Council requesting the lines are painted as soon as possible, they responded stating that it is up to the owners of the Garage. This is not acceptable, so the Clerk will raise this again with the head of Highways.
* Cllr Amlot reported that he met with Dorset Council regarding the flooding along the track near his home. Dorset Council officer will contact the landowners to request that they clear their ditches to help with the flooding issues. It was noted that the scalpings supplied to Mr Gould have not been put down to fill the holes along the track, as he felt the scalpings were too fine and it would just wash away.

Reports from representative from local organisations and Councillors

* Notes from Village Hall Trustees: It is with much sadness that we have to report the death of Dr. Brian Harper. Brian was a long-term resident and active supporter of the village hall and the West Stour community. Thank you, Brian! You will be missed.
* At this AGM, two members of the committee, John Parker and David Amlôt, will be standing down. The committee welcomed Rose McCready as a member in January this year. It also welcomed Cllr. Patrick Mitchell as the Parish Council’s village hall liaison officer representing the Chair of the Parish Meetings.
* The committee agreed to raise the cost of hiring the hall to £10 for residents and £15 for non-residents.
* Improvements - Following on from Mel and Andrew Marshall developing and reviewing village hall Safeguarding and Health & Safety policies. The committee have allocated policy/maintenance responsibilities (e.g., first aid; fire safety etc.) to individual members. Some maintenance to the hall have been completed. Wessex Internet has now been installed at a very low monthly cost. The hall now has a new projector capable of projecting images in daylight conditions plus two microphones.
* Usage - The Railway Society continues its weekly Monday meetings; the village book group has met on a number of occasions; and an Arts & Crafts group meet regularly. Amongst other things in the hall, there has been other events taken place.
* Financial - The village hall remains in a healthy financial situation including a ring-fenced reserve of £10.5k as a contingency fund. Income £3648. Our income decreased by £222. But if we factor in that in 2023, we had a legacy of £500 & the alternative fuel payment of £150, the hall’s income is down by £872. Apart from the contingency reserve and some other designated funds, at end of December 2024 we had unrestricted funds of just under £20.5k

5/25. Dorset Council Councillors reports.

Dorset Councillors reports will be available to see on the Parish Council website or a copy can be obtained by the Clerk.

6/25. Planning Applications – the following planning applications had been received for West Stour parish from April 2025 to October 2025.



7/24. Accounts to date – this information was tabled with the proposed budget

agreed. This will be proposed at the Parish Council meeting in November for resolution. Action – Clerk

8/24. Matters of interest and information – it was reported that the Church bells refurbishment will start on the 20th of November. The cost to complete the necessary work is £30,000.00. The Church carpark will be used by the builders whilst work takes place.

10/24. Agenda items to be agreed for the next Parish meeting on 16th of April 2026 at 7.00pm

AGM

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.10pm

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

Website address http//: www.stours-pc.gov.uk

Should you wish to contact any Councillor please us the address

clerk@stours-pc.gov.uk