

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Litton Cheney Parish Council meeting held at 7:00 pm on Tuesday 8th September 2026 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr John Firrell (Chair)
Cllr Bill Orchard (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Andrew King

Also present:

Ms Debbie Hollings (Clerk)
Dorset Council Cllr Sally Holland
6 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Quentin Blacke.

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest received.

3. Democratic time

A resident raised concerns about road safety at the bend near Four Meads Farm, highlighting vehicle speeds, poor visibility, and several near misses. The recent death of a cat outside the property was also noted. It was

suggested that the 30mph speed limit sign should start nearer the bridges, with additional signage such as a bend/chevron and "slow" warning. The possibility of a centre white line was also discussed. Cllrs agreed that the Parish Council should raise the matter with the Highways team at Dorset Council, although it was recognised that any changes would be subject to the relevant procedures and timings.

Residents present also raised concerns regarding the Crosstrees Cottage planning application, including the lack of a visible site notice and the timing of notification to the Parish Council. Concerns were expressed about proposed roof lights, the change of use of the garage, reduced parking provision and associated vehicle access and highway safety issues. A further concern was raised regarding the description of a boundary trellis as having been erected by mutual agreement. The residents confirmed that they intended to submit their own observations on the planning portal and were asked to provide the Parish Council with a copy.

4. Approval of Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th July 2026

Cllr Orchard proposed that the Minutes were an accurate record; Cllr King seconded and carried unanimously.

5. Matters arising since the previous meeting not part of this Agenda

No matters were raised.

6. Dorset Council Overview - Ward Councillor for Chesil Bank: Cllr Sally Holland

Cllr Holland provided an update on several Dorset Council matters.

The new Best Start Local Plan aims to improve outcomes for children by bringing together health, education, early years and voluntary sector services. Dorset Council has also secured £1.1 million of government funding for homelessness prevention and support.

An update was provided on community flood reviews following recent storms. Dorset Council is working with parish councils to identify local flooding and drainage issues and consider preventative measures. The Parish Council was encouraged to arrange a meeting with Andrew Proberts of Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Risk Management team and Community Highways Officer Stuart Smith to discuss local concerns, including flooding at the eastern end of the village and regarding the issues with the winterbourne and drain.

The proposed new political map for Dorset was noted, with only minor changes affecting the local Chesil Bank Ward and a new name change to Chesil Ward.

An update was also given on proposed 'Community Conversations' meetings to be hosted by Dorset Council which are intended to bring together parish and town councils and other local organisations to consider local needs and concerns.

Members were advised that the Dorset Council highways reporting system would be temporarily suspended

from 14th to 22nd September while a new system is introduced. During this period, only urgent matters could be reported by telephone; existing reports would continue to be dealt with.

7. Parish Council Finance

7.1 RFO Report including current financial statement.

The Clerk reported that £2,700 in VAT had been reclaimed for the previous two and a half years. Work was ongoing to update the Lloyds Bank account, including removing previous signatories and updating the business address. Arrangements were also being investigated to enable dual authorisation for online banking.

7.2 Approval of invoices for payment (appended to agenda)

Proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously.

7.3 Approval of Schedule of Regular Payments (appended to agenda)

Proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Firrell and carried unanimously.

7.4 Consider and agree investment options.

The Clerk presented a report on investment options. It was noted that higher-interest accounts could provide a better return, although access to funds would be subject to notice periods. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Firrell, and carried unanimously to retain sufficient funds for immediate access and place £10,000 into a 90-day higher-interest deposit account.

8. Update on a possible joint road repairs petition with other Bride Valley Parish Councils.

Cllr Firrell reported on the progress on a proposed joint communication to Dorset Council regarding concerns about road maintenance and the allocation of funding across the Bride Valley. Neighbouring parish councils have responded positively and agreed in principle to participate, with a response from Long Bredy and Kingston Russell Parish Council still awaited.

A joint communication will be drafted and circulated among the participating parish councils for comments, allowing each parish to identify local roads requiring attention. The final communication will then be submitted to Dorset Council Ward Councillor Sally Holland.

Councillors expressed concerns about the poor condition of local roads, the apparent prioritisation of higher-class roads, and the perceived disparity in maintenance provision across different areas of Dorset.

9. Approve the Parish Council's payment of £340.00 towards the Rowden Farm bridge refurbishment

Proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Firrell and carried unanimously.

10. Parish Plan update

Cllr Firrell reported that the Parish Plan Steering Group is in the process of being established, with approximately 10–12 people having expressed an interest. A further meeting is expected to take place within the next 30 days, at which the group aims to move from initial discussions to agreeing proposals and next steps for developing the Parish Plan.

A previous Parish Plan provides a basis for the group's work, although the content and questions may be updated. A WhatsApp group has been established for communication, with arrangements to ensure all interested participants are included.

11. Consider and agree the purchase of a wreath for Remembrance Day in November up to the cost of £150.

Proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr King and carried unanimously.

12. Consider and approve the purchase of a new Parish Council Website.

Councillors considered quotations for a new parish council website and agreed that the one provided through Hugo Fox was considered the most cost-effective option and sufficient for the Parish Council's requirements. It was agreed to start with the Bronze support package, with the option to upgrade later if required. There are no initial set-up costs. Bronze Hosting package is £119.88+VAT pa. There is no charge for the allocation of a new

.gov.uk Domain name. Up to 10 .gov.uk mailboxes is £17.49 + VAT per month (£209.88 pa + VAT).

The website will be separate from the village website and will include parish information, documents, and a direct planning application search linked to Dorset Council.

It was agreed that the new website be implemented as soon as possible, subject to clarification of outstanding questions regarding email provision, the domain, and other technical details. Existing information, including recent financial and meeting records, will be transferred and updated. The change will also require new parish council email addresses for the clerk and all councillors.

Proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously.

13. Councillors' Portfolios:

13.1 Planning Matters: Cllr Orchard

Cllr Orchard reported that planning approval had been obtained for the application for the property at Barges Close.

13.2 To consider any planning applications, appeals or enforcements in circulation:

13.2.1 P/HOU/2026/04567 Crosstrees Farm Cottage Hines Mead Lane Litton Cheney Dorset DT2 9AE Installation of timber bifold doors to the former garage opening, three conservation rooflights, and six solar PV panels to the rear (south) roof slope.

Councillors discussed a retrospective planning application concerning works undertaken to a Grade II listed property within the conservation area. Concern was expressed that various alterations had been carried out without the required permissions, particularly the replacement of original/heritage windows, and noted the potential implications for other listed properties in the village.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would comment on the application rather than formally support or object, highlighting the need for proper consideration of all works undertaken without prior approval. Also, to be included would be the importance of avoiding a precedent whereby unauthorised works could subsequently receive retrospective approval and the potential impact on the character of the listed building and conservation area, particularly regarding the windows. The implications of the garage conversion for available parking should be included and the relevance of the National Planning Policy Framework provisions concerning deliberate failure to obtain planning permission.

Cllr Orchard agreed to prepare draft comments, which will be reviewed by all other councillors and once agreed, will be submitted as a comment on the application.

13.2.2 P/LBC/2026/04568 Crosstrees Farm Cottage Hines Mead Lane Litton Cheney Dorset DT2 9AE Various alterations.

As above.

13.3 Highways/Transport: Cllr King

Cllr King reported that a Traffic Regulation Order now existed on Whiteway and 7.5-tonne weight restriction signs have now been installed on Whiteway and the A35, following several years of hard work to secure the restriction. It is hoped that the signage will enable mapping and navigation platforms to recognise the restriction and reduce inappropriate HGV traffic along Whiteway.

Cllr King also raised the issue of parking problems in the village on Sundays when football matches are being played, with a recent match resulting in significant congestion and parking along village roads. A possible trial was discussed to allow a limited number of football-related vehicles to park near and on the playing field, including on the basketball court, subject to appropriate permissions, insurance considerations and responsible use. It was also suggested that players should be encouraged to car-share to reduce the number of vehicles.

It was recognised that use of the basketball/play area for parking could restrict children's access and create additional safety concerns. No final arrangement was confirmed.

Cllr King will discuss the issue with Pete Gull, who runs the football, and explore possible solutions, including reducing the number of cars and whether a short trial would be practical. Any arrangement would be reviewed in light of complaints, safety, damage, or other problems.

13.3.1 Update on the Litter Bin at the Snicket.

Cllr King reported that vegetation and brambles had overgrown the area and damaged the bin bag, making it difficult to empty and requiring the area to be cleared.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the bin should remain in its current location for now, with the situation monitored. A previous proposal to move it slightly further along the Snicket is still an option, provided the bin remains accessible to Dorset Council for collection and does not encroach onto private or unadopted land.

Dave Ingram will be asked to monitor the bin and keep the Parish Council advised of any changes or further requirements to ensure access is clear.

13.3.2 Update on the culvert at the village Bus Shelter/Jubilee Hut.

Cllr King raised concerns about the safety of the culvert near the bus stop, particularly the risk to children and other pedestrians. A proposal was discussed to possibly install protective mesh or a grid over the culvert.

Both the Clerk and councillors noted that any such installation would require consideration of maintenance, potential blockage and flooding, health and safety implications, and the need for appropriate permissions from the relevant environmental/highways authorities. It was agreed that the matter should first be discussed with Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Risk officer, Andrew Proberts to help identify an appropriate and properly authorised solution.

The existing stonework around the culvert was also noted to be cracked and in need of repair. Steve Elliott will be asked to inspect the culvert and advise on the necessary repairs and possible safety measures.

13.4 Playground/ Playing Field/Allotments: Cllr King

Cllr King reported that there had been no changes in the allotment holders and no issues raised.

Cllr King reported that the new playground equipment is being well used. However, he raised a concern regarding the supporting poles where one appears to have tilted inwards, causing the cross rope to rest on the ground rather than at its intended height. The recent dry weather is likely to be the cause of the problem.

Although this is not currently considered dangerous, Cllr King will contact Huck, the equipment manufacturer, to seek their advice and arrange any necessary remedial action.

13.4.1 Stream bank collapse at playground entrance.

The grass cutting service provided by Dorset Council has continued, and they still do a very good job. However, they did cause the stream bank to collapse at the entrance of the playground. The damage has subsequently been repaired to a satisfactory standard.

13.5 Countryside Matters/Footpaths/Rights of Way: Cllr Blacke

13.5.1 Update on the removal of diseased Ash trees adjacent to Margins, Litton Cheney.

Cllr Firrell reported that an earlier arboricultural assessment identified evidence of ash dieback and the possibility that the trees may eventually need to be removed.

Ownership of the land on which the trees stand remains unclear. The adjoining landowners and Dorset Council do not accept responsibility for the trees or the intervening land and attempts to establish ownership have so far been inconclusive. Some trees overhanging Margins garden and a

power line have been removed by SSE. The remaining trees will be monitored and can stay in place while they are considered safe, but further action may be required if their condition deteriorates.

13.6 Village Fabric/ Maintenance/ DAPTC/BLAP/Administration and Probity: Cllr Firrell

Cllr Firrell provided an update on the ongoing enforcement work at Ford Farm. Significant landscaping and earthworks have been undertaken to screen the new car park from the A35 and the village. The works are progressing well, although further bunding and landscaping are required to improve screening as the planting matures.

The Council welcomed the progress and acknowledged the assistance of Dorset Council Planning Enforcement Officer Ash Osborne, together with Cllr Sally Holland and Cllr Les Fry.

Cllr Firrell reported that he continues to attend regular meetings with the BLAP Management Team and to represent the Parish Council at Parish Liaison meetings. Recent issues covered have included the Dorset Council 'Community Conversations' meetings and potential devolution. The forthcoming Parish Liaison meeting is due to be attended by local MP Ed Morello.

DAPTC's autumn conference is scheduled for October. Councillors Bill and the Chairman expressed an intention to attend, subject to confirming the date and bookings.

An introductory meeting was held with Stuart Smith, the Community Highways Officer, Cllr Firrell and Cllr King. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss local highways matters and reporting procedures.

Councillors were reminded that highways issues, including potholes and dangerous locations, should be reported through the Dorset Council online reporting system. Multiple reports of the same problem can help demonstrate the extent of an issue. It was noted that a new highways reporting system was expected to be introduced shortly, which may alter the current reporting process.

The Chairman reported meeting PCSO Sarah, who explained that reports of suspected fox hunting can sometimes arise from observations of dogs chasing wildlife and do not necessarily indicate organised hunting activity.

Cllr Firrell again highlighted the urgent need to recruit additional parish councillors, noting the vulnerability of the Council's ability to operate effectively when several councillors are unavailable.

14. To consider moving to Closed session to consider Staff matters - Public and press will be excluded from this part of the meeting.

Members of the public and Cllr Holland left the meeting.

15. Clerk's Employment

15.1 Clerk's Annual employment review

Cllrs undertook the annual review of the Clerk's employment arrangements. The Clerk's continued commitment and contribution to the effective administration of the Parish Council were acknowledged and much appreciated, and it was agreed that her employment arrangements should be amended accordingly.

Proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously, with effect from 1st September.

16. Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 7.00pm on Tuesday 10th November 2026.

17. Meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Debbie Hollings
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Litton Cheney Parish Council

Report 1st September 2026

Parish funds	Total
Balance brought forward as at 1 April	£27,464.09
Income to date	£13,274.62
Expenditure to date	£15,283.14
Parish funds as at above date*	£25,455.57

*** Of which the following is held in reserves or CIL**

Earmarked reserves	£12,976.99
CIL	£6,228.97
Playground (ringfenced)	£100.00
Community Fund (ringfenced)	£423.00
Total reserves/CIL held	£19,728.96

Approved spend since last reported/meeting

Huck Tek - new playground equipment	£9,747.61
Scheduled: July & August Clerk's wage	£885.92
Scheduled: Clerk's Expenses	£52.00
Bank A/C service charges	£8.50
	£946.42

Income since last reported/meeting

Interest	£9.27
HMRC - VAT Refund	£2,770.65
Long Bredy & Kingston Russell PC - Payment towards cost of Rowden Farm Bridge replacement	£337.84
	£3,117.76

Invoices/Payments for approval at time of publishing agenda

John Firrell Expenses – Defibrillator Pads	£150.00
Clerk's back pay for April – August 2026	£72.80

Invoices arrived after the publication of the agenda

Schedule Payments due (as detailed on Budget and Commitments for the coming year)

Scheduled: September & October Clerk's wage	£915.04
Scheduled: Clerk's Expenses	£52.00
Bank A/C service charges	£8.50
	£1,198.34