

**Spetisbury Parish Council**

**Annual Meeting**

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Minutes**

**1. Apologies**

CLlr Dunhill, Andrew Brown, Carolyn Cousens, North Dorset NPT.  
18 residents in attendance.

**2. Spetisbury Annual Meeting 2026 Chairman's report (CLlr Bew)**

Welcome everyone and thank you for coming

I want to just take a few minutes to run through some of the things that been happening in the village during the last 12months.

\*There were lots of events organised by villagers, too many to go through them all but two of the highlights of the year were the splendid Country Day and the popular SODS pantomime.

The PC helped the country day by contributing to the security costs that are now a requirement of this kind of event. The weather helped make it a wonderful day and it was great to see so many visitors as well as villagers attending the event. Thank you, John Atkins and the team, for all of the hard work and it's a shame that it might be the last for a while.

Lots of people enjoyed the pantomime which provided the normal level of corny laughs. Thank you Mark and his team for your annual commitment to this event.

\*I think we are all grateful to Councillor Rutherford for investing in the new Old Parlour which feels like a real community asset. Also thank you Robert for allowing the installation of the milk machine which provide pasteurised milk from the dairy farm on the Kingston Lacy Estate. The machine can always take cash but I understand card payments are available again.

At certain periods at the start of the year The Old Parlour was like a pub on an island but hopefully over the next few months it will go from strength to strength and be enjoyed by villagers, cyclists and walkers.

\*On that final point I think everyone is disappointed at the temporary closure of the footpath at Keynston Mill. It was helpful that Dorset Council were able to send James Statham the project manager to the March PC meeting to explain why it will remain closed until the late summer and to answer villager's questions. We still need to find someone that could take on the Rights of Way Officer role so if you think you might be interested then please speak to Steve the clerk.

\*The community speed watch team has been out checking on the speed of motorists through the village. Thank you, Martin, for setting this up for the PC and for Winston taking it on with his team. Incidentally Winston could do with a few more volunteers to join the team that would be prepared to give up a couple of hours from time to time.

\*I know that villagers get frustrated that how long it can sometimes take to get things done in the village. Items like the fallen 40MPH sign at the entrance to the village as an example. Any items like

this are reported to Dorset Highways but due to their limited resources can take some time to be rectified. For example we asked for the curb to be raised by the gap in the wall adjacent to the Primary School as water would run off the highway and flood the footpath. We are grateful it is completed but it took DC a few attempts and over a year.

\*At the last meeting we reported that we would be applying for a 20mph zone adjacent to the school. The application has been ready for sometime but can only be submitted once Dorset carries out an updated speed survey. This has been requested so watch this space.

\*The PC has again made donations of over £2000 from the community fund to local causes like the village fireworks the air ambulance (I didn't deliberately group these two together). Others are maintenance of the church yard, Blandford Leisure Centre, Poppy Appeal, Citizens Advice, the weekly table tennis and the local Scout group

\*A couple of other items funded by the PC were the signs in the water meadows and a new box for the Blackmoor Vale magazines. Thankyou to Mary at Black Dog Graphics and Harry Dipple for sorting these.

\*My thanks to the Station Project for making this a nice area for villagers, the team that help manage the Mead, Anne Taylor for making newcomers feel welcome with the welcome packs and all of the others that give up their time to make Spetisbury a lovely place to live.

Finally my thanks to Councillor Barry Cooper from DC, my fellow councillors, those in the traffic working party and last but not least Steve Pardey the village clerk .

Stephen Dunhill

Chairman Spetisbury Parish Council.

### 3. **Neighbourhood Policing Team** (Steve Pardey)

Crime Statistics over the past 12 months show a total of 140 investigated crimes in our area. These include 51 cases involving violence & sexual offences, 25 of anti-social behaviour, 14 public order offences, 13 criminal damage and 12 burglaries.

There was 1 burglary in Spetisbury, 5 crimes in Charlton Marshall and 6 in Blandford St Mary.

### 4. **Ward Councillor's Report** (Cllr Barry Cooper)

Cllr Cooper reported that he has been in discussions about the broken 40mph signs, safety fencing at the land by the Church and the flooding issues at West End. Overall, he stated that there were very few issues for him to deal with.

### 5. **St John the Baptist Church** (Clive Tory)

The Rev Carolyn Cousens is currently on sabbatical until Easter. Thanks are due to the Parish Council for their continued financial support.

Work on the bell tower has commenced, the total cost will be about £110k. The community need to raise 50% of this and the remainder will come from grants.

Fundraising and other events included: Bonfire/fireworks, Easter Egg Hunt, the very successful coffee mornings, plant sale, PCC tea/coffee & cakes at the Country Day, fete & dog show, Ride & Stride, Harvest Supper (Over 60 residents attended), Christmas Fayre and the Candlelit Carol Service.

Thanks to the Rev Caroln, Winston & Lorna Leese for music & The Well productions, Molly Edwards and the rest of the team, the PCC & Stephen Nicholls for his photography.

#### 6. Spetisbury Primary School (Cllr Cheesley)

The school continues to be a busy and positive place for pupils and staff. We currently have 189 pupils on roll from a planned admission number of 210, and we have recently heard that the Reception class for September 2026 is expected to be full. This is very encouraging news, particularly at a time when many schools are experiencing falling pupil numbers.

This year the school has been focusing on continuing to strengthen teaching and learning, particularly in writing and in the early years. Staff have been working closely together to ensure that children develop strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics while also enjoying a broad and engaging curriculum.

As a church school, collective worship and opportunities for reflection remain an important part of daily life at Spetisbury, and the children are increasingly involved in leading these times. The school is grateful for the close relationship it continues to enjoy with the parish and wider church community.

The school also values its place within the village. Children benefit greatly from opportunities to take part in local events and to learn about the history and life of the parish. They particularly enjoyed performing their dance and steel drum music at Spetisbury Country Day, which was a wonderful opportunity to share their talents with the wider community. We also enjoy welcoming members of the Spetisbury Manor community into school for events such as our Harvest Tea, which the children always look forward to and value greatly. These experiences help them understand that they are part of a wider community and encourage them to take pride in where they live.

During the flooding earlier this year, the area around the school experienced some disruption and we recognise that this placed additional pressure on parking within the village, with some families needing to park further away and walk to school. We appreciate the patience and understanding shown by residents during that time. As always, we are keen to work positively with the community to look after the local area, particularly where verges or spaces may have been affected by increased parking.

The school is pleased to be able to make its car park available for local residents when flooding from the riverside causes concern, and it is also regularly used by walkers enjoying the surrounding countryside. We are proud that the school can play a small role in supporting the wider community and are always happy to work together to ensure the village environment is cared for by everyone who uses it.

Looking ahead, the school would be very happy to support small community projects where possible; this might include helping to care for damaged verges, organising litter picks, or supporting other ways of giving something back to the village. If anyone in the community has ideas about how the school and pupils might help with this, the school would be very pleased to hear from them. We would also welcome continued conversations with the parish council and the wider community about road safety outside the school, including the possibility of introducing a 20 mph speed limit during school times to support the safety of pupils, families and residents.

Finally, we would like to thank the parish council for its continued interest in and support of the school. Spetisbury Primary is proud to serve the village community and looks forward to continuing that partnership in the months ahead.

7. **Village Hall Management Committee** (Martin Kerlogue)

There has been a reduction in overall usage and the committee room is very underused. The committee are still working with a surplus of funds. The gas supply will be removed on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. There are two main areas of concern – the flooring in the main hall and the committee room wall. The Parish Council have both these items under review.

8. **A350 Traffic Group** (Jon Rayner)

Road safety continues to be a concern, speeding traffic is a major issue alongside lack of pavements in some areas.

The static speed camera has been activated over 1000 times and the average speed recorded is 37mph.

There have been 4 near misses recorded on the website.

A meeting was held with Dorset Council concerning road safety at the School.

Community Speedwatch (Winston Leese)

A thank you to Martin Kerlogue for his efforts in setting the group up and thank you to the team of volunteers who continue to run the sessions. Any new members are welcome. Winston attended the Speedwatch Annual Conference where it was reported that, at the end of 2025, there had been 1600 sessions in Dorset resulting in 13456 letters being sent out. 460 drivers received a 2<sup>nd</sup> letter and 28 third letters were sent out.

9. **SODS** (Cllr Cheesley)

The first pantomime was performed in 1988. Thanks to all the participants, on-stage & off, and to all audiences. More volunteers have joined the ranks and this year's panto is Jack & the Beanstalk. £1000 was donated to Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance.

10. **The Mead** (Jeremy Moss)

Recent flooding has not been as high as previous years. The first mowing of the pathways has taken place together with pruning of the Laurels. The apple trees will need to be pruned. There has been an abundance of sloes and blackberries. There are some County-wide important species of flora and fauna present in the Mead and Dorset Wildlife Trust have given a favourable report.

11. **Any Other Business**

The next Annual meeting will be held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2027.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.