

**UPPER MARSHWOOD
VALE
PARISH COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2011

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council qualifies as a 'Power of Well Being' Local Authority under the power of Section 77 of the Local Government and Public Involvement In Health Act 2007

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council is a grouped Council consisting of the parishes of Stoke Abbott, Marshwood, Bettiscombe and Pilsdon.

The Council has 12 councillors and one member of staff. The member of staff is the Clerk to the Council, who is akin to the Chief Executive.

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council was one of the first councils in Dorset to obtain the Power of Well Being. To achieve this recognition the clerk had to undertake an examination and councillors had to attend a training session.

The Chairman of the Council until May 2011 Was Councillor Robert Wyatt. He was responsible for introducing and co-ordinating the Parish Lengthsman Scheme. Once again the council were one of the first in Dorset to introduce the scheme. The council uses the services of a self employed handyman who undertakes work on behalf of the council. His services are shared by Char Valley Parish Council, and recently Beaminster Town Council also joined the scheme. The scheme receives sponsorship from Dorset County Council.

By having this scheme works like gulley and drain clearing can be done far quicker, and indeed cheaper, than sending someone out from a central location. Other works have included clearing of verges, footpaths and looking after street furniture.

Councillor Wyatt receives requests from the other councils on a Monday morning, and from this information he sets the rota for the Lengthsman for the week.

Councillor Wyatt believes that a great deal of the flooding problems in the area have been reduced by the introduction of this scheme. The County Council are also very pleased with the progress made since the commencement of this scheme.

The Lengthsman also ensures that the gritbins are in place ready for the winter and has assisted in keeping rural roads gritted.

Councillor Wyatt feels that the council has made a great deal of progress during the last few years. He was pleased to chair a meeting of volunteers to look at the possibility of having a Parish Plan. This group worked hard to obtain the opinions of the local community and to produce the Parish Plan.

The Council opened its own website which lists the dates of the council meetings and allows access to council minutes. It lists the names and contact details of councillors.

The council has recently introduced a quarterly newsletter that aims to keep the local community up to date with what is going on in the area. The first edition was delivered to everyone, but it is hoped that in the future email addresses will be provided so that costs can be cut down.

The council is now working hard to be one of only a few councils in Dorset which have gained 'Quality Council' status. Councillor Wyatt stated that this really would be a feather in our cap if we can achieve this status.

During the year the council decided that it would lease some woodlands known as Little Giant Woods from the Woodlands Trust. This will ensure that this valuable area is managed locally.

Councillor Wyatt decided to stand down as chairman of the council at the Annual Council Meeting in May and his place has been taken by the former Vice Chairman, Councillor Matthew Bowditch.

All the 12 councillors were elected in May, although there was no need for an election.

The Council meets on the third Thursday in the months of January, March, May, July, September and November. The May meeting is the Annual Council meeting. In addition to this planning committee meetings are held as required during the months that a council meeting is not scheduled. The Annual Parish meeting, which is really a meeting for the parishioners, is held in April.

Two of the council meetings are held in Stoke Abbott, with the others being held in Bettiscombe, there being no village halls in Marshwood or Pilsdon.

FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL

The Council received an unqualified audit for their 2009/10 accounts and the 2010/11 accounts have been passed by the Internal Auditor and we await the conclusion of the Audit Commission.

As can be seen below the council works on a fairly lean budget, however, it feels that it operates under Best Value principles to ensure that it does what it can for the area that it represents.

The following figures are taken from the document submitted to the Audit Commission for the year ending 31st March 2011. The precept is a demand on West Dorset District Council by the Parish Council under the Local Government Act 1972.

Brought Forward	4315
Precept	6000
Other Receipts	11756
TOTAL	<u>22071</u>
Staff Costs	2447
Other Payments	10106
Total	<u>12553</u>
C/Forward to 2011/12	9518
Total Fixed Assets	5033

The Council had maintained a precept of £6000 for a number of years, however it was decided to increase this to £6,200 for the financial year commencing 1st April 2011. Whilst the carried forward total may look large for a small council the amount includes earmarked funds relating to the Parish Lengthsman Scheme. It is also good financial practice to hold a reasonable amount of reserves for emergency projects and situations that may arise.

During the year grants were provided to the Bridport and District CAB (£100), East Devon and West Dorset Ring and Ride (£50). Funds were also provided to Stoke Abbott and Marshwood Parochial Church Councils towards the upkeep of their cemeteries.

During 2010 the Council became members of the Bridport and District Tourism Association.

BUDGET APRIL 2011 UNTIL MARCH 2012

The budget is agreed in November each year due to a demand by West Dorset District Council to have all precept requirements to them by early December. The precept is made to the council by the district council in two payments in April and October.

The Council does not own any property other than the War Memorial, notice boards and a number of gritbins.

Expenditure	
Staff costs	2596
Subscriptions	200
Insurance	340
Office	266
Training	200
Audit	180
Hire	80
Churchyard Grants	450
Other Grants	500
Lengthsman Scheme	14000
Website	150
Contingency	238
Total	19200

Income	
Precept	6200
Dorset County Council	10000
Other Councils	3000
	19200

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Location
July 21st	Full Council	Bettiscombe
September 15th	Full Council	Stoke Abbott
November 17th	Full Council	Bettiscombe
January 19th 2012	Full Council	Stoke Abbott
March 15th	Full Council	Bettiscombe
May 16th	Full Council	Stoke Abbott

Meetings of the Parish Council until the event of the 2011/12 Civic year are listed above.

The meetings normally commence at 7.30pm and include a Democratic Period where the public have an opportunity to ask questions, make statements. The length of this session is at the discretion of the chairman.

Planning Applications

The Parish Council is not a planning authority but receives planning applications for the four parishes to comment on.

Planning applications are dealt with in one of three ways:

At the General Council meeting

At a planning meeting held between Council meetings

By delegated authority

The Planning Authority normally only has eight weeks to deal with a planning application, therefore the time period for this council to make their comments is limited.

When sending a comment to the Planning Authority it would be useful if you would also forward a copy to the clerk of the council.

From the May 2011 meeting of the Council the Chairman of the Council is Councillor Mathew Bowditch

Chairman Cllr Matthew Bowditch
Stoke Abbott Stokewater Farm
Councillor Stoke Abbott
DT8 3JL

Tel: 01308 862758

Elected Members from May 2011

Cllr Fred Bailey Meadowrise, Bettiscombe DT6 6HP	Marshwood	01308 868015
Cllr Ali Cameron Blue Haze, Marshwood, Bridport DT6 5QB	Marshwood	01297 678546
Cllr Wendy Nightingale Hillside Cottage, Marshwood DT6 5QF	Marshwood	01297 678165
Cllr Trevor Richards Deer Park Farm Marshwood Vale DT6 5PZ	Marshwood	01308 868848
Cllr Roy Warburton Shave Cross Inn, Shave Cross DT6 6HW	Marshwood	01308 868358
Cllr Roland Bugler Vale End, Lower House Farm, Bettiscombe DT6 5NT	Bettiscombe	01308 867796
Cllr Michael Rowe Waterhouse Farm, Bettiscombe DT6 5NT	Bettiscombe	01308 868726
Cllr John McClellan Hunts Holme, Monkwood DT6 5PF	Pilsdon	01308 867410
Cllr Christopher Rabbetts Gerrards Farm, Pilsdon DT6 5PA	Pilsdon	01308 867474
Cllr David Borradaile Lewesdon House, Stoke Abbott	Stoke Abbott	01308 868424
Cllr Robert Wyatt Blackney Farm, Blackney DT6 5PB	Stoke Abbott	01308 868249

The Clerk to the Council
John Vanderwolfe, Chartered MCIP
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