

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the online virtual meeting of Litton Cheney Parish Council
held on Tuesday 12 May 2020

Present: Bill Orchard (Chairman); Kathryn Brooks, John Firrell; Andy King; Andrew Price; Bella Spurrier, Maggie Walsh (Clerk). Also in attendance: Cllr Mark Roberts

1. **Apologies** None
2. **Declarations of interest** None
3. **Democratic time** N/A – there were no villagers present
4. **Approval of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10 March 2020** It was proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr King and carried unanimously that these be approved.
5. **Matters arising since previous meeting not part of this agenda** Parish Councillors wished to minute thanks to villagers and volunteers who had pulled together to provide support to those more vulnerable during the current Coronavirus pandemic.
6. **Dorset Council overview** – Cllr Mark Roberts reported that during the current Coronavirus Pandemic, Dorset Council held regular virtual meetings including with Gold Command. They had focussed on vulnerable people and worked closely with volunteer services to ensure nobody was missed. They ensured that vulnerable children and those of key workers were able to attend school and were currently providing 1,000 laptops to ensure children did not miss out on their education. Coronavirus costs for DC were outstripping government grants by around £13m per month and it was not clear what additional funds central government might provide. Meanwhile, reserves were available to cover the additional costs. Dorset Council had the third highest number of business grants to distribute in the country so there had been some delays. Additional grants were available for those who were not eligible for other grants such as B&Bs and small village halls not registered as charities.

Unlike much of the country, there did not appear to have been a rise in domestic violence, but they were checking in case it had been under reported. Household waste tips had been closed as the Police had classed trips to the tip as non-essential journeys, but these had now reopened. Garden waste collections had also resumed.

Chris Loder, MP had been effective at raising issues with ministers on Dorset Council's behalf e.g. he had been instrumental in the reopening of Yeovil crematorium. Any local issues should be raised with Cllr Roberts for him to escalate with the MP or within DC. Chris Loder had also been involved trying to resolve issues with the No 6 bus service between Bridport and Beaminster and limited opening of churches. Gritting of the school route was not currently a priority but would be resolved before winter.

DC had held a number of public meetings and the first cabinet meeting had gone well but there had not yet been a full council meeting. The Annual Meeting had been postponed until September. Planning meetings would be held remotely but this would make public participation more difficult.

Some staff had been moved into other roles during the Pandemic, which may impact on other priorities, such as the Unitary timetable.

7. **Finance report and invoices for approval** (Clerk and RFO). At the time of publishing the agenda, Parish funds stood at £18,687.72. Spend since the previous meeting was £1,796.33 comprising £580.72 salary; £39.49 expenses; £1,176.12 contribution to drainage improvements at The Rocks. Income since last meeting was £5,695 comprising £5,300 precept; £300 donation towards improvements to The Rocks; £95 allotment income and 21p interest. It was too early in the year to predict the year end outturn with any degree of accuracy but the annual budgets were as had been agreed and minuted in January.

The following invoices were for approval

Annual public liability insurance – The Parish Council agreed last year to enter into a 3 year price fixed agreement with BHIB and the renewal premium was within a few pounds of last year's.	£345.20
DAPTC fee for Virtual Meetings training attended by Clerk and Chairman	£20.00
Reimburse Clerk for Zoom licence (for virtual meetings)	£14.39
Reimburse Parish Councillor for lock and chain to secure playground during lockdown	£10.98

It was proposed by Cllr King seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously that these be approved.

In addition, the Clerk sought approval for the following regular payments during 2020-21

- Clerk's salary paid bi-monthly in accordance with NALC scales as set out in job description
- Annual GDPR registration, which was paid by direct debit as this saved the Parish Council £5

It was proposed by Cllr King seconded by Cllr Firrell and carried unanimously that these be approved.

The deadline for completion of Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) had been extended in light of Coronavirus situation. Year end papers were still being completed and would be published on the website in due course, along with details of the period for public inspection. Meanwhile the following part 2 AGAR forms had been completed and circulated to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting:

1. Annual Internal Audit Report – Parish Councillors NOTED this report and thanked Peter Collis for undertaking it.
2. Certificate of Exemption – it was proposed by Cllr Firrell seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously that this be approved.
3. Section 1 Annual Governance Statement – it was proposed by Cllr Orchard seconded by Cllr Price and carried unanimously that this be approved.
4. Section 2 Accounting Statements – it was proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously that this be approved.

8. Councillors' portfolios:

Footpaths/Rights of Way/ (Bill Orchard, Chairman) A tree had fallen across the gate and footpath at the bottom of the Vineyard. DC had been informed and SSE had visited to assess if power lines were affected. A number of footpath gates had disappeared or been damaged: the Footpaths Officer had a list but, although WDDC had repaired them, they were actually landowners' responsibility. Cllr Roberts highlighted that, during the pandemic, some Rangers had been moved into other roles. Cllr Orchard had 17 statements and anticipated 4 more in support of the application to register Watery Lane as a public footpath, but Rangers had been deluged with claims and it would be several years before they could process it.

Highways/Transport (Andrew Price): DC had repaired a number of potholes and also the collapsing road near to the PH. He was pleased with the drainage improvements works undertaken by DC at The Rocks. Works were still required to the collapsing banks/gullies on Whiteway and there had been no progress on the collapsing wall on Redway.

Playground/playing field/allotments (Andy King): Grass cutting had resumed, including the edge of the allotment. The allotments had never looked better: all but one plot was let and all those let were well maintained. The lengthsman would shortly undertake some playground repairs. Cllr Firrell thanked Cllr King for tidying up the area around the bus shelter. Cllr King said the bin smelled foul and suggested the bench and bin should be further apart.

Risk Assessment/Transparency Code/Annual Report (Vacant): prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated the following amended documents and incorporated all proposed changes into the final draft

- Standing Orders – amended in line with NALC Model Standing Orders

- Financial Regulations – amended in line with NALC Model Financial Regulations
- Risk register – annual review

It was proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Firrell and carried unanimously that these be approved. The Clerk would publish on the website. **MW**

Village Fabric/Maintenance/BLAP/DAPTC (John Firrell) Russell Randall, local craftsman, had quoted £2,036.98 plus VAT to reinstate the turnstiles at the top and bottom of The Rocks, along with gates to the side to allow access for those unable to use the turnstiles. The Litton Cheney Trust had agreed to donate £2,036 thus the net cost to the PC would be zero. A second quote had been sought from H Leaf & Son, original supplier of the turnstiles but they were unable to help and said they thought the quote received was a reasonable one. Under these circumstances, Cllr Firrell proposed that the PC suspend the requirement for 3 quotes and award the contract to the Russell Randall. This was seconded by Cllr Price and carried unanimously. **JF/MW**
A spring towards the bottom of The Rocks had caused some leakage, which was being dealt with.

Agricultural Liaison (Bella Spurrier) there were a few caravans by the lake on Charity Farm. Local farmers were concerned there would be too few seasonal workers to pick crops. Cllr Roberts undertook to feed this back, saying that Chris Loder would appreciate the difficulties as his family's background was in farming. It was understood that furloughed staff could legitimately take second jobs.

Planning/Climate Emergency (Kathryn Brooks)

The following applications had been decided

- **WD/D/19/001897 | Demolition of double garage and erection of 1no. dwelling, garage block, access and parking | LAND EAST OF, 7-8 GARDEN CLOSE, LITTON CHENEY**
- REFUSED on the grounds of unsustainable development and backland development.
- **WD/D/19/001428 | Internal and external alterations to include the erection of single storey extensions | 2 CHARITY FARM COTTAGES, MAIN STREET, LITTON CHENEY, DORCHESTER, DT2 9AP7 – APPROVED**
- **WD/D/19/002804 | Removal of front boundary hedge and erection of wall | 2 CHURCH PATH, LITTON CHENEY, DORCHESTER, DT2 9AQ – APPROVED**

The following planning matters were outstanding

- **WD/D/19/001463 | Erection of 6no. dwellings & conversion of a redundant agricultural building to a dwelling (with variation of conditions 4, 5 & 6 of planning permission WD/D/17/000758 to amend approved plans) | CHARITY FARM, MAIN STREET, LITTON CHENEY, DORCHESTER, DT2 9AP**
- There has been no change in the situation with Litton Lakes and no application submitted. Activity is still evident at the site, although the current lockdown will have precluded any visiting caravans etc.
- The landscaping at Charity Farm for the latest barn has not been planted, as required, by March 2020.

Cllr Brooks would shortly attend a webinar on climate change.

9. New planning applications for consideration at the meeting

- **WD/D/20/000698 Erection of cheese processing building and associated alteration to the car parking area including a minor modification to the southern boundary of the site. PARKS FARM, LITTON CHENEY, DORCHESTER, DT2 9AZ**
Parish Councillors recognised the importance of the farm as a rural business with a significant number of employees. They did, however, have concerns about the visual impact of the farm within the AONB. The farm was already prominent as seen from Litton Cheney and the surrounding area and this would worsen with the proposed expansion into the field to the north. They noted that planting required as a condition of permission for the effluent lake may not happen unless or until the lake is completed. Parish Councillors therefore felt that, should the current planning application be granted, effective and mature landscaping should be required to be planted and maintained to mitigate the visual impact. There was also concern at lack of details within the supporting information to explain why a building of the proposed size was required when the consequential reduction in vehicle movements was very modest given overall traffic movements through the village. The

concern was that the proposed building was scaled for future expansion that would further increase traffic within the Bride Valley.

Parish Councillors reiterated concerns that Litton Cheney was not consulted by DC on applications for this site as it “did not meet the criteria” even though its location meant that its impact was more significant for Litton Cheney than for either of the two Parishes that were consulted.

It was proposed by Cllr Brooks, seconded by Cllr Price and carried unanimously that the Parish Council comment on the application for the following reasons.

“The application involves extending the boundary of the site in a Northerly direction into land that falls away from the site, making screening more difficult. It is recognised that the proposed building will not be higher than the existing silos and storage building and that the use of embankment will help to counter the difference in level, as at present. The site is visible from some considerable distance. If consent is given for the new building, the Parish Council would wish that the landscaping provision shown on the plan extending from the existing woodland to the highway, requires the use of trees of a sufficient height to provide effective screening from the outset, rather than using whips which take a long time to mature.

“The construction of this building will apparently allow part of the cheese processing to be brought on site, rather than being sent to Bournemouth, resulting in a small reduction of 6-10 vehicle movement per week (not per day as stated in the original Design and Access Statement). While the Parish Council welcomes the small reduction in goods vehicle traffic, we are concerned that additional processing capacity will be created, resulting in an incremental expansion of the site. It is understood that production is currently at the maximum of 3,500 tonnes per annum. There has been a significant increase in staff numbers since 2015 from 86 full time and 20 part time to currently 125 full time and 20 part time. Cars parked at the site currently exceed the number of spaces. This application provides for an increase in car parking spaces and thus the opportunity for a further rise in employees and traffic movements. It should be noted that most employees travel from Dorchester and Weymouth, not from the local area. The problems of traffic associated with Parks Farm are well documented and the Parish Council would not wish to see an escalation of these problems.

“The Parks Farm site is most visible from the village of Litton Cheney and has a Litton Cheney address. However as the site lies just outside the parish boundary the parish council is not formally informed of, nor consulted on, any applications. We have repeatedly requested that the parish council is designated a statutory consultee, so that its opinion is given greater weight to reflect the impact of development at Parks Farm on the parish.”

- **WD/D/20/000562 & 561 | Internal alterations to include changing layout of shower room, form partitions to create two cupboards, remove electric boiler and replace with oil fired boiler and extend wet heating system to add radiators and installation of flue | BEECH HOUSE, HINES MEAD LANE, LITTON CHENEY, DORCHESTER, DT2 9AG** The Parish Council had been consulted on amended plans and description for the above application. The Parish Council had no objection to the original application and had nothing further to add.

10. Correspondence not dealt with as part of the agenda Parish Councillors were asked to consider any schemes that might improve employability of young people and for which grants were available.

11. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 14 July 2020

Meeting closed

Maggie Walsh
Parish Clerk