

Iwerne Courtney & Stepleton Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 5 May 2021
Remote virtual Google meeting at 7:00 pm - meet.google.com/fau-xvtb-zdx

**The Annual parish Meeting is a meeting of the Parish electorate.
It is not a Parish Council Meeting.
The Parish Council Chairman calls and chairs this meeting.
There is no prescribed format for this meeting and
its recommendations are not binding on the Parish Council.**

1. **Present:** Parish Councillors: Mrs J Hewitt (Chair), Mr J Gredley, Mrs C Barrett, Mr T Sullivan, Mrs W Gredley, Mr T Hewitt and Mr T Kingsbury fleeing attendances
No Parishioners or village residents requested virtual access to attend the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open.

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on **18 November 2020** having been circulated and made available for the Parish (noticeboard and Parish website) prior to the meeting. The minutes, as a true record of the meeting and were signed and dated by the Chairman.

2. **Apologies** – Mr H Gibson Fleming and Dorset Councillor J Somper.
3. The purpose of the Chairman's Summary is to review the Parish Council Business, that has taken place over the previous 12 months and to highlight the major issues your Parish Council has addressed and will continue to do so in the future. Each year an Annual Parish Meeting is held at which residents can air issues and ask the Parish Council to investigate certain matters, which may be of concern and require the council's support. Although the event is NOT a formal Parish Council meeting it is facilitated by the Parish Council for the benefit of the community. The Parish Meeting is governed by specific legislation under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972. The meeting is an opportunity to discuss 'parish affairs' it is not an opportunity for electors to make complaints about the Parish Council.

Separate minutes must be kept which are then approved at the next Parish Meeting, which is sometimes a whole year on. As the event is only held once a year the DRAFT Minutes of the most recent meeting will be placed here pending their formal agreement at the next Annual Parish Meeting.

The Chairman's Summary May 2020 – May 2021

The Chairman provided the council members with a copy of her summary (below) prior to the meeting, but did not read the summary as there were no residents/parishioners attending the meeting. The Chairman thanked the members present for their attendance and support of the work of the Parish Council.

This is last legal virtual meeting of the Iwerne Courtney & Stepleton Parish Council. This past year has been difficult for everyone but this Parish Council has smoothly and effectively continued its democratic business with virtual monthly meetings. I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors who have represented this community this past year - Caroline Barrett, John Gredley, Tim Sullivan and Hector Gibson Fleming and Dorset Councillor Jane Somper (Beacon Ward) for her hard work, advice and support of this community.

The parish council acknowledge that the current method of holding virtual meetings and the technology that allows the council to meet to discuss matters, has, unfortunately excluded some parishioners from joining meetings. Parishioners have been encouraged to contact the council members and the Parish Clerk personally if they wish to bring a matter to the attention of the Parish Council. There are currently 4 vacancies on the Parish Council, and the existing members would warmly welcome contact from parishioners who would be interested in joining them in this vital local work for the Parish. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Lizzie Kingsbury, our outstanding Parish Clerk, for advising, guiding and ensuring that this Parish Council carries out its role effectively and efficiently, particularly in these unprecedented times. The Clerk's job description has certainly expanded over the years which has increased her workload dramatically.

The Parish Council strives to provide excellent, safe facilities for the community and service value for your money. It sets the Annual Parish Precept, which forms a part of your Council Tax Bill and provides the necessary finance for the council to maintain, insure, order and administer the business of the council for the Parish. The council continually encourages parishioners to access the Parish website www.shroton.org (currently under review for development and enhancement) for information about council matters i.e. minutes, agenda, finance matters, planning applications, public notices and much more as well as promoting the information on the noticeboards at the bus shelter. The council

continues to welcome positive comments and suggestions from Parishioners and encourages contact with the Parish Councillors, the Clerk and promotes attendance at its monthly meetings.

The Glebe, is recognised as a unique and beautifully maintained green area at the heart of the village. This space promotes leisure activities for the young and old residents as well as the many visitors (Hambledon and Hod Hill) to play and relax in. The Glebe continues to flourish under the continued stewardship of the Parish Council. The Glebe trees are routinely visually checked for any signs of damage or deterioration. A number of Glebe trees have been maintained this year under the auspices of the professional team from Dorset Council Arboricultural Department. This work included urgent remedial work on a beautiful Willow tree (already identified for essential maintenance work) when a huge branch dropped in the Summer but thanks to quick reaction from a few people it was cordoned off for safety and the tree surgeon team arrived the next day to deal with the damage and necessary pollarding. A huge sigh of relief expressed from residents that the Parish Council had earlier insisted on the removal of an impromptu tree swing from this branch.

Our Play Area remains a valuable asset to the community. A sterling group of volunteers led by Natasha Monaghan, have done a fantastic job fund raising for new equipment and a few local residents have contributed to this effort most generously. It is hoped that this initiative will be completed in the near future. The whole council recognises how much the Play Area was missed when it had to be closed for safety reasons due to the Covid-19 situation. The play area re-opened when guidance allowed it has been by village children, families and the many visitors to the area.

The Wildflower and Fruit tree area remains an ongoing project which was established for over 8 years ago. The number of different wild flowers increase each year and is maintained by the cooperation and kindness of the North Dorset Rangers. The rangers use a special mowing/shaking machine in August to encourage the seed heads to disperse and grow. There are five Common Barberry bushes which have been planted to encourage the local Barberry Carpet Moth to visit and breed (an endangered species). The small apple trees produced so much fruit last year that they were literally bending under the weight. Local people certainly made use of the delicious apple varieties. The Centurion apple tree received a much-needed makeover with the removal of brambles, weeds and dead wood...thank you Ken and Eric. This particular area is set aside for the growth of a wild flower area; it is also a great place for children to play in the inviting long grass during the summer months. Sadly, a lot of the flowers and grasses were squashed and damaged so playing here was not encouraged; however, the council also recognises that village children had a long and boring lock-down so perhaps a little understandable. Please try to keep to the mown paths.

The Parish Council owns a number of assets including the Glebe and its trees. The council owns 5 village public benches, the Millennium Cross, the War Memorial, 4 grit bins, the brick bus shelter, 6 bins/dog waste, the telephone kiosk and the Glebe Memorial bridge. The telephone kiosk Book Recycling scheme is very successful and the council wishes to thank Jane Morris for her continuing care and to organisation of the stock of recycled books.

Road safety and traffic calming measures in the Parish remain a paramount concern to the Parish Council, however, ongoing initiatives have been put on hold at the moment due to the Covid-19 situation and arrangements. The Parish Council will remain involved with the lobbying and activities of the A350 & C13 Community Group concerning the road safety issues on these main arterial roads to and from the coast. The council is involved in lobbying activities to reduce the seasonal noise pollution caused by motorcyclists using the A350 passed the village as a race-track. During this year Parish Rights of Way, the community defibrillator, the water weed in the Iwerne stream, the Dorset Local Plan, the Government White Planning Paper, local Fibre Broadband provision and the state of our village roads (potholes, resurfacing and maintenance) have all been high agenda items this year.

The council is currently reviewing its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, the Glebe Tree Policy, and the Glebe Users Guide in line with requirements for effective administration of the council's business. The council has updated its Fixed Assets and Property Register to comply with the council's insurance policy and annual external audit inspection. We have consulted the community and provided comments on planning applications at

- 'Hedges' – Shroton, 'Littleport' – Shroton, Hambledon House, - Shroton
- 'Little Grange' – Shroton, Courtney House - Shroton
- 23 Shroton Cross and 'Chapel View' – Shroton
- East Kennel Cottage – Iwerne Stepleton
- The Deer Farm - Farrington

The Chairman acknowledged and thanked all the Parishioners who contribute tirelessly and voluntarily in supporting their neighbours, with shopping collections, prescription journeys, car lifts, dog walking, general help and friendship during the COVID-19 situation.

Judith Hewitt
Chairman
Iwerne Courtney & Stepleton Parish Council
5 May 2021

Open Forum

Mrs. J Hewitt - Community Governance Review

There were no members of the public or Parishioners to listen and participate in the discussion about the Community Governance Review. The Dorset Council has asked undertaken a Community Governance Review which is required every 10-15 years. This provides Parishes with an opportunity to determine whether its Parish Council needs to review its size (increase or decrease in the number of council members), the potential for creating new ward boundaries or warding arrangements, to change Parish names or creating/merging with another council (grouping or de-grouping).

The matter has been previously discussed at the March and April 2021 Parish Council Meetings, were the council members determined 9 councillors was too many for any effective purpose of the council, another member thought 7 councillors would be a good working group, whilst another member considered the cohesion and productiveness of the current 5 councillors to be a good balance. One member of the council reminded the meeting that the current 5 members was too small and could be at times considered undemocratic with so few involved in decision making i.e., the selection and election of a Chairman, absences due to sickness, potential for inquorate councils.

There were no further suggestions or recommendations for the review. It was again, agreed that the current size of the Parish council enabled swift consideration of issues and facilitated decision making, and that the council was operating highly effectively.

Mrs. J Hewitt - Village defibrillator

There were no members of the public or Parishioners to listen and participate in the discussion about the management of the village defibrillator. The installation of this facility was a village residents initiative in 2016. There is currently no local 'champion' or lead resident coordinating its maintenance, fundraising or training required for its effectiveness/use and this, despite two earnest requests in the Shroton Lines (March & April 2021), for volunteer community leads to come forward. The defibrillator battery is checked on a voluntary monthly basis by Mrs. Coralee Anstee, a resident of the village, whilst Mr. John Gredley, another resident coordinates money raised at village coffee mornings for the maintenance of the defibrillator.

The Parish Council contributed to the purchase of this facility in February 2016 with a donation of £772 from the INAZIN Community Grant and now finds itself 'saddled' with the ongoing costs of the defibrillator's upkeep i.e., the purchase of a replacement battery in September 2020 and replacement equipment pads in March 2021. The meeting suggested that the Parish Council continue to provide the necessary finance required to keep this facility for the community. The Clerk reminded the meeting that the Annual Precept for the forthcoming year should be increased to include this additional cost to the Parish Council.

Mr. H Gibson Fleming – Update on the Wessex Internet project and support for the village play area refurbishment

Mr. Gibson Fleming was not at this meeting to provide an update on the Wessex Internet project supporting the village play area.

Mrs. C Barrett - Update on the village litter initiative

There were no members of the public or Parishioners to listen and participate in the discussion about the village litter initiative. Mrs. Barrett explained how she had been researching other communities litter initiatives with a view to organising a similar event for the village. Details of the initiative and the opportunities to support this are to appear in a forthcoming edition of the Shroton Lines.

Mrs. J Hewitt – Flowers in the village verges

Mrs Hewitt suggested that the Parish Council might wish to consider purchasing spring bulbs for the village road verges and areas on the Glebe. The last time such an idea was mooted was in 2014 and it was felt that the verges and Glebe areas could do with rejuvenating. Parish Clerk for the Parish Council agenda September 2021.

The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 7:32 pm.

Signed

Date

Presiding Chairman
Iwerne Courtney & Stepleton Parish Council

Parish Clerk 6 May 2021