

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly
Held Wednesday 10th April 2024, the Village Hall, Sixpenny Handley.

Item	
41	<p>Attendance – 22 members of public present plus members of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Parish Councillors:</p> <p>Cllr James Reed (Chairman of the Parish Council) Cllr Colin Taylor Cllr David Adams Cllr Stuart McLean Cllr Andy Turner Cllr David Chick Cllr Rosalie Adams Cllr Ian Mereweather</p> <p>Guests: Cllr Piers Brown Dorset Council Cranborne Chase Chris Butcher Severnside Defibs & Training</p> <p>Also in Attendance: Mrs Ciona Nicholson (Clerk)</p> <p>Apologies received from: Cllr Simon Meaden Sixpenny Surgery Rural Police Team</p>
42	<p><i>Welcome & Introduction</i></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed those present and explained the Annual Parish Assembly is not a Parish Council Meeting, the Parish Council reports to its electorate on what it has accomplished within the year.</p>
43	<p>Confirm the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held 19th April 2023.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Mr A Gibb that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the last Annual Meeting held 11th May 2022. Resolved that the minutes be signed by the Chairman.</p>
44	<p>Matters arising from the last Annual Parish Meeting.</p> <p>None.</p>

Annual Report of the Parish Council presented by Cllr Stuart McLean.

My name is Stuart McLean and I am one of your Parish Councillors that represent the Parish of Sixpenny Handley and Pentridge, of which this is the Annual Parish Report for the past 12 months.

Parish Councils form the lowest civil authoritative tier of government, of which there are over 10,000 such Parish or Town Councils in England. Here in Dorset we are responsible to the unitary authority of Dorset Council, which is made up of 52 Wards, ours being Cranborne Chase Ward. Our Ward Councillor is Mr Piers Brown, who is present here this evening who will be speaking to you shortly and who also attends our Parish Council meetings. Parish Councils have three main aims which are to represent the local community; deliver services to meet local needs; and to improve the quality of life and community well-being of the Parish.

The principle function of a Parish Council is to levy an annual sum of money called a “precept” which is funded from the Council Tax collected from you as Parishioners by Dorset Council. This precept is based on a number of factors including the number of Parishioners on the electoral roll and the number of residences in the Parish, among others. In this current year the precept granted to us by Dorset Council was £64,700 – which is a great deal of money, the disbursement of which is the responsibility of your Parish Council. Your Parish Council holds three meetings each month, of which two are held on a regular basis including that of the full Parish Council and the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The third meeting is held as required to consider planning applications submitted by Parishioners. I should add that two weeks ago we were subject to a full annual audit by Dorset Council auditors, of our Parish Account, which is maintained by our Parish Clerk, Ciona Nicholson. I am delighted to be able to say that the ensuing report found that the account had been maintained in a faultless manner thanks to the professionalism and attention to detail of Ciona, who is to be congratulated for her hard work.

Of course your Parish Council is not alone as we are supported by a large number of willing, able and selfless volunteers who manage, organise and maintain a wide range of facilities in the Parish. For example, included in these are the operation, management and maintenance of this excellent village hall. Additionally, we are most fortunate to have superb recreational and sporting facilities in the village, including the Cricket Ground; Football Pitch; Bowls Club; Tennis Courts and children’s playground, which are all supported by the Sports Pavilion, including the estimable Penny Tap dispensing local craft beers and wines. The Sports Clubs and groups are all run by willing committees of volunteers to whom we are most grateful. In particular, I should mention Mr Mark Young who cuts the grass on the football and cricket pitches ensuring that they look their best at all times. Mark is also the village Football Team Manager. Mark we thank you for your hard work.

Turning now to what your Parish Council has been doing over the past year on your behalf, I am delighted to be able to say that we have achieved a particularly significant objective that we set ourselves, which was designed to resolve an issue about which we have been concerned for some considerable time – which is that of the traffic congestion at the road junction outside the First School in the mornings and evenings. Thanks to our hardworking Parish Clerk, Ciona Nicholson, we were successful in our application for a significant grant from Dorset Council which combined with an additional sum from Parish Council funds, will now enable us to construct a pedestrian pathway from the Village Hall car park across the recreation ground to the back gate of the school and up to the Church pathway. We submit that this has the potential to ease traffic congestion and provide options for safe pick up and drop off of children attending the First School enabling them to walk in safety from the village hall to the school if required. We anticipate that this pedestrian pathway will be completed in time for the Big Issue event on the 13th July.

Sadly, we have been less successful in our efforts to convince the Dorset County Planning Officer that constructing seven houses in the meadow on Frogmore Lane is not a good idea as it is a flood plain, which is a recognised flood zone by the Environment Agency that regularly fills with water in periods of heavy rain. We have submitted a number of objections in the strongest terms to this plan and indeed to the latest variation plan of the developer, Nord Homes, to increase the footprint size of the seven houses for which we await a response. In the interim work has begun on site.

	<p>The other major development work that has taken place around the Parish recently has been that carried out by Wessex Internet, who have sited channels in the High Street to bring high speed fibre optic broadband cables to the village. The Parish Council facilitated the installation of fibre to the Common Road houses across the recreation ground and by doing so have further enabled fibre broadband in the village hall, sports pavilion and parish office at significantly reduced monthly rates. We now await their work to connect individual homes for those who wish to sign up to their service.</p> <p>On the subject of technological advancement your Parish Council arranged for solar panels to be fitted to the Sports Pavilion and on the Village Hall to reduce the cost of the electricity consumed in both facilities and to play their part in reducing climate change.</p> <p>Working with the Speed Watch Team we have recently funded a second Speed Indicator Device (SID) and a sixth monitoring post which is located in Back Lane and Solar Panels for each monitoring post. The solar panels mean that the team no longer has to change batteries in each device every 4 days and given we now have two that would be an onerous task for the team. Which by the way is quite a small team, so if anyone would like to consider joining, please speak to Andy Turner. Having two speed devices means that we can 'pair' the monitoring posts to identify vehicle speeds in opposite directions, up and down the High Street for the 20mph zone for instance. Each device captures data so that our team, can analyse it to understand how drivers respond. This information can support the Speed Gun Team who along with the Police Speed Camera team capture and report those drivers who are speeding. With both the SID deployments and Speed Gun team reporting we can bring the speed of vehicles down making our village a much safer place. It is documented across the country that regular deployment of SIDs does make a difference, so being one of the very few places in Dorset that has more than 2 monitoring posts means we can only make things safer.</p> <p>Your Parish Council has funded and sited a defibrillator affixed to the green shed near to the village hall car park for use by all users of the sports ground. In addition, we have been successful in our bid for a grant of almost £9,000 from the Resilient Communities Fund to purchase an electrical generator for it to be deployed at the Village Hall to enable it to be used in a local area emergency situation.</p> <p>I mentioned that we are responsible for the disbursement of the precept granted to the Parish Council and to that end we thank Councillor Colin Taylor for taking the steps necessary to enhance the standard and speed of our financial transactions by taking the necessary steps to change to on-line banking. Your Parish Council makes a number of financial donations to such organisations as the Citizen's Advice Bureau, whose mobile van now regularly parks outside the Parish Office to offer free help and advice to Parishioners. We have also made donations on your behalf to Handley First School and the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, whose regular meetings we attend.</p> <p>The Village Hall, run by its energetic and vibrant committee, now facilitates a series of regular events including the Community Cinema; Repair Café; Craft Fair; the Scarlet Oak Theatre and a Creative Skills Hub. Also in the village hall last month the school held an Easter Bingo session and the Church co-ordinated a particularly well attended "Longest Yarn" event celebrating the 80th Anniversary of D-Day in the Second World War.</p> <p>I must particularly congratulate Jane Stickland and David McLeod of the Creative Skills Hub from the village hall who every Tuesday carry out a litter pick and bin emptying round across the whole sports ground – very well done Jane and David. The Creative Skills Hub incidentally hires the village hall for 3 days each week throughout the year which is a source of key revenue income for the hall as well the benefits that it provides across the village. For its part the Parish Office now opens a twice weekly Crossroads Café and a Parish Library on the first and third Thursday of each month thanks to the voluntary efforts of our former Parish Councillor, Bea Boyland. Another valuable service on offer at the Crossroads Café on Wednesdays is an IT Support service run by Councillor Andrew Turner who can help with laptop, tablet or mobile phone problems. The Big Session committee plan to hold a major summer event on the sports field and pavilion on the 13th July, for which details may be found on the Parish Council Website.</p> <p>Apart from our Parish Council Website we also have a Facebook and Nextdoor pages through which we publish information such as road closures and key events from across Dorset. Access to our full</p>
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range of Parish Council agendas, minutes of meetings and village amenities can also be found on our Website.

Details of all the entertainment and information services in the village may also be found in our superb village magazine "The Downsman" edited most professionally by Naomi Booth, which publishes a bi-monthly edition distributed by 12 willing volunteers. We thank them all.

However, I very much regret to have to say that after a most commendable number of years in the role, Naomi is stepping down as Editor of the Downsman and that accordingly we urgently need a replacement volunteer as Editor. Could that be you? Please let us know if you would consider taking on the valuable and interesting role as editor of our village magazine. The Downsman magazine of course is very well supported by the Parish Website which contains all of the details that you might need to keep yourself informed of village events and the work of the Parish Council.

The Community Land Trust has unfortunately been restricted in its plans to make progress to site affordable new houses for rent by local people on land purchased from the former East Dorset District Council on Common Road. An architect has been appointed and revised plans have been drawn up. The delay on progress of this worthwhile project has been due to restrictions in central government funding for such projects.

There can be no doubt that the list of events and facilities available to Parishioners in Sixpenny Handley are directly linked to the numbers of willing volunteers who step forward to give freely of their time including the operations of the Handley Hubs, run jointly by the Parish Council, St Mary's Church and the Village Hall committees. Another of our unsung heroes is Councillor David Adams who regularly deploys his professional skills as a plumber to keep control of the boiler and water systems in the Sports Pavilion as well as oversight of the village's allotments as well as regularly strimming and clipping our footpaths and bridleways along our many rights of way around the village – again our thanks to David for his selfless support.

I would also at this stage like to thank, on all our behalf, the tireless work of Sarah Jones who delivers the mail around the village in all weathers and conditions. I know that it is her job - but equally we all know that we can rely upon her attention to detail in ensuring that all our letter and parcels are delivered on time.

The Parish Council would also like to extend its thanks to the First Woodcutts Scouts for their repeated support to the Parish and in particular for their annual litter pick, which keeps the village looking much better than it otherwise would.

So accordingly on behalf of your Parish Council Chairman, Councillor James Reed, and if I may say further on your behalf as members of this Parish, we must thank your Parish Councillors who continue to meet month in and month out, for the continued development and benefit of Sixpenny Handley and Pentridge. However, I must draw your attention to the fact that this month marks the end of this Parish Council's tenure of office. Most of the Councillors at this time will have completed 8, 10 or in some cases even 12 years of service and some of whom intend to stand down at that time. It is essential that we identify replacement Councillors to fill those gaps to continue the good work that I have outlined to you. We currently have one vacancy today that has been publicised locally and so new any new applicant could be co-opted immediately. If you want to have a say in the future development of the Parish, or how we spend the £64,700 Precept that we are granted for our work, do come and join us at one of our monthly meetings to see what it is that we do on your behalf. Sixpenny Handley is a vibrant village and a desirable place to live where neighbour supports neighbour and residents volunteer to support events for the good of the village and its inhabitants. Please do now seriously consider standing as a Parish Councillor or as Editor of our village magazine – They are not onerous duties of which I, as a Parish Councillor, have been proud to carry out for 8 years and is for the good and benefit of your community.

Comments from the electorate:

In recognition and thanks for the huge contribution to the Community over 12 years the Chairman of the Parish Council presented Naomi Booth with a bouquet of flowers.

45	<p>Audited Accounts for year ending 31st March 2023.</p> <p>The Audited Accounts for 2023 have been available for scrutiny on the Parish Council website and on the noticeboard at the Parish Office.</p>
46	<p>Dorset Council Cranborne Chase (Annual Review) - Cllr Piers Brown</p> <p>Cllr Brown explained the area that his role as Cranborne Chase covered and summarised the good news items from Dorset Council & a reflection of accomplishments & achievements.</p> <p>Fines have been significantly increased, CCTV located in hot spots and dash cam footage allowed as evidence are all new initiatives to deter fly tipping.</p> <p>Success in supporting locals in Chase Crescent Woodcutts to apply to Dorset Council to adopt the un adopted road.</p> <p>Working with Asters Housing Associations' Ground Maintenance Team concentrated on the maintenance of trees & shrubs in the Sheasby and Dean Lane bungalows areas.</p> <p>Support for the Frogmore Lane flood risk issues by escalating members concerns over; ditch clearance, clearance of the silted sump and ensuring the planning discharge conditions are met.</p> <p>As a stakeholder Cllr Brown is closely examining the progression of filling the County Farm vacancy along Common Road.</p> <p>Cllr Brown thanked members of the Parish Council for their work and on-going support.</p>
47	<p>Healthcare Report by Practise Manager Maxine, Sixpenny Handley Surgery. Report delivered by Cllr A Turner</p> <p>Sixpenny Handley Surgery News Update April 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Practice (GP) is facing challenges due to a lack of investment, hindering its ability to provide adequate patient care despite being a crucial component of the healthcare system. - The new GP contract, which was anticipated as a potential opportunity to improve recognition and investment in General Practice, has been rejected by a significant majority of GPs and GP registrars. - Over 19,000 GPs and GP registrars participated in the British Medical Association (BMA) referendum, with more than 99% voting against the contract changes. - The rejection highlights the profession's frustration with the inadequate resources allocated to General Practice. - Despite a 1.9% funding increase in the contract baseline, it is considered insufficient to cover rising operational costs and maintain safe patient care over the next 12 months. - The government's exclusion of GPs from accessing certain funding exacerbates the challenge of hiring additional doctors for General Practice. - The General Practitioners Committee (GPC) of England is convening to discuss the profession's next steps in response to the rejected contract.

-UK GPs are the bedrock upon which the rest of the NHS stands We offer 400 million patient contacts a year. Almost 1.4 million every single day.

-The average number of patients each full-time equivalent GP is responsible for now stands at 2,295. This is an increase of 357 patients per GP, or 18%, since 2015, demonstrating the ever-mounting workload in general practice.

The Surgery 2023-2024

The surgery as you can see from the statistics below is busier than ever. The partners and all the staff are working very hard to meet demands and we are constantly reviewing our systems to improve the service to our patients. We would like to thank all our patients for their patience and understanding in these difficult times.

GP Sessions per week

Pre Covid 26
Post Covid 20

Appointments 1 offered and 2 not attended

	Total appointments offered	Total appointments not attended	Number of appointments wasted
Pre Covid (March 2019)	1127	34	34
Post Covid (March 2024)	1728	62	62

Complaints received April 2019

Pre covid (04/2019-03/2020) - 7
Post covid 04/2023-03/2024 - 11

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Village Hall Update by VH Chairman Paul Styles delivered by Cllr Rosalie Adams who is also a Village Hall Trustee

Introduction

Apologies for Chair's absence – with my Vice Chair hat on he has asked me to give this report on behalf of the Village Hall Committee.

Charity status

The old charitable trust was finally dissolved at the end of 2023 and we have just completed our first financial year as a CIO.

The new lease with Parish Council has been completed.

We have a new Bookings Secretary/Trustee on board but are still looking for a Secretary to the Trustees so please spread the word!

We have now set up a new bank account for the CIO after many months of effort.

The Hall

The Trustees are delighted to report that the Hall has had another busy year. Bookings remain strong and we would like to thank all our user groups for their continued support.

As part of the Community Hub initiative, the Trustees have once again been delighted to offer the hall free of charge to groups that support and benefit our community.

The hall's finances remain healthy thanks largely to the Covid grant we received as well as income from our hirers and our ongoing fundraising activities. Reserves are held to help the CIO to operate effectively over the next few years and a reserves policy is being developed by the Trustees. Last year our income just about covered our operating costs, in spite of rising costs, with just a small loss being recorded at year end.

Update on Entertainment / Fundraising Events

Since our last report to the Parish Assembly we have been lucky enough to have 3 sell-out shows provided by **Artsreach**, the local arts charity whose aim is to make a positive difference to the lives of people in Dorset. CarmenCo: A Pocket Opera and Lyngo Theatre's Egg & Spoon were held in October last year and in February this year we had the children's puppet show and workshop – The Zoo That Comes to You. The full Artsreach programme for the autumn season will be launched next month, but we have already booked another child's show for the start of October half term that we hope will involve the whole community. The Goat Show – a rollicking adventure story about goats who are causing chaos in a quiet corner off the countryside and how the whole community has to work together to solve the problem – it sounds right up our High Street!

The **Community Cinema**, run in conjunction with St Mary's Church, is held on the 3rd Friday of the month. The Trustees really enjoy working with the church team and would like to extend special thanks to Peter Goldstone, Annie & Mike Dyer and Linda Cooper. Although not a high profit venture, we have a loyal core audience of around 30 people and the evenings are great fun. Since our last report we have shown a variety of films - from true stories of derring-do, to Agatha Christie whodunnits and, of course, the phenomenon that was Barbie. Our final film for this season is the box office hit Wonka, which will be shown on Friday next week (19th). We will then take a break for the summer and restart in September. We share 50% of any profit made with St Mary's towards their fabric fund.

Craft Fairs – these are now being held quarterly on the last Saturday of the month in March, June, September and the Xmas fair which will be held on Saturday 7 December. Regular crafters pay £6 for a table and really enjoy the ambience we have created. Generally, we have around 20 - 25 stalls. Entry is free of charge for the public and our homemade sandwiches, cakes and fresh coffee and tea continue to prove very popular as do the free craft activities for children.

New Year's Eve Party – our main fundraiser last year was our New Year's Eve Party, which was a great success! We had 90 paying guests and made a profit of nearly £700. The Trustees would like to thank Ali & Simon Lane of Sixpenny Sessions for their effort in ensuring it was such a successful

event. They decorated the hall beforehand and acted as hosts on the night while members of the entertainments team were busy behind the bar.

Relationship with other local organisations

We continue to work hard to support and work with other local organisations for the benefit of the community, including St Mary's Church and Handley Hubs.

Also, we endeavour to maintain a good rapport with our regular users – The Creative Skills Hub, Nappy, The Repair Café and CCF.

As you may remember the joint team from St Mary's Church and the Village Hall hosted a 'Comr Carols for Santa' event just before Christmas, supported by the Parish Council, and raised £578 for Salisbury Hospital Stars Appeal. This was a resounding success and a great example of local organisations working together.

The Church team recently held a fantastic event to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day and show off the village Knit & Natter Group's panel for 'The Longest Yarn' before it travelled to France to join 79 other panels from around the world. The hall was transformed into a French café, serving delicious food and drinks and the event was extremely well supported by the young and old. It was lovely to see the hall being used as a centre for the community to gather and to hear from the few remaining members of the parish who actually lived through D-Day.

Other users of the hall include Yoga, Pilates and Bowls Club practice in the winter and the School, who use the hall for some of their fundraising events, including bingo evenings and themed discos.

The venue has also been used for ad hoc wedding receptions, birthday and retirement parties and wakes.

We will again be hosting afternoon tea at Wimborne St Giles village hall in the summer. This has proved to be a good fundraising opportunity, if incredibly hard work, in the past! This year it will be on Sunday 16 June, starting at 2.30 pm, so please do put a note in your diary. We know that other village organisations are also running these teas during the summer months so please do show them your support too!

Improvements

In addition to the general ongoing M&E management, we also have a continuous programme of improvements to the hall, which in this reporting period have included:

Completing the transformation of the **committee room** which is now a more pleasant space and we are planning to offer it for hire separately to the main hall for anyone who wishes to hold smaller meetings or workshops. This will obviously be with the prior agreement of anyone who has booked the main hall.

Improvements have been made to the foyer, which has been plastered and painted and The Creative Skills Hub has kindly donated the lovely artwork. The Trustees are also very grateful to Ian Callaghan for the lovely welcome sign above the new noticeboard.

The improvements to the outside space have started with the erection of a shed, the installation of

	<p>extra patio and some outdoor benches, and the fence around the garden has now been painted. Thanks to Anthony Brown, we now have a lovely rustic pergola and he will be further developing this area once the weather improves, to include the installation of some hand crafted screens and seating under the pergola plus the planting of some native climbers. The Trustees have applied for grant funding to cover the additional costs of doing this. We are very grateful for the grant already received from the village Community Fund which will enable us to buy some planters, compost and plants to brighten up the front and rear areas of the hall and to sow some wildflower and grass seed on the bank at the back. We are in the process of meeting with a couple of lighting companies to see if we can improve our stage lighting. Once the quotes are received, we will be applying for a grant from ACRE – a fund provided by Defra to support the modernisation and improvement of village halls.</p> <p>We have our annual Spring Clean and Help Out Day on Saturday 20 April when all hands will be on deck to help inside and outside the hall. All volunteers are very welcome, especially those with green fingers, and we can promise refreshments plus a warm feeling that you have helped to maintain and improve our wonderful community venue!</p> <p>Finally, can I just remind everyone that this year's BIG Session will be held on Saturday 13 July from 2 – 10 pm. We really hope the weather will be kind this year as last year it was horrendous! Further news of bands, etc., will be available shortly and details will be in the June issue of the Downsman.</p>
49	<p>Community Land Trust by Cllr James Reed</p> <p>The Community Land Trust was initiated 9 years ago and after many bureaucratic hurdles a planning application is imminent. The CLT Team has undergone changes including Mr Simon Parker stepping down as Chairman and Mr Ian Mereweather joining the team there is determination to gather momentum. We can expect to hold a CLT meeting to present an update. In the meantime, we would encourage anyone who is interested to renew their position on Dorset Council's housing list.</p>
50	<p><u>Skate Park Update</u></p> <p>Five members of the Skate-park fundraising Team were present at the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Turner provided a brief update on the tender evaluation process for the preferred supplier and thanks was accredited to Cllr Taylor who offered to evaluate and review response levels. Locally based company Maverick were appointed as the supplier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant fund raising • Charging schedule (no charges until delivered). • Potential to combat antisocial behaviour. • PCs ownership • Future launch of community fundraising with the aim to self-fund. • Anticipation of finishing the project by September 2025.

51	<p><u>Chris Butcher Severnside Defibrillator & Training</u></p> <p>As the Parish is fortunate to have 6 defibrillators locally based the PC invited Severnside Defibs along to provide a demonstration of how defibrillators should be operated.</p> <p>It was an informative and invaluable exercise which was received well by those present.</p> <p>Thanks was given to Chris Butcher for attending.</p>
52	<p><u>Questions from the electorate</u></p> <p>Cllr Reed acknowledge the number of questions that had been asked throughout the meeting but invited electors to pose any final questions before closure of the meeting.</p> <p>Q: Is there any plans to improve infrastructure with sewerage with the imminent development of Frogmore near to Paddock Close?</p>
53	<p><u>Closing Remarks</u></p> <p>The Chairman, Cllr James Reed thanked everyone for attending, and to all those who had spoken.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor was presented with a gift in recognition of the best attendance record over the past year.</p> <p>The Clerk was also presented with a gift in recognition of her contribution.</p>
	Meeting closed at 8.42pm.

These minutes are to be signed by the Chairman after approval at the next Annual Parish Meeting

Signed;..... Date:21st May 2025.....