

MINUTES (To be approved)

GLANVILLES WOOTTON PARISH MEETING HELD ON 31st OCTOBER 2024

Mike Sandy, the Chairman, welcomed residents to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Edwin and Lucy Parrot, Martin Lilley, Pempy Wallington, Naomi Molyneux and Lloyd Rimmer.

2. Minutes of the last Parish Meeting

All agreed and signed by Mike Sandy.

At this point Robin Legg was invited to give his report:

Robin Legg (Sherborne Rural Councillor, Mayor of Sherborne) apologised about the flooding issues but he was getting no response from Roly Skeats. John Andrews is the member of cabinet in charge of Highways.

It was felt that this was the right time for Chris Allender to give his report on flooding issues.

In response to MS request for information on the flooding issue CA promised to distil some of the relevant information arising from legal advice requested by Robin Legg from Dorset Council Legal Services covering the responsibilities of landowners vis a vis maintenance of drainage ditches on their land in relation to the now regular flooding of some properties in Glanvilles Wootton, and the flow of flood water and debris down the roads - both directly arising as a result of runoff from farm land under their "control".

The advice provided relates to the application of S163 of the Highways Act 1980 (HA 1980) and also advises more widely on enforcement relating to flooded highways caused by the failure of landowners/occupiers to maintain drainage ditches on their land. This advice has arisen from a similar case in Dorset (Mill Lane, Charminster), and was provided by Dorset Council's Legal Services. I don't believe any identifiable action has resulted yet from the Council to address our concerns? Section 4 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 defines Risk Management Functions as including functions under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and functions under section 100, 101, 110 or 339 of the Highways Act 1980. Of relevance to this case are section 100 of the Highways Act 1980 and Section 14A of the Land Drainage Act 1991 which are discussed below.

Fields are indeed included within the interpretation of land and buildings, and so long as the water is flowing over a footway [there are no pavements in Glanvilles Wootton, therefore, quite obviously, the roadway is the footway] then Dorset Council enforcement powers under s163 can be used. Instructions for such enforcement usually come via the community highways officer for the area concerned.

Enforcement action under s151 HA 1980 may be a potential option if the flood water is also carrying with it soil or refuse (ie mud) 'as to obstruct the street or choke the gully' i.e. any highway drainage systems. [This point appears to be quite clearly applicable to the issues we are experiencing in GW - if only it was just mud, rather than additionally stones /gravel and other debris?].

The Council will need proof that the nuisance caused is not a one-off event and that there has been recurring interference with the public rights to use the road (a lot of evidence has already been provided).

Records will be needed of all attempts to contact the person/s who have 'control' of the land informing them that their failure to maintain their drainage ditches is causing flooding to the public highway and asking them to remedy the situation. Any responses should also be logged/recorded. Such records will provide evidence of the person in 'control' of the land having the requisite knowledge of the nuisance and their failure to abate the nuisance within a reasonable timeframe.

There appears to be an open and shut case for the Council to take this forward by applying the following actions:

A) Approaching the relevant landowners to explain the issues that have to be addressed to halt the flooding of properties in Glanvilles Wootton and the impact of the runoff arising from their land on the roadways, and...

B) Making it quite clear what their responsibilities are, firstly with regard to those members of their own community affected, and within the legal framework governing the requirements for them to act to rectify the situation, and....

C) If this is deemed necessary, bringing to their attention the following:

- The Council's duties as the Highways Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority and how these relate to the flooding in GW.*
- Possible action against the occupier/landowner for Public Nuisance.*
- The Council's discretionary powers to compel the owners/occupiers to carry out works to abate the nuisance.*
- The Council's discretionary powers to carry out works to abate the nuisance itself.*

However, from my personal perspective, the local landowners have generally very good relationships with the other members of this small community and I am sure would not wish to be regarded as the root cause of any flooding issues, which subsequently continues to affect the wellbeing of those residents in GW thus affected.

However, if an amicable solution cannot be found, and thus if the legal route is to be followed by the Council, then:

LLFA officers must consider whether the regular, repeated incidents in Glanvilles Wootton meet the trigger for an investigation under section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. If so, consideration would need to be given as to whether it is appropriate for the highway authority to take action to abate the flooding by using its powers under section 100 or the Highways Act 1980 or for the LLFA to act using its powers under section 14A of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

If officers are minded to take action against the occupier or landowner for private or public nuisance, then the next step would be to instruct legal services specialising in litigation to provide further advice.

If notices need to be served under the Highways Act 1980 powers discussed above then instructions can be issued to the Legal Regulatory Team.

It is reckoned that there are 3 or 4 landowners that need to be contacted by the council. Ian Sargent said that 5/6 years ago the council came and dug a ditch on his land and ever since then the water has flowed on to the highway.

Richard Clarke said that whichever way you send the water it all ends up in the same brook. Richard Taylor said he has removed a lot of rubbish from main ditch to brook including 2 mole valley poultry feed bags this week.

RL agreed to get the relevant people to a meeting with the landowners, CA, CD, Tony Eagles and MS.

CD was told by Roly Skeats in February that the telegraph pole through the drain near his house was 3rd on the list in the new financial year in April. About a month ago a crew was out and CD spent the morning with them. They put a camera down the drain and found no telegraph pole as no pipe. There are two manhole covers outside Manor Farm which join and go down the drive presumably to the ditch that runs behind. There is no pipe that runs to drain hole outside Pempy Wallington's. Roly Skeats is not returning calls.

Sue Forder reported flooding outside Glanvilles which has not happened for a number of years. The previous owner sorted the problem out – are the pipes now blocked?

RL said that a survey had found poor mobile connectivity between Sandhills and Glanvilles Wootton. This was being looked at with Atlas Tower Group. There are a number of blackspots and Dorset Council is looking for solutions. How will people in parish hear about this? NH said that the transmitter at Boys Hill was overloaded. It is owned by EE and it is very expensive to upgrade. Sue Forder said overtime things should improve as the digital switchover takes place otherwise there are issues when there is an emergency. NH says we should use wifi calling wherever possible when we are at home. CD uses boosters and data roaming at home.

RL finished his report saying that the planning system should improve. It will be easier to get views aired in front of elected members of the planning committee rather than decisions being made by unelected officials.

3. Matters arising from the circulated minutes not covered by this agenda

- Bins for dog waste – some people are still using the church's recycling bin. Should we get separate dog waste bins? Not for the moment.
- Village Light – we had been contracted to the end of December 2023. When we said we no longer wanted the light we could not just cancel our SSE contract and we then went on to an emergency rate – an invoice was received for £1,400. MS refused to pay and was then threatened with bailiffs. The light hadn't even been working for a year and was covered in ivy. A local resident offered to cut down the ivy but SSE forbade this as too close to the wires. Long and short of this is we have now paid £328 for SSE to disconnect and remove the light and pole.
- Website – Jenny Hunnisett of Holnest read out her email to Mike Sandy (attached). At the last meeting it was agreed that only events run by Glanvilles Wootton residents would be put on the events page/sidebar and that all other events that we were asked to advertise would be put on "Other Local Events". JH was unhappy with this decision. MS pointed out that we were asked by other villagers to advertise their events and these will be put on "Other Local Events" as well. It was also pointed out that Holnest was able to advertise events in the White Hart Vale magazine, on our 2 village notice boards which are unlocked unlike some local villages, put an "A" frame outside the village hall and signs on the A352. The village hall is meant to be getting its own website and then all events held in the village hall will be displayed on there. GT said that the events JH was asking to advertise were fundraisers for Holnest Church. JH said that residents of GW wondered why Holnest events were not on the events page; GT said that no resident has ever asked either editor to change/add anything to the website. JH said that she would get residents to write letters. CD suggested that we leave things as they are and visit the decision at our next meeting in May. All agreed. JH then left the meeting at the conclusion of this discussion.

4. Treasurer's Report

Accounts for April 2024 to October 2024 are attached.

Peter Dove donated the stones around the war memorial so there was just transporting costs incurred.

All agreed to continue the £300 burial ground contribution and the White Hart Vale magazine contribution of £35. Louise Sandy, editor of WHV, said the committee of the magazine liked to keep 1 year's costs in reserve. Richard Taylor asked if £35 was enough. LS explained that the magazine was non-profit and there was other income from business advertisements and parish council contributions. Residents of the 7 villages are able to advertise in the magazine for free. LS was thanked for her hard work producing such a good magazine.

Simon Lawday has inspected the accounts as the external assessor. We have an exception certificate for a full audit (see website page).

MS asked if we wished to raise the precept. It was agreed to keep it at the same level, £1,000, as we no longer had a bill for the street light.

The accounts were approved.

Proposed by Nick Harvey, seconded by Christopher Gabbey. All agreed.

5. Village Activities

a) **Village Hall**

Neither the Chairman nor Vice Chairman was able to attend so the following letter was read out by MS.

The village hall is in good heart and our bank balance stands at around £19,600 including approximately £4500 being ring-fenced for the field. Our regular fund raising, including the recently formed 100 Club, continues to be successful and we end each year ahead of our outgoings. The hall continues to get regular bookings throughout the year, hosting a range of activities including the monthly Saturday morning breakfast and quarterly Pop-Up-Pub. There are three subjects which the committee has been considering of late:- 1. Developing better use of the field and specifically the play area to the side of the hall now that the out-of-date play equipment has been removed. One idea is to build a timber framed lean-to canopy overlooking the play area. It will be open on three sides and have a roof in keeping with our present one. This will provide a sheltered space for all to enjoy and enhance that part of the building. However, unlike any householder, where it is likely that no planning permission would be required for such a project, we fall under the same planning category as a school. Full planning permission is therefore needed and we are going ahead with this. When permission is (hopefully) granted we will be in a strong position to apply for grant assistance. Some of the funds we have will be used as match funding where needed. 2. We have been considering the use of parking in the field and are thinking of laying a recycled plastic grid to the right hand side of the large gate up to the edge of the barn. This has the great advantage in that it's possible to drive over this gridding in wet weather and its visual impact is very little. It would continue to look like a grassy field and can be mowed over. 3. The cess pit continues to be a problem; very simply, it fills with rain water. There is one final repair to be made to the existing drain system and then, all possible routes for rainwater or ground water to enter the system will have been eliminated. Then we get back to the installer to remedy the problem should the tank continue to fill up.

John Elce asked what is the purpose of the proposed lean-to. LS said that together with the playground this would become a family area. Attached to the side of the village hall under the lean-to there would be puzzles for children to play with as well as some seating. The advantage of removing the play equipment is that there is no longer the need for an inspection thus saving money.

CD said that whilst he was Chairman of the village hall a survey was carried out on the uses of the field there was strong opposition to a car park. MS said when the original appeal letter went out asking for money one of the reasons was for additional parking. The proposal is for a honeycomb mess over the section on the right between the barn and the copse. This would allow grass to grow up through therefore preserving the look of a field.

RT asked where the contents of the septic tank were emptied. MS agreed to write to the village hall committee to enquire.

JE asked what had happened to the old septic tank in the playground area. LS assured him that this had been filled in.

b) Tennis Club

There are a record 20 members. Recently the moss had been cleared so that the surface would remain safe throughout the winter. Children's tennis coaching for the year had just finished and it has been agreed to continue this in 2025.

c) Berkeley Field

All in hand. Richard Clarke said that it had been grazed during the summer by sheep so a small amount of rent had gone into the account.

d) Fire Station

Chris Allender reports the ivy on the fire station needs clearing. There are a few sandbags still available. MS will get some more.

e) War Memorial

Stones are now in position. Peter Dove donated them and Stephen Hembrey transported them. Within a week they had been driven over by a tractor so more have been brought it. The intention was to paint them but it was agreed that this would only cause work going forward. Also if you paint the stones white this would detract from the war memorial itself. The war memorial has been recently tidied up and prepared for Remembrance Sunday.

f) Allotment Field

This is due to be rented to Doug Proctor from 1st November 2024. A contract has been drawn up.

g) Telephone Box

The door now opens and shuts easily although GT says it is often left open. CD reports that cars turn up on Saturdays and exchange books – are these going to car boot sales on Sundays? He will note down car registration numbers to see if this is a regular occurrence. GT refreshed the books after the fete in June.

h) Website (see Matters Arising)

i) Litter Rota

This seems to be working well. Someone from Newlands Lane who is doing their Duke of Edinburgh award is litter picking Stock Hill Lane for their volunteer section,

6. Flooding latest (see earlier report from CA).

7. Footpaths and booklet production

LS produced a mock-up of the booklet. It will cost £50 to produce 100. People at the meeting were encouraged to take it away, read and comment by 31st December 2024. MS said that the routes will then be marked up using the Dorset Council yellow footpath signs and the council will mend any stiles, bridges etc.

8. Village Emergencies Proposal

MS read out an email from Caroline Parker Smith:

Hi Mike/Georgina

We've just had a conversation with a friend, and I thought I'd contact you before I forget how important this is.

Could I please flag up an agenda item for the next village meeting?

If anyone in the village has a heart attack, it would be so difficult to do CPR on them and also fetch the defibrillator. So how about all the villagers have each other's phone numbers? It could be on a spreadsheet and laminated so everyone has a copy. That way if there's an emergency in anyone's house, we could raise the alarm and get help from neighbours to help.

It makes a lot of sense and would certainly give everyone a bit of peace of mind.

Anyway, let me know what you think (unless it's been thought of before!).

Caroline

The meeting agreed that this was a sensible idea. Should the telephone numbers be mobile/landline? IS suggested that a WhatsApp Group might be a good way forward. Need to give this more thought.

The village field is registered for Air Ambulance landings.

MS agreed to arrange some First Aid/CPR training for village residents.

9. Suggestions for Parish Projects.

Martin Lilley would like to plant more daffodils. Nick Harvey suggested Ashridge Trees might donate some. If not it was agreed to spend £50 on bulbs.

Poor broadband reception is still an issue in the village. NH said that in conjunction with Openreach's Fibre Community Partnership at his end they now had ultrafast broadband. Some people are on Wessex Internet but NH said that the problem here is that Wessex owns the fibre so you cannot change providers. It is best to use, where possible, the Openreach network.

Date of next meeting

TBC April/May 2025

Signed: _____ Chairman Date: _____

ATTENDEES AT OCTOBER 2024 PARISH MEETING

Mike Sandy
Louise Sandy
Chirs Allender
Sue Forder
Richard Clarke
Richard Taylor
Georgina Taylor
Charles Dutton
Christopher Gabbey
Annie Gabbey
Nick Harvey
John Elce
Eileen Elce
Ian Sargent
Jenny Hunnisett (Holnest)
Robin Legg (Councillor)

GW PARISH ACCOUNTS 1/04/24 TO 31/10/24

INCOME

Precept 1000

Totals 1000

EXPENDITURE

DAPTC	40.13
PL insurance	232.93
SSE	328.12
War Memorial	120.00
	721.18

Income/expenditure 278.82

C/F April '24 1164.29

Balance 31/10/24 1443.11

Expected expenditure until 31/03/25

Website fees	59.99
Burial ground contribution	300.00
WHV contribution	35.00
Total	394.99

Projected balance 31/03/25 – 1048.12

JENNY HUNNISETT EMAIL

Dear Mr Chairman

At item 3 of the published agenda for the Glanvilles Wootton Parish Meeting 7.30pm on Thursday 31 October in the village hall, I formally request that the meeting rethinks, discusses and considers in a friendly and neighbourly manner, reversing a decision made at the Parish meeting held on 23 May 2024.

I refer to the agenda item:

- 5. Village reports
- g. Village website

The following was recorded in the minutes at 5.g, Website: 'The question arose about people outside the village advertising their events on our website. It was suggested that all events held by residents of Glanvilles Wootton, the village hall committee, tennis club and church would be put on the "Events" page and all other events in the village and surrounding villages to be put on "Other Local Events" page. Everyone agreed.'

The minutes do not record what the question was nor the rationale behind the decision to change something that seemingly had been working very well for the benefit of the Glanvilles Wootton Parishioners (Council Tax Payers) and many more people who read the Glanvilles Wootton website. If there is an issue, is there an alternative solution?

Speaking as a regular visitor to the website, to see what is on at the Village Hall, which the parish I live in (Holnest) shares with Glanvilles Wootton and as a bellringer in Glanvilles Wootton Church, I also look to find out about church events, with a view to supporting all of these. Surely it makes sense that one 'click' on the 'Events' tab, reveals all events being held in the village regardless of who is publicising them. To me a second tab labelled 'Other local events' implies it is about an event held somewhere, other than in Glanvilles Wootton and could easily be overlooked by users.

The village hall in Stock Hill serves the three parishes, Glanvilles Wootton, Holnest and Middlemarsh. It is the home of the well supported, established monthly Community Breakfast organised by Holnest Church, run by a group of volunteers from each of the three villages, I am a member of this group. The same group also offers to all, a monthly free 1-1 ½ hour countryside walk from the hall car park, for the benefit of the well-being of its participants. The same group have hosted previous and will be hosting other free events in Glanvilles Wootton for the enjoyment of its parishioners and those of surrounding parishes. Some benefiting worldwide issues such Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal and Turkey and Syrian Earthquake Appeal.

It would seem logic and common sense for all of these and similar to be included under the 'Events' tab on the Glanvilles Wootton Parish website. Surely a 'one-stop' webpage for events happening in the village, would be better for all stakeholders, and reinstate this valued facility.

It is difficult if not impossible for the communities of small rural villages to survive alone, we rely on each other for so much. Rural isolation and poor well-being are known to impact heavily on mental health and consequently on our National Health Service. It would be advantageous to see the regular Pilates classes and similar, that are held in the hall or elsewhere in Glanvilles Wootton, also included on the 'Events' page.

Hopefully, there is a win-win solution waiting to happen.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Hunnisett