

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of Litton Cheney Parish Council
held on Tuesday 10 July 2018 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Present: Bill Orchard (Chairman); Kathryn Brooks, John Firrell; Andy King; Steve Kourik; Bella Spurrier; Maggie Walsh (Clerk). Also in attendance: Cllr Tim Yarker, Cllr John Russell, Cllr Mark Roberts, Geoff Fry (Puncknowle, Swyre & West Bexington PC), David Peretz (Kingston Russell & Long Bredy PC) and 23 local residents.

1. **Apologies:** Tessa Mulhall; Keith Day
2. **Declarations of interest:** none
3. **Democratic time** the following issues were raised:
 - The PC had received a written suggestion that one of the Parish Councillors should have a planning portfolio – Cllr Orchard confirmed this was being considered
 - Which held higher precedence – local plans, neighbourhood plans or the 5 year housing land supply target?
 - The bin at the bus shelter had not been emptied and was overflowing.
 - Advance circulation of the finance report was appreciated.
 - The PC had enquired about use of the Wessex Water grant to repair the allotment/playing field access track – however the grant was intended for an environmental project.
 - The Parish Council had decided to allow dogs on the playing field without wider publicity or discussion.
 - Why was the PC considering spending funds on allotment fences to keep out stock from the adjacent field? This was the farmer's responsibility – not the PCs.
 - Part of the allotment access track had been repaired by the adjacent resident but they were concerned it would be damaged again.
 - The barn erected on Lower Road (Litton Lane, land adjacent to Four Meads Farm) was contrary to the approved plans – Cllr Brooks said this had been raised at the last meeting and pursued with the agent who represented the applicant during the original planning application. Although no longer acting for the applicant he believed the barn erected although a different shape was the same square meterage and it had no doubt been cheaper to buy than the one approved. The agent had advised the applicant to contact the planning officer to see if a retrospective planning application was required. A follow-up would be undertaken.
 - Request for an update on the mobile phone mast.
 - What was the validity of the recent Housing Needs Survey?
4. **Approval of minutes** of Annual Parish Council meeting held on 8 May - it was proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously that the minutes be approved.
5. **Matters arising from previous meeting not covered at this meeting:** none
6. **DCC/WDDC overview** – Cllr John Russell reported that, notwithstanding the Christchurch Judicial Review, work to form the unitary authority was proceeding behind the scenes and there was now a shadow authority. Cllr Mark Roberts added that West Dorset was well represented on the shadow authority. There was also a shadow Scrutiny Committee. The number of councillors would reduce from 106 to 82 and there was currently a public consultation on the ward boundaries which proposed that Litton Cheney should fall within the Chesil Ward. Cllr Orchard welcomed Cllr Tim Yarker and thanked him for attending. A summary of Cllr Yarker's presentation is appended to these minutes.
7. **Finance report – RFO** The finance report had been circulated with the agenda. Parish funds currently stood at £8,661,14 (£9,242.26 general fund and -£581.12 playground). A further £540

donation to the playground was expected, leaving an overspend of £41 which Maggie Walsh considered insignificant as a percentage of the overall project costs.

Approved spend since May's meeting was £16,191.53 comprising £557 clerk's salary and the following invoices approved at the last meeting: £61 hall hire, £584.94 insurance and £14,988.69 playground. Income since May's meeting was £3,991.69 made up of 0.22p interest, £596.61 VAT refund (including £268.40 overpayment), £420 donation from Litton Cheney Trust for bus shelter roof and £2,974.86 grant towards the playground fund.

Invoices for approval: there was one invoice of £140.17 for the DAPTC annual subscription. It was proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr Kourik and carried unanimously that this be approved.

After allowing for known commitments and income there was currently an anticipated year end surplus of income over expenditure of approximately £2,200. However, at this stage of the financial year, additional, currently unidentified costs were likely to arise.

8. **Annual consideration of donations to Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, Bridport CAB and Bride Valley News** Cllr Firrell proposed that the PC donate £75 to each of the above organisations on the basis that all had the potential to benefit villagers. M Walsh confirmed that sufficient funds had been allocated when setting the precept. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously.

9. **Councillors' portfolios: Highways/Transport** (Bill Orchard) – with regard to the collapsed ditch outside Charity Farm, Cllr Orchard sympathised with Mr Romans as the erection of a wall had reduced the turning circle for large vehicles. The waterway was classified as a stream, not a ditch. The PC reluctantly felt the only way to prevent recurring damage was to pipe the stream. Dorset County Council were opposed to this as they felt it would interfere with the flow and could become blocked. Nevertheless, they had requested an application and Cllr Orchard had submitted one as requested. If DCC approved the application, he would bring a formal proposal to a future parish council meeting. It was noted that parked cars can make it difficult to turn into the farm. Cllr Kourik said that Dorset CC would not invoke a parking restriction and double yellow lines must be subject to a lawful order and would need to be enforced. There had been some debate as to who owned the access track to the playing field and who had caused the damage. He had met a structural engineer and established that repairs would cost around £4,000 and had approached Wessex Water with regard to a grant. Their response was awaited before the PC made a decision. Meanwhile, the adjacent residents had repaired most of the damage. The resident of Swallowfield had undertaken to trim the hedge to widen the access. There was however concern that large vehicles may cause further damage to the track or to residents' cars. There was some discussion as to which vehicles use the track and how this could be prevented, including making the sign more prominent or installing a post (but there was concern that vandals may superglue the lock).

Playground/playing field/allotments (Andy King): The allotment fence had been 50% destroyed by marauding sheep. Mr Cuzens had given verbal assurance that he would secure the boundary. AK had obtained 3 quotes to replace the external allotment boundary fencing but these were very expensive and so he would investigate further. The playground continued to receive positive comments from users. He had received one complaint about dog mess, however his personal experience was that the situation had not worsened since dogs had been allowed on the playing field. The trial period was still ongoing and could be ended at any time. The cost of replacement goal posts and nets would be £1,150 - £1,500 however, nobody had contacted him to request goal posts and he would not pursue this unless lobbied to do so. The playground was complete. There were other things that could be done but these were not imperative. An inspection was due to take place. The gate had been left open apparently because children could not reach the latch from the outside – AK would look into installing a double latch.

APK

Footpaths/rights of way/mobile phone (Steve Kourik) Works to the Rocks would not start until Wessex Water had finished replacing the water main. ROW had dealt promptly with a couple of

issues however, vegetation was growing rapidly and they had a backlog of clearance. There had been dog mess in Snicketts off Barges Close. He planned to erect signs and asked villagers to challenge anyone not seen clearing up after their dog. The mobile phone mast was working and O2 were providing a good signal. However, there was still no Vodafone signal. Cllr Firrell was waiting to hear back from the Head of Radio at Vodafone, who had undertaken to look into the situation.

Risk assessment/transparency code/annual report (Kathryn Brooks): the donations and grants policy needed to go on the website. **MW**

Draft Data Protection Policy, Email and Internet Policy and Privacy Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting. KB would amend in light of comments received and recirculate for approval by email before publishing. **KB/MW**

A very small percentage of properties in the village paid non-domestic rates.

Village fabric/maintenance/devolved services (John Firrell). A list of tasks had been created and categorised according to whom would undertake them: volunteers, Bridport TC Lengthsman Scheme or other contractors. He was about to send a list of jobs to Bridport Town Council for the Lengthsman to carry out. He and Cllr Kourik had attended a BLAP meeting about future devolution: WDDC were making progress but DCC had not responded to a BLAP letter requesting information on their devolved plans. BLAP had written a further letter to the leader of DCC but had yet to receive a response. JF had received numerous comments about flies within the village. This was to some extent somewhat inevitable in a farming community given the close proximity of farm buildings to dwellings and he was not sure at this point what, if any, action could be taken but further enquiries would be made.

10. **Proposal for village noticeboard:** a village noticeboard was considered several years ago but the idea was shelved at that time due to austerity. Litton Cheney Trust recently indicated it may be prepared to help financially. Cllr Firrell would approach a number of individuals and organisations, including the school, to set up a working party to investigate further. He would report back to the Parish Council meeting in September. **JF**
Cllr Brooks asked whether funds could be used to upgrade the village website rather than a physical board. Mr Spicer responded that there may also be funds available to upgrade the website but that this would be a separate project and it would fall to the village web group. Cllr Kourik suggested that these two matters were totally different in concept and not connected.
11. **100th anniversary of WW1 Armistice** Cllr Firrell reported that in November it would be 100 years since the armistice ending WW1 was signed. He proposed the PC should take the lead in deciding how the village wished to recognise this event. He would circulate a discussion paper and contact various organisations, including the church and school as well as local residents. **JF**
12. **Correspondence not dealt with as part of the agenda** the PC had been notified about 2 public consultations
 - the Bridport Area Local Plan pre-submission consultation – deadline 7 September
 - recommendations for ward boundaries in Dorset – deadline 27 AugustMW would circulate details to the PC in order to agree a response. Members of the public were also encouraged to respond. **MW**
13. **Planning matters pending & outcomes** The PC had been consulted on one new planning application:
5 The Paddocks DT2 9AF – demolish rear conservatory and utility room and erect garden room and attached utility room (WD/D/18/001240). It was proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Spurrier and carried unanimously that the PC have NO OBJECTION to this application. **MW**
In addition, there had been an agricultural notification for a barn at **Charity Farm, Main Street, DT2 9AP** (WD/D/18/001183) – this came under the notification procedure and so the PC was not a consultee. Mr Romans confirmed that the case officer had requested further details

relating to landscaping and no other details. He added that the barn would be used for storage, not livestock

Update on applications previously reported

Barges Cottage Hinds Meads Lane – erect rear porch (WD/D/18/00424 full planning permission & WD/D/18/00425 Listed Building Consent) approved 29 May

The following 3 applications were still under consideration

Ourganics, Litton Lane – Application to modify S106 legal agreement that restricted occupation of dwelling to existing occupant (WD/D/18/00124)

Charity Farm - Erection of 6 no. dwellings and conversion of redundant agricultural building to a dwelling and dismantle pig barn (WD/D/17/000758 & 59).

Parks Farm (outside parish boundary) - Construction of effluent lagoon (WD/D/17/002317)

14. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 11 September – apologies Cllr Kourik

15. Meeting closed

Maggie Walsh
Parish Clerk

Presentation by Cllr Yarker

Cllr Yarker explained that he held the Housing Portfolio for West Dorset District Council (WDDC) and worked closely with Cllr Ian Gardner, who held the Planning Portfolio. Housing was needed because the population was growing; so that the economy could continue to grow and people could work in the area and in order to retain vitality. Furthermore, in Dorset, the cost of housing was 12% above the national average but average income was 7% below the national average. There were 1,694 households on the housing register. The primary way to deliver affordable/below market value housing was to subsidise it through building market housing.

The Local Plan (LP) set out where building should and should not happen, but was not considered current if insufficient land was likely to come forward within the next 5 years. Central Government had recently standardised the methodology for calculating the 5 year housing land supply and West Dorset did not currently have a 5 year supply. The plan was therefore undergoing a revision, meanwhile, the LP carried less weight and planning applications were assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which presumed in favour of development unless there were strong valid planning reasons against development. WDDC had appointed a commercial housing officer to help understand what sites were likely to be deliverable and this was informing the proposed options sites which would be out for consultation next month. Deliverability helped keep housing land supply above 5 years and thwart speculative development planning applications. Local residents may or may not like LP policies but they were agreed through consultation rather than the NPPF which was imposed by central government.

Cllr Yarker explained that Rural Exceptions Sites were put forward for the development of subsidised/affordable housing in locations where development would not normally be permitted. There were a number of such sites in West Dorset that had been promoted by Community Land Trusts, usually in conjunction with a housing association.

The recent Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) in Litton Cheney indicated that some affordable/subsidised housing was required. The HNA had been carried out in connection with the Charity Farm planning application. It was unlikely to lead to applications for large numbers of houses in the village. Asking an applicant to carry out a HNA was unusual, and usually the required information was readily available from the Housing enabling Unit.

Q: What would happen to the 5 year housing land supply figures once the Unitary Authority came into being?

A: This was not decided yet. Several of the District Councils currently had their LPs in review. He anticipated that these would continue until the plans were eventually harmonised. However, a unitary LP was likely to be regionalised as there was a strong desire to retain local connections.

Q: What was the current position with regard to the 5 year housing land supply in West Dorset?

A: It was last measured on 1 April and was 0.6 short. The revised figure was due to be published in September and was expected to be worse. However, the LP would be given more weight as it came closer to being adopted.

Q: Surely it was developers who determined the 5 year housing land supply?

A: Yes – the local authority produces the figures but were dependant on developers/builders for delivery. The Opening Doors programme aimed to unblock permissions and deliver housing where possible.

Q: It was understood that 25% of housing was expected to come from small plots?

A: This was an aspiration rather than mandated. Sir Oliver Letwin had published his interim report on 'land banking'. He had concluded that large sites took longer to build as developers built at 'absorption rates' however he felt construction could be accelerated if a wider mix of property types were built.

Q: There was support for affordable housing in the village but there was concern at the proposed ratio of affordable to market value on the Charity Farm site.

A: He could not comment on individual cases. The NPPF ratio was 35% affordable. Applications were dealt with on a case by case basis.

Q: Had the Community Land Trust Schemes in West Dorset been over-subscribed?

A: This depended on the scheme. Some had been over-subscribed, in other cases there had been insufficient applicants with a local connection and some homes had gone to families from further afield.

Q: Litton Cheney had voted not to have a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) but instead to rely on policies within the LP, which now carried little weight. How safe were NPs under NPPF rules?

A: NPs must be in tune with the LP in order to be passed by the Planning Inspector. The purpose of NPs was not to stop local development. Providing the NP made reasonable provision for suitable sites it carried a lot of weight. In addition, other NP policies must still be complied with e.g. regarding building materials. Cllr Yarker said he supported NPs: providing there were people willing to take on the considerable work, funds were available to help.

Q: What was the ability of WDDC to challenge speculative planning applications at appeal?

A: Under certain circumstances and where statutory consultees do not object, planning officers' advice is to approve applications if they believe a refused application will be allowed at appeal.

Q: Currently there is an application for an agricultural determination to be applied to a barn at Charity Farm. Legislation introduced in 2015 allowed this to be permitted development whereas in the past it has been dealt with as a normal planning application. It appears that under this present legislation barns can be added ad infinitum as permitted development.

A. Yes, that does seem to be the case and councils have to rely on the applicant's integrity that the barn is required for the purpose it is designated for.