

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Chair Neil Farmer

Clerk Clare Smith

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly

Wednesday 9 April 2025 6:45pm for 7pm at Toller Porcorum Village Hall

Refreshments were served at the meeting

Present:

Councillor Neil Farmer (NF)

Councillor Peter Crabbe (PC)

Councillor Debbie Billen (DB)

Councillor Jane Curry (JC)

Councillor Steve Hodson (SH)

Councillor Helen Jones (HJ)

Councillor Chris Wardle (CW)

In attendance:

Clare Smith (Clerk)

Dorset Councillor Neil Eysenck (NE) 21 members of the public

Please note: at the discretion of the Chair items were discussed in a different order to the published agenda

1. Welcome by Chair of Parish Council, Neil Farmer

2. Special guest, Steve Oliver, from Dorset Beaver Project

Presentation and followed by Q&A and invite for residents to visit the site.

ACTION: those interested in site visit to email the clerk.

3. (Refreshment break)

4. Introduction to Toller Health and Wellbeing initiative

Debbie Slate, Gill Leppitt and Caroline Joyce explained the plans for the initiative and encouraged residents to make use of the sessions.

CW informed the assembly that the Ammonite Patient Participation Group AGM would be held in the village hall, 15 May 2025.

5. Open discussion

a. Telephone and telephone box

An engineer has repaired the phone which is now in working order. The clerk will contact BT again to ask for a 12 month period of usage monitoring instead of taking out the phone as planned.

In the event the phone is removed, Parish Council aims to purchase the telephone box as an asset for the village.

b. 20mph limit

NF explained the processes involved in establishing a 20mph zone. Data has to be collected on current speed limits and history of collisions in the area (no reported collisions within the parish in the last five years).

NF went on to explain it would cost the Parish an estimated £1,000 to submit an application to Dorset Council. If unsuccessful, the Parish could pay for its own scheme at a cost not less than £5,000.

If a 20mph limit came into force it would replace the current 30mph zone.

Some residents were for the project and some were against it. Others wondered what other traffic calming measures could be put in place.

After discussion the consensus was that a 30mph speed limit is suitable.

c. Other topics raised by residents

- i. A resident noted that the Parish Council updates in the Toller Times were beneficial.

Signed by Chair: Date:

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Chair Neil Farmer

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- ii. Another resident raised the severe deterioration of the SLOW road marking on Lower Lane. The clerk has been in touch with Dorset Council on this matter since December 2024 and they will continue to pursue it.

6. Matters arising from minutes of the last Assembly

One outstanding matter: request for steps on public footpath near Northover Farm. Dorset Council's Countryside Service completed these works within one week of the request.

7. Accept the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held 19 April 2024

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Assembly were proposed and duly accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed: PC

Seconded: CW

Accepted

8. Chair's report on 2024-25, Neil Farmer

a. Highways

- i. **Powerstock Bridge** – National Highways and Dorset Council Highway engineers working on joint scheme to remove bridge, reduce embankments and raise level of road. All subject to ministerial approval and planning permission. Work will start earliest in third quarter of this year or first quarter of next financial year.
- ii. **Barrowland Lane** – potholes to be temporary repaired before new surface laid at some point in this financial year. Parish Council will continue to ask for timescales.
- iii. **Flooding Toller Lane** – drier winter has meant less flooding. New farm tenant has raised level of Watery Lane and cut channels into floodplain and it is hoped this will make a difference.
- iv. **20mph** – as item 5b.
- v. **Parish Council has raised over 25 issues** with Dorset Council Highways regarding potholes, gullies, poor visibility, fallen trees, general poor conditions of road edges, damaged bridge and road markings.

b. Environment

- i. **Maiden Newton to Toller Porcorum Trailway** – Landowners now appear to be on board with talks about to commence with largest owner. Real progress could be made in 2025.
- ii. **Water Quality checks** – CW is taking part in a national survey of water quality.
- iii. **Water Recycling Centre** – complete ahead of schedule. Parish Council will invite Wessex Water to a future meeting to update on water quality and discharge levels.
- iv. **Gates project and steps** – completed on footpath between Kingcombe Road and Recreation Ground.
- v. **Fallen trees** – cleared from Toller Brook.
- vi. **Sheep attacks** – could be foxes. Police have provided owners with DNA kits to identify animals committing attacks and if it is dogs the kits can identify the breed. All attacks to be reported to Police Wildlife Officer.

c. Community

- i. **Telephone Box** – as item 5a.
- ii. **Toller Health and Wellbeing initiative** – as item 4.
- iii. **Grants** – financial support for Post Office and Church grounds.
- iv. **Defibrillator training** – open to residents for free, date to be confirmed.
- v. **Community Litter Pick** – collected list of interested residents and provided advice to resident wishing to set up litter pick.
- vi. **Community Emergency Response Plan** – updated and published. Residents encouraged to print a copy from the Parish Council website and keep in a safe dry place.

Signed by Chair: Date:

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

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d. Administration

- i. **Councillor training** – 10 courses taken earning a Two Star Award from Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC).
- ii. **Policy review** – finance, grant awarding and safeguarding policies updated.
- iii. **Qualification** – supporting clerk in attaining Certificate in Local Council Administration which will return the General Powers of Competence to Parish Council.

e. Recreation Ground

- i. **Community Orchard** – applied to Thatchers and received 10 trees.
- ii. **Trees planted by Magna Housing** – resulting in over 150 trees.
- iii. **Survey** – asking residents what they would like.

f. Planning

- i. **Applications** – considered a number of planning applications
- ii. **Material considerations** – taken advice on correct way to respond to planning applications to ensure local views are taken on board.
- iii. **Future Planning** – 3 councillors attended conference by DAPTC with Dorset Council. DB and PC attended 'What is a Neighbourhood Plan' session. They concluded that as potential for meaningful development was low and the cost of any plan was high, there was no benefit to the Parish at this time.

9. Clerk's finance update on 2024-25, Clare Smith

Figures presented are estimates and have not been accepted by Parish Council.

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Precept: | £7,750.00 | |
| Interest: | £100.00 | |
| TPRAA funds:* | £1,205.56 | Part of total transfer for Recreation Ground costs |
| Total income: | £9,046.56 | |
| Spend: | £8,293.57 | Includes unexpected spend and increased costs** |
| Balance: | £752.99 | For reserves but reduced from expected due to increased costs |
| Total funds: | £13,169.18 | £12,461.09 in interest generating account |

*Transfer of £1,676.64 from Toller Porcorum Recreation Area Association (TPRAA) March 2024

**Unexpected spend and increased costs:

- a. Election fee 48% higher than estimated at £737
- b. Increased costs of clerk:
 - i. Increase in mileage
 - ii. Qualification fee of £870
 - iii. Increase in hours from 12 to 16 per month
- c. New laptop required at £400
- d. Prices increases for regular spend such as printing of Toller Times and Defib pads

Asset Register: £32,000 approximately

Precept 2025/26: year on year increase of 27%.

Band D property increase: 16% which equates to an annual increase of £7.69 or 15p a week.

10. Close and refreshments

Meeting closed at 9:15pm

Signed by Chair: Date: