



Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 9th November 2019 - 10am

Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester DT1 1XJ

MOTIONS PUT FORWARD BY MEMBER COUNCILS

Motion 1 (from Sherborne Town Council)

Sherborne Town Council propose that DAPTC lobby the Government to provide financial support for renewable energy and energy conservation projects that have environmental benefits, so all natural and built environments and all new buildings in Dorset be sustainably carbon neutral by 2025.

A. *The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.*

We know that our natural and built surroundings are critically threatened and we believe that urgent action must be taken for a safe and sustainable environment; projects and undertakings which renew, and conserve energy will help to expedite this. This is why we make this proposal.

B. *How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).*

While some areas of Dorset are deteriorating some, like the Piddle Valley, have confronted problems and have, for example, been renewably generating energy and exporting it, for 6 years. We expect Sherborne Town Council to be able to take positive action.

Motion 2 (from Langton Matravers Parish Council)

Langton Matravers Parish Council proposes

a) that DAPTC urge NALC to lobby the Government to make Town and Parish Councils (T&PCs) statutory consultees for all planning applications within their council areas thereby ensuring T&PCs' comments are given greater weight.

b) that DAPTC lobby Dorset Council to ensure that T&PCs are given 28 days to respond to planning applications

A. *The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.*

a) Langton Matravers Parish Council are aware that they are not statutory consultees for most Planning Applications. They feel that T&PCs know their own areas best, and that legal standing might give their comments on Planning Applications more weight and respect. At present the considered opinion of a Parish Council, arrived at after discussion by a legally-constituted body, has no more weight than that of an individual.

b) Langton Matravers Parish Council have in the past had a 28 day time-limit to respond to applications, which usually can be achieved within the pattern of monthly meetings. However, Dorset Council's change to 21-day response times for Councils means that in order to allow for a proper public access and representations at planning meeting, a separate meeting, with agenda, Clerk and minutes must be arranged. This is expensive and time-consuming for Councillors and Council.



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B. *How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).*

a) On many occasions either the Planning Officers, the District Council or the Inspector have ignored issues raised by the Parish Council (e.g. Highways, Parking, over-development) leading to development which has adverse effects on the local community and environment. This leads to a feeling amongst Councillors that time spent on training, discussion with local residents and neighbours and careful consideration of the material issues to come to a balanced decision is wasted, and the interests of local democracy are not being served. An example is Application 6/2017/0542 (Mr and Mrs Smith, Land adjacent Meadowcroft, Durnford Drove, Erect two dwellings on a vacant plot and alter access); LMPC objected on the grounds of ***i) overdevelopment of the site, ii) that the development is unsustainable within the context of the village (NPPF p.2) and iii) the development will have an unacceptable impact on the highway.*** Purbeck District Council upheld these objections, but they were overturned by the Inspector on appeal, leading to the problems outlined.

b) As a result of the new time limit, some applications have been missed and not discussed before the deadline. This creates another form of democratic deficit.

Motion 3 (from Chideock Parish Council)

Chideock Parish Council proposes that DAPTC, through NALC, lobbies central government and Local Authorities to ensure the provision of an effective and economic transport system as an essential component of supporting the economy and the wellbeing of all family members regardless of age, gender or disability.

A. *The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.*

The lack of a viable, green and economical public transport system in rural areas impacts directly upon individuals and their families, who require access to hospitals, care, further education, employment etc etc.

B. *How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).*

Lack of buses impacts education, jobs, social opportunities, leisure, recreation, health (hospital, doctor and dentist appointments) – the list is endless.

Not everyone has a car, not everyone can afford a car, not everyone wants a car. However, the presumption appears to be that everyone has their own transport.



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Motion 4 (from Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council)

Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council proposes that NALC vigorously lobby central government to amend paragraph 14(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019) to allow Neighbourhood Plans to be considered valid with full planning weight for a 5-year period rather than the current 2-year period

A. *The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.*

Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council created a Neighbourhood Plan Committee, largely comprising volunteers from the community who were not already parish councillors, back in 2016. Expert consultant support was arranged and funded by Locality. After three years hard work the Plan was passed at a local referendum and “made” by North Dorset District Council in the spring of 2019.

A positive approach was taken to new development within the community. Beyond existing approvals for 30 dwellings a further 14 dwellings are likely to be needed by 2031, the lifetime of the Plan. Recognising the need for flexibility and sustainable development, the Plan allows for a total of 56 dwellings, a 27% uplift. In addition, the Policy envisages approval for appropriate infill development within the settlement boundary.

In creating the Plan, 26 sites were assessed following a “call for sites” and 4 chosen that will meet and indeed exceed local need and met the community’s strong and long held aspiration to keep the individual hamlets separate with defined gaps and use brown-field sites in preference to undeveloped countryside. As the Plan neared Examination a further 9 applications for sites (and 117 additional homes) outside the Neighbourhood Plan process came forward for consideration. Some of these have been rejected, others remain undetermined. To a large extent, this opportunistic explosion of potential sites reflects the nature of the settlement. Small fields and pony paddocks abound and many of these have been held with development “hope value” in mind and the Neighbourhood Plan process has brought all this “hope” out into the open.

In the run-up to the Plan being “made”. North Dorset DC were very supportive and gave strong weight to the Plan in decisions on planning applications between the Plan’s Examination and the actual referendum. For Neighbourhood Plans to carry full planning weight the principal authority need to demonstrate it has a properly defined 5 year housing supply. Following a Written Ministerial Statement in 2018 it was agreed that Neighbourhood Plans could carry full weight if the circumstances now defined in NPPF paragraph 14 apply.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out how Neighbourhood Plan policies should be considered in the context of the NPPF’s presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that: *“In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided all of the following apply:*

a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan *two years or less before the date on which the decision is made;*

b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement;



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MOTIONS PUT FORWARD BY MEMBER COUNCILS (Continued)

c) the local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 73); and

d) the local planning authority's housing delivery was at least 45% of that required over the previous three years."

The change to NPPF rules are welcome but in reality the two year period is far too short. The volunteers who worked so hard to produce the Plan will have to begin their work again within just a few months of the referendum to ensure that the Plan is considered to be up to date. Whilst any changes that might be necessary might then be approved by an Examiner, if any changes or updates require a change in policies of the site allocations then a further referendum is likely to be needed as well.

The Localism Act didn't envisage referendums every few years to keep a Neighbourhood Plan fully valid. There are few communities where volunteers working on Neighbourhood Plans will be prepared to undertake a role that almost becomes full time.

The need for a Neighbourhood Plan to be refreshed is understood, but a two-year shelf-life is too short; a five-year period would be more practical and reflect the reality of how much time and effort volunteers are prepared or able to give. When we started on the Plan there was no mention of having to update the Plan every couple of years. NDDC had a 5-year housing supply. Now that situation has changed one can imagine any new community in Dorset and elsewhere being deterred from even starting if the volunteers have to face an indefinite commitment of creation and refreshment of their Plan.

B. How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).

The parish council is unclear about the impact on 3- and 5-year housing supply figures given the demise of North Dorset District Council and the creation of the new unitary authority, Dorset Council. If all former district council Local Plans are abandoned does this mean all of rural Dorset is at risk until the new unitary Local Plan comes into being in 2023? If so this unexpected and unforeseen consequence of going unitary would create a strategic disaster with unwanted, unnecessary and unsuitable development foisted on communities that have shown themselves to be positive about new development that is proportionate, sustainable and needed and doesn't destroy the essential nature of rural Dorset.

Motion 5 (from Blandford Forum Town Council)

Blandford Forum Town Council proposes that DAPTC lobbies local authorities to remove the charges and restrictions imposed on Town & Parish Councils for disposal of waste at household recycling centres.

A. The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.

Town & Parish Councils are treated as businesses, to dispose of 'commercial waste', when this waste is often items fly-tipped on council land. This can be land the Town Council is maintaining on behalf of the local authority.



Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 9th November 2019 - 10am

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MOTIONS PUT FORWARD BY MEMBER COUNCILS (Continued)

The Town Council is not allowed to dispose of waste at the Household Recycling Centre during the week but must take it to the weighbridge on a Saturday morning (when staff are not working).

B. How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).

This is a budgetary issue. Examples of W&S Recycling charges:

General mixed waste £165.00 - £ 198.00, price per tonne

Mattresses £28.00 - £ 33.60

Town Council grounds staff only work weekdays and therefore cannot dispose of the waste on a weekend.

Motion 6 (from West Lulworth Parish Council)

West Lulworth Parish Council proposes that a motion to require future housing to be built for the needs of the local people rather than a presumption in favour of any development.

Building homes for Need Not Greed.

Future development proposals should have to show that there is a requirement for the proposed housing.

A. The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.

West Lulworth is aware that housing is being built that does not satisfy the local needs of the area. Genuinely affordable housing or socially rented housing is required and not more market-value homes that will end up being second homes or holiday lets.

B. How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).

West Lulworth has a high ratio of second homes and holiday lets and proposed new housing developments do not address the need for genuinely affordable or socially rented homes. Young people are unable to afford to stay in the village due to the high cost of renting or buying and so local people are unable to remain in the village that they grew up in. This leads to a lack of family support and disconnected communities.

Motion 7 (from Beaminster Town Council)

Beaminster Town Council proposes that in view of the lack of infrastructure versus the number of houses proposed to be built within the County of Dorset, Beaminster Town Council would ask NALC to lobby Government to justify the numbers planned within rural areas and, most importantly, within AONB's.



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Annual General Meeting

Saturday 9th November 2019 - 10am

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MOTIONS PUT FORWARD BY MEMBER COUNCILS (Continued)

A. *The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.*

Beaminster has a population which is decreasing and the present housing needs survey shows a demand for approximately 180 dwellings, with the majority of applicants asking for one bedroomed flats. Present plans show an increase of about 400 houses, very few of which have one bedroom. This represents a 25% increase in Beaminster's built environment which we believe is excessive given the pressures that the present infrastructure is suffering.

We support the present local authority's stated aspirations of attracting younger, working age families for whom we must provide employment opportunities. The lack of employment development in the past has led to an imbalance in the community. However, this in turn, leads to pressures on schools, GP surgeries, transport, water and sewage.

B. *How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).*

Beaminster cannot be the only Council to be affected.

Supporting evidence from Beaminster Town Council follows on next page



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Annual General Meeting

Saturday 9th November 2019 - 10am

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MOTIONS PUT FORWARD BY MEMBER COUNCILS (Continued)

Supporting evidence from Beaminster Town Council

“Fewer households will ‘reduce need for new homes’ “

“There are likely to be 1.4 million fewer households in England by 2041 than the government originally thought, a forecast that economists warned yesterday could have a big impact on housebuilding targets.

The Office for National Statistics said that the number of households in England was projected to grow by 159,000 a year, from 22.9 million in 2016 to 26.9 million by 2041.

The figures are used by the government to work out future housing needs and have been a key reason for its target of building 250,000 to 300,000 homes a year.

This is the first year that the projections have been calculated by the ONS rather than by a government department.

A large proportion of the growth will come from the rising elderly population. Households headed by someone aged 65 years and over are set to account for 88 per cent of total growth between 2016 and 2041. The highest growth is set to take place in London and the lowest in the northeast.

However, while this overall 17 per cent increase in households may seem large, it is significantly smaller than the projection made in 2014. Then, the government said that there would be an extra 210,000 households a year in England, resulting in 28 million homes by 2041.

Bidwells, a property consultancy, said that the latest projections would lead to a dramatic drop in the required number of homes in England.

Ian Mulheirn, director of consulting at Oxford Economics, said that the drop in projections demonstrated that there were several myths around Britain’s housing shortage and argued that it was not necessary to build 300,000 homes a year.

“Over the last 20 years, the various housing departments have used a methodology to predict household need that was flawed,” he said. “It predicted that a significantly higher number of households would form and it was consistently shown to be incorrect at each census point.

“The ONS has changed the methodology and if we had used their figures over the last 20 years we wouldn’t have this figure of extremely high housing need being quoted everywhere.”

Previous projections made by the government were based on census data starting in 1971, which showed household sizes steadily shrinking as more people chose to live alone or to have smaller families. But this trend stopped around 2001, which is when the ONS is now basing its projections from.

The latest figures were disputed, however. Matthew Spry, senior director at Lichfields, a property consultancy, said: “The number of households that have formed can only ever match the number of dwellings that there are for people to live in. Statistically a household cannot form if it doesn’t have an extra house to form into.”

The ONS has also made a new assumption for net migration. It is now projected to be 152,000 a year from mid-2023 onwards. The 2014 projection had assumed 170,500 a year.

Joanna Harkrader, of the Office for National Statistics, said that the slower growth reflected “lower projections of the population — notably assumptions around future births, how long we will live and migration — and more up-to-date figures about living arrangements, such as living with parents or cohabiting.”

(Source: The Times/East Devon Watch)



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Motion 8 (from Langton Matravers Parish Council)

Langton Matravers Parish Council proposes that DAPTC lobby Dorset Council to amend its Planning Policy (in accordance with Revised NPPF Feb 2019 Clause 175) to the effect that in all construction developments, the felling of any mature Native British Species (NBS) tree will only be allowed as a last resort, and then only if it is replaced (at developer expense) with a minimum of three (3) NBS tree saplings, container grown from a credited source, and be no less than 3.5m tall. Should the construction site in question be unable to accommodate such a number, a suitable alternative site will be identified within the Parish where the development is taking place.

A. *The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.*

The present Dorset Council Policy on replacement of trees affected by development is not nearly strong enough, particularly in relation to trees 'protected' by TPOs. In these days of Climate Emergency (declared by Dorset Council) trees are understood to be an important means of capturing carbon, and an important resource in our battle against climate change.

B. *How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).*

LMPC attempted to develop a replacement tree policy for the parish owing to concerns expressed by parishioners and Cllrs about the loss of trees in the village owing to development. Minute 15 of the Meeting on 14th Feb 2019 is as follows:

Replacement Tree Policy. Cllr Loudoun had discussed his proposals with James Bennett, PDC Tree Officer, who says that only trees with a TPO are subject to mandatory replacement.'

The Council had been informed that it could not have an independent Tree Policy, but has to abide by Dorset Council's, which at present seems insufficient to protect trees in our parish. This is why we are asking for the change. The matter has been discussed with other adjacent T&PCs, who support the proposal.

Motion 9 (from Weymouth Town Council)

Weymouth Town Council proposes that DAPTC will lobby Central Government, and ask NALC to lobby, for a change in the law to allow a carer's allowance to be paid to Parish and Town Councillors in England.

A. *The reasons why the Parish or Town Council is submitting the proposal.*

Currently Parish and Town Councils in England are not permitted to pay carers (e.g. childcare) allowances to Councillors. This represents an inequality placed on Town Councillors in England. Currently Borough, District, County and Unitary Councillors in England can receive such allowances, as can Town and Parish Councillors in Wales.

B. *How the issue is affecting local councils in their area (with case study evidence).*

Potential Councillors who have caring responsibilities are deterred from standing for Parish and Town Council. This reduces the variety of backgrounds that are represented on Parish and Town Councils, reducing our diversity and ability to represent all sections of the Community.