

The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group)

Minutes of the 176th meeting of Full Council Thursday 20th March, 7pm at Manston Village Hall

These minutes do not constitute a true record until ratified at the next meeting of the Parish Council. Minute item numbers run consecutively throughout the Parish Council year.

Present: Cllr G. Stokes (Chair), Cllr C. Christensen, Cllr D Woodruffe

In attendance: B. Barker (Clerk) and six members of the public.

Apologies: None received

The Chairman welcomed the Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

46/24 Public Participation (Standing Orders suspended)

The Chair asked if the members of the public had any issues to raise. A resident noted they had contacted the Council before the meeting with questions regarding Minute item 175.40.c/24 (Budget Setting for 25-26) as noted in Minute item 67/24 below. The resident reiterated several concerns regarding agenda items, including the annual increase in precept, parish wardens, and council donations. The resident thanked the council for their comprehensive response. The Chair thanked the resident for raising their questions.

47/24 Disclosures Of Members' Interests and Dispensations

Cllr Christensen noted an interest in Agenda item 12: Planning Applications (Minute 58.24 below). There were no other declarations of interest from Members.

48/24 Minutes of the 175th meeting held on Monday 9th December 2024:

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes of the 175th meeting as true record of it. The minutes were duly signed by the Council Chair.

49/24 Dorset County Councillor's Report

No report submitted

50/24 Chair's report

The Chair thanked the regular participants for their continued engagement with the council proceedings and confirmed the council's commitment to finding new ways to engage the community, drawing attention to items 9 and 19 on the agenda. No other issues were raised.

51/24 Clerk's report on past subject matters arising from the minutes

The Clerk's report was circulated before the meeting (*See OMM 176 Report Pack - Appendix A*).

Ongoing issues from the Clerk's report:

- i Mower Lane bridle path.

Action: Cllr Christensen to follow up with DC on aspects of flooding

- ii Clerk's computer: Proposals presented.

Action: On hold. Not included in 25-26 precept. It will be budgeted from Reserves if required.

52/24 Parish updates:

52.a/24 East Orchard: Cllr Christensen

- i Recent planning applications were reviewed – See item 58/24

- ii It was noted that DC is pursuing an investigation into an alleged change of use of land for residential use.
- iii In relation to flooding, it was noted that a section of the river had been dredged and tree/branch debris removed, which should help combat some of the flooding.

52.b/24 Margaret Marsh: Cllr Stokes

- i Recent planning applications were reviewed – See item 58/24
- ii It was noted that the Pond was to be discussed – see item 62.b/24

52.c/24 West Orchard: Cllr Woodruffe

- i It was noted that it would be good to get more representation from the West Orchards area

53/24 Parish Wardens

Cllr Stokes updated the council on his review of the role and responsibilities of the parish wardens and confirmed the council's intention to suspend the role from April 2025 due to potential conflicts and complications arising from aspects of volunteering, job descriptions, payments, tax liabilities, and insurance.

Action: Council to explore options for employing a village handyman and identify more opportunities to drive community engagement in maintaining the parishes.

54/24 Parish Litter Picks

Cllr Woodruffe updated his review on organising Parish Litter Picks and wanted to specifically thank Cllr Somper for her assistance in putting the Council in touch with Mr D Johnson, Supervisor with Dorset Place Services Team. The Place Services Team has provided the Council with three sets of litter pickers and hoops, along with a supply of bags, for use in the community. They will also be installing a free litter bin. In addition, the council has registered with 'The Great British Spring Clean' and received 300 free litter bags.

Action: Cllr Woodruffe to liaise with DC on possible locations for the litter bin and whether it is possible to secure additional bins for the parish group.

Action: Cllr Woodruffe to explore options for organising and promoting parish litter picks and where to store the three litter picker sets.

55/24 Highways:

Potholes were the key aspect under discussion. No other issues were reported.

56/24 Planning Applications:

Planning applications received between December and March were reviewed. *See OMM 176 Report Pack - Appendix B* for the status and outcome of previous Planning Applications.

- i P/HOU/2025/01284: Proposal: Erect redesigned enclosed porch to the rear door. Location: The Old Chapel Parsons Lane, Hartgrove, SP7 0LF. **NO OBJECTION.**

57/24 Finance:

The monthly bank reconciliation and payment report were circulated before the meeting. *See OMM 176 Report Pack - Appendix C.*

57.a/24 Bank Reconciliation:

Bank reconciliation for April 2024 to February 2025 was **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chair

57.b/24 Payments made and payments for invoices received:

To receive the Schedule of payments for payments. It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the payments with all in agreement. These payments will be paid via bank transfer.

58/24 2025-26 Budget and Precept

A report detailing a) 2024-25 YTD forecast, b) 2025-26 budget, and c) Precept request was circulated before the meeting. *See OMM 176 Report Pack - Appendix D.*

The council voted unanimously to ratify the 2025-26 budget previously confirmed by a meeting of the Chair and Councillors on 28th January 2025 under the Scheme of Delegation 2020 and in accordance with the procedure agreed at the 175th meeting on 9th December 2024 (minute item 175 40.c.24). In line with that procedure, the councillors reviewed the original budget to identify reductions, with the final agreed Precept figure being £4840, an increase of 32% 2024/25. It was

noted that the Parish Council will review future donations in accordance with its revised Grants and Donations Policy as the year progresses.

59/24 Council Banking

Cllr Christensen and Cllr Stokes **APPROVED** changes to the Unity Trust Bank access and authorisation of signatories, removing Cllr Boid and adding Cllr Woodruffe.

Action: Clerk to complete required banking paperwork.

60/24 Asset Register & Insurance:

60.a/24 Asset register

Cllr Christensen summarised his findings on the presence and condition of parish assets.

Action: Cllr Christensen to confirm the final register of assets

Action: Cllr Christensen & Clerk to update the estimated insurance values of assets

60.b/24 Margaret Marsh Pond

Cllr Christensen had photographed the pond, which sits on land owned by the Parish Council. The pond is currently surrounded by a wire safety fence and is overgrown.

Action: Risk Assessment needs to be completed to accompany 2025 insurance review

Action: Cllr Stokes to explore options for next steps relating to the pond

61/24 Policies & Procedures

- i Financial Regulations 2025: Reviewed, **APPROVED and ADOPTED.**
- ii Co-option Policy 2025: Reviewed, **APPROVED and ADOPTED.**
- iii Grant & Donations Policy: Reviewed, **APPROVED and ADOPTED.** This includes a new application form for grant applications.
- iv Standing Orders 2025: Reviewed, **APPROVED and ADOPTED.**
- v Freedom of Information: To consider at next meeting

62/24 Internal Governance Schedule

The internal control schedule was reviewed in advance of the year-end.

Action: Cllr Woodruffe to complete review on Code of Conduct for next meeting

Action: Cllr Woodruffe to complete Register of Interest

Action: Cllr Christensen to review risk assessment (RA), including new Pond RA in line with requirements for end-of-year reporting and insurance review

Action: Cllr Christensen to provide annual scrutiny for bank reconciliation and statements

63/24 Communications:

- i Cllr Woodruffe provided a report on his review of local social media groups and the options offered to use these for the council to engage more with the local community. Conversations with Child Oakford and other groups have been positively received.
Action: Clerk to establish main PC FB page.
- ii PC Website. The PC transition to the .gov.uk domain is ongoing. No further progress to report.

64/24 Training:

No training reported

65/24 Correspondence:

A summary of the correspondence was circulated before the meeting. *See OMM 176 Report Pack - Appendix E.*

- i Great British Spring Clean – noted
- ii Dorset Council Vegetation Guide from Cllr Somper – noted. To be recirculated
- iii Marnhull PC Neighbourhood Plan consultation – noted
- iv Email from resident requesting further information relating to Minute item 175.40.c/24 (Budget Setting for 2025-26) from the council meeting on December 9th, 2024. The email noted that the precept was due to increase by 32% and raised concerns related to the long-standing traditions of parish wardens and council donations. Cllr Stokes and Cllr Christensen responded to this.

66/24 Matters pertinent: No issues were raised

67/24 Decision/actions taken by Parish Clerk under the “Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, Part 3, Paragraphs 6-10”. Record of decisions and access to documents (for reporting purposes only).

None reported

68/24 Items for next meeting

None reported

69/24 Date of Next meeting

- Optional dates were discussed between 26/5/25-2/6/25, subject to availability of Village Hall. To include The Annual Parish Meeting of the joint parishes, the Annual General Meeting of the council and the 177th meeting of the Parish Council

Action: Clerk to check availability of Manston Village Hall and confirm meeting date

The meeting closed at 8:10 pm.

Signed _____ (Chair) Date _____

Recorded by: Beverly Barker: Clerk. Email: clerk@theorchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.org.uk

Further information:

Parish Council information is available at www.theorchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.org.uk. Please report issues regarding highways and footpaths to Dorset Council: Dorset Council Website: [at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/)