

Minutes of the Meeting of Holt Parish Council
23rd September 2026 at 7pm
HOLT PARISH HALL

087	Attendance & Apologies Cllr Geoff Chopping Cllr Jackie Egan Cllr Peter Finney Cllr Wrettham Ladbrooke-Chartres (Vice-Chairman) Cllr Geoff Pike Cllr Guy Reynolds (Chairman) Cllr Janet Wallace Cllr Sarah Weaver Cllr Jane White Cllr Will Chakawhata (Dorset Councillor Stour & Allen Vale Ward) Lisa Goodwin (Clerk) 5 members of public present Apologies received: Cllr Sue Barnes Cllr Jonathan Cutts
088	Declaration of Interests & Requests for Dispensation None.
089	Confirm the Minutes of the meeting held 26th August 2026 The minutes of the meeting held <u>26th August 2026</u> were amended on page 515 item 079 under Rights of Way Matters to amend E45/14 to E45/13; confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
090	Public Open Session A resident attended with an interest in the preparation of a wildfire response plan for Holt. The resident also asked members to chase up the National Trust for its report on last year's wildfire on Holt Heath and to arrange a public meeting once the report is available. The resident is concerned that actions need to be identified to protect the south side of the Heath. <i>It was agreed the Clerk will write to the National Trust and ask them to expedite the report.</i>
091	Dorset Councillors Report <i>See Appendix A</i>

092	Planning & Tree Applications/Planning Enforcement Matters <i>See Appendix B</i> Members are concerned about the health of an Oak Tree at the top of Batchelors Lane which has been raised by a local resident. <i>It was agreed the Clerk would ask a Dorset Council Tree Officer to inspect.</i>
093	Dorset Local Plan Scoping Consultation Cllrs Janet Wallace and Sue Barnes attended the Town & Parish Council briefing by Dorset Council for this consultation on 8th September. Slides from this are expected for circulation to all members to assist in preparing a response. The Scoping consultation is asking questions about: • what the local plan should cover • its proposed vision and priorities • how Dorset should grow • the evidence needed to inform the plan • how people should be involved This consultation is not asking about individual development sites or detailed draft policies. The Local Plan will help guide how Dorset changes in the future. It will set out where new homes, infrastructure, community facilities and environmental improvements should happen and will be used, once adopted, to help decide planning applications across the Dorset areas. The scoping consultation document, including draft engagement strategy and supporting documents can be found online by following this link Dorset Council Local Plan: Scoping consultation 2026 - Dorset Council
094	Local Government Boundary Commission Recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Dorset Members have considered the boundary changes for the proposed 'Stour & Holt Ward' and agreed to respond: <i>In our opinion the inclusion of Spetisbury is inappropriate because it is more closely aligned with neighbouring parishes and Blandford and has no links to this part of the county.</i>
095	Former Council Offices, Furzehill Cllr Will Chakawhata updated members in his report (see Appendix A). Members are concerned what is the current position with the development of the site following the withdrawal of the interested developer and will ask Dorset Council for an update that can be shared with residents for transparency. Cllr Sue Barnes received clarification from Dorset Council on security measures following the withdrawal of 24hr security on the site due to unsustainable costs. There are currently 5 patrols per day, 7 days per week at randomised times to maximise effectiveness. Dorset Council will endeavour to provide an agreed target time for attendance by security in the event of an issue at the site that is reported to the

	24hr council phone line and speak to the Service Manager to make sure their team are clear around responsibilities and required actions. Dorset Council continue to explore other options for security, including works to strengthen the physical barriers to building entry and to monitor both local resident reports and those provided by the security team and evaluate the effectiveness of the current arrangements. Cllr Chopping will be sending a personal response to Dorset Council recommending that a wildlife corridor is created that would be separate from the development site which goes between Furzehill Wood and Woodleaze Copse and would naturally connect the existing badger setts. The corridor would also accommodate the public footpath.
096	Highway Matters Highways Working Group Report: • A Community Speedwatch session was held on 9th September at 8:30am assisted by Dorset Police with a number of offences recorded. An additional resident has joined the CSW team. • Broomhill Crossroads – the petition has been submitted to Dorset Council and a request for a fundamental review where every option is considered to improve road safety here. • The HWG has reviewed the Dorset Collision Map for data on locations that residents have asked for speed limits to be introduced. Using this information, members agreed to expenditure for speed surveys at Colehill Lane, Broomhill between 30mph and Colehill boundary (<i>Clerk to advise Colehill PC</i>); Burts Lane, Mannington and the C50 between speed limits from Broomhill to Whitesheet. There have been no incidents reported at Petersham Lane or Gods Blessing Lane and therefore members agreed not to complete surveys here at this time. Cllr Geoff Chopping suggested edge lines may be beneficial as an alternative option to encourage traffic to reduce speed. • Cllr Geoff Pike reported a cat was unfortunately killed on Holt Lane leading to a lot of comments on the local Holt Happenings WhatsApp group about what is being done to tackle speed of traffic. It appears that residents are not all aware of the work by the Parish Council or that there is a Community Speed Watch. <i>Members agreed to report on CSW sessions on HOLT Together to raise awareness.</i> Other Highway Matters: • Cllr Sarah Weaver reported the road edge erosion has been repaired in Holt Forest but not sure how long it will last as only filled with soil. Unsure if this has been done by Dorset Council. • The Clerk will report again that the 40mph sign by the Cross Keys that is residing in the ditch – upright but leaning. [5327] • Cllr Janey White reported that stones from the bridleway track are dispersing onto the highway at Lower Rowe and a tarmac apron may need to be considered. • It has been reported that vehicles at Cobb Farm are frequently parked protruding onto the highway causing an obstruction and potential for a collision. <i>It was agreed the Clerk will report to Dorset Council Highways. [5331]</i> • The Clerk is to report the kerb stones on the corner of the junction at Holt Green have been disturbed and need re-setting [5328] and that the Holt Lane nameplate needs attention. [5329] • Dorset Council have advised the temporary 30mph speed restriction on the B3078 at Stanbridge will be extended to 28th February 2027 in conjunction with hoarding and building repair works.

	• The Clerk will report the missing nameplate at Gods Blessing Lane. [5330] • The Clerk will report the missing handrails at the ford on Mannington Lane. [5332] Works have already been instructed for the missing bollards on the bend approaching the junction with Holt Road.
097	Rights of Way Matters & Access Holt Forest in the event of fire Cllr Sarah Weaver reported for interest that there are 74 Rights of Way in the Parish extending to 32.7 miles. The access gate at Mannington needs adjusting and has been reported to the National Trust. Members discussed the possibility of clearing vegetation beside the highway (behind the fence) at Lower Mannington to create a permissive path linking footpath E45/7 on the Heath with E45/9, thereby reducing the need for pedestrians to use the highway on dangerous bends. <i>Sarah will discuss the proposal with the National Trust.</i>
098	Parish Hall Matters The new French Doors to the garden have been installed making a great improvement to the hall. The step and outside path have yet to be completed. The recent fund-raising Quiz evening went well.
099	Cemetery Matters There has been one full burial on 16 September and an interment of ashes on 28 September. Mr M Clifford has completed the works instructed to level 3 graves and fill in holes and grass seed.
100	Plan in the event of Fire Cllr Sarah Weaver presented a draft Community Fire Action Plan for members to consider - <i>see Appendix C</i>. Members commended Cllr Weaver for preparing the plan following a meeting with Stuart Tucker of Wimborne Fire Station. Members discussed the draft and agreed that the Parish Council's aim is to raise community awareness of, and preparedness for, a wildfire event and to develop and circulate an action plan with guidance from the Fire Service. Members also agreed that an information page could be added to the Parish Council website.
101	Inspection Reports Village Green inspection 6:15pm Wednesday 23rd September. <i>See Appendix D</i> Village Pound – inspected by the Chairman, no action required. Woodland at Queens Copse – Cllr Geoff Pike, Cllr Sarah Weaver inspected, <i>see Appendix E. Members agreed to consider in more detail at a future meeting. The Clerk will circulate relevant documentation.</i> Gaunts Common Noticeboard – <i>Clerk to make inquiries about maintenance repairs.</i>

102	Correspondence received and circulated in advance • Information and update on the Safe Place Scheme launched by Wimborne Minster Town Council and an invitation to get involved. • Mannington to Nursling Overhead Line Refurbishment update. • Invitation to Dorset Council Community Conversations events on 2nd October and 19th November.						
103	Financial Matters & Expenditure • The Clerk provided members with up-to-date bank account balances. • Members considered two quotations from Solicitors for the expenditure in connection with acquiring the Holtwood Community Farm as a community asset. Further quotations for comparison to be obtained. (JW/GC) • Members accepted the conclusion of audit for y/e 31 March 2026 from which there were no matters arising. <i>The Clerk will publish on the parish council website.</i> • Members authorised the Clerk to pay the following items utilising online banking including Clerk’s Salary: <table><tr><td>ONLINE BDO LLP</td><td>Limited Assurance Review</td><td>£252.00</td></tr><tr><td>ONLINE Dorset Council</td><td>Safety Notices for Cemetery</td><td>£171.84</td></tr></table>	ONLINE BDO LLP	Limited Assurance Review	£252.00	ONLINE Dorset Council	Safety Notices for Cemetery	£171.84
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	The next meeting of the Parish Council will be <u>Wednesday 21st October 2026 at 7pm</u>						

Meeting closed 21:42

These minutes are to be signed by the Chairman after approval at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Signed: **21st October 2026**

Appendix A**Report by Dorset Councillor Will Chakawhata**

- **Former Council Offices, Furzehill**

Dorset Council will approach residents who hold restrictive covenants over the site to negotiate offers for their release. The issue of the badger setts remains unresolved, and the Council is seeking advice from ecologists. Most of the proposed fencing would be simple post-and-wire, allowing badgers to pass underneath. The previously interested developer withdrew by mutual agreement. Dorset Council still proposes to proceed with the footpath and fencing, subject to the ecologists' recommendations. The Council has been advised that the fence requires planning permission.

- **Burts Lane: Speeding concerns**

Burts Lane shares a parish boundary with Horton. I met a resident last week to discuss concerns about speeding and to raise with the parish council.

- **God's Blessing Lane: Planning and highways matters**

Dorset Council investigated a potential planning breach concerning the use of a property as an Airbnb and concluded that no further action was required. The Clerk will report the missing nameplate at the junction with Holt Lane. A complaint has also been received about heavy traffic using this narrow lane, but Dorset Council has no power to prevent access.

- **Local Government Boundary Review**

The review recommends renaming the Stour & Allen Vale Ward as Stour & Holt. The proposed boundary changes would remove Hinton, Chalbury and Horton from the ward and add Spetisbury, which is more closely aligned with Blandford. The Parish Council is invited to submit comments by 1 November 2026.

- **Stone Lane, Wimborne: Highway improvements**

The highway improvements at Stone Lane have been delayed but are expected to make the area safer once completed.

- **B3078 Cranborne Road: Road safety**

A mother and son were injured in another accident on the B3078 Cranborne Road this weekend. The petition calling for a speed limit on this road now has more than 1,000 signatures.

- **Clayford: Planning enforcement**

The complex breaches of planning permission at Clayford remain under investigation.

Appendix B – Planning Applications

Application Number	Location	Description	Parish Council Comment
P/HOU/2026/04942	Trefellen Lodge, Whitemoor, BH21 7DA	Erect two-storey front extension with loft conversion and addition of dormers.	Members have NO OBJECTION to the proposed extension however, we draw attention to the newly installed fence which is out of character with the street scene.
P/FUL/2026/04922	Office Premises Pig Oak Farm, Holt Lane	Change of use from office (Class E) to dwellinghouse (Class C3) to include demolition of existing link.	Members have NO COMMENT on the proposal but would like sight of comments by Dorset Council highways.
P/FUL/2026/04658	Land adjacent to Strawberry Fields, Sheepcroft Lane, BH21 7D	Erect an agricultural storage building (in association with existing smallholding)	Members OBJECT to the proposal. Whilst we understand the need for storage on a smallholding, we cannot see the necessity for a two-storey building and would prefer a lower and longer style building more in-keeping with the local vernacular.
P/PAAC/2026/05177	369 Harts Lane to Amble Mead, Broomhill, BH21 7DD	Change of use of 1 agricultural building to 1 dwelling house and associated operation development (notification under Class Q)	Members NOTED without comment this application which is a request for Dorset Council to determine whether or not prior approval is required for the proposal.
P/TRT/2026/05136	Oak Trees, Holt Lane, BH21 7DQ	Subsidence claim T3 Oak remove close to ground level and manage stump regrowth.	Members are concerned about the loss of this magnificent, mature oak tree, which stands beside the highway and makes an important contribution to the village's visual amenity.

Appendix C

DRAFT PARISH COMMUNITY FIRE ACTION PLAN

The Parish of Holt is approximately 5500 acres

Holt Heath - 1200-1210 acres (approx. 4.9 square kilometres). Owned and managed by NT

Holt Forest and **Holt Wood** - owned and managed by NT

Queens Copse Forestry Commission

Whitesheet Plantation Forestry Commission. Approx 150 acres

Agricultural - grain, maize, rape, hay

Recreational Heathland and Forest (open access) 74 Rights of Way Carparks

Population Approx 1,500 residents in 14 communities:

Holt	Broomhill	Whitemoor,
Mannington,	Holt Heath	Clayford
Holt Forest,	Holtwood	
Higher Row	Lower Row,	
Gaunts Common,	Pig Oak	Grange Furzehill

PLAN

AIM: To raise community awareness and preparedness with respect to a wildfire event and produce and circulate an action plan.

1. Identify communities

Parish map showing housing, schools, pubs, community halls

Key persons - (community leaders) for liaison and information cascade

Vulnerable housing

2. Identify

Water points, Fire hydrants (fire service has a map of all the fire hydrants)

EWS, lakes and ponds, swimming pools

3. Identify

Escape routes

Evacuation locations/centres

Support network

4. Circulate information to all residents

- Preparing homes for wildfire + Home Ignition Zone + Checklist <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/wildfire/preparing-homes-for-wildfire>
- Creating a Safety Zone (Wildfire advice for People Living in Rural Areas) Somerset Fire and Rescue <https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/safety/outdoors/wildfires/rural>
- Preparation for emergency. (Make a plan). <https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/>
- Fire hydrants and Water points
- Evacuation points / centres
- Evacuation locations
- Support network

Appendix D**HOLT VILLAGE GREEN INSPECTION/ REPORT 23RD SEPTEMBER 2026**

Cllrs Geoff Chopping, Jackie Egan, Geoff Pike and Janet Wallace

Grass Area – grass continues to be maintained and cut regularly.

Footpath – is kept cut but gravel is no longer visible – it is almost completely grassed over.

Trees/Hedges – there are 2 dead trees (Ash?) one at the edge of the woodland area quite close to the road and one in the long grass area but not close to the path. They may need cutting down.

There are oak saplings growing around the base of 2 telegraph poles – these may need removing.

The hedge at the bottom of the Green is very untidy and contains broken branches. It needs cutting and tidying (is the Parish Council responsible for that boundary or is it the adjacent properties – hunter Moon and holt Green Cottage?)

Benches and Sign – the benches and sign next to the Village Hall were recently replaced and are in good structural order. The bench on the Green is also in good structural order and firmly attached to the ground.

Pond – all vegetation has been removed from around the pond and the signage is in place and visible.

Highways - the grass on the verges is cut short to maintain visibility. The kerb stones at the corner of Hart's Lane and Holt Lane have been damaged and displaced so need replacing/resetting – report to Highways?

There was also evidence of some damage to the Green caused by vehicles being driven on it from the bottom next to Holt Green Cottage – vehicle access from there could be blocked with small posts (dragon's teeth) – this area of the green contains one of the rare plants found during the SNCI Survey (Chamomile).

During the inspection we also met with Mandy Loader and Daniel Holloway who carried out the SNCI survey of the Village Green.

They showed the sites of plants found during the survey include Mat-Grass, Marsh Pennywort, Chamomile, Devil's-bit Scabious, Sneezewort, Corky Fruited Water Dropwort and Hemlock Water Dropwort.

The Management Plan associated with the SNCI Status should indicate a mowing regime for the Green, which the Parish Council will need to consider once we receive a copy of the document and the report from Mandy Loader.

The area of long grass with paths cut through should ideally be cut once a year in late July with the cuttings removed, and then possibly cut again in early spring depending on the regrowth. This regime would benefit plant species that at present are being stifled by long grasses and allows seed from flowers to be dispersed. If the cuttings are not removed, they enrich the soil which again encourages the growth of dominant grasses.

Appendix E

The Annual Inspection of the HPC land near to Queen's Copse – Cllr Geoff Pike

On the very wet morning of Tuesday 8th September, Sarah and I visited the HPC area near to Queen's Copse Lane to conduct the annual inspection. Being hardy country folk we proceeded regardless of the weather. Kiri, Sarah's dog, seemed to enjoy the visit, enthusiastically greeting a number of other local dogs during our time there.

For those councillors who have yet to visit this small, wooded area, it is approximately one acre in size and is close to the relatively new housing development on Queen's Copse Lane. It is next to an area of small lakes/ponds that are owned and managed by the Christchurch Angling Club. The Angling Club also own the land that is used for car parking.

The HPC area contains a variety of tree species including:- Oak, Field Maple, Large Grey Willow, Silver Birch and, rather strangely, a row of large Leylandii. There are also a small number of, as yet, unidentified tree species. Shrubs growing in the area include:- Bramble, Ferns, Invasive Sedges and a Cotoneaster. There was evidence of what we believed to be a badger set.

Issues to consider:

1. There are three large metal containers in the car park area, two of which are in poor condition. We assume that these are owned by Christchurch Angling Club (CAC). There are at least six vermin traps around the containers. We question what is being kept in the containers (are the Angling Club keeping bait in them?).
2. There is an old, discarded metal barbecue, barbed-wire, four pallets and a very large plastic water container abandoned around this container area, possibly in the area that we own and that we are responsible for.
3. There is a pile of small branches, twigs, etc. left in the middle of the car park that could possibly pose a fire risk in hot weather.
4. A few trees are probably in need of tree surgery. Some require only minor work but other may require more significant work in the next couple of years.
5. Several trees are showing signs of stress caused by the recent drought.

Actions

1. I will take my saw and deal with the pile of discarded vegetation.
2. I will contact CAC in order to remove the items identified in number 2 of the section above, if this is deemed necessary.
3. Sarah's husband and I will deal with the minor tree surgery required.
4. Sarah will mark the drought affected trees to identify them and watched for re-growth next year.

What do we need to do now?

1. Continue to own the plot of land and commit to maintain it.
2. Establish the exact boundaries of our responsibilities.
3. Sell or give it to the CAC.
4. Sell it to the residents of Queens Copse.
5. Attempt to find a local tree surgeon who may want to use it for training.
6. Consider the name for the area.
7. Any other thoughts?