

STURMINSTER MARSHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council on Thursday 8th January 2026 at 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall

Present: Chair Cllr S Cade, Cllr H Palmer, Cllr M Steel, Cllr H Fookes, Cllr T Weaver, Cllr L Purtill and Cllr J Jackson

Also in attendance: Mrs A Clothier (Parish Clerk),

1 **APOLOGIES – MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.**

Cllr L Seare and Dorset Councillor W Chakawhata gave their apologies, and these were accepted by the committee.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Steel declared an interest in item 11 (v)

3 **MEMBERS OF PUBLIC –**

There was one member of the public present.

A resident raised concerns about a significant increase in traffic using White Bridge as a rat run, including large delivery vehicles, and the absence of any traffic monitoring. Issues were highlighted regarding the lack of clear signage indicating reversing requirements, unsafe and deteriorating hardstanding at both ends of the bridge, overgrown brambles and vegetation, and incidents of vehicle damage, including punctured tyres. Concerns were also raised about vehicles parking at the bridge ends, obstructing safe passage.

Requested actions included the provision of properly surfaced temporary refuge areas at both ends of the bridge, cutting back overhanging branches and brambles, and the erection of clear “No Parking” signage.

Cllr Cade and the Clerk to meet with the Highways Officer on the 19th January and this will be raised. Cllr Chakawhata has been informed of the concerns.

4 **POLICE REPORT**

No report

5 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 4th December 2025 were approved as true record of the meeting.

6 **MATTERS ARISING**

A report from the Clerk which had been circulated and is attached to these minutes as **Appendix 1**. Ongoing issues from the Clerks Report are:

- i. Memorial Hall Registration
- ii. Defibrillator at Jubilee Cross

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AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

- i. Playground – to discuss monthly report and damaged crow’s nest swing. The crow’s nest swing was urgently taken down over Christmas at a cost of £50. Quotes have been received for either repair (£480) or replacement (£1079). The swing is 14 years old and worn in several places. It is a very well used and well-liked piece of equipment. It was proposed to replace the crow’s nest swing at a cost of £1,079 and this was RESOLVED with all in agreement.
- ii. Churchill Close Green
 - a. Electrical Box – the electrical box work taking place in January.
- iii. Maypole – Cllr Weaver was thanked for holding the weather vane. Still awaiting quote for replacing the Maypole.
- iv. Memorial Hall – the solicitor has asked whether the Parish Council would like to restart the lease term of 99 year period from 2026 as opposed to the current term which runs from 1965. It was agreed that a longer term would be preferable, and it was proposed that the lease term be amended to start from 2026. This was RESOLVED with all in agreement.
- v. To report on progress of the repair of WI bench at Millmoor – when this was taken away it was found to be completely rotted and the WI were happy to take the bench down. Clerk to investigate bench options for February meeting. Clerk to contact the landowner to say that we are looking at a replacement.
Action: Clerk to contact landowner and look at new bench options
- vi. To discuss defibrillator request at Jubilee Cross – the BHF grant funding request was unsuccessful – those that were successful were based on the areas of highest need and deprivation. It was suggested a Go Fund Me could be set up after an initial survey sent out to the residents.
- vii. To discuss progress on Community Asset Transfer of Charborough Way Green – no update
- viii. To note update of Parish Council website – this has been completed.

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ENVIRONMENT

- i. Climate Change Action Plan –
 - a) EV Charge Point – The EV charge point has been connected and is operational and in use.

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TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

- i. A31 / A350 and Related Matters –a response has been received from National Highways about deteriorating A31 at Almer.
A350 – the speed sign heading south on A350 is damaged. There is a large pothole on the Badbury Rings Road going towards Shapwick. Rushall Lane was closed on 7th January.
Highways meeting on 19th January – report several ongoing issues including white lines on Church corner and Wimborne Road condition of pavement.
- ii. 20mph Speed Limit Application – Just over 150 responses were received to the public survey. Of these, 65% were in favour of a village-wide 20mph zone, 11% supported a 20mph limit on specific roads, and 25% were not in favour. Roads identified for a potential targeted 20mph zone included Station Road, High Street, Churchill Close and Mill Lane. Overall, the survey results were considered positive and the Parish Council agreed to move forwards with the application.
It was noted that traffic speed surveys are required for High Street, King’s Street and Station Road. The cost was confirmed as £295 plus VAT for the first site and £200 plus VAT for each additional site. It was RESOLVED to approve these surveys with all in agreement.
- iii. Jubilee Cross / Wimborne Road – no update.

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REPORTS

To receive reports from representatives of the following:

- i Alms House Charity – roofing is complete. Other decoration works will take place in the Spring.
- ii Memorial Hall – roof has been repaired. Heating problems are being looked into. Grant applied for kitchen refurbishment.
- iii DAPTC – Clerk’s Conference in February, AGM in March
- iv. Flood Wardens – no report
- v. School –. The Headteacher has now left, and a member of the Senior Leadership Team is stepping up until a permanent appointment is made.
- iv. Speedwatch – no report
- vii Dorset Councillor – see **Appendix 3**

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FINANCE

- i. Accounts for payment. To receive invoices and approve payments as per Schedule of payments. See **Appendix 4**. It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the payments with all in agreement.
- ii. To receive the monthly bank reconciliation and quarterly report – the monthly bank reconciliation, budget report was received, noted, and agreed. The quarterly financial report was considered, and questions were raised regarding the levels of earmarked reserves and general reserves held by the Council, in particular in relation to the play area and asset budgets.
It was clarified that play area equipment is costly and that the Council sets aside funds annually to enable the future replacement of equipment; without this planned saving, replacement would not be affordable. It was further confirmed that the Council’s general reserves policy aims to maintain reserves equivalent to between six and twelve months of expenditure.
It was noted that the Council currently holds sufficient reserves, although it is proposed that they will be used in part to subsidise the budget in the 2026/27 financial year.
- iii. Independent internal auditor – The Parish Council resolved to appoint Mr Breakwell to complete the 2025/26 internal audit. The independence of the internal auditor was confirmed.
- iv. To arrange Risk Assessment for 2026 – a qualified resident will be asked to look at the Parish Council assets for the Risk Assessment.
- v. To discuss funding request for the Memorial Hall.
The Parish Council received a paper from the Memorial Hall outlining funding priorities, including:
Short-term support: £4,100 to enable urgent kitchen refurbishment and secure a time-limited external grant. The kitchen was reported as unhygienic, which is limiting hall hires. The Hall has already raised £3,800 through fundraising and has a £2,000 grant.
Medium-term support: Installation of solar panels, potentially funded via grant or loan, to improve the Hall’s long-term financial sustainability.
Longer-term support: Consideration of a substantial annual contribution from the Parish Council towards the running of the Hall and youth provision.
The Parish Council discussed the request at length, noting the urgency of the kitchen works, ongoing fundraising, and the importance of ensuring long-term sustainability. It was raised whether providing this grant was fair compared what is given to other village organisations.
It was clarified that the Parish Council cannot provide loans; grants are the only form of support. It was also highlighted that the Memorial Hall was intended to operate under a full repairing and insuring lease, with responsibility for maintenance and statutory compliance resting with the Managing Trustees. This position has been confirmed with the Council’s solicitor and forms the basis on which the Council currently operates.
Given the importance of the Hall to the community, it was proposed that the £4,100

would be awarded as a one off grant specifically for the kitchen refurbishment. This money would be taken from the remaining grant budget pot and general reserves. A condition of this grant will be the submission of a business plan outlining how the Hall will operate sustainably. Other funding issues will be considered once the business plan is received – this will be requested for the February meeting. It was RESOLVED to provide a one off grant of £4100 to the Memorial Hall for the kitchen refurbishment with all in agreement.

- vi. Payment for the basket swing - It was proposed to replace the crow's nest swing at a cost of £1,079 and this was RESOLVED

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BUDGET AND PRECEPT

- i. To adopt the proposal for the 2026/27 budget and precept.
The budget for 2026/27 was agreed at £75,600. This is an increase of £7,905 from 2025/26 and includes increases in:
Salary - Employers NI increase and national pay rise
New Defibrillators– replacement defib for Memorial Hall
Speeding resolutions – sinking fund for measures to reduce speeding
Grass Cutting – to allow for potential asset transfer of Charborough Way Green Play Area – repairs to grass matting

The level of general reserves has been built up and the Parish Council felt that a small amount could be used to subsidise the increase in budget. The precept was agreed at £70,000. This is a 8.55% increase or £6.59 per year for an average Band D property. The precept request was proposed by Cllr Putill and seconded by Cllr Steel with all in agreement. It was **RESOLVED** to set the precept request at £70,000.

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LITTER PICK 2025

- i. To agree date for 2026 litter pick – agreed as Saturday 28th March at 2pm

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CORRESPONDENCE

- Damage to White Mill Bridge – a car went into the Bridge on the Shapwick side. Clerk and Chair to inform Highways Officer.
- Invite to Westminster from Vikki Slade MP. Preferable days are Mondays and Tuesdays.

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PARISH MATTERS

- Vacancy on Parish Council – to be advertised.

The Parish Council meeting was suspended at 21.10pm whilst the Planning Committee took place. See minutes 8th January 2026 for details.

The Parish meeting re-convened at 21.32pm

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 5th February 2026 at 7.30pm

There being no other business the meeting closed at 21.32

Signed _____ Chairman 5th February 2026

Appendix 1

Clerks Report 08.01.26

Minute Number	Topic	Action	Progress
18 th July 2024 Minute 8 (ii)	EV Charge Point	Progress EV Charge Point near Air Ambulance Recycling	The EV charge point is in place and operational
9 th January Minute 8 (iv)	Environment	Clerk to query Mapperton Ditch with Community Highways Officer	This is on the highways works list of jobs. A follow up report with photos sent on 10/11
9 th January Minute 9 (ii)	Traffic and Transport	Speed on Mill Lane	This is on the highways works list of jobs
5 th June Minute 7	Amenities	Memorial Hall Registration	All progressing – the decedent of the original trustees is signing over to the new trustees.
17 th July Minute 7	Amenities and Facilities	Electrical box	Works took place week of 18 th December 2025
17 th July Minute 7	Amenities and Facilities	Clerk to ask SSE whether they can assist with delivery and installation of Maypole	Awaiting quote for installation.
17 th July Minute 7	Traffic and Transport	To move forwards with 20mph application including online consultation	Just over 150 responses received to the survey. 65% were in favour of a village wide 20mph zone, 11% in favour of a 20mph zone on certain roads and 25% not in favour at all. Areas mentioned for a specific 20pmh zone included Station Road, High Street, Churchill close, Mill Lane
4 th September Minute 8	Playground	Clerk to obtain a quote for the playground repairs	Works confirmed with Dorset Council.
4 th September Minute 8	Asset Transfer	Clerk to contact Dorset Council about the transfer of Charborough Way Green	The CAT request for Charborough Way Green is now logged with Dorset Council and is being progressed. The North Dorset Trailway Committee have been informed about the potential asset transfer of the Trailway, however this is a Right of Way and would need to remain in the ownership of Dorset Council.
2 nd October Minute 8	Millmoor Bench	Clerk to obtain quote to repair bench	The bench had rotted through and has now been removed completely with permission from the WI.
2 nd October Minute 8	Jubilee Cross Defibrillator	Clerk to investigate grant funding towards a defibrillator at Jubilee Cross, obtain contact details, and	The British Heart Foundation grant application was unsuccessful.

		approach Lytchett Motors and Forest Hill Care Home regarding possible support.	
4 th December Minute 7	School Noticeboard	Clerk to reply to the school raising no objection to the new noticeboard	Complete
4 th December Minute 9	Traffic and Transport	Clerk to report white lines at Church Corner and A31 surfacing.	<p>Items reported. National Highways response as follows:</p> <p><i>Thank you for submitting this report regarding the road surface.</i></p> <p><i>We're aware of the problems here and are planning a repair in the near future.</i></p> <p><i>Unfortunately a timescale is currently unavailable. We'll continue to monitor the location until the repairs can be carried out.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you for your patience while we design these works.</i></p> <p>Hedges cut back at Dullar Lane/A31</p>
4 th December Minute 11	Finance	Clerk to ask Mr Breakwell to complete the audit for 2025/26	Complete and confirmed
4 th December Minute 11	Finance	Clerk to confirm website work with Vision ICT	Confirmed and completed
4 th December Minute 12	Correspondence	Clerk to ask for Dorset Council to fix the bin in place at end of Trailway	Request submitted
Other		<p>Bronze Award</p> <p>Policy Review</p> <p>Memorial Hall filing</p>	<p>Application submitted</p> <p>A review of the following policies is being undertaken: Media, Grant Awarding, Equality, Co-Option and Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Weeding of files in cabinets progressing.</p>

Upcoming Training

Clerk's Conference
DAPTC AGM
Planning Update

Schedule of Payments	December payments ratified January					
Payments made						
Payee	Details	Gross	VAT	Net	Chq No.	Invoice number
Vodafone	December Phone Bill	£30.00	£5.00	£25.00		Direct Debit
Alison Clothier	December Salary	£1,300.24	£0.00	£1,300.24		Standing Order
		£1,330.24	£5.00	£1,325.24		
Payments to be made						
Payee	Details	Gross	VAT	Net	Chq No.	Invoice number
Alison Clothier	December expenses - mileage and Zoom subscription	£36.87	£3.80	£33.07		
Dorset County Pension Fund	Clerks Pension for December	£392.70	£0.00	£392.70		Transfer
HMRC	National Insurance and Income Tax December	£281.87	£0.00	£281.87		Transfer
Sturminster Marshall Memorial Ha	Rent of Rooms	£23.75	£0.00	£23.75		Transfer SMMH5137
		£735.19	£3.80	£731.39		

Sturminster Marshall Parish Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

A	Bank Reconciliation at 31/12/2025		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		94,772.03
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/12/2025		101,369.85
			196,141.88
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/12/2025		64,028.27
	Cash in Hand 31/12/2025 (per Cash Book)		132,113.61
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash	31/12/2025 0.00	
	Natwest - Current Account	31/12/2025 0.00	
	Natwest - Business Reserve	31/12/2025 0.00	
	Barclays Current	31/12/2025 36,927.58	
	Barclays Savings	31/12/2025 70,921.22	
	CCLA	31/12/2025 25,000.00	
			132,848.80
Less unrepresented payments		735.19	
		132,113.61	
Plus unrepresented receipts			
	Adjusted Bank Balance		132,113.61
	A = B Checks out OK		