

**LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the meeting of Litton Cheney Parish Council**  
**held on Tuesday 14 November 2017 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall**

Present: Bill Orchard (Chairman); Kathryn Brooks, John Firrell; Andy King; Steve Kourik; Maggie Walsh (Clerk). Also in attendance: Councillors John Russell and Keith Day and 2 local residents

1. **Apologies for absence:** Hugh Lantos; Bella Spurrier; Ros Kayes
2. **Declarations of interest:** none
3. **Democratic time** Matters raised included
  - Comment that it would be preferable to use local contractors or direct employment rather than Bridport Town Council's lengthsman scheme. The Chairman responded that in practice it had been difficult to find a lengthsman that could undertake all the required work but that he anticipated a mix and match approach with some works continuing to be done by local people/contractors. There would need to be a diary of works identifying works required and frequency - James Williams volunteered to help with this.
  - Request that Litton Cheney PC formally request the County Council to reinstate Bridleway number 11.
  - Request to see the existing turnstile retained and repositioned on the Rocks.
  - Concern about the number of families with children leaving the village and the impact on village facilities including the school.
4. **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 September:** it was proposed by John Firrell, seconded by Steve Kourik and decided unanimously that these be approved.
5. **Matters arising from previous minutes not covered at this meeting** John Firrell reported that the one bus per week was being used by villagers from Litton Cheney and other villages. Bridport Town Council had been working with the County Council with a view to providing a community bus service; he did not know if this would involve the existing school bus. The plan was being costed and he hoped details would be available in December. If Litton Cheney chose to be involved, this would impact on the precept. He acknowledged that, without a regular daily bus service, the village would be less sustainable. There had been two requests for lifts to the top of Whiteway to catch the X51.
6. **DCC/WDDC overview**

Cllr John Russell reported that the Secretary of State had decided in favour of there being two unitary authorities in Dorset. Christchurch DC would meet shortly to discuss a possible referendum on the issue. He did not know when the new structure would take effect but anticipated it might start in 2019 after the next elections. In response to the Chairman's question, JR confirmed that the full sum of local council tax support grant had been passed on to parish and town councils but the grant had been on a reducing, time limited basis and had come to an end.

Cllr Keith Day expected the Secretary of State would provide further details within the next six to seven weeks. The Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP) was due to meet the following day to discuss some of the matters that might be devolved to parish and town councils.
7. **Finance report:** RFO Maggie Walsh reported that parish funds currently stood at £18,093.19.  
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Approved spend since the meeting of 12 September was £556.10. Of this £172.75 was approved at that meeting and £383.35 had been paid to the clerk.

Income since 12 September was £10,530.22 made up of £3,612.50 precept; 0.21p interest; £6,842.51 lottery grant for the playground and £75.00 donation from Bride Valley Vineyard, also for the playground.

Invoices requiring approval £505 comprising £120 for hedge cutting and £385 for the clearance of the Triangle: £355 of this had been discussed at the previous meeting and there had been two applications of weedkiller at £15 each. It was proposed by John Firrell, seconded Kathryn Brooks and carried unanimously that these be approved.

St Mary's PCC had requested financial assistance towards the upkeep of the churchyard. Last year the PC contributed £500.00. There was some discussion about the request and also, as the request had been received after publication of the agenda and less than three clear working days before the meeting, whether the PC could legitimately vote on this issue. As a £500 donation for this purpose had been included in budget projections, which were discussed at the Parish Council meeting in January 2017 having been published for consultation beforehand, it was decided that the Parish Council could legitimately vote on this matter. It was proposed by John Firrell, seconded by Kathryn Brookes and carried unanimously that a donation of £500.00 be made.

Defibrillator St John's Ambulance advise was that defibrillators should contain a set of jewellery cutters and a disposable razor. The cost of these items would be no more than £10. It was proposed by Steve Kourik, seconded by John Firrell and carried unanimously that MW purchase these items for inclusion with the village defibrillator.

After allowing for the clerk's salary for the remainder of the year this left an available balance of approximately £7,900 from which some additional maintenance expenses would need to be paid. There was a further £8,387.46 ring-fenced for the playground and £19 VAT to be reclaimed.

Budget projection and precept: the 2018/19 precept would be discussed and a decision made at the January meeting in order to submit paperwork to the District Council by the deadline of 31 January. Work had commenced on budget projections and would be circulated to Parish Councillors and placed on the village website for public viewing prior to that meeting.

The precept had been increased significantly last year due to the need to start paying the going rate for a parish clerk and in expectation of local authorities devolving services to parish and town councils. The full impact of devolved services were not yet known but the following potential financial pressures had been identified:

- increased demands on parish councils would impact on the workload of the parish clerk, meaning contracted hours may need to be increased
- possible contribution to a bus service
- need to build sufficient financial reserves to pay for infrequent and/or unforeseen costs such as parish council elections, village poll
- increased workload for Lengthsman due to devolved services

The government recently indicated it has no plans to cap local councils but this may not always be the case.

Contract of employment there is a legal requirement that, as an employee of the council, the Parish Clerk has a contract of employment. MW and the Chairman were drafting a Contract of Employment and expected to provide an update at the next meeting,

8. **Councillor's portfolios** Highways/Transport (Bill Orchard): BO had recently attended a useful planning meeting: WDDC's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for new housing was £100 per square metre and applied to holiday lets but not affordable housing. He continued to monitor potholes: Highways had recently carried out a repair very promptly but had not considered all the potholes reported to be of sufficient size/depth to warrant action. The Cheese factory continued to reassure

villagers that they try to dissuade delivery vehicles from coming through the village. He noted that the hedgerows in Hines Mead Lane had been damaged by vehicles.

Playground/playing field/allotments (Andy King): the hedgerow between the allotments and playing field still needed cutting on one side and AK undertook to follow this up.

The Allotment Society had tried to encourage plot holders to maintain their plots however only 3.5 of the 14 plots were regularly maintained. 2.5 plots were vacant and there was no waiting list. The PC currently received £25 per plot let. The society would shortly hold its AGM. A community garden was suggested. Whilst the Society can discuss the future of the allotments, any decision was ultimately for the Parish Council to make.

AK was pleased to announce that, with money received and promised there were now sufficient funds for the playground works, with a small surplus. Work would start on 18 December. The climbing frame would be repaired and the slide may need to be replaced (at an anticipated cost of £200-600). It was suggested that any surplus might be spent on adult outdoor fitness equipment.

The playing field grass had received the final cut of the year.

Footpaths/rights of way/mobile phone (Steve Kourik): Dorset County Council had agreed to pay half of the £1,904 costs to repair the Rocks. Litton Cheney Trust would pay £500 and the Parish Council would claim the balance from S106 funds. The works would involve removing the existing surface, then planing and compacting to create a level permeable surface from boundary to boundary. There was some concern about overhanging trees from adjoining properties. The turnstiles will need to be removed for access for construction equipment, after which they will be replaced. Should the matter of the removal of the turnstiles ever be considered because of current legislation, the opinions and concerns of local residents will be sought at a village assembly. Work would commence in three weeks.

Following attacks on sheep, Richard Cuzens wished to erect fencing and a gate on his property. His proposal would involve relocating a footpath which is a costly, lawful process. However this could be avoided if 2 gates were installed as the County Council could determine applications for new limitations without charge. SK had advised RC to speak to highways as it was for them to deal with it, although the PC would be able to comment. A villager commented that residents of School Lane were fed up of sheep escaping through gaps in the fence and also that the swing gate to Cllr Bella Spurrier's field was broken and needed repair.

Galliford Try had been on site to discuss cabling for the mobile phone mast. They currently anticipated the works would commence in January and the mast would be operational in February.

Risk assessment/transparency code/annual report (Kathryn Brooks) - nothing new to report but KB still wished to talk to John about Word documents on the website.

Village fabric/maintenance/devolved services (John Firrell) There had been 2 accidents caused by mud on village roads and Dorset Highways had erected warning signs but had no enforcement officers to ensure farmers cleaned up any mud deposited by their own or contractors' vehicles.

Planting of the Triangle was due to commence week commencing 20 November.. There would still be a Christmas tree on the Triangle.

There would be an item in the Bride Valley News about people putting bins out too early. JF had drafted a letter for councillors' use when appropriate. SK suggested holiday lets might be responsible for putting bins out too early and questioned whether they were paying for commercial waste collection.

JF reported that the house being cleared on Church Path now had a skip – before this, the bins had been overflowing.

Litton Cheney PC thanked the Litton Cheney Trust for the two £500 contributions towards the Triangle and the Rocks.

9. **Proposal to use Bridport Town Council Lengthsman scheme** JF reported that the village had not had a lengthsman for some time and that the PC had not been able to find a replacement. The Bridport Town Council scheme had the advantage of administering training and health and safety compliance and providing equipment. The PC would need to commit to a minimum of 10 days per year at an hourly rate resulting in expenditure of approximately £1,500 per year plus any materials. These funds were available in the budget. A number of other parishes already use the service and he believed no other contractors could provide the same comprehensive range of services, including highway works. It was decided that this matter could be dealt with in isolation, outside of contract matters referred to in the standing orders, because the required works would include specialist highways work not provided by other contractors, Bill Orchard proposed to accept use of the Town Council's lengthsman scheme. This was seconded by Steve Kourik and carried unanimously.
10. **Planning report.** The Parish Council had considered three planning applications at its last meeting (WD/D/17/001608 White Cross House; WD/D/17/001606 Whiteway water treatment works; WD/D/17001626 1 Rose Cottage) and had decided not to comment. This had been reported to WDDC and all three applications had since been approved.

Since then the Parish Council had been consulted on two further applications:

- WD/D/17/002133 Blackbird Cottage., school house lane - oak framed garden room and porch
- WD/D/17/001986 Barges Cottage Hines Mead Lane erect rear porch

As the deadline for comments on both these applications had been sometime before the meeting, the Chairman had agreed that Parish Councillors' comments could be obtained by exchange of emails and, following this process, the PC had decided not to comment on either application. The Blackbird cottage application had been approved on 8 Nov.

Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan consultation The Pre-submission Draft of the Askerswell NP had been published on their village website for a period of public consultation lasting until 29 December. Litton Cheney Parish Council did not wish to submit any formal comments on the consultation but asked that Askerswell be congratulated on reaching this milestone and wished good luck.

11. **Correspondence not dealt with as part of the agenda** - none
12. **Date of next meeting** – Tuesday 9 January 7:30pm
13. **Meeting closed**

Maggie Walsh

Parish Clerk