

# LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall Litton Cheney

Present: W. Orchard (Chairman), S. Kourik (Deputy Chairman), Mrs K. Brooks, A. King, Dr. H. Lantos, Mrs A. Spurrier and Clerk J. Firrell. Also in attendance Cllr J. Russell, Cllr G. Fry (Chairman of Puncknowle, Swyre & West Bexington Parish Council), R. Jones (Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) and one local resident, J. Williams.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr R. Coatsworth and I. Homer.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None.

3. **Democratic Time:** The Chairman reminded those present that any verbal offerings should be restricted to three minutes. Cllr Geoffrey Fry from Puncknowle, Swyre & West Bexington Parish Council suggested that the Chairs of the Bride Valley Parish Councils present a robust combined front resisting the removal of the 210 bus service from the Bride Valley. This suggestion was embraced and Chairman Bill would attend the next WATAG meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January when the matter would be discussed further with other local council representatives and DCC. J. Williams informed the Parish Council that the mobile village shop would not be coming to Litton Cheney again due to lack of custom. The Clerk queried why the mobile shop operator had not informed the PC in the first instance. After note – An apology has been now been received from Laurie, operator of the mobile shop, who also set out her hopes for future use of the mobile shop. J. Williams complained about the lack of information available to interested residents regarding budget projections for 2017/18 and the village precept. It was pointed out that the information he referred to was included in November's meeting minutes and he appeared to be the only one raising the issue. The Chairman indicated that further comment on budget projections would be allowed later in the agenda.

4. **Neighbourhood Plan:** The Chairman invited Richard Jones (Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) to present his progress report. Since the last PC meeting there had been a further Steering Group meeting in December at which the three working groups had reported the results of their toils. The Planning Liaison Group has had useful initial discussions with WDDC planners and Sally Dyke had been in contact with Simon Williams who previously worked as a planner for the local authority and was now freelance. The message seems to be very clear. A NP is a big step and communities must be very sure it is what they need, given the commitment required and the complexities involved.

The Demographic Working Group had produced a variety of background data and this will continue to be refined although currently not a priority up to the point a decision is made whether to proceed with a NP or not. Two meetings of the Consultation Group have taken place, the group having been tasked with drafting material and plans for consulting with residents who having been given the various pros and cons would be asked in the coming months if they wanted a NP. The Steering Group would be holding another meeting in February when it was hoped that a local consultation strategy could be finalised. At this point Richard Jones left the meeting.

5. **Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>**

**November 2016:** It was proposed by A. King, seconded by S. Kourik and carried unanimously that the minutes accurately reflected the meeting held.

6. **Matters Arising that will not be covered at this meeting:** Telephone Kiosk – The Clerk brought the council up to date indicating that WDDC and BT had been informed that the Parish Council objected strongly to the proposal to remove the village telephone kiosk. Despite WDDC indicating they were only a consultee, a position disputed by BT, they (WDDC) had informed all 71 communities that their kiosks were at risk of removal unless they objected to the local authority. Final outcome was awaited.

7. **DCC/WDDC Overview:** The Chairman invited Cllr John Russell to inform the PC of happenings at WDDC. Cllr John updated the council on the “Reshaping of our Councils” initiative and consultation indicating that the consultation had now finished and the various district councils would be discussing the outcome over the coming weeks. He felt that Option 2b splitting the councils into two unitary authority (1. Bournemouth, Poole & Christchurch and 2. West Dorset, East Dorset, North Dorset, Weymouth & Portland & Purbeck with each group being supported by DCC) would be option chosen. How the transition would be handled had yet to be decided but it was hoped the new configuration would be in place before or by 2019. Despite his absence Cllr Ron Coatsworth had asked the clerk to bring two matters to the PC's attention. Come 12<sup>th</sup> January the Local Plan Review recently carried out would be available to download from the Dorset for You website. After note – This has now been done and circulated to councillors and the Chairman (Richard Jones) of the NP SG. Cllr Ron also urged councillors to familiarise themselves with the NHS Clinical Commissioning Consultation which had in fact already been circulated to councillors but subsequent to this meeting was again circulated.

8. **Finance Report:** The Clerk/RFO reported that funds currently stood at £6344.86. Income since November was an interest payment (2 x 10p) of £0.20p. Expenditure since November added up to £809.00 ((Village Lengthsman £120.00, Clerk £173.00, St Mary's Churchyard £500.00 and LATCH Hall Hire £16.00). Invoices requiring approval for payment – Village Lengthsman £60.00, R. Randall (Grass Cutting) £373.80, LATCH Hall Hire £8.00 and BVN Leaflets £8.40. Proposed by S. Kourik, seconded by Dr H. Lantos and carried unanimously that they be approved for payment. It was also agreed that a Vision ICT invoice for £60.00 representing the village website hosting fee could be paid although this fee would be covered by a donation from LATCH whose turn it was to cover this cost. Recoverable VAT currently stood at £250.09.

Budget Projections & Village Precept – Following on from discussions at the previous PC meeting in November, budget projections had been circulated to councillors and placed on the village website. It was considered that this information coupled with that already contained in November's meeting minutes was sufficient for decisions to be made. All town and parish councils were facing similar dilemmas regarding increases to their precepts, taking account of tasks that may be devolved from the principal authorities and the possibility that central government may apply a cap to future increases. Litton Cheney had the added consideration that a new clerk during 2017/18 would need to be paid at the going rate based on a 20 hour month. It was further highlighted that the precepts of similar sized local communities were considerably higher than LC, as were clerk's salaries.

For ease of reference here are some examples based on 2016/17 precepts/salaries – Shipton Gorge (350 pop) – Precept £6506 (Clerk £1686); Puncknowle/Swyre/West Bexington (350 pop) - £7842 (Clerk £4K +); Loders (518 pop) - £8500 (Clerk £3755); Burton (948 pop) - £22524 (Clerk £5865); Long Bredy (208 pop) - £3000 (Clerk £1890 – post currently vacant); Litton Cheney (350 pop) - £3600 (Clerk £692).

Discussions ensued. Sadly little detail was known at present as to what the financial impact would be as a result of tasks being devolved (Cllr Russell said much of it at this stage had to be down to guesswork) but it appeared from examples given that other councils were allowing for increased expenditure (Puncknowle were raising their precept by £2500 (to £9,300) and Lodders by £1500 (to £10,000). Litton Cheney precept options were based on an increased percentage of 61% or 100%, given a precept of either £5800 or £7200. The Chairman stated that a decision needed to be taken as precept requests had to be with the principal authority by 31<sup>st</sup> January. Two options were on the table. There were no supporters for the 61% (£5800) increase but a resolution proposed by W. Orchard, seconded by S. Kourik that the precept be raised to £7200 was carried unanimously. For a Band D house this would amount to an £18 per year rise from £18 to £36.

9. **Councillors Portfolios:** Highways/Transport (W. Orchard) – There had been a further meeting with Ashley Chase Estates (Cheese Dairy), Long Bredy Parish Council, Dorset Highways and ourselves. The devised Travel Plan which as a rule applied to around 60% of the traffic heading towards ACE was now in use given the completion of the new unit and monitoring was taking place. The directions shown on the ACE website were intended for vehicles above 7.5 tons which were being directed via Long Bredy. It had been agreed by all parties that other vehicles could decide what route they preferred to come and go by. A question was raised concerning milk tankers transiting the village on their way to ACE as to whether they should be operating late at night. ACE would be asked.

Playground/Field/Allotments (A. King) – Further quotes were awaited concerning the playground fences but due to the holidays little further had been achieved on the playground front. The present equipment was still very much usable but required some maintenance. Cllr King was hopeful more progress could be achieved shortly. A quote had been received from DCC regarding the grass cutting. A quote would now be sought from Russell Randall plus possibly a third quote. Despite the fact there was little use being made of the playing field it was considered that it should be maintained to an acceptable standard.

Superfast Broadband (Dr H. Lantos) – Dr Lantos felt there was little to report although he had been made aware that recent work by Outreach had not improve the speeds of those who had so far subscribed to SFB. Outreach had installed exclusive lines for ACE and CG Fry at their (ACE & CGF) own cost.

Footpaths/RoW/Lengthsman/Mobile Phone Coverage (S. Kourik) – There was now a new person in place of Jill Exton at DCC and SK was allowing them to settle in before contacting them about the various footpath issues that existed around Litton Cheney. This included The Rocks. The Clerk indicated that at least three people had slipped in that area recently so the need for a permanent solution remained urgent. On mobile phones, it appeared that as a result of the government's announcement recently regarding digital technology and the wish to give more people access to superfast broadband and mobile phones coverage, a number of companies were interested in possibly providing a solution in the village. St Mary's PCC had been approached regarding housing antennas in the bell tower. John Cooper had been contacted by Vodafone /O2, and a company called Shared Access had contacted the clerk to discuss identifying council or village land that could be leased over a 20 year period so that a mast could be erected on site, and there still existed the possible involvement of EE. All these would be progressed over the coming months and the PC kept informed. Avian Flu (AI) had been discovered at Abbotsbury Swannery. Owners of all types of poultry must follow guidelines set out by DEFRA.

Transparency Code/Risk Assessment (Mrs K. Brooks) – Further work had been carried out regarding the Transparency Code and the need to upload certain information onto the village website or make it available through other means. Mrs Brooks and Clerk J. Firrell considered that this exercise was almost complete. Work on the Model Publication Scheme would be progressed prior to adoption by the PC. A Risk Assessment review would be carried out in time to be dealt with at the March meeting.

10. **Dog Control:** Cllrs Spurrier, King and Lantos had been asked by the Chairman at November's meeting to look at the various issues of dog control, particularly as it related to Litton Cheney, and bearing mind a recent mauling of a sheep by dog/s when it had to subsequently be put down. The matter also has a relevance to a current WDDC consultation on dog control orders. The question of dog fouling and owners failing to clear up the mess could really only be properly dealt with if the PC was prepared to report owners to WDDC dog wardens. Inevitably any "control" could only be effective if it was enforced.

As far as owners of livestock/farmers were concerned there appeared to be an increased need for more signs reminding the public of the necessity to control dogs when on land containing livestock. Signs could be obtained from the National Sheep Association and NFU. Another source for signs may be Dorset Rights of Way.

When it came to the playing field and playground, there had been a call for an improved and fenced children's playground area. Coupled with this there has been a leaning towards relaxing the "no dogs" rule so that dogs (on a leash) could be taken to the allotments and allowed in the playing field, but not in the playground area. A possible review of the current rules would be undertaken once definitive proposals were put forward regarding the "new" playground. Good signage also has a part to play.

11. **Bus Service (Concessionary Passes Consultation):** This had been partly dealt with during Democratic Time. Whilst there was a need to maintain collective pressure on DCC with regards to retaining the 210 bus service, it was agreed that councillors would respond as individuals to the consultation which ended on 13<sup>th</sup> January.

12. **Defibrillator:** Cllr Dr H. Lantos had questioned the need to attain a code before gaining access to the defibrillator and had suggested that the cabinet could be left open. The Clerk had contacted South Western Ambulance Service who had indicated they had no objection. After some discussion it was agreed the cabinet would be left accessible, and the code would be marked on the cabinet.

13. **Planning Matters Pending & Outcomes:** Tree Works still pending – The Old Post Office, Glebe Cottage and Summer Hill. After note – The Old Post Office and Glebe Cottage have now been approved. Tree Works (Outcome) – The Orchard and 3 Garden Close have been approved.

14. **Correspondence:** None.

15. **Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 7.30pm at LATCH.

15. There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

J. Firrell – Parish Clerk