

MARNHULL PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 7th September 2026.

Present: Cllr Turner (Chairman), Cllr Winder, Cllr Worley, Cllr Palmer-Smyth, Cllr Hilder, Cllr Cormack.

Attendance: Mrs Sally Upshall – Clerk.

There were 13 members of the public present.

1. Apologies for absence –

Cllr Vitali - Dorset Council Councillor.

Cllr Hilder, Cllr Finch.

Public Questions –

Concerns were raised regarding the heavy tractor movement along Sodom Lane and it being used as a short cut. The Chairman asked regarding the contracting company which was not known so he will try and find the details and request a discussion with them around these concerns.

Teenage Shelter – Mr Eveleigh reported that this needed to be painted and some other restoration work is needed. Mr Eveleigh is happy to paint and repair and the Chairman thanked Mr Eveleigh for this and volunteered to help.

The Rights of Way Improvement plan consultation by Dorset Council was raised and whether the Parish Council is planning to respond? The Parish Council has not been informed regarding this and so will look into it and respond before October. The Clerk will contact the Footpath Officer to discuss and see if he can attend the next meeting.

To note any declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.

There were none.

Approval of the minutes - The minutes of the meeting that was held on the 6th July 2026 was approved.

Dorset Council report – The Chairman read out some notes from Cllr Vitali, due to him not being able to attend the meeting. Key points were as follows:

Police incidents

I know there are concerns about several police incidents in the village over the last month. I had a long meeting with Inspector Adam Gill about these on Friday and wanted to update people on that conversation.

With regards to the gathering at the Recreation Ground:

- Adam was clear that the police response was short of the standards that they set for themselves, but he wanted to share the operational factors that resulted in no officers being dispatched. The incident when reported was classed as a Grade 2 event; Grade 1 events ("blue light" jobs as they are referred to necessitate a direct and evidenced risk of harm) are met with a response within 20 mins. Because there was no immediate and evidenced risk of

harm, the gathering at Marnhull was treated as a serious incident, but a Grade 2 rather than a Grade 1 event.

- Two factors exacerbated the situation from the police force's perspective. One, it was an especially busy night, and the duty officers had prioritised other incidents in the area. Similar gatherings were reported throughout Dorset. Two, the event largely came out of nowhere for them: no forewarning, no social media activity etc.
- He was clear that if this was a Grade 1 event – if genuine harm was taking place and could be verified – the police would have been able to act decisively.
- Inspector Gill has pushed taskings since the event to ensure there are high visibility patrols throughout Marnhull, with the Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton teams collaborating to deliver these. I have witnessed these at Rec personally his week.

With regards to the incident at St Gregory's Church:

- I personally impressed on him the seriousness of this event, and the sense that the church has of being vulnerable at present. I asked for two things: that whatever steps are needed to deter future episodes like this are taken, potentially with cameras (and signage advertising the cameras); but also that resource is put into finding the perpetrator and holding them responsible.
- The church's fork – which it seems was used to dig the holes in the graveyard and left out – has been taken by the police for forensic study.

Waste Collection

We recently discovered that the Shaftesbury Depot – which serves Marnhull for waste collection – is the worst performing in the county. I'm delighted that Matt Boulter has been asked to go on and improve the operations there.

We discussed the main challenges. One of the main ones is that the pit at the depot – where vehicles are repaired – has been out of service for some time, meaning collection trucks requiring maintenance have had to be driven to either Poundbury or Weymouth. The replacement pits are to be installed at the start of October which should have a positive effect on the service.

We also discussed the issue with staffing, and the reliance on agency workers. We agreed that part of the issue with agency workers is that they lack the local knowledge about collection routes and the idiosyncrasies of country roads, which can lead to more missed collections. He is currently drafting a resilience report on the workforce, and without pre-empting its findings and recommendations, I suspect it will argue for the recruitment of more FTEs instead of depending on agency workers. I believe this could be cost neutral.

B3092 speed limited consultation

The notice of proposal for the 30mph speed limit extension will be advertised next Thursday (10th September) and the consultation will end on 2nd October 2026. I will share further details via social media

To consider planning received, up to the time this Agenda was posted.

Cllr Winder gave an overview of the new National Planning Policy Framework. Keys points are:

More small scale developments in Villages adjacent to the settlement boundaries to encourage local developers to build more quickly. The new Dorset Council plan is expected to identify 550 such sites in the new local plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan protection still carries significant weight with respect to planning applications. There are 11000 houses that have planning permission within Dorset that are yet to be built. There will be more clear guidance on design and meeting local character.

The Government are taking the responsibility away from Local Councils in terms of Planning Committees and for example a reserved matters application has to be a development of over 500 houses for it to be heard at the Planning Committee. Delegating more responsibility to Planners means the Parish Council will need to be robust and very thorough in its responses to the Case Officers.

Dorset Council has changed course quite substantially in 2026 on how it intends to produce the new Dorset Local Plan. The important development is that the Council has abandoned the attempt to complete the plan under the old system and, from 31 July 2026, formally commenced preparation under the Government's new plan-making system.

The previous programme envisaged taking the emerging Dorset Local Plan through examination in late 2026/early 2027 and adoption around Q2 2027. Dorset now says that timetable is no longer achievable. There are three main reasons. First, the Government's revised housing methodology has effectively doubled Dorset's housing requirement (3247 vs 1160 built last year). Secondly, the Government introduced a new statutory plan-making system in March 2026. Thirdly, plans continuing under the old system would have had to meet a December 2026 deadline, and Dorset concluded that the additional evidence and assessment necessarily meant that it could not produce a sound plan by then.

Consequently, the Council is essentially restarting the statutory process but not starting the planning work from scratch. That distinction is important. Dorset says that the evidence already gathered and the responses to previous consultations—including the August–October 2025 Options Consultation, which generated more than 9,000 responses—will continue to inform the new plan. It is anticipated the new plan will be complete by August 2029.

Plough Ground access hedges – Cllr Winder explained that this is being investigated by Dorset Council Planning due to the conditions of the permission not being met.

Reserved Matters – Salisbury Street Cllr Winder gave an update as follows:

[Application background](#)

Application P/RES/2026/04634 is a reserved matters application by C G Fry & Son Ltd for the erection of 67 dwellings with associated infrastructure on approximately 3.2 hectares of agricultural land on the eastern edge of Marnhull, between Salisbury Street, Tanzey Lane, Sodom Lane and the existing allotments.

The principle of residential development was established by outline planning permission P/OUT/2023/00627, allowed on appeal in May 2024 (APP/D1265/W/23/3323727). The means of vehicular access was also established at outline stage. The present application therefore seeks approval of the four reserved matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.

The scheme has subsequently been developed through pre-application discussions with Dorset Council and there was a public consultation event in January 2026.

[Proposed development](#)

The application proposes 67 two-storey dwellings arranged around a network of streets, mews and landscaped spaces. This is materially different from the original design based upon cul-de-sacs. The design seeks to reflect the traditional character of Marnhull through varied building lines, differing house types, informal street arrangements, traditional architectural detailing and use of local materials.

The layout has evolved significantly from earlier versions. Changes include moving development further south from the northern boundary, increasing the landscape buffer around existing properties and Grade II listed Laburnum Cottage, reducing the prominence of parking and providing a lower-density character towards the northern edge.

The current Planning Statement gives a clear breakdown of the 67 proposed properties by bedroom size and tenure.

Property size Market sale Affordable Total % of scheme

1 bedroom	0	4	4	6.0%
2 bedrooms	7	10	17	25.4%
3 bedrooms	23	11	34	50.7%
4 bedrooms	11	1	12	17.9%
Total	41	26	67	100.0%

The proposal includes 26 affordable homes, with the applicant stating that an off-site financial contribution will account for the remaining fractional affordable-housing requirement.

Open space and landscaping

A substantial part of the northern portion of the site is retained as public open space and green infrastructure. This includes a Local Area for Play (LAP), Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP), attenuation pond, informal paths and extensive landscape planting.

The landscape strategy includes retention of existing hedgerows and mature trees together with new native hedges, structural tree planting, native shrubs, species-rich grassland, wildflower areas and wetland planting.

Emphasis is placed upon establishing an east-west landscape structure and providing separation between the new housing and the properties adjoining Sodom Lane, including Laburnum Cottage.

Along the western boundary, the scheme proposes a wildlife corridor associated with Tanzey Lane. This incorporates the existing hedge bank, mature trees, species-rich grassland and other habitat enhancements. The western edge is intended to remain substantially dark, with no conventional lighting proposed there other than downward-facing PIR porch lighting.

Access and pedestrian movement

Vehicular access is from Salisbury Street, in accordance with the principle established at outline stage.

The development is intended to provide a permeable network for pedestrians and cyclists. Of particular significance is the proposed treatment of Tanzey Lane, which the applicant intends to function as a pedestrian, cycle and horse route rather than as a through route for general vehicular traffic. It would connect the development with the adjoining neighbourhood to the west and, through the proposed public open space, towards Marnhull allotments to the east.

These proposals are relevant to the final Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan, particularly Policy 8, which seeks a continuous accessible east-west pedestrian connection through the wider eastward expansion area, including links towards the allotments, Tanzey Lane, Ashley Road and the village.

The precise delivery of some of the wider connections, including the detailed Tanzey Lane crossing and onward connections outside the application site, remains an important matter for Dorset Council to consider when determining the application.

Laburnum Cottage and heritage

Grade II listed Laburnum Cottage lies immediately to the north-west of the development site.

The layout has been designed to provide a substantial landscaped separation between the cottage and the proposed housing. Existing boundary hedgerows are largely retained, additional planting is proposed and the nearest houses are set back behind the northern open space.

The applicant's Heritage Statement nevertheless concludes that the development would result in a low level of less-than-substantial harm to Laburnum Cottage. It acknowledges that the proposed houses would introduce a more suburban character into parts of the cottage's presently rural setting, although the landscaping, separation and retention of hedgerows would mitigate that effect.

This is particularly relevant to Policy 8 of the final MNDP, which seeks a landscaped buffer enabling Laburnum Cottage to remain apart from the village in a simple agricultural setting.

The application also identifies below-ground archaeological remains of local significance, principally within the north-eastern part of the site. The Heritage Statement acknowledges that construction could affect such remains where foundations, roads, drainage infrastructure or play equipment intersect them.

Drainage and ecology

The application is accompanied by a detailed surface-water drainage strategy incorporating **infiltration drainage and an attenuation pond**.

Following further investigation and revision, the strategy proposes substantial attenuation of surface-water runoff, with controlled discharge from the pond. The supporting drainage information has been developed in response to the site's known groundwater and surface-water constraints.

Ecological measures include retention and enhancement of hedgerows, habitat buffers, species-rich grassland, wildlife features and protection of the western bat commuting corridor.

On the technical information submitted, the principal drainage issue is now the satisfactory implementation, approval and long-term management of the proposed system rather than an absence of a drainage strategy.

Infrastructure and planning obligations

The development is subject to infrastructure obligations secured in connection with the outline permission.

The Planning Statement identifies approximately £909,681, excluding indexation, in contributions towards local infrastructure. These include education, community facilities, health care, formal sport, informal open space, allotments, preschool provision, libraries, rights-of-way improvements and the North Dorset Trailway.

On-site provision additionally includes the LAP and LEAP, informal public open space, landscaping and green infrastructure.

Overall position

P/RES/2026/04634 does not determine whether the site should be developed for housing: that principle, together with the principal access, has already been established by the outline permission and appeal decision.

The application determines what the approved 67-dwelling development will look like and how it will function, through its layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.

The submitted scheme has evolved considerably following Dorset Council pre-application discussions and community consultation. It provides a more substantial northern landscape buffer, extensive green infrastructure, two-storey development, pedestrian and ecological connections and a detailed design intended to respond to Marnhull's character.

The principal matters for detailed consideration are therefore whether the final scheme satisfactorily complies with the Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan, particularly Policy 8, including the delivery of the required pedestrian connections and treatment of Tanzey Lane; whether the proposed landscape buffer and green corridor adequately protect the setting of Laburnum Cottage; and whether the landscape, heritage, ecological and drainage mitigation upon which the scheme relies is appropriately secured and delivered.

Overall, the reserved matters application is a substantially developed and amended detailed scheme for the 67 homes already approved in principle, rather than a fresh application for the principle or amount of residential development.

To receive the Chairman's report –

The Chairman gave his report on things have been taking place over the summer.

Topple Testing – This has been completed with thanks to Charles for his help, there were approximately 6 gravestones that need some repair, this needs to be repeating in the Cemetery at the Recreation Ground and the Chairman will look to sort out some volunteers for this.

Driveway to Cemetery – The Chairman has asked Mr Lupton to give a quote for the additional work in tidying this.

Development at Crown Road – There has been some issues with the provision of services to the area, the first property is unlikely to be occupied until summer 2027.

Recreation Ground working party – The first draft has been produced and some further information is being collated about individual projects before a draft is circulated to Councillors.

Men's Shed – There has been some discussion regarding a different location and options around this using some of the 106 monies. They will submit some more detailed drawings and costings.

Heritage Group – The Chairman had the honour of speaking at the unveiling of the new information board, there has been a lot of work by the group completed.

Meeting with Mr Crocker – This is scheduled for the 5th of October to discuss the upcoming development plans.

Parish Boundary Walk – This will take place on the 10th of October with a 9am start at Carraway Barn, this is the 3rd annual walk and the distance is 16 miles but there is a break point at Primrose Farm Shop which is around the 6-7 mile mark where collection is possible for those who do not wish to do the whole walk.

Accounts – The Payment Schedule for September 2026 for the sum of £2267.75 had been circulated and was agreed and signed by the Chairman.

To receive the following Officers' reports.

Dog fouling signs in the Recreation Ground – Cllr Hilder circulated an email around previously regarding the concerns for the wording on the signs and the lack of contact with Dorset Council Dog Warden, he suggested contacting Cllr Vitali to assist with this which was agreed by Councillors present.

Item on the gathering at the Rec – Cllr Winder gave the following update:

Events of the 16th August

At 7:45pm on Sunday 16th August Mrs Sally Upshall (MPC's clerk) received a call from a concerned resident stating that large numbers of teenagers were gathering at the Recreation Ground. Sally attended the Recreation Ground accompanied by her daughter and a family friend and then called me to explain the situation and ask for some support. I attended at c. 8:15pm.

There were approximately 150 – 200 young people there, aged it appeared between 14 and 17. There was a lot of evidence of alcohol consumption, and many were worse for wear. There was also a strong smell of cannabis. When asked some of the attendees explained they had seen an invite to a party at the Village Hall on a snapchat group. Some were quite aggressive and we were both concerned that there was a significant safeguarding issue as some of the girls were clearly underage and drunk. There were no responsible adults present.

We took the decision to call the local police to see if they could attend and possibly disperse the gathering as it was quite noisy and in a residential area and because of the perceived safeguarding issues. Sally placed an initial call with Dorset Police at 8:40pm The call handler advised the call would be given high priority and that the police would attend.

Whilst walking round the Recreation Ground we met with a local resident, who was very concerned about what was occurring and informed us that there had been a party at the Village Hall the previous Wednesday, 12th August. Lots of youngsters had attended and many had been noisily walking around the local area.

We spoke to some of the young people present, the majority of whom were in high spirits but generally reasonably polite. They had come from a broad area (Gillingham, Sherborne etc) and the attraction of meeting in Marnhull rather than their own towns was there was no local police presence. When we mentioned that the police had been contacted many left the Recreation Ground returning somewhat later.

Sally followed up with the police on two further occasions. The first time the response was that they were waiting on a shift handover to attend. The second occasion (after 11pm) they apologised and said the intention was to still send a patrol out.

The children started being collected from c. 10:30pm. We took the opportunity to speak with some of the parents. Most said that they had dropped the children off to attend a party at the Village Hall and were surprised that there was no party. Some were collected by older siblings or friends in cars and we had to ask them to stop revving the cars and playing loud music in the car park. One lady arrived to collect her daughter and friends only to find one of the friends had gone missing. Fortunately, she reappeared sometime after, safe and sound but clearly inebriated.

We left the Recreation Ground at c. 11:20pm when there was probably c. 30 young people left when it was apparent the police were not going to attend. There was a lot of rubbish left strewn in the Recreation Ground and graveyard. Given the lack of responsible adults, the age of some of the attendees and their intoxicated state both Sally and I felt we could not leave prior to most of the young people leaving and we were very relieved that more serious issues did not occur or indeed that no significant damage was not done to the Village Hall.

To be 100% clear, as parents, we both recognise that young people need to meet up and enjoy themselves and we know this means some level of pushing the boundaries. In this situation however the lack of supervision, the volume of alcohol consumed, the state of many of the attendees and their age crossed the boundaries of what is reasonable and created a safeguarding issue that should concern us all.

Sally was approached by a member of the village because they were aware of her professional background and felt she was the appropriate person to support as well as knowing she is the Parish Clerk. She has worked within Children's Social Care for 15 years, and a part of her role is advising organisations, including education and youth settings on safeguarding procedures and working within the Contextual Safeguarding arena.

Her involvement in this situation has therefore been to offer her safeguarding knowledge and professional support to the Parish Council. The aim is to work together to reduce risk and prevent any future incidents on the recreation ground that could lead to a serious safeguarding concern.

What we subsequently learned

- The hall had previously been booked for a young person's party for Wednesday 12th August. The booking met the VH's booking criteria. The VH team was not aware that the guests had spilled out into the neighbourhood. Broken glass was found on the cricket square the following morning.
- One of the young people (we believe aged 15 and in Year 10) had attempted to book the village hall for the Sunday. They had errantly tried to book for 7-11am rather than the evening. The booking was not accepted. It may be the case that they assumed it would be accepted and sent an invite out accordingly for a larger scale repeat of the party of 12th August.
- The VH has had other attempts to book the Village Hall that have been declined.
- The police did not attend. The explanation given to Sally was that they were short staffed. The issue was not other higher priority calls that had taken precedence.
- The rubbish left at the Recreation Ground and cemetery was cleared up the following morning by locals and by cricket club members who beat MPC to it. The Parish Council would like to thank those who undertook the clean up.

Actions arising

The remote location of Marnhull Recreation Ground (compared with local towns) means that a recurrence is possible. The Parish Council will be working with the Village Hall Committee and the local police to ensure we are better prepared in the future to manage any future gatherings and to ensure the Village Hall is not damaged and there are not disturbances in the village. We will do all we can to ensure that any parties organised for young people do not cause any safeguarding issues.

Subject to agreement by MPC it may be appropriate to update our village emergency plan.

The Chairman noted that he would like to think of something positive to come from the situation and could we give consideration to organising some events over the summer for young people. He encouraged anyone with children or Grandchildren to talk to them to see that they may like.

Village signs - The Chairman noted whether this is an idea Councillors would like to look into which they all agreed it was. The Chairman will discuss with Dorset Council and come back to Councillors. This has been discussed in the Traffic Calming Group and the Heritage Group so working together to support the character of the Village.

Speed Watch update – Cllr Finch email previously circulated as follows:

Speed watch results

Since our last meeting in July, the Community Speed Watch Group have been out three times,

New st - 146 vehicles recorded, 18 between 30-35. 2 over 36

Burton St - 99 vehicle's recorded, 1 between 30-35, 0 vehs over 36

Church Hill - 103 vehicles recorded, 2 between 30-35, 1 above 36.

I attended the Traffic Calming Groups meeting this Monday where they were discussing their next steps, they are looking at a variety of Warning Signs, both painted on the road and on posts around the village with a view to remind drivers to drive more carefully. There was a lot of discussion as to the various locations. The members of the group have been tasked to identify on a map where and the type of signs they think would help. This includes 'Gates' on the roads leading into the village. The information will go to Jo Briffa who will compile a Wish List which will be sent to the Parish Council hopefully in October.

This was the last meeting of this Group. All matters concerning this issue will be dealt with by the Community Speed Watch Group.

To consider any other matters arising from recent correspondence.

Mirror request on Mill Lane/Burton Street/Musbury Lane junction – Cllr Finch already covered this and has met with the residents and the mirror is being repositioned.

Entrance into Recreation Ground from Nash Lane – The slabs are cracked and need attention. Some suggestions onto a different surface that will allow the ground to move. The chairman will speak to Cllr Finch and Cllr Hilder.

Date / Times of next meeting

Parish Council Meeting – Monday 5th October 2026 in the Village Hall.

Items for the agenda –

Telecoms mast, speed watch group, footpath officer to attend if possible.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.06 pm.

Signed by the Chairman..... Date

