

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Litton Cheney Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 10th September 2013
At Litton and Thorner's Community Hall
Litton Cheney**

Present: Mrs S. Dyke (Deputy Chairman) for the latter part of the meeting, D. Bowen, I. Homer, Dr. H. Lantos, W. Orchard, Mrs A. Spurrier and Clerk J. Firrell.
Also in attendance Cllr R. Coatsworth and four local residents.

1. **Apologies:** S. Kourik (Chairman)
2. **Declarations of Interest:** None.
3. **Democratic Time:** In the absence of the Chairman and initial absence of the Deputy Chairman, D. Bowen assumed chairmanship of the meeting. Given that Mr Andy Romans, owner of Charity Farm, was present, agenda **Item 8** was brought forward and discussed in democratic time. The Clerk explained the current situation as it now stood. After a visit to Charity Farm by the Parish Council and interested parties to both sight and discuss the location of the second barn, concern had been expressed to WDDC by the Parish Council that the barn was being constructed in a different position to that approved. This view was supported by letters from local residents whose outlook from their residences would be affected by the barn in its current position. There were several other issues regarding Charity Farm relevant to past planning applications. A response from WDDC indicated that they would be reviewing the situation and this would include a visit to Charity Farm. The Clerk stressed that matters could not be progressed further until such time as the WDDC representative had investigated and reported their findings. However, Mr Romans was given the opportunity to explain his side of the situation as to why the position of the second barn had changed from that supported by the Parish Council and approved by WDDC. Mr Romans indicated that by building the barn in a different position he could place it at a lower level thereby reducing its visual impact. He also felt that by building it away from other buildings and using it to store feed there would be less danger to farm livestock in the event of a fire. Mrs A. Spurrier questioned whether in fact the barn was being built at a lower level and asked what measures had been taken to ensure proper drainage was provided given the last owner of the farm had constant problems with slurry leaching into the stream. W. Orchard commented that the second barn had been designated for livestock in the original planning application and if it was now to be changed to store feed, and presumably the first barn to house livestock then a change of use might need to be applied for in addition to any retrospective planning permission. There was clearly more to come on this subject once WDDC had investigated further but the Parish Council appreciated Mr Romans coming to the meeting to explain his position, despite apparent disagreement.

Withdrawal of Bus Service – Mr Gil Smith raised the subject of the withdrawal of the Saturday bus service which had been proposed by WDDC. This situation had been commented on by several local residents. Cllr Coatsworth indicated that it was necessary to economise on certain bus services given the reduction in government grants for transportation. The Parish Council agreed the withdrawal of the bus service would place an unnecessary burden on those who did not have other forms of transportation, particularly given the “out on the sticks” situation with regards to Litton Cheney or other villages and would be writing accordingly to WDDC and Dorset County Council. The point was raised as to whether the newly introduced Community Infrastructure Levy paid by those seeking planning permission could be used to subsidise the bus service to rural areas?

Access to Charity Farm - Mr A. Romans asked if something could be done to improve the access to the side lane/track leading off Main Street up to Charity Farm. The current situation does not allow sufficient space for large vehicles to turn into the lane thereby incurring damage to the verge on the opposite side of Main Street and also to the posts protecting the walls either side of the lane. The entrance had already been improved a couple of years ago but clearly not sufficiently. It was suggested Mr Romans initially consult with WDDC and with the owners of The Orchard, Mr and Mrs Newell, to see what could be done to improve the situation. The Parish Council would make enquiries of the Highways Agency to see if measures could be taken to mitigate the damage to the grass verge by the stream. It is possible an alternative entrance to Charity Farm may have to be used in the future.

4. **Approval of Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th July 2013:** Proposed by Dr. H. Lantos, seconded by Mrs A. Spurrier and carried unanimously that the Minutes accurately reflected the business transacted at that meeting.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - Local Plan – It did appear that the revised Local Plan submitted by WDDC to the planning inspectorate did contain a caveat that redundant farm/industrial building sites such as Moxom's Yard should be used for other development.
 - Lights on A35 – Representation had been made that during periods of poor visibility on the "top road" that motorists be instructed to use their headlights. There was an acute fear by many residents that venturing onto the A35 particularly at the Whiteway junction was an accident waiting to happen.
 - The Rocks – This had now been settled and it was agreed that all the work requested had been done.
 - Superfast Broadband – Dr H. Lantos brought councillors up to date with the current situation. The contract had now been awarded and it was hoped work would begin sooner rather than later. It still required as many people as possible to register their interest in getting superfast broadband which could influence where DCC placed areas in terms of priority. It was highlighted that this information had been placed on the Litton website. It was acknowledged that TV reception in the village was generally rubbish and little has been heard from DORBAG on the subject and they would be contacted again.
 - Village Inventory – This still had to be completed and was expected to be so shortly.
 - Road Damage – Concern was expressed at the damage to roads around the village caused by HGV's and large agricultural vehicles. W. Orchard had been in contact with DCC who were aware of the situation but had yet to classify the damage particularly in Hines Mead Lane as a priority. He would return to the charge.
 - Ford Farm – They would be requested to direct large vehicles via Bredy Hut rather than through the village.
6. **Finance Report:** The external audit had now been completed and the Parish Council had been given a clean bill of health, thanks mainly to the work carried out by internal auditor, R. Dewar, in conjunction with RFO J. Firrell. A vote of thanks was given to Robert Dewar for his splendid efforts. Some issues remained concerning HMRC but these were expected to be resolved shortly. It had been agreed between the internal auditor and the RFO that next year the audit would be completed sooner and a schedule set out that would allow this to happen. One point was raised by BDO (External auditor) – that one of the boxes in the Annual Report should have been notated with a "No", and this should be noted for next year. An invoice for the village lengthsman for £180 was approved for payment. Proposed by Dr. H. Lantos, seconded by I. Homer and carried unanimously. Current funds stood at £4191.62. Income since July had been £351.54 (Vat refund £351.37, Interest 17p). Expenditure since July £1269.33 (The Rocks £476.40, Insurance £599.03, Playing Field Sign £40.50, DAPTC sub £125.40, Hire of Hall £28). Vat re-imburement still to come £122 and the 2nd half of the precept £1625 was due at the beginning of October. The

internal auditor has distributed a paper on future precepts with the indication that after several years of non-movement and with the prospect of higher maintenance bills for village assets it would be prudent to have a policy of increasing the precept each year. How much that would be would depend on the financial pressures appertaining at the time.

7. **Councillors Portfolios:**

Highways – W. Orchard had covered the road situation in Matters Arising.

Playing Fields/Allotments – D. Bowen reported the demise of the chickens which had been killed by a fox or other predator as a result of trespassers leaving the area unsecured. It was not known at the time if chickens would be re-introduced at the allotments. The new sign had been erected at the entrance to the playing field.

Broadband – already covered in Matters Arising.

PC Assets – an inventory of PC assets will be carried out shortly by I. Homer & W. Orchard.

Neighbourhood Planning Event – Mrs S. Dyke would attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

8. **Planning Applications & Outcomes:**

Charity Farm had already been dealt with in Democratic Time.

The Old Rectory – Concern had been expressed that now major work at The Old Rectory had been completed, the land should be returned to its original state to the rear of the property. The Clerk reported that he had contacted Mrs Cave, owner of The Old Rectory, who had informed him that work had already been done to reinstate the land but it was accepted more work was still required. It was felt this matter could be dealt with via further dialogue.

Church Path – This thoroughfare despite being a potentially charming approach to St Mary's Church and The Old Rectory was spoilt by overgrown vegetation. It also impeded emergency vehicle access. The Clerk would ask the lengthsman to contact the owners/residents of the properties offering to tidy things up, failing which a letter from the PC would be delivered indicating a failure to cut back vegetation would result in the matter being referred to Dorset Highways who would carry out the work and charge the residents for doing so.

Coombefield Farm – It had been reported that work to widen the yard at the property had encroached onto agricultural land. This required further investigation. Councillors were encouraged to visit the property and see for themselves.

9. **Correspondence:** Electoral Review – A review of ward boundaries was taking place and councils were being asked to consult as to what ward they would like their town/village to be in. Councillors were asked to view the details online and inform the Clerk of their preference. After note: Councillors have subsequently indicated they would prefer for Litton Cheney to remain within the Bride Valley ward – our natural home.

10. **AOB:** Ford Farm – Mrs S. Dyke would write to Martin Crabb regarding plans for their new “cave” asking for further details when available. The Chairman invited Cllr Coatsworth to inform the meeting of any matters of importance. On the subject of Superfast Broadband interested parties should call 01305 221048 to register that interest. The Dorset Safety Partnership was offering courses to drivers over 75. Details could be found on the Dorset for You website.

11. **Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 12th November 2013. D. Bowen offered his advance apologies.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

J. Firrell
Parish Clerk