

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF CHARMOUTH
HELD ON TUESDAY 19 MAY 2026 AT ST ANDREW'S COMMUNITY HALL CLUB ROOM

5 electors, 7 Councillors, Dorset Councillor Belinda Bawden and the Parish Clerk were present.

1. The Chair, Cllr Jane Bremner, welcomed Charmouth parishioners to the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Noel and Cllr Sally Roberts.
3. The Chair explained that the meeting had been advertised in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 using the Statutory Notice.
4. The Minutes of the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting had been displayed on the website and were also available around the room. The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.
5. Matters arising from the minutes – There were no matters arising from the minutes.
6. Councillor introduced themselves and explained their responsibilities on the Council (Jane Bremner, Melanie Harvey, Julie Leah, Katie Moore, Martin Sayers, Judith Sheppard and Mike Smith).
7. Report from Dorset Councillor Belinda Bawden – Belinda highlighted the wonderful work of local Councils and that they get an undeserved bad name sometimes. She feels that it is a privilege to be elected to represent the Lyme Regis and Charmouth Ward at Dorset Council.

Belinda went on to highlight the following current issues:

- How Charmouth had rallied behind the proposed closure of the Fire Station – the particular hard work of Lisa Clarke was acknowledged;
- Future Coast Charmouth – ongoing pilot scheme to help communities adapt to future coastal change;
- How DC is currently in a very good place politically;
- That three year funding statements are back in place;
- That DC is winning awards for national initiatives;
- How she is focusing on young people and ensuring they are acknowledged in communities;
- Dorset COP in November and the Youth COP;

Belinda stated that it is very rewarding when things are achieved and she thanked the bodies that help make that happen.

Comments received:

- Surprise that there weren't more people present about the proposed fire station closure.

8. Reports from Chairs of Parish Council Committees:

- Foreshore Committee (Judith Sheppard, Chair) – Judith updated the meeting on the following items from the Foreshore Committee:
 - Swim buoys and that it is hoped they will be in place again this year;
 - Ongoing programme to replace beach huts;
 - Reintroduction of recycling bins and the hope to increase these;
 - Replacement and repair of picnic benches;
 - Future Coast Charmouth (FCC) and that a design for new beach access steps is eagerly awaited;
 - Recent cliff falls and the swift reopening thanks to the new law brought into force following the opening of the King Charles III coastal path;
 - The newly commissioned outdoor interactive painting by local artist Donna Goold for which the Council has paid for the materials – the painting is from a photo taken through the Coastsnap cradle installed at the Foreshore by FCC to enable uploading of photos taken for Plymouth University to analyse. The unveiling of the painting will take place on Monday 25 May 2026 at 11am – all welcome.

Judith thanked all the maintenance staff for their ongoing hard work in keeping the Foreshore so tidy.

Comments/questions received:

- Why the benches at the Foreshore had been taken in so early last year – Judith confirmed that a storm was forecast but the position had been noted and this won't happen again;

- How lethal the beach access steps actually are – Judith stated that the Parish Council are constantly repairing the steps and there is a notice at the top indicating their unevenness. She reiterated that it is very much hoped that FCC will install new steps within the current financial year.
- Playing Field, Cemetery and Street Management Committee (Katie Moore, Chair) – Katie updated the meeting on the following items from the Playing Field, Cemetery and Street Management Committee:
 - Ongoing scrutiny of parking, speeding and road markings in the village;
 - The recent survey regarding the proposal to introduce a 20mph zone in The Street and Lower Sea Lane as well as the proposed installation of a Speed Indicator Device. Martin updated the meeting on the figures from the survey and that these would be discussed further before an application is made to DC;
 - The planned upgrading of the pelican crossing;
 - The visits of the DC Parking Officers daily during the season on their way to Lyme Regis;
 - The upgrading of the pavilion facilities;
 - The plans to replace the Events Shed;
 - The commitment to Real Time Bus Indicators at the “Church” bus stops;
 - The new LB1 bus service running from Lyme Regis to Bridport on Friday and Saturday evenings from May to September.

Comments/questions received:

- Concern about the illegal parking – Belinda reported that she had managed to secure a visit to Charmouth and Lyme from the DC Portfolio Holder for parking and she is awaiting a date.
- Planning Committee (Julie Leah, Chair) – Julie explained that the Committee have the ability to comment on applications only but have no powers. All comments made on planning applications refer to submissions from neighbours as well as the Neighbourhood Plan which, as stated last year, is critical as a reference document and can be viewed on the Parish Council’s website under “Policies”. The Committee also comment on Tree Applications and the comments are being listened to by DC with action being taken. Julie reiterated that sometimes due to timescales, applications are dealt with by delegated authority if not considered contentious. However a special meeting will always be arranged if it is felt necessary.

Comments/questions received:

- There was concern about a very large tree at the rear of Sovereign land in Wesley Close and Julie undertook to visit as Tree Warden.

Belinda mentioned that she is on the Western and Southern Area Planning Committee and the Strategic Overall Committee and therefore she doesn’t comment on applications to enable commenting at the meetings and avoiding being predetermined.

- Finance and General Purposes Committee (Jane Bremner, Vice Chair) – Jane reported in Peter Noel’s absence that it has been a good year for the Council with all properties occupied and the income from the Car Park reaching the budgeted figure.

As explained last year lots of beach huts have been changed for better quality products which have shown in recent years that they survive the weather in better condition and therefore cost less in the longer term.

Every year when budgets are worked out for the next year, all Council owned buildings are looked at to anticipate any maintenance work that may need to be undertaken over and above the normal routine maintenance. This helps to ensure that the assets are maintained to a good standard while managing costs responsibly for the benefit of parishioners.

The Council is audited twice a year by an “internal auditing” company who scrutinize its accounts in detail and then the end of year annual return, together with the internal audit report, is sent to an external auditor for further checks.

9. Report from the Chair of the Parish Council – Jane Bremner spoke about:

- The hard work of the Councillors who all do as much as they are able depending on their individual circumstances. She thanked them and wanted them to know the important and worthwhile work they do is appreciated. She stated that they are fortunate too that for the majority of the time they have the support of the community.
- There are still two Councillor vacancies and enthusiastic people are always welcome – particularly some from a sector of the community not currently represented. Perhaps someone younger to help bring new perspectives.

- The Council is very pleased to support and work alongside the many other groups within the village, including the recently reformed Youth Club, the Community Library, the Events Committee, the Scout Group, Lyme Regis Youth Football Club, National Coastwatch Institute, River Char Action Group, Charmouth Allotments and Charmouth Traders. We also hope to see Charmouth Football Club back in action next season.
- That further information can be found on the Future Coast Charmouth website under the Mid Programme Project Update.
- The background to the Environment Working Group and how that now that environmental considerations are firmly embedded across all Council activities, the Environment Working Group held its final meeting this month. Many projects have been achieved over the 5 years and, with the help of many in the village, lead to Charmouth receiving Gold in the South West in Bloom Competition last year. Advertisement will commence shortly regarding this year's entry.....
- Achievements for this year....
 - New bridge installed at the Cemetery
 - Upgraded picnic benches at the Foreshore
 - Replacement grey beach huts
 - Housing Needs Survey delivered to every household in the village
 - Commemoration of VE Day
 - Contributions to county-wide issues and consultations, particularly the Draft Local Plan which was compiled by the planning committee with contribution from others in the village. Available to view on our website
 - Already mentioned SWiB Gold
- As well as ongoing projects.....
 - Increasing biodiversity at the Cemetery
 - Refurbishment plans for the Pavilion
 - Consideration of a new Events Shed
 - Installation of Real Time Bus Indicators
 - Continued engagement with Future Coast Charmouth
 - Roof improvements to Elms roof
 - Keep the village tidy and in good order and a pleasant place to live
 - Aim to improve recycling and manage the marine waste including liaison with other bodies to recycle as much as possible – volunteers are always welcome to help with this and other projects.
- Being a man down with the Facilities Manager being very poorly. Best wishes are sent to him and his family at this most difficult time. The existing staff were thanked for stepping up to ensure the smoother running of the Council continues and the village is asked for patience at a very busy time.
- The continued support for Charmouth Fire Station and how it is sincerely hoped that now that the consultation process has ended, the Station will be saved.

10. Q&A Session – for residents to address the meeting in respect of any matter relevant to the Parish as a whole:

- Q. On the footpath at the end of Barrs Lane, the security bars and mesh had been kicked in some time ago – Judith Sheppard undertook to look at this as the Parish Footpath Warden and report to DC.
- Q. The huge amount of potholes in Barrs Lane and the damage to the grass verge due to parking – it was confirmed that track is privately owned and that land at the end of Barrs Lane including the track is currently for sale.
- Q. Dumping of cuttings on the bank of the River Char – Julie undertook to look at this.

Katie mentioned that when she had attended the recent WATAG (Western Area Transport Action Group) meeting recently, they are campaigning to improve transport from Lyme Regis to Dorchester Hospital and are confident that a reliable service is achievable.

Belinda spoke about the new LB1 bus and how the vision and funding came about from spotting a need. She would like to see the bus extended in future years to include Axminster Station on the route.

Jane Bremner thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm. Coffee was served.