

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting Held on Tuesday 10th January 2012 At Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Present: S Kourik (Chairman), Mrs S. Dyke (Deputy Chairman), D. Bowen, I. Homer, H. Lantos, W. Orchard, Mrs A. Spurrier and Parish Clerk J. Firrell. Also attending William Bryer (Master of the Foxhounds – Cattistock Hunt) and four local residents.

Apologies: Cllr R. Coatsworth and Cllr T. Bartlett.

1. Declarations of interest: None.

2. Democratic Time:

The Chairman invited Mr William Bryer to address the meeting regarding a recent visit to the village by the Cattistock Hunt when a number of foxhounds invaded several private gardens on Chalk Pit Lane. Mr Bryer apologized for any inconvenience caused by the hunt but defended robustly the practices of the hunt, that the hunt conducted itself within the law and made every effort to avoid confrontation with local residents. The Chairman felt strongly that on this occasion the hounds had not been under strict control, a point Mr Bryer disagreed with, and hoped in the future this situation would be addressed. Mr Bryer was asked that on the next occasion the hunt was in the area that any trail laid should be away from the village. At this point, Mr Bryer left the meeting.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8th November 2011:

It was proposed by D. Bowen, seconded by Mrs A Spurrier and carried unanimously that the Minutes represented a true reflection of the meeting and that they be approved. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

4. Matters arising:

Queen's Jubilee – A committee made up of all the main village organizations was being put together and a representative was required from the Parish Council. Mrs S. Dyke consented to being the PC representative. A meeting would be arranged shortly. Other representatives included Mr D. Taylor (PCC), Mr J. Firrell (LATCH), Mrs B. Robbins/Mrs E. Kingston (LCSC) and Mrs J. Chaffey (Thorner's School).

Superfast Broadband: The Chairman indicated that progress was being made by DCC with regard to funding and more would become clearer in due course. It was agreed the PC would be keen to be part of any initiative that would bring faster broadband to the area. Current technology suggested that TV reception would at some point be delivered through Broadband, and given that both TV and radio reception in the Bride Valley was dire, it would be essential that this technology should be embraced. It was agreed a questionnaire should be organized within the valley and the Chairman and H. Lantos would follow this up. It was proposed by Mrs S. Dyke, seconded by I. Homer and carried unanimously that the Parish Council should indicate its willingness to be involved in any future initiatives, including consideration on additional funding.

5. Finance Report:

J. Firrell (Clerk & RFO) presented his report. Current funds stood at £5140.32. Income since the November Meeting was 0.16p (Interest) and expenditure £468.00 (Lengthsman £120; BDO Audit Fee £90; Planning application fee £85 and Clerk's salary £173). Invoices requiring approval –

Lengthsman £120, R. Randall (Playing Field maintenance) £429 and DAPTC (New councillors course) £60. Proposed by D. Bowen, seconded by I. Homer and carried unanimously.

Clerk's Salary – This had not been reviewed since July 2008 and it was necessary to bring this up to date in view of the additional duties undertaken by the present incumbent (RFO), and the change in hourly rate since 2008. Whilst the current clerk did not feel so inclined to take the extra pay, it was accepted that any future clerk may wish to do so, and at the going rate. The Chairman stated the full amount should be paid for services rendered and this was agreed unanimously by the council. As from April 1st 2012, the new hourly rate would be £8.238 (SCP 18) and the annual salary would be based on 9 hours per month, an additional 24 hours per year. This would convert to a salary of £963.25, an increase of £271.25

Risk Assessment – The Internal Auditor (Mr R Dewar) had handed out a paper to councillors at the November meeting and they had been asked to review the points made and the risks identified. It was confirmed that currently all risks had been identified but regular reviews should be undertaken. The RFO would produce a list of the risks covered by the PC's insurance policy at the next meeting. The Chairman thanked Mr Dewar for his efforts both as an Internal Auditor and for identifying areas that required councillors' attention.

Donations: Traditionally at this time in the fiscal year the PC considered donations to local charities. It was proposed by Mrs S. Dyke, seconded by Mrs A. Spurrier and carried unanimously that the following donations be made: Weldmar Hospicecare £50; Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance £75; BVN £50; CAB (Bridport) £75 and Coastwatch £20, a total of £270.

The Parish Council was asked by Mr F. Spicer to consider providing financial assistance for the upkeep of St Mary's Churchyard. This matter had been discussed in 2010 and £200 had been provided and the PCC had been requested to look at ways of reducing costs which they had done. It was pointed out that if the PCC found they could no longer finance the upkeep of the churchyard, it could be taken over by the District Council, a move that most local residents would find unpalatable. It would also mean that the right for local residents to be buried in the churchyard would disappear. After some discussion, with most councillors agreeing that some form of financial assistance should be given, it was proposed by W. Orchard, seconded by H. Lantos and carried by a majority that £300 be provided. The PCC would be asked to look at alternatives means of funding, although it was accepted they had undoubtedly trimmed their costs to the minimum. The PC requested that in the future a fuller picture of St Mary's property and fabric maintenance responsibilities be given.

6. Councillors portfolios/briefs:

Allotments/Playing Field

D. Bowen stated the Allotment Association had held an AGM in November. There had been no change in officers and several new people had taken over allotments. £210 would shortly be passed to the RFO. He suggested that a change should be considered to the joining fee (£30) perhaps with it being done away with completely. The Clerk indicated that this would mean a change in the constitution and he would discuss it with Mr Bowen. It was agreed that the hedge between the allotments and the playing field would be layered.

Highways/Traffic/Signs

W. Orchard asked if more grit bins should be considered. It was confirmed that in the event of heavy snow or freezing conditions DCC would keep the valley road from Long Bredy to Burton Bradstock gritted. At that point it may not be possible to use all village access roads and local residents would need to take account of restricted access. The dead tree at the bottom of

Whiteway had been reported to DCC and they would remove it (this has now been done). Magna Housing would be asked again to remove the dead tree at the entrance to the community hall.

Footpaths

The Chairman informed the meeting of rights of way details currently being considered by DCC.

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Development

Mrs S. Dyke presented this subject. Much had been discussed within the county on "Local Plans" and how they would be affected by the Localism Act. The main issue for Litton is future development and the Development boundary that might be reinstated. It was possible that at some point the PC would need to discuss a Neighbourhood Plan. No affordable Housing can be considered without a site. There is also no available money at the moment. If we involved a Housing Association it is likely that we would need to go ahead with a large site (c. 10 houses) which would serve a greater area than just the village. However a Community Land Trust would be the way forward for a small development (possibly in partnership with another nearby for economic reasons). The village would then be involved in the building, and selection of tenants on an ongoing basis. The CLT organization is trying to set up a Loan Fund to enable villages to be able to progress their plans.

7. Planning Applications:

Summer Hill – Although this had received planning approval, concern had been expressed by councillors and local residents that the boundary wall had been built too high and the topping not in keeping with planning approval or other village walls. Discussions had taken place with the owner, Mr D. Bayer and Mrs A. Spurrier and the Clerk, J. Firrell. Mr Bayer had indicated he was aware of the situation which had happened without his knowledge or consent and it was his intent to rectify the situation. Concern was expressed that the PC could not be seen to agree a course of action with Mr Bayer in case subsequently it was not approved by WDDC. It was agreed that Mr Bayer should be informed that he should discuss his plans to correct the situation with WDDC. This way it was felt the situation could be better managed directly between the two parties. After note: Mr Bayer has been informed as have WDDC.

Community Hall – This has now been approved by WDDC.

Garden Close – Removal of hedge. Still not determined.

Four Meads Farm – Erection of Grain Store. Approved and work appeared to be progressing.

8. Correspondence:

All had been dealt with in the agenda.

9. Any Other Business:

I. Homer raised the subject of WATAG (Western Area Transport Action Group). Things appeared to have gone quiet on this subject and Litton Cheney did not seem to be involved. Mrs Barbara Whillock who was attending the meeting was able to update the PC on the current state of affairs.

Village Café (21st January) – H. Lantos agreed to represent the PC at the forthcoming event.

10. Date of Next Meeting:

Tuesday 13th March 2012 – 7.30 pm LATCH

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.35 pm.

John Firrell
Parish Clerk