

The Orchards' and Margaret Marsh Parish Council (Group)

Minutes of the 180th meeting of Full Council Monday 9th March 2026 at 6:30pm at Child Okeford Community Centre, Child Okeford, DT11 8EL

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

Present: Cllr C. Christensen (Chair), Cllr Tebbutt-Russell, Cllr Stokes

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

The meeting started at 6:30pm

69/25 Public Participation

No items were raised by members of the public present.

70/25 To receive and consider apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Woodruffe and Cllr Elliot

71/25 To receive any declarations of interest and consider any requests for special dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011

There were no declarations of interest from Members regarding the Agenda items.

72/25 To receive and consider applications for co-option to the council.

In line with current governance arrangements for The Orchards and Margaret Marsh Grouped Parish Council, the joint parishes should have up to seven councillors. An application was received from Mr Philip Gay. It was RESOLVED to APPOINT Mr Gay to fill the vacancy for West Orchards. Cllr Gay then signed the Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting as a Council member for the rest of the session

73/25 To receive and resolve to approve the Minutes of the last meeting

It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes as a true record of the 179th meeting held on Monday, 8th December 2025. The minutes were duly signed by the Parish Council Chair

74/25 To receive a report from County Councillor: Cllr Jane Somper

- i Cllr Somper reported significant and worsening flooding issues across the ward, including incidents affecting residential properties. While funding exists for large-scale capital flood schemes, there remains a critical gap in routine maintenance (e.g. drains, ditches, culverts), which is a key contributor to local flooding. She continues to prioritise affected areas and is working with Dorset Council and partners to push for improved coordination and maintenance.
- ii Cllr Somper noted the introduction of Dorset Council's *Statement of Reasonable Expectations*, which sets out a framework for partnership working, communication, and potential collaboration on service delivery and assets between Dorset Council and parish and town councils. She highlighted that, while the principles support closer working, further clarity will be

Signed Chair

Date.....

needed in practice around how any expanded roles, responsibilities, or arrangements would operate locally.

75/25 To receive the Chair's report:

- i The Chair reported that flooding has been a significant issue since the beginning of the year, particularly at the bottom of East Orchard Road. This will be raised with the new Dorset Council officer once appointed.
- ii The St Thomas Church PCC is pursuing the transfer of the graveyard (including the closed section) to the Council. The Council reiterated concerns regarding the potential financial impact on residents. Further discussions will take place to explore possible options.
- iii The Chair attended the Dorset Council Town and Parish Planning Forum. It was noted that the Dorset Local Plan, due for consultation in August, will align with the NPPF and includes a requirement for approximately 3,246 dwellings per year. As the current land supply falls short of this requirement, it may reduce the influence of local plans on planning decisions.
- iv It was agreed to continue using Child Okeford Community Centre for future meetings.

76/25 To receive the Clerk's Report on past subject matters arising from the minutes:

See OMM 180 Report Pack - Appendix A for the status and outcome of previous matters

- i The Clerk confirmed that the Council's insurers advised that no additional cover is required for proposed works at Margaret Marsh Pond, subject to appropriate health and safety guidance, volunteer briefing, and signage.
- ii The Clerk advised that the council's email system will be migrated on 20–21 March, during which time there may be a short delay in responses.

77/25 To receive Parish updates:

77.a/25: East Orchard – flooding issues noted (as above).

77.b/25: Margaret Marsh – minor surface water issues reported; no significant property impact.

77.c/25: West Orchard – councillor vacancy noted; residents encouraged to express interest.

78/25 To discuss any Highways, Bridleways and Footpaths issues:

Nothing to report. Members of the public are encouraged to report any new faults or existing defects to Dorset Council at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/report-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement

79/25 To receive any updates on Flooding

Nothing to report. Members of the public are encouraged to report flooding to Dorset Council at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/report-flooding

80/25 To comment on current Planning Applications:

See OMM 180 Report Pack - Appendix B (Planning Applications)

Applications can be viewed at dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land.

80.a/25: P/FUL/2025/04458: Barn At E 383165 N 116080 Fishey Lane East Orchard: Under Officer Consideration

80.b/25: P/CLE/2025/05892: Highgate East Orchard Shaftesbury SP7 0LH: Certificate of lawfulness. Refused

80.c/25: P/FUL/2025/05069: Buildings At Trapdoor Farm Village Road To Trapdoor And Henbury Farm - Granted

80.d/25: P/FUL/2025/07433: Pennyclose Farm Church Lane East Orchard SP7 0LP: Conversion of barn to 4 no. dwellings and associated works: Granted

81/25 Review of Governance Schedule:

All reporting is up to date.

82/25 To ratify decisions taken under the Scheme of Delegation 2025

None taken.

Signed Chair

Date.....

83/25 Financial Matters

See OMM 180 Report Pack - Appendix C for supporting reports.

83.a/25: Bank Reconciliation for April 2025 – February 2026 was APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair alongside copies of bank statements.

83.b/25: The Final 25-26 budget reports and forecast to March 31st 2026, were received and noted. This included a VAT return for 01/01/25–28/02/26 totalling £173.

83.c/25: It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the payments already made (Appendix C).

83.d/25: It was RESOLVED to APPROVE all payments as per the schedule presented (Appendix C). Payments will be paid via bank transfer.

Action: RFO to organise bank transfers for approval by two councillors

84/25 Staffing & Confidential Matters

None to report

85/25 Communications:

PC to continue to contribute to the Orchards & More WhatsApp group.

86/25 Training:

Cllr Christensen joined DAPTC planning forum in February. All Councillors to explore options

Action: Clerk to send new councillor training details to Cllr Gay.

87/25 Correspondence:

None received

88/25 Matters pertinent:

The Chair noted that the St Thomas Church warden believes the PC should contribute to the upkeep of the graveyard for the benefit of the East Orchard residents. This will be considered further by the Council.

89/25 To note any decision/actions taken by Parish Clerk

As per “Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, Part 3, Paragraph 6-10” Record of decisions and access to documents (for reporting purposes only). None reported.

90/25 To record any items for the next meeting agenda: None reported.

91/25 To record the date of the next meeting: Monday, 18th May 2026 at 6:30pm at Child Okeford Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 7:30 pm.

The draft minutes will be approved as a true record of the meeting when signed by the Chair.

Signed (Chair) _____

Date _____

Recorded by: Beverly Barker: Parish Clerk & RFO

Email: clerk@orchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.gov.uk

Further information:

Parish Council information is available at www.orchardsandmargaretmarsh-pc.gov.uk. Please report issues regarding highways and footpaths to Dorset Council: Dorset Council Website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/