

**Minutes of the meeting of Minterne Parish Council held on Wednesday January 15th 2020
at Minterne House at 7.30pm.**

Present: The Lord Digby, Chairman, Mr. P. Goodfellow, Mrs. C. Howard – Johnston, Mr. C. Saunders, Mr. G. Stevenson, Mr. Paul Stanzl, Mr. S. Tite & PCSO S. Pilcher and the Clerk, Mr. P. Horsington.

Eight members of the public attended..

39. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs. J. Haynes, Dorset Councillor.

40. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on September 11th were signed as correct.

41. Declarations of Interest

Lord Digby declared Personal, Prejudicial & Pecuniary Interests in applications WD/D/19/002556 for Lord Digby at the building known as Manor Farm Barn, Sandy Lane, Minterne Magna for the conversion and alteration to 1 No. dwelling to include removal of lean to extension & erect single storey extension and WD/D/19/002557 for Lord Digby at the building known as Manor Farm Barn, Sandy Lane, Minterne Magna for internal & external alterations to facilitate the conversion to a 1 No. dwelling.

42. Open Session - Police & Community Matters, Dorset Councillor's report

PCSO Pilcher gave her report, which included theft of sheep at Middlemarsh, and a burglary at Nether Cerne. PCSO Pilcher highlighted that Scams are still occurring and Beauty spots are still being targeted.

In the absence of Mrs. J. Haynes, Dorset Councillor, her report was received after the meeting and is attached as an addendum after the minutes.

43. Financial matters

Lord Digby reported that the account balances at December 31st 2019 were £5,193.63p.

Receipts - nil

Payments – nil

Lord Digby presented the budget & figures to the end of the Financial year.

The Council, after discussion, on the proposition of Mr. Goodfellow, seconded by Mr. Stevenson unanimously agreed the Precept of £2,100 for 2020/21.

44. Planning matters

The Council noted that there was no decision for WD/D/19/001691 for Mr. Sherry (A 2 Z Adventures) at Bridge Wood, Middlemarsh for Change of Use on land south of Manor Farm Cottages.

The Council noted that there was nothing to report on the situation at The Stables, Middlemarsh.

Lord Digby, having declared Interests in the applications WD/D/19/002556 & WD/D/19/002557 left the meeting and Mr. Goodfellow took the Chair.

The Council having studied the details of the applications submitted WD/D/19/002556 for Lord Digby at the building known as Manor Farm Barn, Sandy Lane, Minterne Magna for the conversion and alteration to 1 No. dwelling to include removal of lean to extension & erect single storey extension and WD/D/19/002557 for Lord Digby at the building known as Manor Farm Barn, Sandy Lane, Minterne Magna for internal & external alterations to facilitate the conversion to a 1 No. dwelling, after discussion unanimously supported the applications. It was noted that these were two applications for the same building. Lord Digby returned to the meeting.

45. Rights of Way

Mrs. Howard-Johnston stated that as conditions were so wet, there were no issues to report.

46. Highway issues

The Council were informed that Dorset Highways have responded to the request for improvements at the junction of the C.12 with the A.352 at Middlemarsh, stating that they will be putting in yellow bar markings.

Dorset Highways stated that the criteria laid down by the Department of Transport would not be met for a 'Stop' sign as there was insufficient visibility at the junction of the A.352 with the C.12.

Concern was raised by Mr. Tite at the poor visibility particularly with HGVs at the junction, due to the sign on the C.12. Members also recommended that if the hedges were reduced in height in that area, this would also improve road safety.

The Council also highlighted safety issues on the A.37 at the Evershot / Minterne Magna junction on the A.37 asking for this junction' safety to be reviewed. It was agreed to send both these issues to Dorset Highways.

35. Flooding issues

Mr. Goodfellow reported that the A.352 had been flooded at Middlemarsh..

36. Correspondence

The Council noted the two issues of Clerks Direct.

37. Items for report, or for the agenda of the next meeting

Mr. Stevenson expressed his concern as to whether the owners of the Saw Mills site, Middlemarsh were complying with the granted conditions for the car parking area. After some discussion, the Council agreed to monitor the situation and agreed that this is an agenda item for the next meeting.

38. To confirm the date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday May 13th 2020 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business; the Chairman thanked all present for their attendance, and declared the meeting closed at 8.23pm.

Signed.

Date.

Dorset Council to increase funding for adult social care and children's services

Dorset Council has submitted proposals for its 2020-21 budget in a report going to three

Scrutiny Committees (People, Place and Resources) on 13 January. These proposals include:

Article I. Increase in funding for adult social care of £11.7m, taking the budget from £111.2m last year to £122.9m to meet the forecast demand for social care for older and disabled people

Article II. Increase in funding for children's services of £10.3m, taking the budget from £63.7m last year to £74m to meet the forecast demand for support for children with complex needs and those in care.

The 2020-21 budget is set in a context of rapidly rising demand for both adults and children's care both this year and into the foreseeable future.

This financial year (2019-20) the council is currently forecasting an overspend of £8.2m on directly controlled budgets, and £6.5m on funding for schools and education. This overspend is largely due to unprecedented and growing levels of demand for social care services, which, in turn, is the result of population changes such as more people living longer with chronic and complex conditions, and an increase in diagnosis of children's special educational needs and disabilities. Dorset Council's proposed increased budget for 2020-21 aims to address to the predicted growing demand.

Since 2010, central government grants to councils have been cut by nearly 60%. Dorset Council no longer receives any Revenue Support Grant from central government. This loss of funding has placed significant pressure on councils nationally, including Dorset Council, and on their ability to continue providing quality local public services.

In order to help fund the essential budget increases for adult social care and children's services, Dorset Council proposes an increase in council tax of 3.996% for 2020-21. Of this increase, 2% is the social care precept agreed by Government in the September spending review to help fund growing demand for social care. This would generate £9.6m of additional income.

However, the council tax increase will not fully cover the forecast increased social care costs, so in order to balance the budget Dorset Council will need to continue making substantial reductions in its expenditure without affecting the delivery of frontline services.

Dorset Council has already achieved significant cost reductions over the past year as a result of Local Government Reorganisation. For example:

- 1) A reduction in the number of senior officer roles, and where there is duplication and overlap across support services like finance, HR, IT and others, delivered savings of £10m.
- 2) A reduction in the number of councillors from 204 to 82 delivered £400k in savings.
- 3) Cost reductions have been made on insurance, audit fees and other activities where the council only has to pay for one organisation rather than six. A new single banking provider is anticipated to deliver a saving of £70k a year.

Next year's proposed budget includes further multi-million pound savings through property rationalisation, reducing travel and transport costs, and a £3m reduction on expenditure through procurement. All savings are reinvested into frontline services.

Cllr Tony Ferrari, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Assets, said:

"Over the last year, the creation of the new unitary Dorset Council has enabled us to make significant efficiencies by removing duplication across the former councils. As a result we've been able to continue to deliver all services previously provided by the district, borough and county councils despite the growing demand for and cost of adult and children's social care services. However, we recognise that we need to increase our budget for the coming financial year in order to fund the continuing growth in demand.

"The council must – and will – deliver services sustainably within budget. We are developing innovative solutions to transform how we provide services with the aim of providing better services at a lower cost. However, transformation takes time, and residents of Dorset need services to be delivered in the meantime, so our 2020-21 proposals will enable us to fund additional demand over the coming year."

Cllr Spencer Flower, Leader of Dorset Council, said:

"We would of course prefer not to raise council tax. However, we are left with no choice due to a steady decline over recent years in the overall funding from central government and the rising cost of adult social care and children's services. The alternative would be to cut discretionary services such as libraries, highways and parks which neither I nor my colleagues wish to do.

"As an advocate for Dorset, over recent months I have lobbied Government for fairer funding – particularly for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and social care. As a result, we did secure a much needed additional £10m funding from Government in the autumn spending review. I will continue to make the case for Dorset with Government throughout the coming year.

"We have a statutory obligation to deliver many of our services. Looking after our most vulnerable residents is very important to us. And it is also important that we achieve a balanced budget through efficiency, not cuts."

The council's proposed net expenditure budget for 2020-21 is £305m. A diagram attached outlines the proposed sources of the council's funding for next financial year. Following discussion at the Scrutiny Committees on 13 January, budget proposals will then be discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 28 January and at the Full Council meeting on 18 February for final approval. These are all public meetings and members of the public are welcome to attend. Details of meetings are here: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/committees

Jill Haynes.

