



Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Alderholt Parish Council held at 7pm on Monday 9th June 2025 in the Committee Room at Alderholt Village Hall.

Present: Cllr A Butler (Chairman), Cllr A Hibberd, Cllr G Logan, Cllr M Smethers and Cllr D Tooke.

In Attendance: 1 member of the public and Nicky Ashton, Parish Clerk.

112/25 Welcome from the Chairman:

Cllr A Butler welcomed everyone to the meeting.

113/25 To receive and accept apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Cllr S Butler, Cllr S Emberson and Cllr R Stone.
Members **RESOLVED** to accept their reasons for absence.

114/25 To receive declarations of interest and/or consider the granting of dispensations:

There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests received.

115/25 To confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 12th May 2025 are a correct record of that meeting:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes as a correct record and they were signed by the Chairman.

116/25 Chairman's Announcements.

The Fete will be taking place at the end of the month and hoping everyone can attend.

117/25 To receive a written report from Dorset Councillor Dave Tooke:

Report is attached to these minutes.

118/25 Public Forum

No questions or statements.

119/25 Representative Reports.

Cllr Smethers distributed a written report on a recent ARA meeting prior to the meeting.

120/25 To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee:

Members noted the minutes.

121/25 Clerks Report:

- Received notification of a proposed temporary closure of Cheaters Lane.
- Received notification of a proposed temporary closure of Sandleheath Road.
- Confirmation has been received from Dorset Council that CIL monies can be used for the road traffic signs.
- Attended the larger Town and Parish Council and Dorset Council Meeting on 15th May. The following was discussed Double Devolution Framework, Being a Better Partner and Closer Community Working. Survey to follow.
- Crime reference number given for orchard vandalism: 55250073632.
- Parish Online Membership renewed and requested documents sent to Dorset Council



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for NP.

122/25 Finance – to discuss and agree the following:

- To approve the monthly payments as listed in the schedule (i) and agree to delegate an authorised Cllr for online banking payments:
Members **RESOLVED** to approve the payments and Cllr Logan was appointed as the authorised councillor for payments until the next meeting.
- To receive the May bank reconciliation:
Members received and noted the bank reconciliation.

123/25 To receive the final Internal Audit Report For 2024/2025:

Members received and noted the report – no issues were identified and the auditor confirmed that the various records and procedures in place provide an adequate standard of control.

124/25 To confirm there is no conflict of interest with BDO being our external audit and for individual Cllrs to confirm they have no individual interests to declare:

It was confirmed that there is no conflict of interest and no individual interests were declared.

125/25 Annual Return for The Financial Year Ended 31 March 2025 - To approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return for submission to the Parish Council's External Auditors:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve Section 1.

126/25 Annual Return for The Financial Year Ended 31 March 2025 - To approve Section 2 – Account Statements of the Annual Return and Statement of Variances for 2024/2025 for submission to the Parish Council's External Auditors:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve Section 2 and the Statement of Variances.

127/25 Exercise of Public Rights – To approve the dates of 13th June to 24th July as the period for the Exercise of Public Rights:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the dates.

128/25 To discuss the engagement event regarding the forthcoming public consultation on the Dorset Council Local Plan and agree Councillor attendance:

It was agreed that Cllr S Butler and Cllr Logan would attend.

129/25 To receive an update on the Fete preparations and to agree any actions:

Cllr A Butler provided an update. Need as many stewards as possible and it was agreed to put on Facebook asking for volunteers.

130/25 To approve repairs to one of the SIDs (maximum cost £320.00 net):

Members **RESOLVED** to approve repairs and to also purchase an additional screen protector at a total cost of £380.00 net.

131/25 To receive the quarterly play inspection report and weekly inspection reports for May and to agree any actions including safety surfacing replacement:

Discussions took place regarding works to the play equipment, possible future grant applications and the updated quotes received for replacing safety surfacing for the Junior Swing, Roundabout and Zipwire. Members **RESOLVED** to check with the chosen



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contractor how long the works would take to complete and the decision on whether to proceed, subject to the response received, was delegated to the Chairman and the Clerk.

Cllr Tooke left the meeting at 7.50pm.

132/25 To receive a report on the Allotment fencing as discussed last month and agree any actions:

Members **RESOLVED** to obtain quote from contractor who originally installed the fencing to carry out repairs and to proceed with works subject to costs not exceeding agreed amount. Funds to be used from allotment maintenance budget and general reserves. It was also agreed to carry out works to the path to remove weeds by pump spraying vinegar, which will need to be purchased.

133/25 To discuss VJ Day 80th anniversary:

It was agreed for the Clerk to check if it is possible to purchase a VJ Day flag and to find out what other local councils are doing to mark the anniversary and report back at the next meeting.

With no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.03pm.

Date of next meeting – Monday 14th July 2025.

(i) Schedule of Monthly Payments for Approval

Payable To	Amount	VAT	Total	Details
Assist Business IT	147.15	29.43	176.58	IT Support March to April
Assist Business IT	152.15	30.43	182.58	IT Support April to May
Parish Online	200.00	40.00	240.00	Mapping Software Annual Subscription
Elite Playground Inspections	75.00	15.00	90.00	Play Equipment Inspection
BT Bill	209.01	41.80	250.81	Telephone Bill
Staffing Costs	5375.26	0.00	5375.26	May Staffing Costs
Unity Trust Bank	8.55	0.00	8.55	Bank Fees
DAPTC	1286.69	0.00	1286.69	Annual Subscription Fee (including NALC)
W Jones (Mr Merlin)	200.00	0.00	200.00	Fete Entertainer
Mr S Butler	112.12	0.00	112.12	Reimbursement for Orchard Expenses
Mrs N Ashton	33.90	0.00	33.90	Travelling Expenses (DC Meeting Dorchester)
Loos 2 Go Ltd	360.00	72.00	432.00	Fete Toilets
ARA	1037.50	0.00	1037.50	AHRG Contract July Payment

250609 Dorset Councillors Report for Alderholt Parish Council

1. Environmental Initiatives

Dorset Council has launched the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy, aimed at reversing environmental decline. This strategy, developed with BCP Council and Natural England, focuses on:

- Restoring natural habitats and reversing biodiversity loss.
- Identifying priority species and habitats in need of immediate action.
- Encouraging public participation through consultations and surveys.

The strategy sets 12 nature recovery priorities and includes a Local Habitat Map to guide conservation efforts. It aligns with the national 30by30 target, aiming to protect and manage 30% of land and rivers for nature by 2030.

Funding for this initiative will come from biodiversity net gain, nutrient mitigation, and Environmental Land Management schemes.

Public engagement is a key component, with Dorset Council launching a **consultation period from May to July 2025** to gather feedback. Residents can participate by completing a survey available on the Dorset Council website. Additionally, the council is hosting **drop-in sessions** to encourage community involvement.

The Consultation can be found at: [Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation - Dorset Council - Citizen Space](#)

Drop in sessions will be at

- Open Farm Sunday at Home Farm, Sadborough – Sunday, 8 June 2025, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Blandford Library – Thursday, 12 June 2025, 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- [Bournemouth Library](#): Monday 16th June, 10am to 3pm
- [Bridport Library](#): Wednesday 25th June, 10am to 3pm
- [Dorchester Library](#): Tuesday 15th July, 10am to 4pm
- [Christchurch Library](#): Friday 25th July, 10.00am to 3.00pm

2. Economic Growth Strategy

Dorset Council has introduced an Economic Growth Strategy to boost employment and investment. Key objectives include:

- Boosting economic growth by identifying and prioritizing key projects.
- Attracting investment by positioning Dorset as a prime investment location.
- Creating high-value jobs in sectors such as clean energy, maritime, and defence.

- Strategic negotiations with government and regional partners to secure funding.

The council is establishing a Dorset Growth Board, comprising representatives from business, local government, education, and health sectors. This board will provide leadership for economic growth and maintain ongoing dialogue with Dorset businesses.

Challenges facing the county include modest productivity compared to regional and national averages, high housing costs relative to earnings, and a growing population predominantly of post-working age. To address these concerns, the council is targeting key sectors with growth potential, such as clean energy, ensuring a skilled and inclusive workforce, supporting the transition to net zero, and promoting sustainable development

At the Dorset Innovation Park, the council is in advanced negotiations with companies interested in investing in the area. The council is also setting up a new arm's-length company to run the Innovation Park dynamically and commercially. Recruitment for the chair of the board and managing director for this company is currently underway

3. Governance and Financial Oversight

Following an audit by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), Dorset Council is strengthening its contract and spending oversight. The audit revealed several governance weaknesses, going back several years and indeed prior to the Council becoming Unitary, including:

- Spending and contract decisions not always following correct procedures.
- A lack of proper checks and transparency in financial management.

In response, the council has implemented reforms such as:

- Reviewing spending approval processes to ensure compliance with governance standards.
- Enhancing transparency in procurement by improving record-keeping and budgeting.
- Establishing stricter governance standards to prevent financial mismanagement.

The audit found that some financial management issues date back to practices in the former County Council. Dorset Council has developed a robust action plan and established a dedicated team to drive urgent improvements. The council is focusing on strengthening governance, enhancing transparency, modernizing systems, and ensuring that public funds are managed with the highest standards of accountability.

Additionally, Dorset Council is implementing a transformation plan to streamline operations, increase efficiency, and reduce costs. This includes increased use of technology, better customer service, and lower operating costs.