

Minutes

of the Puncknowle & Swyre Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday 28th May 2024 at 7.30p.m at the Village Hall, Puncknowle.

PRESENT: Councillor G Fry (Chairman), Vice Chairman J Marsh and Councillors
S Bowsher, M Buckland, P Bullen and C Marsh together with 23 local electors.
IN ATTENDANCE: Dorset Councillor Sally Holland (Chesil Bank)
Councillor Bowsher acted as Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE None

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday 25th April 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Welcomed residents and spoke about the recent election. This was uncontested in the Parish with nine candidates standing for nine seats. Sally Holland was elected as the Dorset Councillor for Chesil Bank and planned to join the meeting later.

4. PRESENTATION AND REVIEWS BY VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

a) Allotments

It has been another difficult year for plot holders due to the excessive rain and cold. There are currently 4 plots available. The Allotment Holders' Committee has tried to improve access to the plots by widening the path.

b) Puncknowle Art Group

This is now meeting on the last Friday of the month in the Village Hall from 10am-12.30pm. Sessions include visiting Tutors or otherwise people bring their own work. New members, including complete beginners are welcome.

Not related to the Art Group, it was noted by a resident that there are three people in the village who are taking part in Dorset Art Weeks 2024.

c) Book Club

The club continues to thrive, meeting every first Wednesday of the month usually in the village hall. Twelve books are selected each year to encompass a wide range of authors and can be supplied on loan from the library. The club publish their thoughts for each book in the BVN.

d) Puncknowle Church

After an Interregnum of almost one year, a new Rector will be joining the newly extended Bride Vally and Chesil Benefice in July. A Flower Festival was held in May. The Fete (now shared with Swyre Church) will not take place this year. The Café Church continues once a month.

e) Swyre Church

The Living Churchyard is managed with the help of volunteers. A coffee morning was held around St Andrews Day last year and on Easter Saturday. A presentation about the history of the houses in Swyre was given in November.

f) Footpaths

Footpaths Officer D Bird gave a summary of the huge amount of work he undertakes as a volunteer for the community, and he was thanked by the chairman for all that he does. The Parish Council have offered to look for volunteers where this would be helpful.

g) The Gardening Club

This is a Bride Valley club which meets on a Monday, once a month in Litton Village Hall, often with guest speakers. Membership entitles people to special offers and discounts with some local suppliers.

h) Neighbourhood Watch

Mrs C Marsh spoke about the nature of some of the Neighbourhood Alerts that she circulates through email to the community. These originate from Dorset Police through Dorset Alert and cover a range of issues from reporting crime to community news. Two local issues have been dog fouling and the speed of traffic along the Coast Road. Thanks were expressed to the Community Speed Watch Team for their work. Residents felt this had made a difference. A temporary portable speed camera had been provided through an initiative by the Police Crime Commissioner. This has been removed due to vandalism.

i) Local WI

The Bride Valley WI has now celebrated its 10-year anniversary. They meet on the first Thursday of the month in the Village Hall. A range of activities include speakers, craft events and visits. Last year they held a Summer Social Event on Hive Beach.

j) Local History Group

Membership is now around 40 primarily local people. An average of 20 members come to meetings on the third Monday of the month in the Village Hall. Meetings provide for an informal sharing of local knowledge and research. Some activities have included visits. A guided walk about the history of West Bexington will take place on 15 June.

k) Table Tennis Group

The Table Tennis Club remains extremely popular and is fully subscribed due to the limitations of the size of the hall. Members pay a £3 weekly to cover the costs of the hall and tea and coffee. Over the last year, excess funds have been donated towards the DEC appeal for the Ukraine. Anyone who wishes to play table tennis can still hire the hall privately to do so.

l) The Luncheon Club

This has been going for 17 years and is open to all people aged 55 or over and who have lived in the three villages in the parish or in Chilcombe, Long Bredy and Little Bredy. The lunch is held in the village hall on the third Tuesday of every month except in August, with usually 25-30 diners attending. There a small team of volunteers and offers of help are always welcome.

m) The Playing Field

The Playing Field is maintained by the Parish Council with the help of volunteers. There have been two volunteer sessions recently to help clean and maintain equipment and to cut back hedges and brambles. Another session will be planned shortly.

n) The Village Hall

The Village Hall Committee manage this great asset for our three villages. The committee put a lot of effort into looking after the hall. After some large projects, smaller

maintenance and improvements are nearly always ongoing. Lettings have now improved, and it is becoming difficult to arrange new regular evening bookings. Breaking even however remains difficult due to the onerous cost of heating the hall. The Christmas Social event, which is funded by the church is widely appreciated by residents.

o) Puncknowle Swyre and West Bexington Website

The Parish Council has been working with the community to make improvements to the Puncknowle.net website. Work is ongoing.

Dorset Councillor Sally Holland joined the meeting at around 8.15pm.

5. PRESENTATION ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan gave a presentation and explained what neighbourhood planning is about. It showed the achievements of the Steering Group to date, and what stages remain. Strong community engagement throughout the whole process is fundamental to achieving a robust outcome. Two recent engagements have been the Business Survey (March to May 24) and the Community Session on 20 April in the Village Hall which focussed on Housing and Development and Environment and Biodiversity.

The business survey achieved a 56% response rate from over 40 businesses which support over 250 jobs. The results will be published shortly.

The Community Engagement session on 20 April was attended by 51 people.

The day had a nice buzz about it, and 41 attendees filled in a questionnaire to provide feedback on the topics presented, the draft vision and objectives of the plan and the way the session went.

Residents were reminded to consider walking a “May Meander” along the footpaths in the villages. Feedback will be fed into the plan. The Steering Group is currently building the Evidence Base and any extra support from volunteers is welcomed.

There was good discussion with residents on many of the topics raised in the presentation. The key points were:

- Concern about second homes and desire for these to be acquired for affordable homes (although this would not be permitted or viable).
- Desire for affordable homes to enable young people and local families to live in the area (recognising that these would probably have to be rental homes to make truly affordable as even young professional people would struggle to get a mortgage).
- Challenge of inclusion, recognising that most of the people who attended the community event came from the older population. This point was appreciated and the Steering Group had endeavoured to engage with different demographics, e.g. postal distribution being conscious that some of the older residents were less IT-aware. Nonetheless, the challenge of getting younger people was recognised given their reluctance to engage with traditional media. The bark-rubbing activity within May Meanders may attract young children but short, snappy on-line polls (ideally with some “reward” for involvement) may work for teenagers/early 20s. The Community Survey should have an online option for completion and Survey Monkey could be explored for specific topics. It was also suggested that we could consider involving an experienced youth engagement worker to set up some sessions to make contact with the younger generation, and there was a brief discussion around the topic.

The SG would welcome other suggestions.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

Signed: (Chairman)

Dated.....