**Motcombe Parish Council**

**Minutes of Motcombe Parish Council Meeting of the Parish Council held via Zoom (as Motcombe Village Hall cancelled the hall booking before another venue could be found)**

**On Tuesday the 4th of February 2025 at 7.00pm**

**Present: Cllr L Stacey – Chairman, Cllr P Mouncey – Vice Chairman, Cllr S Rogers, Cllr W Dunlop, Cllr R Craigmile and Cllr J Odell**

**In attendance: Mrs N Phillips (Parish Clerk), Kerri Jones from This is Alfred. Dorset Councillors Cllr B Ridout and Cllr V Pothecary. There were no members of the public present.**

**Kerri Jones from This is Alfred and the Clerk recorded the meeting**

**Public period-** there were no points raised.

**24/81. To receive and accept apologies of absence.**

Cllr M Mason, Cllr V Moore, Cllr F Burney and Dorset Councillor C Woode sent their apologies.

**24/82. Declaration of Interest and Dispensations.**

There were none.

**24/83. Co-option for new Councillor**

No one came forward

**24/84. Approve minutes dated the 10th of December 2024**

Cllr Stacey proposed the Minutes from the meeting dated the10th of December 2024, this was seconded by Cllr Mouncey, all members in favour. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes from the meeting dated 10th of December 2025 (24/84– no budgetary provision required)

**Matters arising:**

**Update on to do list –** this was updated on the 1st of February 2025. The following items have an update.

* The Clerk chasing Persimmon Homes for an answer to the Parish Councils proposal to manage the open spaces in Willow Way and the Limes. There has still been no reply to the Parish Councils request regarding the open spaces or any response to the concerns raised by the local residents. This has now been escalated to higher management within Persimmon Homes.
* 20MPH project, Cllr Mouncey had attended an online seminar, with the 20’s Plenty for Dorset Campaign coordinator, full details of the meeting is available in Cllr Mouncey’ report.
* Phone Box renovation, Cllr Odell has agreed re-furbish the Telephone Box around Easter time, in the better weather. This will be an agenda item for March, to finalise what should be in the phone box, as at the moment, people have used it for a book drop off, which now needs to be emptied out ready for the refurbishment.
* Drain Cleaning, the Clerk has requested that the drains cleaned each month, but there are still some being missed. Cllr Craigmile has agreed to produce a map showing where the drains are and circulate it to the other Councillors for comments. Once agreed, this will be sent to Dorset Council waste management team to ensure they know where all the drains are.
* Welcome to Motcombe Signs, due to Dorset Council replacing the Motcombe Signs, that they initially stated they would not do, the 4 winning Children’s designs will ne make up and used on the four entrances to the village, with authority of Dorset Council. Cllr Mason will be asked to look into cost for producing the signs and the Clerk will obtain the criteria for these signs with Dorset Council for Cllr Mason, as they will be on the highways.

**A copy of the to do list can be requested by the Clerk**

**24/85. Report from Dorset Councillors**

**Cllr B Ridout, Cllr C Woode and Cllr Pothecary had circulated their reports, which is available on the Parish Council website, or a copy can be obtained by the Clerk.**

Cllr Ridout reported that Dorset Council have increased the Dog Wardens and there will be Dog Wardens checking areas of concern more regularly. Cllr Ridout will ask the Dog Wardens to visit the Meadows on a regular basis. The Dog Wardens have the power to enforce on site penalties, so please ensure you pick up after your dog around the village and a reminder that you can take your full dog bags home and put them in your landfill bin.

It was noted that the main point of discussion at Dorset Council is the Budget.

**24/86.** **Finance**

**To agree: Payment Schedule.** The Clerk tabled the payment schedule for December 2024 and January 2025. Details listed below:



It was proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Mouncey to ratify payments for December and pay the bills on the schedule for January, all in favour.

**RESOLVED**: to ratify the payments for December and pay the bills on the schedule for January 2025 (24/86 – current account)

Cllr Rogers agreed the bank reconciliation.

**24/87. Planning - Review of Working Group recommendations.**

P/VIC/2025/00066 – East Coppleridge Farm – erect new dwelling – it was noted as it is for variations of conditions on an application that has already been agreed.

P/HOU/2024/07330 – 44 The Steet – erect pitch roof from existing out building to main dwelling – no objections.

P/CLE/2024/07625 – Sunset Ridge – certificate of lawfulness – noted.

Thanes Farm – change of use, noted

P/FUL/2024/02230 – Savage Cat Farm – (amended plans) – has been approved by Dorset Council

Cllr Dunlop reported that here has been some criticism of the two developer presentations last year, so it is worth explaining why we do this. Early community involvement enables us to shape developers' thinking at the conceptual stage (RIBA Plan of Work Stage 0 or 1), before they have invested time and money in design. The only alternative is to wait for a planning application at RIBA Stage 3 or 4, at which point we would be responding under greater time pressure, with less information and when developers are more entrenched in their view because of the greater level of investment to get to that point. The Parish Council welcome developers to speak (or meet their request to address the Parish Council meeting) to the Parish Council and residents so the Parish Council have an opportunity to influence their plans. The Parish Council want to try and ensure that if any application is successful, the Parish Council have all of their suggestions, including 106 contributions, within the application as submitted.

**24/88. Chairmans report**

Reported that the tree/hedges around the Allotment area have been cut back and the small amount of damage caused to the pathways whilst these works took place, are quickly disappearing.

**24/89. Officers’ reports**

**Cllr P Mouncey reported the following:**

**Meadows -** The ‘hedge’ (mainly sallow trees and brambles) alongside the allotments was cut down, and the associated ditch cleared, in mid-December by a specialist forestry contractor. The work was completed in one day. The hedge material was left in situ, acting as a wind break for the allotments and the roots will regenerate through this old material. Once growth resumes, it can be trimmed in future years to a little over the current height. In addition, the laid front-field hedge was trimmed in early January and will be maintained to the same height as the hedge alongside Prideaux Drive, with a trim each autumn. Some beech hedging saplings, donated by Cllr Dunlop, have been planted to fill the gaps at the field gate end. In addition, it is hoped to plant some Spindle Berry saplings and dog roses to further strengthen the weaker places and add some summer/autumn colour. Other areas of overgrown bushes etc have been cut back on the site, and there are two fallen trees to cut. The annual prune of the orchard is also well underway. Finally, the rotted post at the car park end of the fence (hedge) alongside Prideaux Drive has been secured.

**Rights of Way** - During January, the North Dorset Rangers undertook maintenance work in the parish. Three stiles on the path off Bittles Green have been repaired, plus the double stile just below Kingsettle Farmhouse, and a new gate fitted on the bridleway, again near Kingsettle Farmhouse. Finally, three rotten fingerposts have been replaced. All of this work had been the subject of cases reported by me on the Dorset for You website over time.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - Due to needing to complete a major project for another Dorset village, our consultant was unable to start working with us on the update in January. The start has therefore been agreed for April, and I will hold a preliminary meeting with them in February. Cllr Mouncey will also be attending a one day DAPTC seminar focussing on neighbourhood plans in early March being held at a location near Dorchester.

It was noted that a Photo competition is being organised, for surrounding areas within the White Hart Link, more details will be given once full details are available.

**Cllr W Dunlop reported the following:**

**On water issues –** in a press release from the Environment Agency in the headlines, of which is that over the next five years Wessex Water are expected to spend £4.2 billion on environmental measures, including £515 million to reduce the use of storm overflows. This latter part of the press release is of interest because there is one in the village. Wessex have yet to programme works for this spending (which for context is up £1.6 billion from the last five-year period), so it remains to be seen whether the village can expect anything. The village system is relatively small, and remedial works will be difficult and expensive, so it will not be immediately attractive to them, so it is important that incidents continue to be reported by residents. In addition, we will need to look at the release statistics when they are published in the summer and decide appropriate action act that point.

**Speed** - Over the past year or so there has been quite a lot of mention of a reduced speed limit for the Conservation Area at the southern end of the village. For clarity, the restrictions on Conservation Areas are primarily architectural and planning-based in order to protect their "special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/conservation-areas-overview). They do not automatically merit a lower speed limit and the fact of an area being designated is not a compelling argument for a lower speed limit. A much more compelling argument is that there is a road safety issue - it is just that in our case the road safety issue happens to be roughly speaking in the Conservation Area. It's a small distinction but an important one because the road safety argument is much stronger to lead on, and because if we do have a 20mph area its boundaries should not be tied to those of the Conservation Area, as the Parish Council may well want the freedom to go a bit wider.

**24/90. Clerk Report**

Due to an email received from a resident of the Parish, the Clerk would like to clarify again the position of Councillors that declare a personal or prejudice interest in an agenda item. If a Councillor declares a personal interest in an agenda item, they are advised not to participate in discussion on the matter and not take part in voting. However they are legally able to participate in discussion and vote if it is not felt that this will prejudice the outcome. If they have a prejudicial interest (affects financial position or members of the public present know the facts and would reasonably think the personal interest is so significant that it may prejudice the Councillors judgement), the Councillor can be asked to leave the meeting or are not allowed to participate in discussion or vote. The Council may grant members a dispensation from the ban on speaking or voting or both, if it considers that without dispensation from speaking for voting would be so great a proportion of the members that the Councils business would be impeded. The meeting that has been questioned was a public meeting that a developer had requested, so it was for information only for the residents of the Parish and the Parish Council, there was no proposal, votes or resolutions involved, therefore any of the Councillors would have been allowed to ask question and be present at the meeting.

The other matters raised by the member of the public via email have been covered under planning and environment and will be send a response direct from Cllr Dunlop and the Clerk.

Concerns have been raised about hedges in the Village, especially the hedge around Old Post Office House on the three-way junction. The Clerk will write to the homeowners and request the hedge is cut back to the line of the curb. **Action - Clerk**

**24/91. Items for next agenda and date of next meeting – Grants**

The Parish Council meeting will be held on **TUESDAY the 4th of March 2025 at 7pm in the Pavilion at Motcombe Village Hall.** There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20.30

Signed by the Chairman…………………….............................................

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