

# LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Village Assembly  
held on Tuesday 14 May 2019 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Present: Bill Orchard (Chairman); Bella Spurrier; John Firrell; Maggie Walsh (Clerk). Also in attendance: 31 local residents

1

1. **Apologies:** Kathryn Brooks; Andy King.
2. **Chairman's review of the year**

The Chairman, Bill Orchard, thanked everyone for coming and began summarising recent events.

Dorset Council had not consulted the Parish Council about its intention to introduce a double decker school bus. The PC only learned of the plan when a number of villagers received letters requiring them to clear overhanging hedges and vegetation within 14 days. The PC believed the route unsuitable for a double decker bus, as evidenced by problems caused when HGVs attempt to drive through the village. The PC also felt the proposed journey of one hour ten minutes from Winterbourne Abbas to the Sir John Colfox School was too long for schoolchildren. Following representations from several Parish Councils, Dorset Council had put the matter on hold pending further discussions.

Parish Councillors from Litton Cheney and Long Bredy attend regular meetings with Ashley Chase Cheese Farm. Ashley Chase now use Ashley Cooper to project manage transport via a hub, which had helped reduce HGVs in the village. A working party was looking into the feasibility of a private road to the Cheese Farm, which would keep HGVs out of both villages.

The stream opposite The Old Tithe Barn had been damaged by heavy plant entering Charity Farm. Some remedial works had been carried out and the PC had been in discussion with the Environment Agency (EA) and Dorset Highways to find a long-term solution that both would support. Agreement had been reached to excavate the stream and lay slabs angled towards the road. The PC hoped work could shortly be completed by Bridport Town Council from funds already budgeted for the lengthsman scheme, but would look to the farm owner to recover costs from contractors should they cause any subsequent damage.

In 2017 and 2018 there was a substantial increase to the Parish Council precept, partly in anticipation of work devolving to Parish Councils as a consequence of local government reorganisation and the financial challenges it faced: the new Unitary had commenced with a significant deficit. There was still no further information on how this might impact on Parish Councils and the PC had therefore chosen to freeze the precept at £10,600 for the current year. At approximately £52.21 per year for a band D house, he hoped villagers felt this represented good value for the services they received from the Parish Council.

John Firrell had organised a team of volunteers - the "Premier Crew", of around 15 people who carried out various works around the village. E.g. preparing the stream for the duck race and various clearance works including the allotments, The Rocks and bottom of Whiteway.

Two years ago, the village was consulted about a Neighbourhood Plan (NP), which would allow the community to influence the location and nature of development in the village. At that time, villagers voted against a NP, concluding the Local Plan provided sufficient protection for the village. Subsequently planning permission for 7 houses at Charity Farm suggested the Local Plan did not provide as much protection as had been thought. Under the new Unitary, the various Local Plans inherited from the previous District and County

Councils will need to be aligned/amalgamated. The PC would await the outcome of current deliberations before deciding whether villagers should be asked if they wished to revisit a Litton Cheney NP.

A number of people, including John Firrell, David Hearn and children from the village school, had worked hard to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WW1 Armistice, focussing on the contribution made by men from the village. The village should be proud of their efforts.

Various works had been undertaken to improve drainage and the surface of The Rocks, whilst trying to keep costs down. This had not been entirely successful and this may need revisiting.

The allotment plots were well administered by the Allotment Society. However, following an incursion by sheep and problems with rabbits, the PC had supported the allotments by paying for new fencing: this had been successful. The refurbished playground was also popular.

Most dog owners acted responsibly and cleared up dog poo. Dorset Council no longer install or service new dog bins but accept limited quantities of dog waste in general litter bins and household bins. Unfortunately, a small number of people had recently deposited sacks full of dog poo in the village litter bin, which smelled offensive and overflowed at times. An additional bin could be provided, if villagers were prepared to use the PC precept to pay for its installation and servicing. The village bin should now be emptied weekly.

The Chairman finished by saying the PC continued to struggle to fill vacancies and asked villagers to consider becoming a Parish Councillor: a worthwhile role and not too onerous.

3. **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

Dog fouling was discussed. The PC cannot enforce bylaws preventing dog fouling. Dorset still has a dog warden whom anyone can notify about loose dogs. The location and number of bins were discussed.

The waterway down the track towards the playground was blocked – JF would ask the Premier Crew to clear it.

The area around the telephone box was muddy after rubbish had been left there awaiting collection: this had been an oversight and should not happen again. The PC would probably be asked to take ownership of the telephone box so this area may come under future discussion.

Parish Councillors recently met with the Police Community Support Officer to discuss crime rates in the village and how crime is recorded.

4. **Presentation by John Firrell** – regeneration of the bus shelter area

JF explained that a group of villagers were considering how the area around the bus shelter/ Jubilee Hut might be improved. Items being considered included

- an interpretation board including information about the village now and in the past. He hoped the school would be involved in this.
- extending the rustic kerbstones in front of the shelter
- location of existing noticeboard
- removing/moving the existing bench
- moving the bin further away from the bus stop to reduce smells

- location of the village stone

Villagers made a number of observations, including whether improvements were needed. JF stressed discussions were at early stages and no decisions had been made. His presentation was to give villagers a chance to have their say, promising their views would be heard.

JF also highlighted that Dorset Council had insisted the turnstiles at each end of The Rocks impeded access and could not be retained as they were. This had proved contentious with villagers. He shared an artist's impression of a possible solution whereby the turnstiles are retained with a swing gate at the side. Most present felt this was a good idea.

Some of those attending felt a number of interesting ideas had come from the floor and there was some discussion about systems by which, other than attending PC meetings, villagers might be able to convey further ideas to the PC

At the close of the meeting, Freddie Spicer thanked the Parish Council on behalf of the village for their work over the past year.

Maggie Walsh  
Parish Clerk