



Clerk David Green
Email: Clerk@fontmellmagna-pc.gov.uk

Fontmell Magna Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 10th March 2026
Fontmell Magna Village Hall
6.30pm

In attendance: Cllr Hannah Lister (Chair), Cllr Katie Cooper, Cllr Steven Drew, Cllr Sara Powell, Cllr Christine Scott, Clerk David Green and 15 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Long, Cllr Jane Somper.

2. Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interests received.

3. Approve the minutes of the PC meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 13th January 2026 were unanimously approved.

4. Consider any matters arising from the January 2026 minutes

Bedchester Allotments – The Chair reported that a self-management arrangement between Dorset Council and the allotment holders is under discussion. A further complaint concerning the misuse of plots has been forwarded to Dorset Council; the Parish Council will not have any involvement in the management of the plots.

Change to .gov.uk domain – work to transfer the Parish Council website a .gov.uk domain has been completed and Councillor email addresses are in the process of being changed. The Chair thanked Cllr Powell for all work in relation to this process.

5. Unitary Councillor Report

The Chair read Cllr Somper's written report to the meeting:

Household Recycling Centres Changes to Access

Dorset Council has confirmed that from Monday 23 March 2026 a booking system will be introduced at four household recycling centres in the county including our local centre Shaftesbury. Residents wishing to visit the site will need to reserve a time slot in advance.

The council says the change is intended to manage demand and improve the running of the sites. However, it represents a significant shift away from the long-standing arrangement where residents could simply turn up to dispose of household waste when needed. Also, Blandford has not yet been allocated this scheme so it is likely that some residents will migrate to Blandford.



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One reason given for the move is that residents from neighbouring authority areas can currently use some Dorset recycling centres without charge, while Dorset residents may be required to pay to use sites in other counties. Dorset Council argues that the booking system will make it easier to identify and charge non-Dorset visitors, however can someone register with a Dorset postcode and avoid paying?

The council also says the new system will help staff prevent businesses from using household recycling centres to dispose of commercial waste, which is supposed to be taken to licensed trade facilities.

Under the new arrangements, visitors will need to book online or by telephone. Each site will have around 430 bookable appointments per day, with bookings available up to two weeks in advance and a 30-minute arrival window. Same-day bookings are expected to be available where capacity allows.

While Dorset residents will not be charged to use the affected sites, people living outside the county will have to pay a fee per visit. Six other recycling centres in Dorset will continue to operate without a booking system for most waste types.

Although the council believes the system will improve efficiency and reduce queues, some residents and councillors have raised concerns that introducing advance booking may make recycling less convenient, particularly for those who rely on spontaneous visits or who are less comfortable using online systems. As with similar schemes introduced elsewhere, the real impact will likely only become clear once the system has been in place for some time.

Bookings for the new system open on Monday 16 March.

Planning Enforcement

The council has a Development Management Local Enforcement Plan in place, which sets out how planning breaches are handled. The aim is always to resolve issues through negotiation first, wherever possible. This is set out in law.

It is important to note that although someone may breach planning regulations, this does not always mean they have committed a criminal offence. Planning enforcement is discretionary, and the council must act proportionately when deciding how to respond.

Some inconsistencies have been found across different area teams. However, officers now have access to a range of high-tech tools and often receive photographic evidence from the public, meaning a site visit is not always needed at the start. This helps officers contact individuals more quickly before deciding whether a visit is necessary.

A public Section 188 register will soon go live online for ward members. It will show the notices that have been issued, the locations involved, and the requirements for each case. This should be available within the next six months. Elected members will



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also receive a login to check whether an enforcement notice exists for a particular address. This will help us respond to enquiries more effectively and keep parish councils updated.

The North Dorset team is currently managing around 191 live cases, while the Minerals and Waste team separately handles about 40 cases. Officers use a set of clear priority criteria to determine which cases require immediate action. This helps streamline and speed up the overall enforcement process.

Residents can report planning enforcement concerns online using the council's webform [Planning enforcement - Dorset Council](#) or by emailing planningenforcement@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. If someone does not wish to make a formal complaint themselves, particularly because their identity could become public in the event of a court case, a concern can instead be raised by the Parish Clerk or by me on their behalf.

Statement of Reasonable Expectations

A number of parish and town councils have recently been considering Dorset Council's proposed *Statement of Reasonable Expectations* document, and concerns have been raised in discussions taking place across several parishes.

The document encourages parish and town councils to expand their role in local service delivery, community leadership and place management. However, the principles set out are quite broad and lack detail about how these proposals would work in practice.

There is concern that the document may signal a gradual transfer of certain non-statutory responsibilities from Dorset Council to town and parish councils. At present there is little clarity about how any new arrangements or structures – such as the suggested area boards – would operate, what authority they might have, or how they would be funded.

Another issue raised by several parishes is the potential financial impact on residents. If town and parish councils begin taking on services previously delivered by Dorset Council, the cost of those services would likely have to be funded through the local precept. Unlike council tax set by the principal authority, the parish precept is currently uncapped.

This raises concerns that residents could effectively end up paying twice: once through their Dorset Council tax for services, and again through an increased parish or town council precept to maintain those same services locally.

There is also a possibility that, even where responsibilities are transferred to town or parish councils, the practical delivery of those services may still end up being contracted back to Dorset Council or other providers. Some parishes have questioned whether this could create an inefficient arrangement where costs are simply redistributed rather than genuinely reduced.



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The document also promotes greater collaboration between Dorset Council and town and parish councils, including joint initiatives, shared services, and the potential transfer of assets or responsibilities where both parties agree. It further suggests that councillors and council officers, particularly clerks, may need additional training and development in order to take on expanded roles.

While partnership working between different tiers of local government is generally welcomed, many parish councils feel that much greater clarity is needed about responsibilities, governance and funding before any firm commitments can be considered.

Flooding

Over recent months I have been dealing with a number of very challenging situations relating to flooding across the ward, including incidents where homes have been affected. These situations have required ongoing engagement with residents, Dorset Council and other relevant bodies.

Unfortunately, flooding is not an issue that is likely to disappear. With increasingly intense rainfall events and existing drainage pressures, it is something our communities will continue to face and which requires sustained attention.

While funding has been announced to support flood management, much of this funding is directed toward capital projects such as new infrastructure or large-scale mitigation schemes. However, many of the problems residents experience arise from day-to-day maintenance issues such as blocked drains, ditches, culverts and watercourses which do not always fall within the scope of these capital funding streams.

As a result, there remains a gap between the availability of funding for major projects and the ongoing maintenance work that is often needed to prevent flooding problems developing in the first place.

I will continue to press for practical solutions and better coordination between the relevant authorities to ensure that both infrastructure improvements and routine maintenance are properly addressed.

6. Collyers Brook update

Barbara Robbins provided an update:

- The Environment Agency have confirmed that a permit will be required, the cost of this will be £ 238.
- An Environmental Risk Assessment, prepared by an ecologist, will also be required, the cost being £ 500
- Evaluation of the site can only take place when the river level has reduced
- An initial quote of between £9,000 and £10,500 for building work has been received; alternative quotes will be sought



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- SSP Consulting had agreed to waive their usual fees which would have been circa £ 5,800 plus VAT

The Chair advised that the PC contribution to the project cost will be reviewed when full costs and other funding sources have been confirmed.

7. Public Session

Issues in relation to Dinah's Hollow were raised, in particular damage to the verge in Mill Street, and whether Google & satellite navigation companies had been asked not to show this route. Cllr Cooper noted that the Dinah's Hollow Team have confirmed that Google & navigation companies has been asked not show this route; arrangement have been made for verge markers to be put in place. The Chair noted that the diversionary route notified by Dorset Highways is only advisory and it is probably more likely that local traffic is using this alternative route to the C13.

A resident thanked the Parish Council for its efforts to persuade Dorset Council to repair problem potholes in Bedchester and Gupples Lane.

8. Highway

Dinah's Hollow closure/C13 diversionary measures

As noted in the public session, several issues including verge damage and the positioning of signage have been raised with the Dinah's Hollow project team.

20 Mph speed limit application

The Chair noted that planned consideration of the full scheme by Dorset Council in February has been delayed.

9. Village Hall Defibrillator project

The incident at the Village Hall following which one of our parishioners very sadly passed away has raised the question of an additional defibrillator at the Village Hall itself – there being some distance to the defibrillators at the School and the shop.

Cllr Cooper has investigated costs and noted that a complete package including defibrillator, box and training is available for around £ 1,500.00. The Chair advised that the PC could use arrears of VAT which total £ 1,000 towards the cost. The Village Hall committee have agreed to contribute £ 450.

The PC unanimously agreed to proceed with this purchase.

10. Planning Review

Cllr Drew updated the meeting in relation to applications per the separate report.

Cllr Drew provided an overview of the Planning Policy Forum meeting on 3rd February 2026; this is available on the PC website. It should be noted that is a



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question of whether the new Local Plan would take precedence over a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan. It may be at some stage the Fontmell Magna NP will require 'refreshment'.

11. Finances

Retrospective Payments approved:

Date	To whom	Description	Amount
12-Jan-2026	HMRC	Q3 2025/2026 PAYE	£ 209.58
19-Jan-2026	Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	£ 4.25
20-Jan-2026	Jimmy Flynn	Domain renewal	£ 25.00
28-Jan-2026	David Green	Jan 2026 pay	£ 331.60
02-Feb-2026	Fontmell Magna Village Hall	Hall Hire	£ 50.00
04-Feb-2026	Sara Powell	mailchimp subscription	£ 58.68
17-Feb-2026	Lloyds Bank	Bank Charges	£ 4.25
02-Mar-2026	David Green	Jan 2026 pay	£ 331.60
04-Mar-2026	GeoXsphere	Mapping tool	£ 45.00

The Clerk confirmed the bank balances at 04th March 2206:

Current AC	£1,223.33
Deposit AC	£13,626.79
TOTAL	£14,850.12

12. Footpath issues

Cllr Scott delivered a footpath update on behalf of Gill Darwell. There are no major issues but it should be noted stiles are slippery due to the wet weather.

13. Any Other Business

The Chair noted that revised 'drop-off' arrangements at the School were working well whilst a smaller school bus is being used.

14. Next meeting date

This will be held on Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 6:30 pm in the Village Hall, and will include the Annual Parish Meeting, The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and a PC meeting. There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.20

David Green
Clerk