

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Litton Cheney Parish Council held on Tuesday 11th November 2025 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Present: Cllr John Firrell (Chair), Cllr Bill Orchard (Vice-Chair), Cllr Quentin Blacke, Cllr Rob Matthews, Cllr Andrew King, Ms Debbie Hollings (Clerk). Dorset Council Cllr Sally Holland.
Also two members of the Litton Cheney community.

Apologies for absence: None received.

Declarations of interest: No declarations of interest received or dispensation requests.

Recognition of Remembrance Day: One minute's silence was observed by all present.

Democratic time: Mr Freddie Spicer expressed concern regarding the white render on the new properties at Bride Place, indicating the approved colour should be sandstone. This matter is still being dealt with by Enforcement but would be monitored by the PC.

Mrs Sally Dyke requested that the parish council look into the dimensions of the structure adjacent to Bride Place, which she feels is too high, and questions the shape of the building at the south end. Parish councillors confirmed that they were currently aware of the situation and would follow up.

Mr Freddie Spicer also thanked the parish council in respect of their generous annual support for St. Mary's Church in Litton Cheney, with the hope that this will continue.

Approval of Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 9th September 2025

Cllr Orchard proposed that the minutes were an accurate record. Cllr Matthews seconded, and all councillors agreed.

Matters arising since the previous meeting not part of this Agenda No matters arising.

Dorset Council Overview - Ward Councillor for Chesil Bank: Cllr Sally Holland Cllr Holland presented her report.

Cllr Holland confirmed that Dorset Council is currently investing in road resurfacing. The Council is aiming to reduce the environmental impact of road repairs by introducing an additive to the tarmac that allows it to cool more quickly. This results in less disruption, faster completion of works, and a reduction in carbon emissions. The additive also produces stronger, longer-lasting repairs.

New legislation has been passed to strengthen renters' rights. These include a number of key changes. Full details can be found on Dorset Council's website at

[Renters' Rights Bill and what it means for Dorset residents - Dorset Council](#)

Dorset Council has secured £93 million for climate and ecological outcomes up until 2030. 70% of the amount will come from government grants, the rest coming from Dorset Council's capital investment and match funding. There can now be further action on renewables, retrofitting homes, EV infrastructure and supporting businesses and communities to try and transition across to a lower carbon infrastructure.

Dorset Council has become the 100th organisation to receive Age Friendly Community status in England. This means that the focus is on Dorset being a place where people live with a better quality of life as they grow older.

Cllr Holland highlighted the launch of the Budget Simulation exercise for residents. It is available online until 2nd December at Dorset's Budget Simulator. The tool helps residents understand the difficult choices required to have a balanced budget.

Dorset Council is consulting residents and other interested parties on the Community Governance Review currently underway regarding the boundary between Shipton Gorge and Loders parishes. The boundary was altered at the time of the previous Dorset Council elections, moving further into Shipton Gorge. Some affected residents have since petitioned Dorset Council to revert the boundary to its original position. If the review supports this change, it will take effect at the next Dorset Council elections in 2029.

Clerk's/RFO's report:

Health and Safety Training for councillors – newly adopted policy requires all councillors to undertake 'adequate' H & S training. Online Health and Safety training is available at £15 per head via DAPTC. Cllr Andy King will undertake the online Health and Safety training to see if it is appropriate for the level of knowledge required by him and other councillors. The Clerk will book his place with DAPTC Training.

Financial update:

Approval of invoices for payment – as per Appendix a:attached:

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

Approval of Schedule of Regular Payments as per Appendix a: attached:

Cllr Orchard requested that the amount provided to St Mary's Church be increased from £550 as listed in the scheduled payment list to £600. Proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr King.

All scheduled payments were proposed and seconded by Cllr Orchard and Cllr Blacke and carried unanimously.

Spending options and projects for 2026/2027 financial year:

Councillors considered several items to be amended and/or included in the budget for the 2026/2027 financial year. The Budget will be agreed at the January 2026 parish council meeting. The Clerk requested that all councillors consider items for inclusion in the budget and get back to her over the coming weeks, to enable her to include items in the proposed budget.

Litton Cheney Trust: Agree and confirm the formal appointment of Sarah Matthews as Trustee to the Proposed and seconded by Cllr King and Cllr Blacke and carried unanimously. Cllr John Firrell took the opportunity to thank the Litton Cheney Trust for all the work that they do for the village, including helping the school with their swimming pool and helping the hall with the solar panels and batteries. Also, other items around the village, including the Chilcombe Bridge.

Consider a new Parish Plan:

Cllr Firrell reported that during his and Cllr Orchard's attendance at the DAPTC/Dorset Council Devolution event at the end of October, parish councils were encouraged to renew or create a Parish Plan, focusing on how residents see the village developing in future years. Consideration of parish boundaries was also suggested. He provided background on the creation of the previous Parish Plan in 2005, and it was unanimously agreed to form a steering group in the new year to explore the feasibility of producing a new Parish Plan.

Policy Review:

The following policies were reviewed and adopted:

- Dignity at Work Policy (HR)
- Expenses Policy (Councillors)
- Social Media Policy

The following existing adopted policies were reviewed.:

- Publication Policy
- Reserves Policy

Adoption of all new and amended policies and Terms of Reference was proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr Orchard and carried unanimously

Councillors' Portfolios:

Planning: Cllr Orchard reported as follows.:

- Approval has been granted for the solar panels fixed to the roof of the carport at The Cottage, Main Street.
- Approval has been given for the single-story extension to the rear of Heynings in School Lane.
- Whitethorne Cottage, opposite School Lane. The application to demolish the existing cottage and construct 2 new cottages on the footprint has been refused.
- 6 Bride Place. All properties are now on the market at a reduced price. The developer and Planning Enforcement Officer are in ongoing discussions on the colour of the external rendered finish.
- Ford Farm and Planning Enforcement Officers have been working to find a compromise that all parties can be happy with. The plan is that landscaping takes place around the farm, in particular the carpark, to ensure that views to the factory are softened from the A35, the village and the surrounding area. Ward Councillor Sally Holland and Richard Brown of National Landscapes have been very helpful in trying to resolve the outstanding issues. Also, thanks should be given to retired parish councillor Andrew Price for all the time and work that he spent on this issue.

Highways/Transport: Cllr Matthews gave updates on the following:

- In mid-September, a lorry lost traction on Whiteway, blocking the road. The driver, a temporary contractor delivering to the cheese factory, had taken the wrong route. Cllr Matthews contacted the factory, which apologised and confirmed all drivers had been briefed on the correct route.
- Residents also raised concerns about leaves at the bottom of Whiteway in front of Beech House. The 'Premier Crew' could not clear them due to the weather. Once cleared, Cllr Firrell will coordinate with Dorset Council to ensure their removal.

- Cllr Matthews met with Stuart Smith from Dorset Council Highways to discuss the streams running along both sides of Main Street. Maintaining the unhindered flow of water through the village is essential to prevent surface water on the road, particularly as Main Street often experiences surface water issues during the winter months. Cllr Matthews expressed thanks to all residents who have fulfilled their riparian responsibilities, noting that many sections of the streams have now been cleared of foliage. He also highlighted the importance of removing the build-up of debris that has washed down, as this can restrict water flow. With water levels currently low, now is an ideal time to carry out this work. Stuart Smith will confirm suitable locations for leaving bags of debris, and he will try to arrange collection so that residents do not incur charges for disposing of rubble at the local tip.
- During Stuart Smith's visit to the village, Cllr Matthews also took him to look at the water that is emerging from under the road surface in front of Charity Farm. Wessex Water are adamant that it is not fresh water or sewerage, as they have tested the water. Stuart Smith believes that it may be coming from a new spring or that there may be a very old pipe under the road. He will check the records for further information. Wherever the source of the water is, Stuart advised that a short temporary road closure would be required.
- Following on from the previous meeting, we decided that we would invite people to create a community speed watch, which could be done via the Bride Valley News and via social media. Cllr Matthews will work on this before the next meeting.
- Curbs in front of 6A and 6B Barges Close. There has been damage to curbs in front of several houses in Barges Close and Baglake. Residents are concerned that turning lorries are causing the issue. It is understood that residents are gathering photographic evidence for litigation purposes.

Playground/ Playing Field/Allotments: Cllr King reported that the allotments were all fine. However, the hedge still needs to be cut. The contractor knows about it and will be returning to undertake this work.

The Annual Playground Inspection had identified two medium-risk items: holes in the swings that need welding and a wire frame scheduled for removal. All other findings were low risk, including minor issues such as some swing seat linkages.

A question was raised about the surface condition under the swings, which can be slippery in the winter. Cllr King confirmed that surface tiles are due to be cleaned and that the issue disappears in the summer. Cllr King confirmed that he makes regular inspections of the play equipment.

Cllr King has received 3 quotes from different play equipment suppliers as follows:

Supplier	Net Cost	VAT	Total Cost
Huck Play, Bridport Two pieces of equipment, 1 balance beams and slack ropes and 1 rope swinger	£9,460.01	£1,892.00	£11,352.01
Redlynch Four pieces of equipment, 1 balance beams, 1 crossed rope, 1 trapeze rings & 1 wobble board	£5,725.00	£1,145.00	£6,870.00
Playdale Playgrounds Two pieces of equipment, 1 net tunnel and 1 slack rope and swing balance beams	£7,920.47	£1,584.09	£9,504.56

Two of the quotes are within the £7,000 limit set at the meeting in September 2025. All quotes are with the proviso that the ground is cleared and levelled at the cost of the Parish Council, before they install any new equipment.

Two pieces of equipment will be removed from the playing field, the bow of the boat and the mesh climbing frame.

All three quotes are for climbing and balancing equipment made mainly from timber and ropes. Cllr King believes this equipment will be especially beneficial for younger children, allowing them to climb, crawl through tunnels, and play together. The most expensive quote came from the local Bridport company.

Cllr King highlighted two considerations before purchasing new equipment: whether the Council will fund ground-levelling for installation, and whether the high-cost equipment will be well used. Two suppliers use a new method involving drilled casings for the poles.

Cllr Firrell noted £8,000 is reserved for the playground, with £6,000 from CIL funds and £8,000 in general reserves. Cllr King proposed using up to £8,000 for the equipment and also to consult with

children and other users on preferred equipment, gather feedback via social media, and seek volunteers to remove the existing equipment.

Cllr Firrell proposed setting aside £8,000 for playground equipment, with Cllr King tasked to consult suppliers and seek input from the children on preferred equipment. Cllr Orchard seconded the proposal, which was carried unanimously.

Countryside Matters/Footpaths/Rights of Way: Cllr Blacke Cllr Blacke confirmed that he had not yet spoken with Stuart Semple regarding The Rocks path. Cllr Firrell requested that they ask Stuart Semple to the village to discuss what is needed to make the path safer.

Village Fabric/ Maintenance/ DAPTC/BLAP/Administration and Probity: Cllr Firrell confirmed that he had recently attended a BLAP (Bridport Local Area Partnership) meeting and that it may be possible for BLAP to get involved with DAPTC and Dorset Council as a pilot for local forums that Dorset Council are hoping to develop. Local forums will be the bridge between the unitary authority and town and parish councils.

The parish council received concerns about a litter bin near Manor Farm House by the Snickett, used for dog waste, causing flies and odour in hot weather. Councillors discussed alternative locations, including moving the nearby bench to accommodate the bin. Further discussion with the homeowners is required, and Cllr Firrell will take this forward.

Cllr Firrell wished to pay tribute to Chris and Russell Randall, who have produced 7 more crosses and stands commemorating the end of 80th anniversary of the end of World War 2. These crosses join the 9 already produced to commemorate the end of the First World War. The crosses have been made of English Oak and are displayed within the church. No charge was made for the making of the crosses.

Village Christmas Tree

Cllr Firrell confirmed that the village Christmas tree has been potted and is of reasonable height. Cllr Matthews asked about a contingency plan, and Cllr Firrell confirmed that budget funds are available to purchase a new tree if needed. Afternote – Contingency plan activated.

Planning matters No further applications.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 7.00pm on Tuesday 13th January 2026

Meeting close: 8.58pm

Debbie Hollings

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, Litton Cheney Parish Council

Appendix a – Financial Report 11 November 2025

Parish funds	Total
Balance brought forward as at 1 April	£29,931.60
Income to date	£12,234.87
Expenditure to date	£9,385.13
Parish funds as at above date*	£32,781.34

*** 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	£0.00
Income since last reported/meeting	
Precept - 2nd Tranche	£6,000.00
Interest	£24.89

	£6,024.89
Invoices/Payments for approval at time of publishing agenda	
Expenses to John Firrell for payment of Remembrance Day Wreath	£56.00
Expenses to John Firrell for payment of brass plaques	£96.00
Russell Randall - Refurbishment of Village Notice Board	£372.79
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Invoices arrived after the publication of the agenda	None
Schedule Payments due (as detailed on Budget and Commitments for the coming year)	
Scheduled: November & December Clerk's wage	£885.92
Scheduled: Clerk's Expenses	£52.00
Bank A/C service charges	£8.50
	£1,471.21