Compton Abbas Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF

COMPTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL on the 26th of March 2025

 **6.30PM at Compton Abbas Church Hall**

Present: Cllr R Lower - Acting Chairman, Cllr Z Ellison-Wright, Cllr J Crocker, and Cllr B Lower

In attendance: Mrs N Phillips (Parish Clerk) – Dorset Councillor Jane Somper and 1 member of the public

Cllr R Lower welcomed everyone to the meeting

**Public Consultation period –** the following matters were raised.

It was confirmed that the Airfield monitoring group have obtained legal advice and information regarding conditions of the Section 106 and 52 planning legal agreements. The Clerk confirmed that this matter had been handed to Dorset Council legal team106/Cil department and to date, there has been no further updates from them.

Concerns over the increase in flooding in areas within the village and on the main A350. These concerns had been raised with Dorset Council, who have cleared the drains to try and help with the increased amount of water coming off the fields. It was also noted that a resident will be speaking to the landowner, to request that a ditch is dug, to help with the water flowing off the fields. The Clerk will contact Dorset Council to ensure that this matter is being monitored and will request more regular clearing of the drains. **Can all households ensure that any drains outside their property on the highways are kept clear from any debris coming from their private land.**

24/35. Apologies for absence –there were none

24/36. Declarations of Interest and dispensations – there were none.

24/37. Co-option for New Councillor – there were none.

24/38. To agree the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting dated Wednesday the 20th of November 2024.

Cllr Z Ellison-Wright proposed that the Minutes were a true and accurate record, this was seconded by Cllr B Lower, all in favour. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

RESOLVED: that the minutes were approved and signed by the Acting Chairman (24/38 – no budgetary requirements)

**Matters arising**

To adopt amended financial regulations – the Clerk is in the process of amending the financial regulation, these will be ready for adopting at the AGM

To confirm new Bank Signatories – Cllr R Lower and Cllr J Croker are new signatories, and Cllr Z Ellison-Wright agreed to be added as a Signatory. The Clerk will sort the necessary paperwork.

To agree officers roles – officers roles will remain the same until the AGM in May 2025.

Update on proposal concerning Compton Abbas Airfield Sec52 and 106 agreement – this was discussed under public consultation.

Update on dog/general waste bin – the new wheely bin is in place and being used and emptied.

Update on replacement noticeboard for Twyford – the noticeboard for Twyford was delivered to Cllr Z Ellison-Wright and Cllr J Croker and Cllr B Lower has installed it.

Update on original objection to Public Footpath Diversion order for Compton Abbas Airfield – to confirm that the Parish Council withdrew they objections to this application.

To discuss Wessex Internet discounted broadband connection for the Parish – Last year, Wessex Internet had offered to supply the Church, the Church Hall and the Phone box at a reduced broadband cost. Unfortunately, they had a new policy put in place stating that they would only support one location within the Parish with discounted Broadband. After debate, it was agreed that the Church Hall would benefit more from having the broadband supplied at a discounted rate, so the Parish Council application for the discount has been withdrawn. At this point concerns were raised over the cost that the Parish Council pay for BT broadband/line rental and electricity cost to light up the telephone box and bus shelter. This matter will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

Update on Church Hall/Hub – Cllr Z Ellison-Wright reported that the hall has continued to be used for regular events such as the Social Hub, Pizza nights and Christmas Party, which are well attended. Advice has been sought about the work required to repair and maintain the hall.

To agree date to discuss Picnic in the Paddock – It was agreed to hold the Picnic in the Paddock on the 9th of August 2025.

Update on Dark Skys presentation held on the 20th of February - The recent stargazing evening was curtailed by poor weather but at least the Parish had been awarded the Dark Skys status, which is now on the wall of the church hall. This is the third time in succession that the weather has prevented a successful event, and it may be the case that there will not be another one organised for next winter. However, a recent newcomer to the Parish is a keen astronomer and is intending to install a telescope in the Twyford area which he would invite residents to use which may be an alternative.

To discuss Parish Council website – there are items that need to be updated on the website and a question was raised of why people are required to logon to a specific area of the website, to see the archived pictures of the Parish. The Clerk reported that the login is necessary as most of the information is protected by licences from the original suppliers of the information. The Clerk has never been asked by a member of the public for the login details since it has been on the website. After debate it was felt that this area should be deleted as it can be confusing for people visiting the website, as it looks like they need to login before looking through the other areas that are not protected by login details. The Clerk will arrange this to be removed. Action - Clerk

To discuss flooding matters – this matter was discussed under public consultation. But if anyone in the Parish is affected by flooding, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Council or Dorset Council environment department directly.

To discuss VE day – Dorset Council will be lighting a Beacon at Weymouth on VE day to commemorate it.

To discuss Speed Watch – Cllr Z Ellison-Wrights reported the following: The Community Speedwatch Team have continued with regular sessions and were joined recently by Councillor Jane Somper. During recent sessions 16-28% of drivers were speeding, with an average speed of 40mph and a maximum speed of 66mph. The week commencing 7 April is CSW Action Week. Currently only northbound traffic can be surveyed as no safe location for monitoring southbound traffic has been identified. The group currently consists of 5 people, so more volunteers would be appreciated. The CSW Team would like the Parish Council to consider funding a Speed Indicator Device, but a traffic survey would be required first, to determine whether a Speed Indicator Device can be authorised. Concerns were raised about a Damory Bus that was registered as speeding from a speed watch, so the police will be sending them a letter, but to re-enforce how dangerous any speeding traffic is, the Parish Council will also write to Damory Bus company. After debate, it was agreed that the Parish Council to apply to Dorset Council for a speed/traffic survey to be done, to start the process for a Speed Indicator Device to be put on the A350 through the Parish. The Parish Council will be required to fund this project. The Clerk will request the survey. Action - Clerk

Update on playground/Fanners Field – Cllr J Crocker reported the following:

Fanners Field - Unfortunately the hedge maintenance planned for the northern boundary has not taken place as planned due to family illness. It remains to be seen if the work can be carried out at a future date, which will be next Autumn / Winter now. The surface near the playground would benefit from rolling to flatten down the vehicle damage. Cllr Crocker has spoken to a resident that may have a roller that can be used.

The first grass cutting was done last week. It must be Spring.

Playground - The annual inspection took place in January and reported only minor low-risk items. However, one was the presence of sharpened pieces of wood amongst the wood chip and this has been the source of at least one complaint to our knowledge. It is thought that this has been caused by our usual supplier feeding off-cuts of wood through the chipper.

Ideally, we should cover the existing surface, and the new exposed area with bark chippings specially prepared for playground surfaces, however a rough estimate of costs places this in the region of £2000 which may be prohibitive.

Cllr J Crocker will obtain a detailed quote for new chippings to be laid. Action – Cllr JC

It was also noted that the area where the fencing had not been finished has now been done. Thank you to the resident that completed this.

24/39. Planning and tree application

There were none

24/40. Receive Chairman and Officers reports:

The Chairman reported the following:

The Parish Councillors were sad to say goodbye to our previous Chairman, Trevor Clements, who stood down following our November meeting. Trevor began as a Compton Abbas Parish Councillor in May 2017 and became Chairman in January 2020. I know all councillors would like to thank him for his many years of service to the village and wider parish.

Although December seems a long time ago now, thanks must go to Cllr Ellison-Wright for organising our very successful Christmas Party which was enjoyed by many villagers. This followed the wonderful Carol Service at St Mary’s.

Thanks also to Cllrs Crocker and Lower for erecting the new noticeboard for Twyford. The Parish Council has been thanked on behalf of Twyford residents.

Following confirmation of Dark Skies Friendly Status, congratulations must go to Cllr Crocker who worked very hard on this project and accepted a plaque on behalf of the Parish at the Dark Skies event he organised in February. News of this success is featured in the March edition CCNL’s ‘The Hart’.

The Parish have the summer Picnic in the Paddock to look forward to and hope to work closely with the village’s Social Hub and the PCC to ensure another successful event.

There are currently two vacancies for councillors and an advert will be in the next newsletter.

Cllr R Lower reported the following:

Footpaths- No issues reported by members of public.

A fallen tree which blocked the footpath to the Hall was made safe by North Dorset Rangers – our thanks to the team.

Permissive footpath is fine and thanks to the person who kindly repositioned the finger post which had become dislodged.

After receiving an update from Dorset Council Gore Clump junction safety improvements, it has been forwarded on to Sara Greenwood from the British Horse Society, who confirmed that the Head Of BHS safety and our Field Officer had a meeting with Roger Bell of Highways last week on site and have some very positive ways forward on the changes at Gore Clump, they hope that National Trust confirms their requests.

Cllr B Lower reported the following: Beacon Ward Councillor Jane Somper arranged a consultative meeting between Jason Hammond, the Airfield Manager, and the local Parish Councils for Monday 24th March. There were representatives from Fontmell, Ashmore, Shaftesbury, Melbury Abbas and Compton Abbas, for whom, on this occasion Cllr Ben Lower attended, deputising for Councillor R Lower. It was reported that for 2025 there will be no airshow. As a joint decision by the Airfield and Aero Legends a number of factors have paused this event, but the ambition remains to have another show in 2026. There are to be changes to the Airfield website with a launch rebranding and confirmation of their diary of events. These again include the Spitfires flights and visiting Bugatti and Land Rover car clubs. Other changes include a planning application to install a roll-out canopied area for visitors and, after altering fencing and installing signage Graham Stanley, Dorset Council’s Senior Ranger will be invited to walk the rerouted footpath to skirt the perimeter of the runway.

DC Cllr Jane Somper commented that an objection to move the footpath crossing the runway had been withdrawn but that there is currently no timescale for Dorset Council’s roadworks at Dinah’s Hollow or the safety improvements to the Gore Clump junction with the C13.

Cllr J Crocker reported the following:

Trees – there is an opportunity for the Parish to plant some Dorset Back Popular saplings. Cllr Crocker will speak to a landowner to see if they are interested in planting these nearly nonexciting species. If there are any landowners that maybe interested (the trees can grow up to 40meters high) please contact Cllr Crocker

24/41 Report from Dorset Council Councillor Jane Somper

At the meeting held with the Airfield Manager, it was also noted, they are relaunching the hospitality side of the business. It was also noted that they are looking to manage the Spitfire days differently.

Dorset Council have confirmed they have the funds allocated to the Gore Clump and Dinahs Hollow project and due to needing diversion whilst Dinahs Hollow is closed, the Gore Clump project should be completed before Dinahs Hollow works commence.

Flooding has been a big issue in North Dorset, which some is a result of climate change. Cllr Somper has raised concerns that Dorset Council will be spending more money on bringing forward their net zero target plan by 5 years, where they should be spending funds looking at prevention and protection for flooding, rather than using to work on the plan.

A new family hub has been set up in Sturminster Newton and is the only hub in North Dorset available for support. Families that need support or even if you don’t, there is a lovely café that help support the running cost for this most needed hub. More information can be found on this link to Dorset Council website. https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/family-hub/find-a-family-hub.

Dorset Council called an emergency full Council meeting to discuss their borrowing/terms. The terms of borrowing for repayment has been increased to 40 years from 25 years. Questions were asked asking for more details on how much increasing the borrowing time would cost? There were no full details given but was approved by majority.

24/42 Finance - to agree Payment schedules

To agree Clerks hours and wages for 2025 – It has been agreed that the Parish Council will now meet 5 times a year instead of 4 times a year. The Council have already had a proposal from the Acting Chairman for the Clerk hours increase and wage scale (as NALC recommendation). Cllr R Lower proposed that Clerk’s hours are increased from 15 hours a month to 20 hours a month and a pay scale increase from 26 to 27.

 RESOLVED: To increase the Clerk hours and wages scale as above (24/42 – salary)

To consider Annual Grant awards – none received.

To agree payment Schedule and bank reconciliation for February and to ratify payments made in November, December and January:

The Clerk had circulated the Payment Schedule for November, December and January which were agreed via email. The Clerk tabled February’s for the sum of £2094.37. This was proposed by Cllr J Lower and seconded by Cllr J Crocker, all agreed for the payments on the payment schedule be paid, the schedule was duly signed Acting Chairman.



 RESOLVED: to pay the payment on the schedule to the total sum of £2094.37 (24/42 current account)

24/43. Clerk’s Report – Correspondence. All correspondence has been circulated.

The Councillors agreed to hold their Parish Council meetings in January, March, May, July and October of each year.

24/44. Items for next agenda and date of next meeting – AGM and APM - BT and Electric supply – SID

The Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 21st of May 2025 at Compton Abbas Church Hall time to be agreed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.55.

Signed…………………………………………………………………………………………

Website address http//: [www.comptonabbas.org.uk](http://www.comptonabbas.org.uk). Should you wish to contact any Councillor please

 use this address: clerk@comptonabbas.org.uk