

CHILD OKEFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Child Okeford Parish Council meeting held on 5th October 2026 at 7pm at Child Okeford Community Centre.

Present: Cllr T Cotton (Chairman), Cllr R Choat, Cllr B Ireland, Cllr L Pelly, Cllr R Smith, Cllr G Sparrow, Cllr C Weatherley.

In attendance: Mrs Jan O'Connell (Parish Clerk), 3 members of the public. Footpath Officer: Alan Blundell.

Apologies for absence: Dorset Councillor Sherry Jespersen, Cllr M Kerridge, Cllr M Salisbury.

1. To record any undisclosed declarations of interest: None received.

2. To consider granting dispensation to councillors as required: None required.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th August 2026: The minutes were Approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. To consider any matters arising from the August minutes:

-Co-option of new Councillor: Charlotte Weatherley – All councillors approved and voted in favour of this co-option.

-COPC would like to thank Cllr G Sparrow for all the work he has carried out to review and update the insurance policies for the PC and the CC. It had come to light that there had been some overlap with the 2 policies, Cllr Sparrow has now sorted this and now the policies are separate. This has created a saving to the PC's annual premium. Cllr Sparrow to speak to Gallagher as they had removed cover for the War Memorial which we will request is reinstated.

-Hedge Trimming: The PC has received emails regarding overgrown hedges, particularly in Upper Street and the Hollow. The overgrown hedges are covering up road signs and making it difficult for pedestrians to pass some areas. This can be reported on DC website, and all are encouraged to do so. COPC to produce a flyer to put through the letterboxes of properties where the hedges or foliage is overgrown.

-Traffic Surveys: COPC to request that a traffic survey be carried out at the Gold Hill end of the village at the Saxon Inn. This survey is being carried out with a view to applying for the 20mph scheme to be extended to this part of the village.

5. Public Participation:

- A resident requested that the 'No Cyclists' signage be reinstated at the footpath between the High Street and Jacob's Ladder / Homefield, also reported that there had been horse droppings on the pathway which is not a bridleway.

-It was reported that the bins at the Community Centre had been overflowing – COPC to look at having an additional bin at the CC.

-It was suggested that the PC enquire whether there are sufficient records of the war memorial – i.e. photos and a record of the names listed, should anything happen to the memorial. Cllr Sparrow to discuss with the village archivist, David Pope.

6. Ward Councillor Report: No current report.

-Cllr Jespersen had contacted PC to suggest that they request a review by DC Highways to establish whether the road safety measures at the sharp bend at Fontmell Parva House are still adequate, as pulling out at this area is difficult and safety signage needs to be updated.

-The Clerk to arrange a meeting with Cllr Pelly and DC Highways Officer to walk around the village and discuss the various highways issues that need to be addressed. All councillors to liaise to ensure that all of the Highways issues are raised.

-The Chair to respond to the Dorset Local Plan Scoping Consultation.

7. Correspondence:

-The Chair and Cllr Ireland to meet with Will Luxton regarding the noticeboard at the shop.

8.Reports:

-Footpath report:

-We await the contractor to commence work on Pine Walk.

-The footbridge over the Stour enroute to Bere Marsh will be repaired in the New Year by the Highways department of Dorset Council.

-The new landowner at the Doctors Pond has made a great effort to widen the pond and to create an environment which should be much more conducive for wildlife.

9. Any Planning Matters:

-P/ADV/2026/03271: The Cross Stores: Display 1 no. LED illuminated sign and replace shopfront window graphics: COPC had objected to this application as the shop is situated within the conservation area and the signage was not in keeping with its rural village surroundings.

10.Finance: The Clerk had circulated the Finance report for September 2026.

The following payments were approved:

-Clerks wage at agreed rate/ PAYE/NI £362.08 (2 months)/ Bus shelter Clean £160.00/Google Workspace £28.00/ Bank charges £8.50/ Cloudy IT £135.36/ BDO LLP Audit charges £378.00/ Okeford Builders Retention release £900.00.

-2027 – 2028 Budget – The Clerk to commence the budgeting for the next financial year and circulate proposals before the November meeting.

10. -Any Other Business.

-The Boundary Commission are looking at ward boundaries with a view to amending them before the next election in 2029. This was to ensure that Dorset Councillors were representing an equal number of residents. The proposal is that Child Okeford's ward would change and be grouped in with Shillingstone and surrounding villages, rather than Pimperne, Durweston and Stourpaine.

-Elderley Digital Champions- a successful scheme in Shaftesbury, Stur and Sherborne, where elderly residents are supported with digital issues – This item to be put onto the next agenda.

The date for the next meeting was confirmed to be Monday 2nd November 2026.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.14pm