

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Full Parish Council Meeting | Wednesday 11 March 2026

TPPC response to Fire Station Closure consultation

Minute reference: 26/03-13.ii

SECTION A – About you (all questions require an answer)

1. Which best describes you? (Select one primary role)

Other: Toller Porcorum Parish Council

2. What is the first part of your postcode? (e.g. SP1 2, BH21 5)

DT2 0

3. Which station are you commenting on?

Maiden Newton

4. Please specify your age group

Prefer not to say

5. Please specify your gender

Prefer not to say

6. In a sentence, why is the station you selected important to you?

Closure of any station should only be considered if the same or an increased level of service and response times can be guaranteed from another location – this does not seem to be the case when considering the closure of Maiden Newton Fire Station.

SECTION B – Information and understanding (all questions require an answer)

7. Before completing this survey, how well did you understand the proposals?

Fairly well

8. Which information have you used to form your view? (Select all that apply)

Consultation leaflet, DWFRS website, Social media, Local media, Word of mouth,

Other - email response to questions asked directly of DWFRS

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The information provided explains clearly why changes to fire station provision are being considered.”?

Agree

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The information provided allows me to understand the potential impacts of the proposals on response times, risk and community safety.”?

Agree

11. What information (if any) would help you give a more informed response?

Information on how often Maiden Newton Fire Station has been the first responder to emergency calls. It is disappointing this information has not been included in the available documents.

More public meetings in the areas at risk and these meetings being better advertised than the present ones currently are.

Information on the ramifications to overall service delivery by the Fire and Rescue Service if the proposals are not enacted.

SECTION C – Your views on the proposals (all questions require an answer)

12. Thinking about the proposal affecting the station you selected, to what extent do you support or oppose?

Strongly oppose

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13. Please explain the main reasons for your view.

The council strongly opposes the closure of Maiden Newton Fire Station due to the increase in response times to emergencies in Toller Porcorum and similar communities. While the estimated increase in response times may appear small, every additional minute matters in an emergency and can increase the risk to lives and property.

The existence of Maiden Newton Fire Station shows there has been a risk-based requirement for it. No evidence has been presented in the proposal documents to show that this risk has been reduced, nor have any impact studies been published to show the outcome of local emergencies when Maiden Newton Fire Station was not the first to respond. This does not fill the council with confidence that closure is an acceptable outcome.

In addition, the council believes the demand on fire services is likely to increase rather than decrease due to extreme weather events like flooding and wildfires, caused by the current trend of wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. These factors, combined with more vehicles on the roads due to a lack of public transport and tourists in the summer mean services provided at the current level are going to be stretched and have less capacity to respond if multiple emergencies occur at the same time.

14. Which factors mattered most to you when forming your view? Select your first choice

Response times

SECTION D – Alternatives and impacts

15. In considering the Fire Authority's long-term financial sustainability, alongside factors such as risk, demand, and value for money, would you be willing to contribute an additional amount per week in Council Tax? Please select all options that apply?

20p

16. Please explain any concerns you have about the effectiveness of increasing council tax spending on the Fire & Rescue Service?

The council believes it is vital that any increase to Council Tax to fund the Fire Authority in the future must be ringfenced for the Fire and Rescue Service only and furthermore, for the delivery of frontline services only. The council does not support an increase in Council Tax for this purpose if the Fire Authority cannot guarantee the same or an increased level of service and response times that exist at the current time.

Not all residents would be able to support an increase of any amount without suffering financially in other areas of their lives. Provision of any Emergency Service should not rely on the ability of residents to pay for said services.

17. Do you have alternative suggestions that the Authority should consider instead of, or alongside, the current proposals?

The council suggests the Fire Authority focuses on delivering frontline services that are vital to the communities it serves and considers what savings could be made in the management and administration of the service.

SECTION E – Community, equality and place-based impacts

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposals adequately consider the needs of vulnerable or higher-risk groups?

Neutral

19. Are there specific communities or groups that you believe would be disproportionately affected by the proposals?

Don't know

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20. Please describe any particular local factors (e.g. rurality, transport links, housing growth, deprivation, known local risks, seasonal population changes) that you think should be taken into account

The parish of Toller Porcorum is a rural community with narrow roads and often poorly maintained single-track country lanes. In winter months these roads are affected by adverse weather conditions, frequently flood and are not routinely gritted – a service that has been withdrawn. In summer the area experiences a significant increase in visitors due to tourism and its location within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Many visitors camp, increasing the fire risk with outdoor cooking.

The parish includes a high proportion of older residents, people living alone and those who may be infirm or require additional assistance in an emergency.

Access to the area is already difficult due to the factors above and, combined with the current trend of wetter winters and hotter, drier summers, those difficulties are only likely to increase along with the demand on Emergency Services.

SECTION F – Confidence, safeguards and review

21. If the proposals proceed, how confident are you that Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority will monitor the impacts and take action if problems arise?

Not at all confident

22. What would give you greater confidence in the Authority approach going forward?

If the Authority could guarantee the same or an increased level of service and response times, which is not the case. In light of this the council would want Maiden Newton Fire Station to remain open.

23. Is there anything else you would like the Authority to consider before making a final decision?

The Authority should carefully consider the strength of feeling within rural communities about these proposals and the increased risk to life and property. Emergency Services are vital in areas where access is already challenging.

The Authority could work more closely town and parish councils that are well placed to help promote fire prevention initiatives, share safety information with residents and support community engagement that could help reduce risks and improve preparedness.

At the parish council meeting held 11 March 2026, the council adopted the following:

1. Toller Porcorum Parish Council asks Edward Morello MP and Leader of Dorset Council to write to the appropriate government minister to request the funding formula for Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service be reviewed to take into account the rurality of large areas of Dorset and Wiltshire.
2. Toller Porcorum Parish Council objects to the proposed closure of Maiden Newton and other fire stations in Dorset unless assurances are provided that response times (as of the date of this meeting, 11 March 2026) to Toller Porcorum and the surrounding areas can be maintained at current levels or improved upon as part of any proposal to close fire stations and reduce the resources allocated to rural areas.