

CHESELBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - TUESDAY 6TH MAY 2025

In May last year, after the re-election of Councillors Searle, Sewill, Walsh, Waters and me, Roger Hall was co-opted as a member of the Parish Council. This means that we are still one person short of our full complement of seven councillors. I would like to thank all of them and our dedicated Parish Clerk for their hard work and the support they have given to the Parish Council over the past twelve months. I was honoured to be re-elected as chair of the Parish Council in May last year and at the Parish Council's AGM which follows this meeting, a new chair will be elected by councillors.

Cllr Nicky Searle, together with a dedicated group of volunteers, has arranged regular (quarterly) litter picks both within the village and along the roads leading into it from as far as the junction with the B3142 near the Northbrook roundabout. The Parish Council is grateful to everyone who gives up their valuable time to help keep the village and its environs as neat and tidy as possible.

Cllr Searle continues to organise regular community speed watch sessions at various locations throughout the village. Again, she is supported by a dedicated group of volunteers who have all received training in the use of the speed watch equipment by Dorset Police. It is encouraging to note that the overwhelming majority of vehicles have been recorded as travelling within the 30mph speed limit.

Many people will be aware that following a village-wide survey undertaken at the end 2022, the Parish Council applied to Dorset Council to reduce the speed limit through the village from the current 30 mph to 20 mph. I am pleased to announce that in the last few weeks, Dorset Council has agreed to the speed limit reduction. We do not yet have a date for implementation but as soon as we do, we will publicise it as widely as possible.

Cllr Hall carries out monthly inspections of the children's playpark to determine what maintenance, if any, may be required to keep the equipment in good order. The Parish Council notes from Cllr Hall's reports that some cosmetic work may be required to some of the equipment during the course of this year and this will be kept under review by the Parish Council.

Two new picnic tables were bought for the playpark early last summer.

Following a survey of residents carried out a little while ago, it was agreed that part of the playpark containing the swings, climbing frame etc. should be fenced off from the remainder of the park to prevent this area being used for the exercising of dogs. In addition, dogs are only allowed into other areas of the playpark if they are on a lead. The Parish Council has been advised that some dogs are being exercised in the playpark without a lead and this is currently being monitored and the policy on dogs in the playpark may be reviewed further by the Parish Council.

Fortunately, with the exception of the village hall field, there has been no real flooding in the village during this year. Residents may recall from previous discussions held between

Cllr Waters and the Environment Agency and Dorset Council that the stream will find its own course and this may mean that the field naturally floods during spells of wet weather. This may help protect properties downstream. This issue will be kept under review by the Parish Council.

Cllr Waters has also contacted the EA to ask if they check the water quality in the stream when it's in flood. The EA has advised that they do not routinely monitor water quality in the stream but it probably would do no harm if residents report any concerns about water quality directly to the EA.

I should add that the Parish Council does liaise with the school regarding the flooding of the village hall field.

I would remind everyone that sandbags are available for householders' use from the store at Mayden Revel. The Community Emergency Response Plan was last updated in December 2023 and a copy of this can be found on the Parish Council's website.

During winter 2023/24 the finger post at the Dewlish junction was badly damaged but I am delighted to say that together with support from Dewlish Parish Council, this has now been repaired and returned to its original condition. Thanks go to Cllr Searle for making this restoration happen.

The Parish Council, together with some other parish councils in the area, continue to support the bi weekly bus services to Dorchester and Blandford. In the last financial year, the Parish Council contributed £1000 towards the service and will review its continued support later this year. It is understood that the service overall is well used and that demand for the service from Cheselbourne has increased slightly albeit from low starting numbers. The Parish Council has placed a series of adverts in the Village News with the aim of encouraging more Cheselbourne residents to register and use the service.

A feasibility study has been undertaken by Dorset Council regarding the installation of an EV charging point in the village. At this time, the Parish Council understands that no decision has been made on a possible location for the charging point.

Finally but not least, some thank yous (in no particular order) on behalf of the Parish Council and all Cheselbourne residents:

- The Roberts and Bere families for organising the putting up and decorating of the Christmas tree outside the school which is admired by everyone;
- Everyone who maintains the flower boxes at the entrances to the village and near the school;
- Sara Timlin for all her work in maintaining the defibrillator by the front door of the village hall;
- Stephanie Worth for her hard work in ensuring that the village news is published each month and to everyone who distributes it.

- Bev Waters and the village hall committee for ensuring that the hall remains at the centre of village life;

If I have missed anyone whom I should have thanked, please accept my apologies for not having done so.

Finally, if you have any concerns or ideas you wish to raise with the Parish Council, please contact the clerk, Amanda Crocker or any of the councillors directly. Alternatively, please do come to one of the bi-monthly meetings which always begin with an open forum. Contact details are on the Parish Council's website.