

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Litton Cheney Parish Council
held on Tuesday 11 July 2017 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Present: Bill Orchard (Chairman); John Firrell; Andy King; Steve Kourik; Hugh Lantos; Bella Spurrier; Maggie Walsh (Clerk). Also in attendance: Councillors John Russell and Ros Kayes; Geoff Fry (Chairman of Puncknowle Parish Council) and 6 local residents

1. **Apologies for absence:** Kathryn Brooks; Elizabeth Kingston
2. **Declarations of interest:** none
3. **Democratic time:** the Chairman apologised that approval of the draft minutes of the extraordinary meeting of 18 May concerning Charity Farm had been omitted from the agenda - this item would be carried forward to the next meeting. He requested that residents were constructive when raising issues during democratic time and restricted their contribution to no more than 3 minutes.

Various issues were raised including the poor state of finger posts/signage within the village (Mr F. Spicer); concern that the impending withdrawal of the bus service would remove some residents' independence and that at least one person intended to move away from the village for this reason (Mrs S. Dyke); how to establish if there were a need for affordable housing in Litton Cheney and what criteria would be used. Mr Geoff Fry commented on the amount of mud and dung on Main Street and suggested the parish council write to the farmer responsible. Mr J Williams requested an update on potential use of rights of way funds to replace stiles with gates and asked if improvements could be made to the playing fields in time for the school holidays including a new basketball net, surface cleaning and whether anything could be done about moles. The Chairman stated that several of these issues would be discussed later in the agenda.

4. **Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 9 May.** These were approved unanimously. Proposed by Andy King, seconded by John Firrell.
5. **Matters arising from previous meeting not otherwise on the agenda** - none.
6. **DCC/WDDC overview.** Councillor Ros Kayes gave an update regarding plans for replacement bus services following the imminent withdrawal of the 210 as a result of Dorset County Council withdrawing its subsidy. Bridport Town Council had set up a working party to look at the feasibility of a "hub and spoke" community bus serving Bridport and the surrounding villages. A number of bodies were involved, including the Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG), and were considering a wide range of options as to how the service would operate and how it could be funded, including contributions from parish councils. This feasibility work would be completed shortly and considered after August. The Holistic Transport Review Board were due to meet the following week and were looking to integrate school transport contracts with various special needs services as well as fee paying passengers.

Building works on a new special needs/elderly community hub in Bridport had been due to start in September but further work was now required to bring it within budget. The planning application was therefore unlikely to be submitted before October.

Chairman Bill Orchard asked how confident Councillor Kayes was that some form of replacement bus service could be in place within 6 months. Councillor Kayes explained that much work had already been done, that the County Council had funded the feasibility study and that further funds were available to launch the project. Meanwhile, community transport grants were available if parishes wished to work together to set up interim arrangements and could provide match funding. She suggested parish councils should however await the community transport proposals. Bill Orchard explained that as an interim measure the parish council aimed to use volunteers to take residents to the bus stop on the A35. A question was asked about potential insurance issues. Councillor Kayes recommended referring to the website for information on forming a car club.

Cllr Hugh Lantos asked how much the County Council had paid towards subsidising the 210 bus service. Councillor Kayes did not know but said it was probably more than £10,000. Elizabeth Kingston had commented that a number of teenagers rely on the bus service during school holidays.

Councillor John Russell gave an update on local government reorganisation. Of the 9 Dorset district and county councils, Christchurch and Purbeck had abstained, East Dorset was unsure and the remaining 6 councils supported the proposal which was currently with the relevant central government minister.

7. **Finance report:** RFO Maggie Walsh reported that parish funds currently stood at £8,502.09. Approved spend since the meeting of 9 May was £1,279.91: of this £824.56 was approved at that meeting and £455.35 had been paid to the clerks (£72 John Firrell; £383.35 Maggie Walsh). Bride Valley News, Bridport Citizens Advice and Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance had thanked Litton Cheney for their donations. Income since 9 May was £0.21p interest. Invoices requiring approval - £358.84 (playground equipment) - proposed by John Firrell, seconded by Steve Kourik and carried unanimously that this be paid. £19 VAT was due to be reclaimed. A balance of £1111.11 was currently ring-fenced for the playground.
8. **Councillors' portfolios:** Highways/Transport (Bill Orchard): Liaison over potholes continued. He also advised that Wessex Water planned significant civil works alongside Whiteway during August-December. This would likely involve significant heavy plant movements and he had asked for a traffic management plan. The project manager had been unable to attend the meeting but had said she would contact everyone she believed would be affected by the works. The Chairman understood that the works would require planning permission so was unsure whether Wessex Water would actually be in a position to start in August.

Playground/playing field/allotments (Andy King): AK had applied to the Big Lottery Fund to help pay for play equipment from Dorset County Council. He thanked Jess Maskery for her help preparing the proposal, and Diana Cheater and Hannah Bunting. AK also intended to apply for funds from S106 agreements. He did not yet know how much would be forthcoming from the village supper. Assuming the funding bids were successful, works were likely to start in December. Meanwhile, he had purchased new swing seats and chains and planned to repaint equipment frames before the school holidays. A basketball net had been ordered and was expected within a week; ground surface cleaning had not yet started. The grass cutting standard on the playing field had been excellent but he had not looked into the mole situation as yet: whilst the condition of the playing field could be better, it was acceptable. New goal posts could not be included with other funding bids as the playing fields and playground were 2 different areas in relation to Lottery funding. Regarding allotments, 2 were available. There was concern over the upkeep of a few

allotments but as there was no waiting list, they would lose income if existing holders were expelled.

Footpaths/rights of way/mobile phone (Steve Kourik): the County Council have undertaken some work on finger posts etc., predominantly using volunteers. Landowners have to agree before stiles can be replaced by gates and there is not much funding available for that type of improvement. He was awaiting an estimated cost from Fry's contractor for works to The Rocks. Potentially this could include works to the ditch, resurfacing the path and installing a handrail although key clamp and hand rail may be a cheaper option. Once an indicative cost was known, quotes would be sought from several contractors although it may be possible to use County Council contractors with the parish council contributing to the works. Funding may be sought from S106, possibly Litton Charity and/or local transport plan funds. Although the County Council are responsible for public rights of way, in practice they do not have enough money for all outstanding work needed in the county - residents may wish to write to the county council to express their concerns about this. The County Council have however pressure washed the surface in the past, which does work for a short time.

Planning consent had been approved for the proposed radio phone mast. There was no proposed date for the work but GallifordTry (the applicant's agent) had indicated it could be fast tracked. SK mentioned that rocks and tree roots were hidden in the vegetation on Redway, which were hazards for vehicles and pedestrians. Two of the landowners did not live in the village and so the vegetation was not properly maintained. A giant hogweed was encroaching on the Rocks. James Williams had put up warning signs and had removed seed heads to stop it spreading but the leaves needed to be left so they could be treated with herbicide otherwise it would just grow back. SK clarified that it is illegal to allow giant hogweed to spread but that the law was not as rigorous as that relating to Japanese knotweed.

Risk assessment/transparency code/annual report (Kathryn Brooks). John Firrell reported on KB's behalf that the Dorset for You website would cease holding Declaration of Interest forms and that these had been restored to the Litton Cheney website. Bill Orchard urged parish councillors to ensure Declarations of Interest were updated to reflect any changing circumstances.

Village fabric/maintenance/devolved services (John Firrell). JF was endeavouring to make the village look its best and thanked those who had recently cut verges, including several public areas. He had started looking at repairing/refurbishing finger posts and Dorset AONB could put him in touch with volunteers who could help - including the Young Offenders establishment on Portland. The Parish Council were now registered as a Dorset Fingerpost Champion! He had photographed all signs and village furniture and all signs and finger posts were now registered with Dorset AONB. He and Steve Kourik had attended a meeting of the Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP) where the main item of discussion had been devolved services. BLAP intended to write to the County Council with a list of questions, given the uncertainty regarding devolved services. Councillor Russell clarified that the County Council had no money to give to parish councils for devolved services so the issue is what services would devolve and when. It would then be for villages to decide whether they wished to continue to provide that service. However the County Council first needed to agree what services it would stop providing. A County Council representative would be asked to attend the next BLAP meeting on 20 September,

9. **210 Bus service:** this had mostly been covered under item 6. John Firrell had travelled on the 210 bus, which had been full by the time it reached Bridport, and had

spoken to users. He was aware of work underway to find a long term solution and the situation might be clearer once the primary school bus contracts had been awarded. He had therefore focussed on interim arrangements although some passengers had made alternative arrangements for when the service ceased. He hoped to create a list of volunteers who would take residents to and from the X51 bus stop on the A35 at the top of Whiteway. Those wishing to use this option would need to book in advance and may have to phone several people to find a volunteer who would be available. Other options include Dial-a-Bus which runs every Wednesday (once a month to Dorchester, the rest to Bridport): although predominantly for use by the disabled, this service could be used by others when space was available. There was a possibility that the Dorset Community Action bus that runs once a week from Abbotsbury to Dorchester could be extended to Litton Cheney. However, the latest news was that Dorset Community Transport would cover the 210 route every Wednesday during the school summer holidays as a trial, using the same timings as the 210 service at a cost of around £5 (since confirmed as £3) but at the moment bus passes could not be used.

10. **Housing needs survey:** in light of the decision not to proceed with a neighbourhood plan, and pending the Charity Farm planning application, it would be useful to understand whether there is in fact a need for affordable housing within Litton Cheney. The Magna Asset Manager had explained to John Firrell that the Magna bungalow in the village was to be sold because there is no perceived need or demand for that particular (small) type of accommodation. The proceeds of the sale would go towards construction of 200 new social houses required elsewhere in the district, and in line with the Local Plan. The fact that Magna are selling the bungalow therefore does not shed any light on the need (or not) for affordable housing in Litton Cheney nor can this information easily be gleaned from the housing waiting list. The Neighbourhood Plan steering group might be willing to consult villagers about housing needs. However, to ensure the correct questions are asked, Maggie Walsh would first talk to the local housing authority and report back to the next parish council meeting.
11. **The Rocks** - see item 8
12. **Planning matters:** the Charity Farm application remained undecided; the application for a radio phone mast had been approved; an application for a police mast had been registered and the Parish Council had supported the application in line with previous discussions.
13. **Correspondence not dealt with as part of the agenda:** Wessex Water proposal dealt with in item 8. No other items for discussion.
14. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 12 September 2017, 7.30 pm.
15. **Meeting closed.**

Maggie Walsh - Parish Clerk