

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Litton Cheney Parish Council held on Tuesday 10th March 2026 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr John Firrell (Chair)
Cllr Rob Matthews
Cllr Andrew King

Cllr Quentin Blacke

Ms Debbie Hollings (Clerk)

Also present:

Dorset Council Cllr Sally Holland and two residents of the Litton Cheney community.

Apologies - None

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Bill Orchard (Vice-Chair)

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest received or dispensation requests.

3. Democratic time

No topics were raised.

4. Approval of Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 13th January 2026

Cllr Blacke proposed that the minutes were an accurate record. Cllr Firrell seconded, and all councillors agreed. Approved.

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

No matters arising.

6. Dorset Council Overview - Ward Councillor for Chesil Bank.

Cllr Holland presented her report.

Dorset Council will consider a £2 million investment to lower its energy bills and reduce carbon.

Dorset Council won a national clean energy award for its low-carbon efforts, installing solar panels on 113 buildings that generate 4.6 million kWh yearly and save £520,000, with more installations planned.

Road maintenance funding has increased, with up to £5.25 million approved to tackle flooding and reduce future disruption, including £5 million for flood resilience and £250,000 for an additional gully cleaning crew with a proactive year-round schedule.

Cllr Holland reported contacting National Highways about severe winter damage and potholes on the A35 but received no clear answer on resurfacing.

Rowden Farm has now been let to a new tenant.

Cllr Holland has also had communication with the local Community Highways Officer regarding the issue with surface water near Baglake.

7. Parish Council Finance

7.1 RFO Report

The Clerk presented councillors with the current Budget and Commitment spreadsheet up to today's date and also, the current bank reconciliation report.

7.2 Approval of invoices for payment – see attached report.

Proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr King and carried unanimously.

7.3 Approval of Schedule of Regular payments – see attached report.

Proposed and seconded by Cllr King and Cllr Blacke and carried unanimously.

8. Litton Cheney Trust – Agree and confirm the appointment of Lyn Lacey as a Trustee to the Litton Cheney Parish Trust.

Proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr King and carried unanimously.

9. Discuss flooding issues on the east side of the village.

Cllr Matthews described the recent issues with surface water at the lower end of Baglake. The pipe that goes under the road is not large enough to take the level of water away from the area. Currently, the water levels have subsided substantially. When dry, the road will need to be repaired. Although not a permanent resolution, there is hope that if the inundation occurs again, sandbags could be placed to divert flowing water sufficiently to allow cars to pass through. Wessex Water have been to the site and has confirmed that the pipe is not theirs.

The Dorset Council Community Highways Officer has now stated that road repairs will be carried out in due course. In the meantime, a diversion has been put into place. **After note – Repair now carried out.**

10. Discuss action required on the culverts near the village Bus Shelter/Jubilee Hut and the allotments site.

Cllr Matthews confirmed that the Dorset Council, Community Highways team have confirmed it is not within their remit to advise on matters regarding safety issues in the culvert adjacent to the bus shelter.

Cllr Matthews suggested that the installation of a reinforced steel bar may be an answer to lessen worries about any future accident. Cllr Firrell confirmed that he had spoken to Russell Randall about installing a grid/bar across the culvert, at an estimated cost of around £150.

Following the discussion, Cllr Firrell agreed to contact the Environment Agency, who are responsible for the upkeep of rivers and water courses, to investigate further options for what is considered a dangerous safety hazard.

Councillors discussed the placement of a reinforced steel bar mesh over the opening to the culvert on the allotments site. Cllr Firrell will follow up on the issue with the landowner.

11. Website (Village and Parish Council) – Does it conform with legal requirements?

Cllr King reported that, having investigated the statutory requirements for a parish council's website, the current parish council section of the village website is not up to the standard and does not comply with the requirements.

Cllr King suggested that the Parish Council has its own website as a separate entity to the existing parish site. This would mean that it would be the responsibility of the Parish Council, who would own it, edit it, and run it, to ensure it complies with all necessary regulations.

Following the discussion, all councillors agreed to move forward with the idea of a parish council website. Cllr King was asked to contact suppliers of parish council websites for further information, including costs. All councillors agreed to discuss this item further at a future meeting.

12. Parish Plan Update

Cllr Firrell confirmed five people have been recruited to the Steering Group, and that they will consider the best way forward to recruit others to the committee. Cllr King has agreed to act as the representative from the parish council.

13. Councillors' Portfolios:

13.1 Planning: Consider Faith House Planning Application P/HOU/2025/07756 Replace existing conservatory.

Litton Cheney Parish Council have no objections to this application and is supportive of the change. Proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr King, and carried unanimously to support the application.

13.2 Highways/Transport:

Cllr Matthews confirmed that Dorset Council have asked the owner of Thatch Cottage on Hinds Mead Lane to remove the stones at the front of that cottage that are currently too close to the highway. The requirement is that any stones are at least 450 cm away from the side of the road. The majority of stones have now been moved; two

large stones remain. The placement of these will be followed up by the Dorset Council Community Highways Officer. Cllr Matthews wished it to be noted that the requirement for any stones at the frontage of any properties in the village is subject to this legal requirement of being 450cm away from the edge of the carriageway.

Openreach is due to close the road between The Paddocks and Hinds Mead Lane for a day on 7th April for cabling works.

Openreach is due to close the road between Hinds Mead Lane and the top of The Mount, between 27th April and 1st May.

13.2.1 TRO Weight Limit

Public Consultation: THE COUNTY OF DORSET (WHITE WAY, LITTON CHENEY) (WEIGHT RESTRICTION) (NO. *) ORDER 202. This Traffic Regulation Order is now under consultation, which will result in changes to signage on the A35 leading down White Way. Cllr Matthews thanked former councillor, Andrew Price, who was in attendance, for all his hard work in getting the changes under consultation to this point. Cllr Firrell invited Andrew Price to speak on what has been achieved. Mr Price briefly reviewed the considerable work that had been put in over the years, indicating that he hoped this was now coming to an end.

13.3 Playground/ Playing Field/Allotments:

Cllr King reported minor damage to the allotment gate and will contact Russell Randall, who installed it, to arrange a repair.

13.3.1 Approve additional funding (£123.01) for new play equipment above the £8000 already allocated for the project.

Cllr King confirmed that approval for extra funding was no longer required. The Litton Cheney Trust have agreed to donate £1000 towards the project. Cllr King will now contact Huck Play to agree to their quote and for work to start on the construction and installation of the new play equipment.

13.3.2 Consider the quotes received and approve the expenditure for the Grounds Maintenance contract for the financial year 2026/2027.

Three quotes were received, Dorset Council (£1,134.77 plus VAT), D Smith's Gardening Services (£2,400.00 plus VAT) and Wessex Grounds Maintenance (£5,120.00 plus VAT).

Following consideration of the quotes received, Cllr Firrell proposed that the parish council agree to accept Dorset Council's quotation, seconded by Cllr King, and carried unanimously.

13.4 Countryside Matters/Footpaths/Rights of Way:

Cllr Blacke reported that Russell Randall had been contacted regarding the bridge requiring replacement /refurbishment at Rowden Farm. A quote had now been received, and Cllr Firrell confirmed that the quote had been forwarded to Stuart Semple of Dorset Council. Stuart confirmed that Dorset Council would not have any funds to contribute to the replacement bridge until the next financial year, come April. Cllr Blacke confirmed that the Litton Trust has offered a contribution of £300 towards the cost of replacement/refurbishment of the bridge, and also the West Dorset Ramblers a contribution of approximately £100. It was noted that there was a hope that any repair/refurbishment costs would be shared with Long Bredy and Kingston Russell Parish Council, as the bridge is located within their parish boundary.

13.5 Village Fabric/ Maintenance/ DAPTC/BLAP/Administration and Probity:

Cllr Firrell presented an update on Ford Farm and the landscaping plan and schedule, which had been agreed with Dorset Council and Ford Farm. Former councillor, Andrew Price, was asked to update the meeting regarding progress on this project. Andrew Price reported that work had started on the plan to reshape the ground, which is now visible, and that instead of continuing with the enforcement case, the situation looks to be heading towards an alternative and equitable resolution.

At a recent meeting with Ash Osborne, Senior Planning Enforcement Officer at Dorset Council, both Cllr Firrell and Andrew Price reiterated that two parts of the plan were particularly important: the need to screen the current car park and the need to enhance the landscaping, earth shaping, and planting on the western side of the new car park.

Cllr Firrell reported that there was a Litter Pick in progress in the village, which would continue over the coming 7

to 10 days. Equipment has been supplied to volunteers.

Additional points raised by Cllr Firrell included that the village defibrillator has been checked and is fully operational, and its batteries are still in date. There will be a Duck Race in aid of Julia's House Children's Hospice taking place on Easter Sunday, 5th April.

14. Policy Review

14.1 Policies – Review and adopt the following policies:

- a) Co-option Policy
- b) Complaint Policy
- c) Training and Development Policy

Proposed and seconded by Cllr King and Cllr Matthews and carried unanimously.

14.2 Required documents for Transparency Code Legislation - Review and adopt:

- a) Transparency Checklist

Proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr King and carried unanimously.

11. Date of next meeting: The Parish Assembly and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be from 7.00 pm on Tuesday 12th May 2026.

12. Meeting close. 8.30pm

Debbie Hollings
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, Litton Cheney Parish Council

Report 10th March 2026

Parish funds	Total
Balance brought forward as at 1 April	£29,931.60
Income to date	£12,281.65
Expenditure to date	£12,864.22
Parish funds as at above date*	£29,349.03

* Of which the following is held in reserves or CIL

Earmarked reserves	£17,750.00
CIL	£6,741.82
Playground (ringfenced)	£100.00
Community Fund (ringfenced)	£423.00
Total reserves/CIL held	£25,014.82

Approved spend since last reported/meeting

Scheduled: January & February 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	£22.91
	£22.91

Invoices/Payments for approval at time of publishing agenda

Invoices arrived after the publication of the agenda

Dorset Council - Grounds Maintenance Apr 25-Mar 26	£1,296.88
SLCC - Annual Membership Fee - Total £200 shared with Shipton Gorge Parish Council	£100.00
Roger Sorrell - Hedgetrimming at the LATCH	£144.00

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

Scheduled: March & April Clerk's wage	£885.92
Scheduled: Clerk's Expenses	£52.00
Bank A/C service charges	£8.50
	£2,487.30