

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Village Assembly held on Tuesday 8 May 2018 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Present: Bill Orchard (Chairman); Kathryn Brooks, John Firrell; Andy King; Tessa Mulhall; Maggie Walsh (Clerk). Also in attendance: Cllr John Russell, Alan Marler, Paul Turner and Paul Delves of Wessex Water and 31 local residents

1. **Apologies:** Steve Kourik; Bella Spurrier; Cllr Mark Roberts

2. **Presentation by Wessex Water**

Alan Marler from Wessex Water (WW) explained forthcoming works, commencing on 14 May, to replace the water main. He also brought walnut cake and biscuits, which were much appreciated. The project would use every type of construction method available to the water industry using disused pipes as ducts where possible to minimise excavation.

Works would be undertaken by one of their most experienced teams. They would work closely with residents, knocking on doors to minimise disruption as far as possible. Residents would be able to get their cars on and off their drives when they needed to (but not necessarily by their normal route) and receive deliveries etc. AM asked residents to inform WW operatives about deliveries and any exceptional events affecting access/traffic.

WW would give 48 hours' notice if the water was to go off and could provide bottled water if required. They had worked closely with Dorset County Council (DCC) to ensure bins would be emptied as normal and the school bus would get children to and from school on time. There would be a temporary bus stop and two WW staff would be allocated to ensure children were able to get on and off the bus safely. After-note: WW had also discussed matters with Dorset Community Transport who run the weekly bus service to and from Bridport.

The water main had been prioritised for replacement because of its history of bursts. The new main should last 80 years. The site office would be based on land beside Tithe Barn House. Work would be completed in two phases: phase one would be from Tithe Barn House to the bus shelter; phase two would be from the bus shelter to Whiteway. Diversions would be set up during each stage of works and pedestrians would be encouraged to use Church Path/The Rocks. John Firrell asked WW to inform the school that there would be increased traffic along School Lane during the works. Alan undertook to liaise with DCC Highways to ensure the proposed resurfacing of The Rocks would not occur at the same time as the water main replacement. Road closures would remain in place over weekends but, where possible, WW would try to move barriers back so people can get through. WW would not know what was involved until the project was underway and so works were scheduled to last 10 to 12 weeks but would hopefully take less.

In response to residents' questions:

Water pressure in mains naturally varies but residents should not notice this unless the pressure relieving valve was not working properly – contact Alan to get it checked.

Excavations would be patched but WW would not resurface the road.

Residents living in the east of the village should not be affected (other than by the road closures) as the main there was replaced fairly recently. They would only notice an increase in pressure if there were significant leaks in the main being replaced.

Villagers should contact WW with any problems, questions or concerns using the contact details below. All WW staff carry ID cards – anyone in doubt about the ID of anyone claiming to be from WW should contact the emergency number.

Alan Marler, Design Engineer Tel 01225 528129 Mob 07909 545562

Email: Alan.Marler@wessexwater.co.uk

Emergency Number: 0345 600 4 600

3. **Chairman's review of the year**

Bill Orchard, Chairman, reported that at last year's Village Assembly he had explained why it had been necessary to increase the precept in order to employ a village clerk, as John Firrell was stepping down after many years of undertaking the role for a stipend. Once the Unitary Authority replaced the existing authorities, there would be a shortfall of £16 million and some services would devolve to town and parish councils. Parish Councils would therefore need to decide whether to allow things to fall into disrepair, utilise volunteers, or pay to maintain services. Litton Cheney Parish Council was open to suggestions about how to protect the precept. Bridport Town Council had also asked parish councils whether they would be willing to contribute to town centre services such as toilets, Citizens Advice Bureau etc. Parish Councils had responded that they did not believe they were in the position to raise the precept sufficiently to fund these services.

This year the parish precept was set at £10,600, which equated to £65 for a band D house for a year. This level would not allow the parish to build up sufficient reserves to meet the challenges ahead. Currently the access track to the playing fields was subsidising and repairs would have to be funded from reserves.

The Parish Council had traditionally donated approximately £700 each year to several organisations and to the upkeep of the churchyard but had received increasing numbers of requests for donations from other organisations. The maximum the parish could donate was approximately £2,200 a year but if villagers wished to increase donations beyond current levels, this would increase the precept.

Developers paid "S106" contributions for certain types of development. These contributions were held by the District Council on behalf of parish councils. Litton Cheney Parish Council had used S106 funds to help pay for the playground and planned to use some for resurfacing The Rocks. The Parish Council would like to identify other projects that could benefit from S106 funds before the Unitary authority came into effect, when those funds may be diverted elsewhere.

The Charity Farm planning application had been agreed in principle subject to the applicant undertaking a Housing Needs Assessment. The results of this indicated that villagers supported in principle development of affordable housing in the village. There may therefore be further applications with developers looking to finance affordable housing with full price housing. There had been spirited debate over The Rocks. The £1,904 cost of resurfacing would be split between the County Council and the Parish Council (funded by S106 and the Litton Cheney Trust). The Turnstiles would be re-erected slightly offset to allow access by pushchairs in order to comply with the Equalities Act. The Parish Council would notify villagers about where they were to be reinstated and would hold another Village Assembly if required.

John Firrell had spearheaded the replacement bus service and was currently pursuing use of bus passes and access for schoolchildren aged 16 to 18. The bus shelter ridge had been rethatched. The official opening of the revamped playground had preceded the Assembly. He wished to minute the Parish Council's thanks to Diana Cheater, Hannah Bunting and Andy King for their vision and doggedness to see the project through.

A vacancy had recently arisen on the Parish Council. This time, two candidates had come forward but, in the past, the Parish Council had struggled to get candidates to stand. Further vacancies would arise in the future. It was important that the Parish Council should be broadly based and representative of the village and being a Parish Councillor was not a great time commitment – all that was required was to be approachable and available – being an active participant is better than being a passive complainant. Local residents were asked to seriously consider running for election to the Parish Council.

Bill Orchard finished by introducing each of the Parish Councillors and the Clerk.

4. Open Floor

This was an opportunity for local residents to raise matters they wished to bring to the attention of the Parish Council and/or other residents.

The recent Housing Needs assessment was discussed. The Parish Council had received the survey results that day which showed that there was support for affordable housing in the village – a summary of the results would be published on the village website. A number of villagers felt it had not been clear that the survey had been undertaken by the Charity Farm applicant and said

they would have responded differently had they understood this. The District Council Rural Housing Enabling team had provided the applicant with the template and methodology and had collated the results. The question was asked as to whether the village should reconsider its decision not to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan.

It was not yet known when the telephone mast would go live. (Since the meeting it has been established as likely to be mid June.)

5. Meeting Closed.

Maggie Walsh
Parish Clerk