

Draft Minutes of Winterborne St Martin Parish Council

Wednesday 26 February 2025

Magna Community Room

Present: Cllrs Pemberton (Chair), Nuttall, Scarth, Hutchings, Marsh, Walker, Fitzgerald, Newell, Eversden

Democratic Period:

A Parishioner who is part of 'The Green' parish group, informed the Council of a Community Asset transfer currently in progress with Dorset Council. The group would like to invite the Council to consider working with them on the allotments part of the plan and advised that they have about 12 people who want allotments. The group acknowledges that this differs from what the Parish Council have. A CIL application has been made requesting £2,500 and the group would contribute around about £2000, £1500 of that has already been received.

A public meeting for the village has been arranged for March in the Village Hall.

Cllr Pemberton advised that he recalls from a previous meeting that at some stage the group wants the Parish Council to formally support the project.

The parishioner confirmed that they will be requesting the support, but they didn't include this on the application and advised that the applications forms have changed which is part of the reason it took so long to submit the application.

Cllr Pemberton asked when the group envisages requiring the CIL money.

The Parishioner confirmed that no request for monies will be made until they receive permission to implement the plan. They have until the end of April to put the final bid together. The group is going to circulate a final draught ahead of April to allow people to make comments and then the final bid will be submitted in April. The application for money will probably be three to four months after that.

Cllr Pemberton advised that the Parish Council will need to publicise the CIL application and suggested that the group would be looking for indicative support, which the Council would not be able to give until the application has been published which would be at the March meeting of the Parish Council which would still meet the April deadline.

It was agreed that once the plan has been received it will be published on the website and the Cllrs can agree what motions need to be included on the agenda for the March meeting.

Action: All Cllrs to review plan and consider motions

A parishioner requested support from the relevant authorities to create a safe path for pedestrians and confirmed that a petition received 43 signatures.

As this is an item on the agenda it will be discussed in full.

15/2025 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Pemberton advised that he would like to declare two very tenuous declarations of interest to make concerning item 16a) Reading Room/Memorial Hall:

1. The second clause of the trust document says that it's for the benefit of those who are serving in or have served in the armed forces, which Cllr Pemberton has.
2. That it is a War Memorial and Cllr Pemberton takes these seriously.

Cllr Hutchings declared an interest in item 9c) as he works on the farm.

Cllr Marsh declared an interest in item 16a) as advised by the Chair.

Cllr Marsh declared their interests in the Memorial Hall and Reading Room property, which is tied to both his role as a Parish Councillor and his family farm business. The farm, which has been in the area since 1964, has long-standing connections with the building, including providing a water supply (which has remained active) and running a commercial game shoot that used the hall for meetings. Additionally, the farm has paid the hall's electric bill since 2020 and has done maintenance work around the property.

In 2024, the Parish Council and Trustees made an informal offer to sell the building to Cllr Marsh's father, this offer was never pursued as it became clear the building was not for sale. Cllr Marsh emphasised that as a Parish Councillor, his focus is on the community, not personal gain. Cllr Marsh also addressed accusations against his family, including exaggerated valuations meant to create a bidding war. Cllr Marsh also mentioned two other offers to purchase the property were submitted to the council.

Cllr Marsh asked the Councillors, to consider his declared interest carefully and invited them to reflect on whether any other members of the Council might need to declare their own interests in the matter as Cllr Pemberton has. Cllr Marsh reminded the Council that it's in the Parish's best interest that all approach this decision with openness and fairness.

The Clerk advised that if these declarations fall into the criteria of pecuniary interests, then those Cllrs should not take part in any discussion relating to the item. Cllr Pemberton suggested a vote take place when the agenda item is discussed.

There were no further declarations made.

16/2025 Dorset Cllr report

No update received.

17/2025 Police report

No update received.

18/2025 Minutes of Winterborne St Martin Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 22 January 2025

It was proposed by Cllr Stuart and seconded by Cllr Fitzgerald that these minutes should be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

All agreed with two abstentions.

19/2025 Action points from last minutes

- a) January, item 5, Cllr Marsh to explore Police report circulation - Clerk advised that alerts are now being received and shared with Cllrs. A discussion was had regarding the police report from the local PCSO. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the PCSO to request monthly updates. – *Action for next agenda.*
- b) January, item 7.1, previous Clerk - access to the NALC document repository – Clerk advised unsure what this action required, and it was agreed to contact DAPTC. – *Action for next agenda.*
- c) January, item 10.1, Cllr Marsh to raise motion for speed limit signs to be moved – Clerk enquired if the signs missing were repeaters or terminals and it was advised that it is

the terminals, but both of these are now missing. Clerk to report to Highways. – *Action for next agenda.*

d) January, item 10.1, Previous Clerk to chase SID repairs – Cllr Newell to chase. – *Action for next agenda.*

e) January, item 10.3, Cllr Scarth – tender for river clearance – agenda item.

f) January, item 10.5, Cllr Scarth – to confirm Grounds contract expiry date – Cllr Scarth confirmed 10 September 2027. -COMPLETE

g) January, item 10.8, Cllr Pemberton to circulate background information on the Reading Room - COMPLETE

h) January, item 11, Cllr Hutchings to process the new Clerk's access to bank accounts – COMPLETE

i) January, item 11, previous Clerk & Cllr Pemberton to resolve Scribe issues - COMPLETE

j) January, item 12, Cllrs Pemberton, Eversden, Fitzgerald to move benches on Village Green – COMPLETE

20/2025 Finance

a) Approval of schedule of payments & bank reconciliation

Cllr Fitzgerald signed both documents.

b) Approval of third quarter of Financial Year accounts

It was proposed by Cllr Nuttall and seconded by Cllr Fitzgerald that these are accepted as a true record. All agreed.

21/2025 Planning

a) Decision Notices

P/PABA2/2024/05661 - Ballarat Farm Blagdon Hill Martinstown - Erect a new agricultural building to measure 24m in length, 3.6m to the eaves, 12m in breadth and a ridge height of 5.21m - Decision: Withdrawn - Decision Date: 11/02/2025

P/HOU/2024/07133 - 2 Hardy Close Martinstown - Erect single storey lean to porch extension and conversion of workshop - Decision: Granted - Decision Date: 09/01/2025

The Clerk apologised for any confusion adding these to the agenda and clarified that they are for information purposes to advise of updates to planning applications considered by the Parish Council.

22/2025 Highways, Rights of Way and SID

a) Motion: 'The Parish Council accepts the need for a path on land between Fairfield and East house on grounds of safety and will pursue a course of action that will lead to the establishment of such a path'

Proposed by Cllr Nuttall and seconded by Cllr Pemberton

Cllr Nuttall reminded the Cllrs of the parishioner's comments explaining the need for a path due to convenience and safety concerns. The current route is often too wet and muddy to walk on, forcing people to use the road, which is dangerous because it lacks streetlights and cars travel fast. The parishioner is asking the Parish Council to agree in principle that a path should be created, acknowledging that the details, such as materials, feasibility, and costs, will be discussed later. The goal is to gain approval to pursue the project.

A discussion was had which centred around the proposal to create a new path for safety and convenience, but concerns were raised about its priority compared to other needs, like addressing other areas in the village without pavements. Cllr Pemberton emphasised that the motion doesn't commit the Parish Council to any immediate expenditure, and the goal is just to agree in principle to pursue the path. There was also a discussion about land ownership, as the path might cross land claimed by someone else, complicating the issue. Despite some support from parishioners for the path, including safety concerns about walking on the road at night.

It was proposed by Cllr Nuttall and seconded by Cllr Pemberton that the motion is carried. A vote took place which resulted in 4 in favour (Cllrs Hutchings, Nuttall, Scarth, Marsh) – 4 against (Cllrs Fitzgerald, Walker, Newell, Eversden) and 1 abstention (Cllr Pemberton). Cllr Pemberton advised he was going to use his casting vote to make the decision and although he voted in favour as a seconder to the proposal, he now votes against. Motion defeated.

- b) Item to note from Cllr Newell.

Following months of un-actioned requests to DC to remove the mud and stones washed down the bridleway onto the road, neighbours attempting to clear a way through the 6-inch-deep mud for pedestrians, the road has now been cleared by Church Farm. Thanks go to Farmer King and his staff for using farm machinery and removing several loads of debris, the road is now clear for pedestrians and dog walkers without wellies. DC have agreed to investigate the root cause of this and see if there can be some rectification which prevents debris being washed on to the road.

- c) Slurry spillage – Cllr Walker

Cllr Walker raised concern with the recent spillage and wanted to know if anyone could explain why it happened, how it happened, and how it's going to be prevented from happening again.

It was agreed that Cllr Walker will send a what.3. words location and any photo evidence to the Clerk who will then contact the Environment Agency for an update.

23/2025 Allotments

No update

24/2025 Flood, Stream & Riverbanks

- a) Contract for 2025/2026

It was agreed previously that this contract would go out to re-tender.

- b) Stream clearance 2025 – 2028 – Agreed to re-tender.

25/2025 Washpool

No update

26/2025 Grounds

- a) Contract for 2025/26

Cllr Scarth confirmed the end date for the current contract is 10 September 2027

- b) Ground adjacent to Church Cottage

Cllr Scarth confirmed that strimming work has been arranged as part of the contract.

27/2025 V & V

Cllr Pemberton advised that he writes the update every other month as Chair and looks to the Cllrs to take it in turns the other months. Cllr Walker agreed to write for March.

28/2025 Village Hall Trustee

Cllr Pemberton gave an update which included the following:

- The Trust are in the process of applying for Hallmark status, the paperwork is being prepared.
- The hall now has its own website which is live but not yet fully operational.
- The village website is to close next January.

29/2025 Reading Room

a) Motion: That the Parish Council accepts and signs this day the *Deed of Appointment and Conveyance relating to the Memorial Hall (also known as the Reading Room) Winterborne St Martin (also known as Martinstown) Dorset, DT2 9LB between Christopher James Trevett, John Dermot O'Brien and Stephen John Slade and The Winterborne St Martin Parish Council.*

Proposed by Cllr Eversden and seconded by Cllr Hutchings

The motion was discussed and the following key points raised during the discussion:

Legal and Moral Considerations:

The council debated whether they should accept the building, considering both legal advice and the building's history as a memorial to those who died in the Great War. There were concerns about long-term costs and the potential burden of maintaining the property. Some council members suggested that taking ownership would protect the building and its historical value, while others questioned the financial and practical feasibility.

Cllr Pemberton suggested CIL monies might be an option.

An alternative memorial in the village was suggested.

Cllr Scarth advised that there are several anomalies in the document issued by the Solicitor.

Potential Uses and Concerns:

Some council members emphasised the importance of preserving the building and ensuring it remained a community asset. Others raised concerns about its condition, potential liabilities, and the lack of clear, income-generating use. While some were in favour of using

grants for refurbishment if the building was used for community purposes, others were wary of the ongoing financial responsibility.

Ahead of taking the vote, Cllr Pemberton asked the Cllrs to vote on Cllr Marsh being able to participate in the voting given his declaration of interest and the advice of the Clerk that Cllr Marsh should not be included. The Cllrs voted in favour of Cllr Marsh being able to vote.

The motion was proposed by Cllr Eversden and seconded by Cllr Hutchings and a vote took place which resulted in 6 in favour, 2 against (Cllrs Pemberton, Walker), and 1 abstention (Cllr Marsh).

In conclusion, the council voted to accept the deed and take ownership of the Memorial Hall, despite reservations from some members regarding its future sustainability.

The Clerk asked if a Working Group was to be set up for the Reading Room. This was discussed and would need to include taking the lead on the Land Registry response and other related tasks. It was noted that the previous working group was disbanded.

b. Land Registry Requisition

Cllrs acknowledged the urgency of responding to the Land Registry to avoid the process being nullified. Councillors Nuttall, Fitzgerald and Eversden agreed to form a working group and take the lead in addressing the Land Registry documentation.

Action: Cllrs Nuttall, Fitzgerald & Eversden to form working group and respond to Land Registry

30/2025 External correspondence received

a) Parishioner concerns with traffic speeding on A35

The Clerk advised of an email received from a parishioner who lives along the A35 within the Parish of Martinstown who is increasingly concerned about the speed of traffic.

It was agreed that the Clerk respond advising that contact should be made with National Highways as they manage the A35.

Action: Clerk to respond to Parishioner

b) Parishioner comments concerning recent v & V Parish Council article

The Clerk advised that an email had been received expressing concern that the wording in the article was incorrect. Cllr Scarth confirmed that the matter has been resolved.

31/2025 Parish Matters

Cllr Marsh clarified that the key for the Reading Room is held by the partnership, not his father, as previously mentioned. The key is held because the partnership is responsible for the electric meter.

The partnership has installed their own connection to the milk machine and is working to address delays caused by weather constraints. Once the connection is completed, they plan to relinquish responsibility for the electricity and water supply to the building and intends to cut off both the electricity and water supplies once ownership of the building is established, as the partnership no longer wishes to bear the liability associated with these utilities.

There was discussion about the memorial on the Reading Room, with some unaware that it serves as a memorial. The memorial commemorates those who lost their lives in the First World War, though there is a desire to acknowledge those who served in other wars.

The memorial was built in 1856 or 1857, and there is also a list of those who died in World War II inside the church, along with a statement about the bells raised in their memory. The bells were funded by public subscription.

Some members suggested that a more prominent memorial could be established outside of the building, as the current memorial is not widely recognised.

It was confirmed that the memorial is not officially registered as a "Memorial Hall" but is part of the trust. There was also discussion about the memorial's legal entity and the history of the building.

Historically, the Parish Council lays laid a poppy wreath annually at the Memorial Hall during Remembrance Day services. We now lay our wreath outside the Church.

There were concerns about the maintenance of the memorial plaque, with advice from the War Memorials Trust to leave it as is, as it has aged naturally. Additionally, it was noted that one of the names on the memorial has been replaced with a new name, leading to speculation about a possible error or update after the original engraving.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2047 with notice that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 March 2025, 7pm at the Magna Community Room.