

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Litton Cheney Parish Council held after the conclusion of the Annual Parish Meeting/Village Assembly on Tuesday 20 May 2025 At Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

1. Apologies for absence
No apologies received.
2. Declarations of interest
No declarations of interests received.
3. Election of Chairman
The Clerk took nominations for the Chairman. Cllr John Firrell was nominated by Cllr Matthews and Cllr King seconded this, all other councillors backed this nomination unanimously. The Chairman took over the running of the meeting from the Clerk.
4. Election of Vice Chairman
Cllr. Firrell nominated Cllr Bill Orchard for the role of Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Matthews. All agreed unanimously.
5. Democratic time
No members of the public present.
6. Approval of minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 11th March 2025
Cllr Matthews proposed that the minutes were an accurate record. Cllr Blacke seconded, and all other councillors unanimously agreed.
7. Matters arising since the previous meeting not part of this Agenda
No matters arising.
8. Dorset Council overview - Ward Councillor for Chesil Bank Cllr Sally Holland
Councillor Holland had already provided a comprehensive update on her work over the past year at the Annual Assembly, which took place immediately before this meeting. The minutes of the Annual Assembly can be found on the Litton Cheney Parish Council website at www.littoncheney.org.uk/xxxxx
9. Clerk's/RFO's report including:
 - 9.1 Receive Clerks/RFO Report including Correspondence
The Clerk presented her report and confirmed that all outstanding salary payments to the previous Clerk, Lucy Beasley, have now been made, except a recent payment to Bitdefender. Lucy had paid the annual charge for the PC security application herself. She has now passed the relevant details to the current Clerk to ensure that the payment will be made by the Council next year, rather than by her.

The Clerk also confirmed that she has been working on the AGAR reporting alongside Cllr Firrell and had met with the internal auditor on several occasions to provide further information where necessary.
 - 9.2 Receive the Financial update.
 - 9.2.1 Approval of invoices for payment (appended to this agenda)

Proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr Matthews, including one additional late entry for a refund to Lucy Beasley to Bitdefender.
 - 9.2.2 Approval of Schedule of Regular Payments (appended to this agenda)

Proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr Matthews and unanimously carried.
 - 9.2.3 Note the Parish Council Asset Register has been updated.

Councillors discussed the asset register and noted that depreciation is not included in parish council accounts. Cllr Firrell also highlighted that, as part of the internal audit, the auditor had pointed out that the LATCH building was not listed among the Council's assets.

Cllr Firrell explained that the hall is built on land with a 110-year lease and that the building itself is held in trust and managed by trustees. When the lease expires in 93 years, ownership of both the land and the building will revert to the Parish Council. At present, however, the Parish Council only owns the land, which should not be listed as an asset.

Cllr Firrell added that if LATCH ceases operation within the 93-year lease period, ownership of the building would transfer to the Parish Council.

9.3 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

9.3.1 Receive and agree the Annual Internal Auditor's Report for the year ending 31st March 2025.

Cllr Firrell expressed his wish for the recommendations outlined in the report to be included on the July agenda. The Clerk confirmed that one of the actions listed in Paragraph 2 of the report - the publication of payments over £100 for the financial year 2022/2023 - has now been completed.

Cllr Firrell also proposed that the Council formally express its gratitude to John Halliday for conducting the audit without charge. This proposal was supported by Cllr King, seconded by Cllr Matthews, and unanimously agreed by the Council.

9.3.2 Note the AGAR has been prepared, and that the exemption form is due for signing by the Chair.

All councillors noted the AGAR reports and Cllr Firrell signed and dated the Exemption Form.

9.3.3 Receive and agree AGAR Section 1. Annual Governance Statement, due for signing by the Clerk and Chair.

Council received and reviewed AGAR Section 1 – the Annual Governance Statement. All councillors unanimously agreed with the declarations contained within the document. The Chairman and Clerk duly signed and dated the statement. The proposal was made by Cllr Blacke and seconded by Cllr Matthews.

9.3.4 Receive and agree AGAR Section 2. Annual Accounting Statements for the year ending 31st March 2025, due for signing by the RFO and Chair. The figures were agreed and accepted unanimously.

The proposal was made by Cllr Blacke and seconded by Cllr Matthews. The RFO and Chairman then signed the document accordingly.

9.4 To consider and agree a new Parish Council Insurance agreement.

Following a brief discussion on the two quotes obtained, the Council unanimously agreed to continue using Clear Insurance for the next three years at a fixed annual premium of £364.35. The proposal was made by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Firrell, and agreed unanimously.

9.5 To consider providing grants to organisations and the amounts to be given.

9.5.1 Citizens Advice Bureau, Bridport.

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that all three requests for grants would be approved and increased from the previous £100 per year to £120 per year. Proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Matthews, and agreed by all councillors unanimously.

9.5.2 Air Ambulance

See 9.5.1 above.

9.5.3 Bride Valley News

See 9.5.1 above.

10. Councillors' Portfolios – up to 20th May 2025:

10.1 Planning: Cllr Orchard

Cllr Orchard confirmed that there have been no sales at the development at Bride Place.

10.2 Highways/Transport: Cllr Price

Cllr Price stated that we have been notified of some closures on the A35 between Dorchester and Bridport between the hours of 8 pm and 6 pm between the 19th and 31st May 2025.

Parks Lane is closing between 27th June and 6th July 2025 for highway repairs leading up to Ford Farm.

Chalk Pit Lane is closing twice, once on 3rd June and 23rd June 2025, for Openreach. Looke Lane was postponed from 5th to the 23rd of March and will now take place 21st July to 8th August 2025.

10.3 Playground/ Playing Field/Allotments: Cllr King

10.3.1 Consider and agree the annual costs for Allotment plots for the coming year.

Cllr King has paid £115 into the parish council bank account in allotment fees. He has also agreed to distribute the breakdown of charges for the available plots separately.

Cllr Price recommended that the current allotment charges remain unchanged for the coming year. All councillors unanimously agreed this recommendation.

A member of the Allotment Society approached Cllr King to request permission to erect a glass greenhouse on their plot. Concerns were raised about the possibility of the greenhouse being abandoned if the plot holder were to vacate the allotment.

Cllr King asked whether a formal set of allotment rules had ever been issued to plot holders. Cllr Firrell confirmed that such a document did exist during his time as Clerk.

As no decision could be made at this meeting, it was agreed to add this item to the July Agenda for an update. After note: Allotment rules stipulate that it is for the Allotment Association to decide if an allotment holder can have a greenhouse.

Regarding the swing surface, replacement of the surface underneath the swing was initially estimated at £800–£900. However, upon reviewing the actual cost, it appears that due to the specialised nature of the work, including two site visits, the total cost would be approximately £3,500.

At present, brushing the matting in spring keeps it in good condition, but during wet autumn weather, maintenance becomes more challenging. There are some grant funds available from Dorset Council, with a grant application deadline of 2nd June.

10.3 Countryside Matters/Footpaths/Rights of Way: Cllr Blacke

Nothing to report at present.

10.4 Village Fabric/ Maintenance/ DAPTC/BLAP/Administration and Probity: Cllr Firrell

10.4.1 Consider and approve the cost of servicing 2 newly placed bins at the Snicket and White Cross. In relation to waste collection, the total annual cost is expected to be approximately £500 for both bins, with weekly collections between April and September and fortnightly collections from October to March. The cost per bin collection is £6.21. Cllr Matthews proposed that the cost of the servicing for the 2 newly placed bins at the Snicket and White Cross be approved. Cllr Blacke seconded the proposal, and it was unanimously agreed by all councillors.

10.5 Telecommunications/IT: Cllr Matthews

Nothing to report at present.

11. Planning Matters

There is only one further development in the village to report: the approved Planning Application P/VOC/2025/00323, which involves raising the garage roof to create ancillary accommodation within the loft space and converting part of the ground floor to provide access. Tree works have now commenced on the site. T

12. Community Infrastructure Level (CIL)

There are no items to consider for this fund at the present time.

Under this item, Cllr Orchard noted that John Halliday, the internal auditor, had raised the question: *"Can you keep on rolling out reserves?"* Following a brief discussion regarding Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds and general reserves, it was agreed that the Chairman would like the Reserves Policy to be reviewed in the near future. This will enable informed decisions to be made about financial planning for the coming years.

13. To consider changing the start time of regular Parish Council meetings from 7.30 pm to 7 pm. Cllr Firrell proposed that the meeting time be moved from 7.30 pm to 7 pm. All councillors agreed.

14. Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday, 8th July 2025 at 7 pm.
The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.

Debbie Hollings
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Litton Cheney Parish Council