

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Litton Cheney Parish Council held on
7:30pm on Tuesday 11th March 2025
At Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Present: Cllr John Firrell (Chair), Cllr Quentin Blacke, Cllr Bill Orchard (Vice-Chair), Cllr Andrew King, Cllr Rob Matthews, Cllr Andrew Price, Debbie Hollings (Clerk)

Also in attendance: Dorset Councillor Sally Holland and 1 parishioner.

Before the official start of the meeting, Cllr Firrell took the opportunity to say a huge Thank You and pay tribute to outgoing Chairman Bill Orchard for 10 years stewardship of the Parish Council and in doing so with not a cross word.

1. Apologies for absence

None Received.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Blacke declared an interest in planning application P/HOU/2025/01011Heynings, School Lane, Litton Cheney DT2 9AU. Cllr Blacke lives next door to the property where changes are proposed.

Cllr Firrell and Cllr King are both on the LATCH committee and they will not take part in the vote on the proposal under Item 12 for a possible donation to the hall of £3,000 from the Parish Council's CIL funds.

3. Democratic time

1 parishioner present. They enquired why the Agenda for the meeting was not available on the parish council section of the website and not on any of the notice boards in the village. Cllr Firrell pointed out that the agenda was on the home page of the village website and on the main notice board at the Triangle but indicated that, from the next meeting, agendas will be placed in the three notice boards in the village. Hopefully it could improve residents' attendance at the meetings.

Following a short discussion, it would appear that the website had a number of technical issues and documents were not available where they should be. Cllr Matthews will follow this up with the webmaster.

4. Approval of Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th January 2025

Proposed by Cllr Firrell, seconded by Cllr King and all agreed unanimously to be a true record.

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

None

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

Cllr Holland presented her March 2025 report to Council. Cllr Holland highlighted the following points:

Portland Waste Incinerator – Dorset Council are disappointed that this application is still going through the planning phase as the Environment Agency has given it certification. The application is due to be heard in the High Court in the next two weeks and there is hope this will halt the application's progress. As the government have ceased to approve any further incinerators similar to the one planned for Portland, it appears ironic to have one approved close to an area of outstanding natural beauty within the Dorset landscape. Although the application applies to Portland it is felt that

the incinerator will affect businesses, trade and tourism throughout the whole of west and south Dorset.

Devolution – Although the bid was unsuccessful, it is felt that this will now give the council time to find out about the real costs of devolution through the progress of the councils still involved.

Recruitment of new Dorset Council Chief Executive – Currently in the process of recruitment and have now narrowed the number of applicants down to 15.

Cllr Holland answered several questions raised by councillors. Cllr Orchard expressed concern regarding Rowden's Farm in Litton Cheney. Cllr Holland confirmed that all the land surrounding the farm buildings is currently rented out to farmers. Cllr Holland has raised this issue with Dorset Council herself as she was concerned that they may sell off the farm when it should be available to young farmers within the county to take on. She announced that what previously had been the informal Farming Panel will now become the Farming Committee. This means the committee will operate with full democratic services support, so minutes are taken, and it will become more formal. Cllr Holland was asked what is likely to happen with the farm and she confirmed that it was not suitable for Dairy as it is too small. There is no reason why it cannot be taken on as a smallholding or for raising beef. She is aware that there are issues with the ditches not being cleared out and she will raise this with the highways team.

7. Clerk's/RFO's report.

7.1 Receive Clerk's/RFO's report.

The Clerk presented her report to council.

The Clerk attended an event with Dorset Planning and DAPTC called Future Planning. The day was given over to presentations from various teams within Dorset Council's Planning Department. Full Questions and Answers, along with all the slide presentations, will be sent out next week once received from DAPTC. Also to be sent out will be notes made by the Clerk on the breakout session attended on Neighbourhood Planning.

Cllr Firrell confirmed that he had attended a BLAP meeting on the same day where the planning team presented part of the same discussion from the Future Planning event. Cllr Firrell noted that in the meeting, Mike Garrity, Head of Dorset Council Planning, highlighted the concern that Dorset Council have up until October 2025 when they can rightfully claim they have sufficient building land for the number of houses that they have to build. However, after October, Dorset Council have a new housing target, which has gone up 80% and they will be required to have access to a five year land supply for this new number. There is concern where that land will be coming from. It will prove difficult, and it may not be possible to achieve targets.

7.2 Approval for the Clerk to progress to next point on the pay scale (SCP 15 to SCP 16 £15.33ph) in recognition of gaining the CiLCA qualification and receive 28 hours back pay for February was proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Matthews, and unanimously agreed. The Parish Council congratulated Clerk Debbie on this achievement.

7.3 Receive the Financial update.

- Approval of invoices for payment was proposed by Cllr Price and seconded by Cllr Blake and unanimously agreed.
- Approval of Schedule of Regular Payments was proposed by Cllr Price and seconded by Cllr Blake and unanimously agreed
- Accounts will be updated following this meeting to ensure that the Annual Year End Audit can take place.

8. Councillors' Portfolios

8.1 Planning: Cllr Orchard

8.1.1 Cllr Orchard presented his report to Council. Highlights

- Update on new development Bride Place and rendering issues. Cllr Orchard has spoken to the developer and confirmed that they believe that it is very near to completion apart from cleaning windows and finishing off some landscaping. An open weekend has been held - just 2 people attended. To clarify, the affordable houses are being offered to those who meet a certain criteria. This criteria is for those with a combined income of less than £80,000 who currently live in Dorset or the surrounding area. The developer is looking for direct sales of the properties and not part-rent/part-buy.
- Cllr Orchard has also followed up with the Dorset Council Planning Enforcement Team on the matter of the rendering of the new homes which go against the original planning application. The current guidelines from the Enforcement team requires they provide a response within 21 days; however, it has now been two months, and no response has been forthcoming. Cllr Orchard will chase again, and Cllr Holland was asked to follow up with Enforcement on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Other matters dealt with at Item 9.

8.2 Highways/Transport: Cllr Price

8.2.1 Cllr Price presented his report to council. Highlights of the report are included below.

- One new road closure to report: Cow Lane where three trees are due to be felled. Full details of the closure will be sent to the Parish Council for publication.
- Update on A35 signage and TRO Weight Limit on Whiteway. Cllr Price wrote to Jack Wiltshire, Head of Dorset Highways, after the last parish council meeting to offer help to pay towards new signage. Cllr Holland also followed this up with Jack Wiltshire. Thank you to Cllr Sally. However, things have progressed further this week, where, after speaking to the lead of National Highways in the Southwest, Jonathan Hill, Cllr Price confirmed they were optimistic in making progress with their approach of incorporating within an A35 safety assessment that one of the outcomes of the assessment will be new signage for Whiteway that we have been seeking. As an outcome, it is hoped Jack Wiltshire will be introducing a Traffic Regulation Order which will bring about a weight limit, therefore, requiring signage on the A35. A different and much better optimistic output.
- Progress report on Cheese Factory landscaping. There is a collective concern about the car parking and lack of movement concerning the application and new proposals which are very different from the original approval. There has to be a conclusion, and Cllr Price would like to ask the Enforcement team for another meeting to try to progress the situation. Cllr Firrell confirmed that this appears to be the only option, especially considering that after a meeting in October 2024 all parties, including National Landscapes, DC Enforcement, Parks Farm (Cheese Factory) and LCPC had agreed a plan in principle, and what has been put forward subsequently bears no resemblance to what was agreed. Cllr Firrell and Cllr Price will request a new meeting with Aidan Meredith, Head of Enforcement at Dorset Council, or his successor.
- Update on Community Highways Team meeting with Cllr Andrew Price and Cllr John Firrell; Cllr Price and Cllr Firrell met on the morning of Tuesday 11th March to discuss the working relationship between the CH team and the Parish Council moving forward. The first item

discussed was the current role of the Community Highways Officer. CHO's have three main responsibilities - highway inspections, oversee routine maintenance, including surfacing and ensuring that drains/gullies are cleared and lastly to ensure verges/hedges are cut back and signs can be seen. The current Area CHO performs this role, however this is not the role that Andrew is familiar with, and this is where the disconnect has occurred. It was identified that potholes are dealt with on a fortnightly basis: they are reported online and if there is a collective issue, the CHO can then mark them to be repaired. The Community Highways Team deal with items reported to them by the public, parish councils, Dorset Council highways team, and this is their primary role. All in attendance at the meeting agreed that it was a useful and productive exercise. All issues with highways need to be reported via the self-reporting portal as this is how Dorset Council now deal with routine highways issues. Cllr Firrell had stressed at this meeting that more would be done to encourage local residents to report potholing and highway issues.

8.3 Playground/ Playing Field/Allotments: Cllr King

8.3.1 Cllr King presented his report to council. Highlights of the report are included below.

- Update on the Service Level Agreement for Grounds Maintenance for the coming year financial 2025/2026. Total Cost £1083.73 plus VAT
- Councillors to formally support the actions of the Council and Clerk/RFO in confirming that Dorset Council will take on the Grounds Maintenance SLA for the coming year.
- Cllr Price, seconded by Cllr King, proposed to accept the actions that have been taken with respect to the SLA for Grounds Maintenance and all councillors unanimously agreed.
- Cllr King has put out a request to villages via BVN, social media and the notice boards for assistance to keep the play equipment in good condition. He has had two positive responses to date for which he is very thankful but hoped for more.
- Cllr King highlighted a number of items that require attention in the field. The gates need adjustment and perhaps ultimately replacing with a more child friendly version. The basketball surface has moss growing over it. The surface under the swing will need replacing shortly. This will cost around £800 and should go on the May meeting agenda for agreement. No Dogs Please signs are also required for the site.
- Allotments – Annual cost of plots will need to be discussed at the May Annual Meeting.

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

8.4.1 Cllr Blacke presented his report to council. Highlights of the report are included below

- Progress update on the work required to Chilcombe Bridge. A revised invoice from Dorset Council for £854.30 was received for the work carried out by Russell Randall. Approval for the payment was proposed by Cllr King and seconded by Cllr Blacke and unanimously agreed.
- The Litton Trust have also agreed to donate £500 towards the total cost of the project. Dorset Ramblers have already paid £100 to the Parish Council as their contribution to project.
- Cllr Blacke asked Cllr Holland about the empty Askerswell motel site off the A35, which has become the target for fly-tipping. Cllr Holland suggested that he log the issue on the Dorset Council self-service portal which was also for issues of waste and fly-tipping.
- Cllr Blacke informed members that he and an acquaintance recently put information on Facebook and in the BVN about the '7 Benches Walk' around the village which he understands has proved quite popular and that the WI are going to undertake the walk soon.

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

9.1 Cllr Firrell presented his report to council. Highlights of the report are included below.

- Fingerpost Refurbishment – Fingerpost at White Cross junction opposite the White Horse further damaged during recent hedge cutting. Dorset CPRE have agreed to provide a grant of £150 towards the refurbishment, leaving the Parish Council liable for the remaining costs of £378. Cllr Matthews proposed to approve the required spend on the refurbishment, seconded by Cllr Orchard and unanimously agreed by all councillors.
- New litter bins, there are plans to put one at White Cross and one at the Snicket. Richard Cuzens may require Dorset Council approval as to where to locate his bins.
- There will be a village litter pick during April.
- 80th Anniversary of VE Day – This would run from 5th to 8th May involving the school and the village at a local and national level

10 Telecommunications/IT: Cllr Matthews

10.1 Cllr Matthews presented his report to council.

- As reported during the last meeting, Openreach have mostly completed the infrastructure in the village. There are however some planned works coming up, which involve traffic management. Residents are actively encouraged to take up full fibre, particularly if they have pledged their voucher

11 Planning Matters

- Planning application P/VOC/2025/00323 Proposal: Raise garage roof to form ancillary accommodation within the loft space and convert part of ground floor to form access. Extend existing rear lean-to extension (with variation of conditions 2 & 3 of planning permission P/HOU/2022/02303 to relocate staircase externally and the addition of rooflights. Location:12 Barges Close Litton Cheney DT2 9DR
Decision: - Original comments still relevant - no further comments.
- P/TRT/2025/00172 T1, T2 and T3 Beech fell in Whiteway Hill, Litton Cheney DT2 9AG – approved.
- Planning application P/HOU/2025/01011 – Erect single storey extension. Heynings, School Lane, DT2 9AU.

Decision: - Support.

12 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

- To consider making a grant for new Storage Batteries for Litton and Thorner's Community Hall. The total cost of the Storage Batteries is £6,427.50. Agreement is sought for the approval of a grant of £3,000, the balance being made up by LATCH (Litton and Thorner's Community Hall), Litton Cheney Trust and a contribution from Thorner's School. Approved. Proposed by Cllr Price and seconded by Cllr Blacke and agreed by Cllr Matthews and Cllr Orchard.

13 Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be the Annual Meeting and Parish Assembly at 7.00pm on Tuesday 20th May 2025. Items for inclusion on the agenda are sought from councillors and residents. One item to be included will be the proposed site of the Christmas Tree.

14 Meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Debbie Hollings
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Litton Cheney Parish Council