

The Parish of Donhead St Mary

Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 6th May 2026 at 7pm
The New Remembrance Hall, Charlton.

Present:

- 8 Members of the Public (all 8 also being parish councillors)
- Wiltshire Councillor – Cllr Gerry Murray
- The Parish Clerk – Simon Pritchard

Minutes:

1. Welcome by the Meeting Chair:

The Chair of the Parish Meeting is always the current Chair of the Parish Council, if they are attending the meeting. Cllr Brake was in attendance and welcomed everyone to what is an open meeting of the parishioners.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2025:

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 7th May 2025 had been circulated at the time to members of the Parish Council and were available from the Parish Council's website.
The meeting adopted the minutes.

3. Report from Parish Council Chairperson:

Cllr Brake had issued a written report:

Following the Parish Council election process in May 2025 eight Parish Councillors were appointed, there being only eight people standing for eleven available seats. At a subsequent meeting two former parish councillors who had not stood for re-election came forward and they were formally co-opted onto the council. There remains one vacant seat which can be filled by co-option if a suitable applicant comes forward.

It has been a very full and busy working year for the Parish Council. As will be seen from the following report much has been achieved although there is always more to be done. Many of the projects completed this year were started in previous years, reflecting the fact that the Parish often has to work with, and through others, to get things done.

Ludwell Flooding

The most significant and concerning event this year was the sudden and unforeseen flooding of seven properties along the A30 in Ludwell on the 27th of January 2025. The alarm was initially raised about 6.30am by an affected resident. Cllr Lin Walker, the Parish Flood Warden was soon on the scene and worked to obtain assistance from the emergency services and give support to affected residents. The Grove Arms was also partially flooded but staff opened the doors to flooded residents and emergency responders and ensured that plentiful refreshments were freely available. This generous action has been commended by all those affected.

The flooding was triggered by intense rainfall in the previous 24 hours, exacerbated by blockages in the stream where it passed under the A30 causing an upstream build-up of storm water.

Following on from this disastrous event the Flood Warden convened a meeting for all affected parties to identify as to why the flooding happened so rapidly, where the initial problems arose and the responsibilities of riparian and bank owners to ensure a clear riverbank and watercourse. This is ongoing work and the Parish Council recorded thanks to Cllr Lin Walker for her hard work and commitment to help all those impacted by this dreadful incident.

Roads and Highways

A considerable part of the Parish Councils work is addressing the many roads and highways issues which arise within the parish. With the support of our Wiltshire Councillor, Gerry Murray, and his predecessor Richard Budden, some of the major maintenance backlog to minor roads has been addressed and some long overdue repairs have been undertaken. That said, there is still a catalogue of outstanding work and the PC continues to press for action.

The PC has invested in Speed Indicator Devices (SID's) and these have been effective in achieving mean speed reductions particularly on the A30 through Middle Coombe and Ludwell. A scheme to upgrade road signage and road markings in Middle Coombe was funded by the Council and has added to the effectiveness of the speed reduction measures.

Cllr Paul Dewey manages the SIDs, collates the statistics and liaises with the police and the highway authority to ensure there is effective use of the information. This is invaluable work, undertaken by him, for the benefit of the community, and we express our appreciation to him for the way he carries out this important task.

Safety signage work at the A350/ Wincombe Lane junction has been carried out although we are still awaiting the associated road markings to be put down.

Ongoing highways projects include pursuing a reduction of the 50mph speed limit on the A30 through Coombe to 40mph and seeking a weight limit for HGV's using Dennis Lane. Both these projects are currently under active discussion with Wiltshire Council as is a proposal to provide village gateway signs for Charlton to remind road users that they are passing through a village area.

Planning matters

A major part of the PC's work is responding to consultations from Wiltshire Planning on planning applications and for proposed tree work in Conservation Areas under Tree Preservation Orders. Where necessary, site visits by Councillors take place to inform decisions. In the past year the Parish Council has responded to over 24 consultation requests.

Dorset Council published a draft Housing Local Plan last summer which suggested expansion of the housing allocation for Shaftesbury. A formal response to these proposals was made concerning the potential impact on this Parish.

Open spaces, Cemeteries and Play areas

The parish council is responsible for the care and management of the Cemetery and church yard at St John's including grounds maintenance and boundaries.

In this past year the ownership of play area at Coronation Drive was transferred to the Parish from Wiltshire Council including a payment to secure improvements and future maintenance. Upgrades and additional equipment have been provided at this location using Solar Farm funding with the provision focussed on the needs of younger children and families. Two large items of play equipment have also been installed at the Remembrance Field Play area for older children.

Routine grounds maintenance works and safety inspections continue to be overseen by our Parish Clerk to ensure that we fully meet our legal obligations. We commend the way in which Simon Pritchard, the Parish Clerk, carries out this essential work and manages the formal work of the Parish Council.

Roger Brake - Parish Council Chairperson

4. Report from Wiltshire Councillor:

New Wiltshire Council Waste Strategy:

New obligations for Principal Authorities that come into effect fully in 2027 will mean that more food waste will need to be recycled. More needs to be recycled, less incinerated. Wiltshire Council will be taxed on carbon emissions. Current recycling rate is 40%, target is 60%. The change will see a weekly collection introduced. The recycling of all other materials will remain on fortnightly collections. The landfill collection will move to every three weeks. Studies have shown that 50% of the contents of the landfill bins can be recycled. Will soon be able to recycle soft plastics as part of the kerbside collection.

Shaftesbury Recycling Centre:

Now have to book and if you are a Wiltshire resident, pay £8.50
Local Wiltshire Councillors have been campaigning for local Wiltshire residents to once again have free access. Dorset Council have quoted £200,000 per year to Wiltshire Council to make this happen. Have suggested that Wiltshire Council buy a block of 500 visits at £10 per visit and see what the uptake is. This has yet to be accepted. The leader of Wiltshire council has said he will personally become involved if a resolution cannot be found.

Fly Tipping:

Wiltshire has one of the best records amongst the neighbouring authorities for taking action against fly tippers. Currently, reported instances are stable.

Local Highways Resurfacing:

Have been asked to provide a list of roads that need resurfacing to the highways department. There will be more roads put forward than there is capacity to do at the same time. A highways engineer would visit and assess the road; the worst ones will be done first.

Community Lottery:

A Wiltshire Council supported local lottery is being set up. Local organisations will be able to apply for funding from it.

Q: are you aware what is going on at Kingsbury Cottage (A30 Birdbush)? Large trees cut down, large static caravan now onsite, new entrance onto the highway
A: aware of the works, know that Highways are investigating the new highways entrance.

5. Reports from Members of the Parish Council with Portfolios:

Wiltshire Council Area Board – Cllr Brake:

Three meetings attended in the last year; useful meetings.

New Remembrance Hall – Cllr Adams:

Nothing to report

Donhead Sports Club – Cllr Dewey:

New roof installed. The football club won the league. Ladies' loos refitted, Gents loos still to do

Remembrance Field Trustees – The Chairperson & Cllr Dewey:

One meeting this year. Site visit planned soon. Fibre broadband yet to be installed.

Footpaths / Rights of Way – Cllr Rogers:

Nothing to report

The Parish Steward – Cllr Feltham

The Parish Steward has not been around for most of the winter as he was taken out of the area onto other duties.

Highway Matters (inc LHFIG) – Cllr Hibbert:

Having no luck in finding the LHFIG meeting dates, not on the Wiltshire Council website.

Flood Warden – Cllr Walker:

Meetings attended in Salisbury & Warminster, have also attended online meetings all put on by Wiltshire Council. The Fire service is not being helpful in giving information about the Ludwell flood and what they did with the gates under the bridge. Was promised a meeting with Wiltshire Council Highways people as well to cover Ludwell, but this hasn't happened.

Snow Warden – Cllr Rossiter

Machine now put away for the summer.

National Landscape Matters – Cllr Fortescue

Encouragement is being given for planning to be done properly and in keeping with the area.

6. Open Public Parish Forum:

No further matters were raised.

Closed 19:48