

Minutes of the Meeting of Church Knowle Parish Council
held in the Furzebrook Village Hall
at 6:30pm on Tuesday 13th January, 2026

PRESENT

Council Members:

Cllr Mr Ian Gilbert [IG] (Chair)
Cllr Mrs Jayne Wilson [JW] (Vice Chair)
Cllr Mrs Judi Newns [JN]
Cllr Mr Derek Burt [DB]
Cllr Mrs Hazel Parker [HP]
Cllr Mr Howard Fry [HF]

Clerk to the Parish Council:

Mr Andrew Parsons [AP]

C. K Parishioners & Members of the public:

16 Members of the public.

Dorset County Councillor:

Cllr Ben Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

001.26 Apologies for non-attendance were received from Cllrs Slack and Grice..

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

002.26 There were no declarations of interest. The meeting was recorded by the Chairman.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

003.26 It was noted that the Dorset Highways gritting lorry had not gritted the roads in Church Knowle during icy weather. As well as increasing the risk to ordinary motorists these were on a school bus route and should be given especial attention.

004.26 People attending St Peter's Church for special services are parking on the blind bend by the Church. The proper place to park is at the Village Hall which has plenty of room and is free. There is a sign on the Church gate informing people of this..

005.26 Many of the public attendees are interested in the planning application and it was decided that there would be a public discussion in the Planning part of the agenda before the Parish Council made its recommendation.

VACANCIES FOR PARISH COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBER

006.26 There is still a vacancy on the Parish Council. There have been no new applications to join the Parish Council and the vacancies will continue to be advertised as usual.

REPORT BY DORSET COUNCILLOR

Dorset Councillor Ben Wilson gave his report on matters especially relevant to Church Knowle.

007.26 He said a proposed signage for the speed limit in the Village had been sent to the Clerk. The Clerk undertook to forward this to the Council and give an instruction to proceed.

008.26 The county budget for Dorset has been prepared and will result in a 4.99% increase in Council Tax for the coming year.

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9th DECEMBER 2025

009.26 The minutes that had been previously circulated were read. It was resolved that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Passed unanimously.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

010.26 - No matters arising -.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

011.26 Cllr Newns said that the Neighbourhood Plan was progressing and that there will be a meeting in the New Inn meeting room for farmers and those with an interest in the agricultural sector.

PLANNING MATTERS

The planning application deferred from last month was considered, starting with submissions from members of the public.

012.26 P/FUL/2025/06766 Convert unused building to Garden Centre (M.Jones)

013.26 It was reported that a meeting in the Furzebrook Village Hall attended by 35 parishioners opposed to the application had been held on 5th January and that was strong community sentiment in this parish and also in Arne against the proposed Garden Centre. The Chairman asked for a show of hands from the public attendees and 13 opposed the application, 1 was for it and there were 2 abstentions.

014.26 A member of the planning consultants (CL Planning) spoke in support of the application saying:

- This is a sympathetic conversion of a derelict building
- A transport consultant has assessed the capacity of the highway and the proposed car park and found them to have sufficient capacity.
- This application should be considered entirely independently of the Blue Pool business.

015.26 Various members of the public spoke in opposition to the application saying:

- A new garden centre added nothing to the community and would commercially damage and likely affect the viability of existing nearby cafes and garden centres.
- The site is in very sensitive heathland site and the Purbeck Plan specifically lists development as significantly damaging this ecosystem and advises against it.
- No consideration has been given to reptiles and amphibians in the ecological report.
- The site is known to be a home for bats and the applicant has undertaken recent work on the same site with no bat survey or certificate.
- The road is not suitable for a busy commercial site and cannot safely handle the increased traffic.
- The quiet enjoyment of their homes will be seriously affected by a commercial centre. This is a quiet rural residential road.

016.26 Cllr Newns (special responsibility for planning) presented an analysis of the application and a letter to be sent to the Dorset Planning Officer on behalf of the Parish Council. Points raised included:

- The increase in traffic and visitor numbers will affect nearby residential properties.
- The access arrangements for commercial vehicles are poorly planned with inadequate turning space.
- The sewage facilities, being an existing septic tank, are inadequate for a commercial use.
- The site is in a Super National Nature Reserve.
- Natural England has objected on ecological grounds.
- The long term ecology of the Heath must be considered.
- A condition must be imposed limiting this development to a garden centre use only.

017.26 The Parish Council resolved to oppose the application, request that it be put before the Planning Committee and to send the letter from Cllr Newns as representing the views of the Parish Council and the community.

Resolution passed, all in favour with one abstention.

THE PLAYING FIELD

018.26 - Nothing to report -

HIGHWAYS MATTERS

019.26 The signs for the Cotness ridge have been installed.

THE CORFE RIVER

020.26 - Nothing to report. -

THE CEMETERY

021.26 The application and design for a memorial tablet for cremation plot of David Pierce was unanimously approved

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

• ACCOUNTS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL FROM 10th DECEMBER to C.O.B. 13th JANUARY 2026

022.26 The accounts were examined and approved unanimously

• SETTLEMENT OF INVOICES PAYABLE AT THE MEETING

023.26 The Chairman and Clerk presented the invoices payable. These were examined and the resolution to accept and pay the invoices was passed unanimously. All of the invoices were duly paid.

• APPLICATION FOR GRANTS

024.26 - No applications -

CORRESPONDENCE

025.26 The Clerk reported that he had received several detailed letters by email from parishioners objecting to the planning application P/FUL/2025/06766. These have been printed and given to Cllr Ben Wilson to submit to the Dorset Planning Department for consideration.

026.26 Cllr Parker said that a parishioner had brought to her attention a notice in the Public Telephone Box in Church Knowle Village saying that this box would be removed if it was not adopted. The Clerk said that the box was a listed building, the property of BT and that as such BT was obliged to maintain it. He said that he had inspected this box and the equipment was working, producing dial tone and able to be used for emergency calls. It was not however possible to make outgoing calls from the box even using the instructions provided.

The Clerk is to write to BT informing them that Parish has no plans to adopt the box and that it remains their property with the responsibility for maintaining the equipment and the structure. Both are currently in good order.

OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DEEMS OF IMPORTANCE

027.26 The recent storm Goretti has produced locally winds in excess of 50 mph. It was noted that the Blue Pool continued to operate its Illuminate attraction during this and that prepaid tickets would be lost on non-attendance. The regulations regarding keeping attractions open during hazardous weather conditions should be investigated, possibly with reference to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Cllr Wilson said he would research this with Dorset Council.

NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

028.26 The next meeting of the Church Knowle Parish Council will be held at the Furzebrook Village Hall on Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 6-30pm.

029.25 There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:05pm

Approved by Chairman :..... Date:.....