

**Iwerne Courtney & Stepleton Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Wednesday 17 May 2023**

**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), Mrs C Barrett, Mrs H Christmas  
Members of the Public Sue & Nigel Bennett and Unitary Councillor Jane Somper

The Chairman welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open.

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on **18<sup>th</sup> May 2022** were agreed

2. **Apologies** – Mr H Gibson Fleming Mr John Gredley .
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 2022 – May 2023**

It is with sadness that I have found myself the author of this annual report.

Cllr Tim Sullivan became Chair in May 2022. The duties of the Chair were foreseeably going to be more difficult this year than most, due to the resignation of our Parish Clerk. Tim took on the role of advertising and employing a new Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council, which turned out to be even more challenging as he had to repeat the process after the first choice fell through.

This Parish Council is very grateful to Tim, (and his family) for his time, hard work and commitment to Parish matters. He went above and beyond his duties as a Chair/Parish Councillor. He was employed on Parish Council duties the night he had his tragic accident.

We remember Tim as a lovable kind hearted man and he will always be fondly in our thoughts. With respect I will move on with my report for the year.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors, John Gredley, Helen Christmas, Caroline Barrett, Hector Gibson Fleming and County Councillor Jane Somper for their hard work and dedication to the Parish.

I would also like to thank our new Parish Clerk, David Green, for guiding me through this unprecedented period.

This Parish Council strives to provide excellent, safe facilities for the community and service value for your money. It set the annual Parish Precept, this year at £4,936, of which forms part of our Council Tax Bill. The PC encourages parishioners to look at the notice boards at the back of the Bus Shelter which advise the public of all our finance matters, minutes of meetings and agendas. This information is also available on the village website at the moment, but the PC have agreed to a new website provision by Aubergine which should be completed in the near future.

Cllr Gredley has liaised with Dorset Highways Officer on a number of occasions and discussed flooding issues and the poor state of our Parish roads. Potholes continue to flourish in our roads despite the constant infilling. We are ever hopeful that the promised new surfacing work around 'the block' will not be delayed again. Our unique open space, the Glebe, continues to flourish every year under the stewardship of the PC. It is beautiful free area for both young and old to enjoy, sit, play and relax. 75 daffodil bulbs were planted on the Glebe and around the

play area exterior, in the Autumn, as well as 10 recycled rose bushes. The roses are getting ready to bloom soon. The Glebe trees are routinely visually inspected for damage. The Glebe was used by the whole village when we celebrated both the Queens Platinum Jubilee last year and the recent Coronation party of HRH King Charles III.

Our Play Area is a valuable asset to the community. The play equipment ensures that the children of this village have a safe and fun place to play. The equipment is officially inspected once a year. The play area is a facility that is open to all, all year round.

The Wildflower and Fruit tree area project has now been established now for over 10 years. The number of different wild flowers increase each year. The Dorset Rangers kindly cut the area last September (a month later than normal) using a special mowing/shaking seeds machine.. and this may be the reason why the yellow rattle has noticeably spread further this Spring. Sadly only 3 Common Barberry bushes have survived ..which encourage the local endangered Barberry Carpet Moth to visit and breed. The small apple trees produced a bumper crop of apples last summer which were enjoyed by many. The old apple tree in the centre is reputed to be over 100 years old.

The Parish Council owns 5 village public benches, the Millennium Cross, the War Memorial, 4 grit bins, the Bus Shelter, 6 bins/dog waste, the telephone kiosk and the Glebe bridge. The telephone kiosk Book Recycling scheme is still proving to be very successful.

The village defibrillator is NOT a Parish Council asset however the PC regard this as an essential piece of potentially lifesaving equipment in this rural village, and support any fund raising activities.

The PC regularly review our Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, the Glebe tree policy, the Glebe users guide and the property register in order to comply with Government Regulations and our insurance policy.

We have consulted the community and commented on planning applications at 25 The Cross, Littleport, Jenmar, Old Mill cottages, Manor Farm, Chapel View, Shroton Cottage, Stepleton House, Hambledon Hill Farm, Hambledon cottage, Autumn Cottage, 3 Newfield Lane.

Dorset County Planning department no longer advertise Planning applications on the property or with neighbours so it is important for the Parish Council to continue to advise and consult the community on applications.

We always welcome positive comments and suggestions from village residents- who can contact any Parish Councillor, the Clerk and/or attend our monthly meetings.

**Judith Hewitt, Presiding Chairman**

**The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 7:15 pm.**

Signed

Date

Presiding Chairman  
Iwerne Courtney & Stepleton Parish Council

Parish Clerk 18 May 2023