

# LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall, Litton Cheney

Present: W. Orchard (Chairman), S. Kourik (Deputy Chairman), C. Franklin, Mrs A. Spurrier and Clerk J. Firrell. Also in attendance Cllr J. Russell and 6 local residents.

- 1. Apologies:** Mrs D. Cheater, I. Homer, H. Lantos and Cllr R. Coatsworth.
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** None, although C. Franklin indicated he would have to declare an interest if a discussion ensued regarding Land adjacent to Barges Close. After note – In the event a discussion did not occur.
- 3. Democratic Time:** The Chairman indicated to those present that if they wished to bring up a subject for discussion now was the time to do so, but as previously stated a speaker would be restricted to three minutes to make their point. At other times during the meeting, speaking from the floor would only be allowed at the invitation of the Chairman.  
**Footpaths** – Mr F. Spicer stated that two footpaths appeared to be blocked in the vicinity of The Old Rectory and asked if action could be taken to rectify the problem. Deputy Chairman S. Kourik said he was aware of the problem and discussions had been held with DCC and other interested parties in an effort to solve the problem. The Chairman had had discussions with Mrs Emily Cave who had agreed to change the mode of access at one of the sites, and would be happy for the PC to suggest what that should be. Further discussions would be held but it was confirmed that a stile was not acceptable.  
**Dog Poo** – Mr R. Symes complained about the amount of dog poo distributed about the village and in the playing field in particular and suggested that more notices should be displayed. This subject proved to be one where everyone had a view and many suggestions were put forward as to how best the issue could be addressed. It was explained that this subject was already on the PC's radar, notices having appeared in the BVN and on the village website but it would now be an agenda item for the next meeting, and in the meantime suitable signs would be purchased and placed in appropriate places.  
**Tree Works** – Mr J. Williams believed that the Parish Council were not dealing with tree work planning applications in a correct and proper manner. This was tied in with the Parish Council's historical practice of leaving it to the "good offices" of the WDDC Tree Officers which he contended was not in line with the need to take account of biodiversity and the stated duty of a council when dealing with these matters. The Chairman responded by saying that this practice had been in use for many years and took account of the greater expertise exercised by the district council's tree officers. It had time after time proved to be the right decision resulting in rational and sensible conclusions. The Chairman indicated he would be raising this subject in his opening statement which was the next item on the agenda.
- 4. Chairman's Opening Statement:** As this was his first meeting as Chairman, he felt it would be appropriate if he set out his objectives that he hoped to achieve during his time in office. Recent legislation required councils to become more transparent, accountable and administratively updated, and this was already being achieved but was a work in progress. Investigations were underway to see if a Neighbourhood Plan was appropriate for the village, and the PC would be meeting with an NP expert on 12 November as part of this process. The Parish Council would also be looking at reviewing the way it deals with tree works and this would be an agenda item for the next meeting. Until that time the Parish Council would continue with its practice of leaving it to the WDDC's tree officers to apply their expertise and rational thought. The Parish Council would consider agenda items from

local residents provided it was forwarded three weeks in advance of the meeting, together with the rationale attached. The final decision as to whether the item would become part of the agenda would be made by the Parish Council.

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

**September 2015:** Proposed by S. Kourik and seconded by W. Orchard and carried, that the minutes reflected an accurate account of the meeting.

**6. Matters Arising from the previous meeting not covered at this meeting:** Magna Green – Progressing very slowly but it was thought the lease would be finalised before Christmas, which would allow the lease to be formally accepted by the Parish Council at its meeting in January. Defibrillator – A meeting had been held with an officer from the local ambulance service who had advised on the possible location of the defibrillator and how the “system” worked once it was installed. A gate pillar opposite the bus shelter as you enter a public footpath was thought to be a suitable location and there was a power supply nearby. Mr C. Legge who owned the land would need to be contacted and this was being done. The Parish Council would now be contacting the British Heart Foundation requesting delivery of the defibrillator once payment of £400 had been made. Travel Plan (Ashley Chase Estates) – Regular meetings were now being held between Litton Cheney Parish Council, Long Bredy Parish Council, Dorset Highways and Ashley Chase Estates so that the HGV situation could be monitored. There had been several occasions where HGV's had got stuck in the village, drivers, many with poor to non-existent English language skills, having used their sat navs, and who then had to be assisted and guided out of the village, and onwards to Ashley Chase. It appeared HGV problems were on a national scale, and at the recent AGM of the DAPTC in Dorchester a resolution put forward by Chideock Parish Council was passed unanimously asking the National Association of Local Councils to urgently take up the issue of SatNav systems directing heavy vehicles onto unsuitable roads in rural areas. Wessex Water – Recent weather providing the area with copious amounts of rain had temporarily pushed water shortage and the seemingly excessive extraction of water by Wessex Water from village sources onto the back burner but the situation would be closely monitored.

**7. WDDC Overview:** Ward Councillor John Russell offered up several snippets of information regarding the work of WDDC. An Executive Committee of which he was a member would be meeting on 17 November. Now that the Local Plan had been adopted, the council's attention was being drawn to the need for business growth which would have to be handled sensitively so as not to conflict with the objectives of the Local Plan. The council hoped that extra funding could be made available via discretionary rate relief. The question of more local devolution had been looked at and currently was not considered possible.

**8. Finance Report:** The Clerk/RFO presented this report. Current funds taking account of funds held for the defibrillator stood at £6945.82. Income since September was £0.16p (Interest) and Expenditure £482 (Lengthsman £165, R. Randall £132, DAPTC £12.50 and Clerk's Salary £173). Invoices requiring approval for payment – Humphries Kirk for work on the Magna Green lease (£369.60) and British Heart Foundation for the defibrillator (£400). Proposed by S. Kourik, seconded by C. Franklin and passed unanimously. Request for financial assistance for the maintenance of St Mary's churchyard – The request had been received from St Mary's PCC. The Parish Council has provided assistance over many years and it was hoped this would continue. Last year the PC gave £250. The Chairman was in favour that financial assistance should be provided and suggested it should be increased from the previous year. All members of the Parish Council present agreed it should be increased and after some discussion it was proposed

by C. Franklin, seconded by W. Orchard and carried unanimously that St Mary's PCC be given £500 to assist with the maintenance of the churchyard. Relief in Need Charity – It was proposed by S. Kourik, seconded by W. Orchard and carried unanimously that Lyn Lacey be nominated to join the board of the Relief in Need Charity in place of Margaret Thomas who had resigned. 2016/17 Precept – Usually at this point in the financial year the Parish Council decides on the amount of the Parish Precept, prior to sending a request to WDDC for this amount to be accepted and incorporated within the Council Tax. We had yet to receive a request from WDDC for this information, and whilst it was felt by the RFO that the present state of funds probably could not justify an increase on last year's precept of £3600, it was decided that a figure would be finally agreed at the January Parish Council Meeting. Available Funding – The Parish Council would be making use of the various funding avenues available to councils. Cllr Coatsworth's fund had made available a total of £440, subject to the correct criteria being applied (possibly to offset against the legal costs of the Magna Green lease) and the PC were aware that S106/CIL funds were available to the village and the current amount would be verified. After note – S106 funds stands at £4400, but was split into several areas such as community venues, green space and play areas.

9. **Councillors Portfolios:** Highways/RoW/Footpaths – Deputy Chairman S. Kourik led on this subject. Footpaths had been discussed in the earlier part of the meeting and other elements concerning footpaths via information submitted by the RoW Officer would be looked into further in due course. The Rocks were particularly slippery, and probably needed pressure washing, or if finance could be found, re-surfacing with a non-slip finish. Playing Field/Allotments – In the absence of Mrs D. Cheater, the Clerk informed the council and those present of the work Mrs Cheater had been pursuing since the last meeting. After discussion with several playground equipment providers, one of the companies had put forward a “dream scheme” that could be use as an aspiration given its cost. It did however allow for this particular scheme to be put together in stages as funding became available. A visual image of the scheme looked impressive despite sharp intakes of breath when the cost was revealed. It was a work in progress, one that had been put together after considerable research including contacting Thorner's School, families with children and local residents. More detail and further ideas/costs would be made available by Mrs D. Cheater at January's meeting. A list of possible funding sources had also been made available by one of the equipment companies. Neighbourhood Plan – The Chairman brought the meeting up to date indicating that the PC would be meeting with Jo Wittenden on 12 November and the hope was that as a result of this meeting, it would be possible to put together a time line and schedule in the lead up to a public meeting. Although the PC would be the body responsible for the formulation of a Neighbourhood Plan, should it be decided to go ahead, it would be a steering committee appointed by the PC who would be the working component of the scheme. It was imperative that the right talent and resources were incorporated within the steering group and it was hoped these people could either be identified so they could be approached, or would volunteer to be part of the project without too much coercion. Superfast Broadband/Mobile Phone Mast – In the absence of Dr H. Lantos, the Deputy Chairman informed the meeting of the latest developments including the recent closing of the valley road from Long Bredy Hut to Litton Cheney which had been closed in order to “lay down” the fibre optic cable necessary to activate the superfast broadband. As a result of this work several local residents in Litton Cheney and other villages have lost broadband. Although it was due to be brought up in Planning Matters, the Deputy Chairman, S. Kourik, discussed the current non-progress with regards to the installation of the mobile phone mast planned for the upper part of Chalk Pit Lane on land owned by John Cooper. A meeting had been recently held with Oliver Letwin MP who accepted that to date the standard of service and degree of competence from the facilitator

and installation contractor left much to be desired, He undertook to seek out another installer and find an alternative source of funds. There would be a further meeting before Christmas to progress matters.

10. **DAPTC Summary Report:** This report had been circulated to councillors and concerned a pilot scheme “Working Together” which involved Dorset County Council, four Town Councils and DAPTC exploring ways of improving how councils at all levels work and operate together. There was a requirement to respond to the report and the Clerk would do this before the end of November. The overall impression was this was a step in the right direction but currently it was only stated intent, and only time would tell if the commitment shown in the document could morph into meaningful action.

11. **Planning Matters:** Land adjacent to Barges Close: Still awaiting a decision by WDDC. Moxom's Yard (Change of Roofing Material) – The council raised no objection to this application which swapped tiles from one roof of the dwelling to another. Reconfirming Tree Works Policy – As indicated in the Chairman's Opening Statement the council would continue with its current practice of leaving it to the “good offices” of the tree officers, but would be discussed further at the next meeting. The Old Rectory – This would be dealt with in line with current practice regarding tree works. There was an objection from the floor which was deemed to be out of order.

12. **Correspondence not dealt with as part of the agenda:** None.

13. **Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

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

J. Firrell  
Parish Clerk.