

## **LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Litton Cheney Parish Council held on Tuesday 20 May 2025 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall**

**Present:** Not recorded.

**Apologies for absence:** No apologies received.

**Declarations of interest:** No declarations of interests received.

**Election of Chairman:**

Cllr John Firrell was unanimously elected as Chairman.

**Election of Vice Chairman:**

Cllr Bill Orchard was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman.

**Democratic time:** No members of the public present.

**Approval of minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 11th March 2025:**

Cllr Matthews proposed that the minutes were an accurate record. Cllr Blacke seconded, and all other councillors unanimously 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 has now completed her first year in the post as a Dorset Councillor.

Cllr Holland has attended parish council meetings whenever possible as she sees her role as one of helping residents and councillors.

Sally has kept Rowden Farm on her radar, with respect to Dorset Council trying to sell it. Dorset Council will be coming to clear gullies around the farm, along with culverts and gullies around the parish.

Issues around the exit off the A35 coming down into the village and Long Bredy. She is very much aware of the issue of the size of vehicle and speed of those turning off the A35. Safety assessments are being done along the road.

Fly-tipping on the Litton Cheney/Long Bredy parish border has been reported by Sally as she spotted it on her way to the meeting. Sally reminded people that there is lots of good information on the Dorset Council website, where incidents can be reported. One particular good item to report is a near miss in the car; the more the incidents are logged, the more they are flagged up to Dorset Council. You do not need to be IT savvy to report issues.

DC has a new CEO starting in August, Dr Catherine How. Catherine was CEO at the Worthing/Arun district council in West Sussex.

Recycling performance at the county council puts it in the top-performing unitaries for England, based on recycling figures of over 65%. The national average is 44%. The county has very little residual waste at the curb side.

New small capital grants are available at the moment. Details are available on the Dorset Council website.

Cllr Firrell offered a special thank you to Sally because, despite it being her first year of service, she has been incredibly diligent both in looking out for us and actually attending meetings. "You have told us things that we needed to know and so thank you very much indeed."

**Clerk's/RFO's report:**

The Clerk confirmed that all outstanding salary payments to the previous Clerk, Lucy Beasley, have now been made, except a recent payment to Bitdefender. Lucy had paid the annual charge for the PC security application herself. She has now passed the relevant details to the current Clerk to ensure that the payment will be made by the Council next year, rather than by her. The Clerk also confirmed that she has been working on the AGAR reporting alongside Cllr Firrell and had met with the internal auditor on several occasions to provide further information where necessary.

**Financial update:**

**Approval of invoices for payment (as per Appendix a)**

Proposed by Cllr Firrell and seconded by and Cllr Matthews, including one additional late entry for a refund to Lucy Beasley for Bitdefender.

### **Approval of Schedule of Regular Payments (as per Appendix a)**

Proposed by Cllr Firrell and seconded by and Cllr Matthews,

The Parish Council Asset Register has been updated. Councillors noted that depreciation is not included in parish council accounts. Cllr Firrell also highlighted that, as part of the internal audit, the auditor had pointed out that the LATCH building was not listed among the Council's assets. Cllr Firrell explained that the hall is built on land with a 110-year lease and that the building itself is held in trust and managed by trustees. When the lease expires in 93 years, ownership of both the land and the building will revert to the Parish Council. At present, however, the Parish Council only owns the land, which should not be listed as an asset.

Cllr Firrell added that if LATCH ceases operation within the 93-year lease period, ownership of the building would transfer to the Parish Council.

### **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**

The Annual Internal Auditor's Report for the year ending 31st March 2025 was agreed.

Cllr Firrell expressed his wish for the recommendations outlined in the report to be included in the July agenda. The Clerk confirmed that one of the actions listed in Paragraph 2 of the report, the publication of payments over £100 for the financial year 2022/2023, has now been completed.

Cllr Firrell also proposed that the Council formally express its gratitude to John Halliday for conducting the audit without charge. This proposal was supported by Cllr King, seconded by Cllr Matthews, and unanimously agreed by the Council.

Councillors noted the AGAR reports and Cllr Firrell signed and dated the Exemption Form.

**AGAR Section 1** – acceptance of the Annual Governance Statement was proposed by Cllr Blacke, seconded by Cllr Matthews unanimously agreed. The Chairman and Clerk duly signed and dated the statement.

**AGAR Section 2.** - acceptance of the Annual Accounting Statements for the year ending 31st March 2025 was proposed by Cllr Blacke and seconded by Cllr Matthews. The figures were agreed and accepted unanimously. The RFO and Chairman signed the document accordingly. To consider and agree a new Parish Council Insurance agreement.

Following a brief discussion on the two quotes obtained, the Council unanimously agreed to continue using Clear Insurance for the next three years at a fixed annual premium of £364.35. The proposal was made by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Firrell, and agreed unanimously.

### **Grants to organisations and the amounts to be given:**

Citizens Advice Bureau, Bridport, Air Ambulance and Bride Valley News. It was agreed that all three requests for grants would be approved and increased from the previous £100 per year to £120 per year. Proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr Matthews, and agreed unanimously.

### **Councillors' Portfolios:**

#### **Planning: Cllr Orchard**

Cllr Orchard confirmed that there have been no sales at the development at Bride Place.

#### **Highways/Transport: Cllr Price**

Cllr Price stated that notification had been received of closures on the Dorchester to Bridport section of the A35 between the hours of 8 pm and 6 pm from the 19th to the 31st May 2025. Parks Lane is closing between 27th June and 6th July 2025 for highway repairs leading up to Ford Farm.

Chalk Pit Lane is closing on the 3rd and 23rd of June 2025, for Openreach.

Looke Lane closure was postponed from 5th to the 23rd of March and will now take place from the 21st July to 8th August 2025.

#### **Playground/ Playing Field/Allotments: Cllr King**

Consider and agree the annual costs for Allotment plots for the coming year.

Cllr King has paid £115 into the parish council bank account in allotment fees. He has also agreed to distribute the breakdown of charges for the available plots separately.

Cllr Price recommended that the current allotment charges remain unchanged for the coming year. All councillors unanimously agreed this recommendation.

A member of the Allotment Society approached Cllr King to request permission to erect a greenhouse on their plot. Concerns were raised about the possibility of the greenhouse being abandoned if the plot holder were to vacate the allotment.

Cllr King asked whether a formal set of allotment rules had ever been issued to plot holders. Cllr Firrell confirmed that such a document did exist during his time as Clerk.

As no decision could be made at this meeting, it was agreed to add this item to the July agenda for an update. **After note:** Allotment rules stipulate that it is for the Allotment Association to decide if an allotment holder can have a greenhouse.

Replacement of the surface underneath the swing was initially estimated at £800–£900.

However, upon reviewing the actual cost, it appears that due to the specialised nature of the work, including two site visits, the total cost would be approximately £3,500.

At present, brushing the matting in spring keeps it in good condition but, during wet autumn weather, maintenance becomes more challenging. There are some grant funds available from Dorset Council, with a grant application deadline of 2nd June.

#### **Countryside Matters/Footpaths/Rights of Way: Cllr Blacke**

Nothing to report at present.

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

**Servicing 2 newly placed bins at the Snicket and White Cross:** The total annual cost is expected to be approximately £500 for both bins, with weekly collections between April and September and fortnightly collections from October to March. The cost per bin collection is £6.21. Cllr Matthews proposed that the cost for servicing the 2 bins be approved. Cllr Blacke seconded the proposal, and it was unanimously agreed by all councillors.

#### **Telecommunications/IT: Cllr Matthews:**

Nothing to report at present.

#### **Planning Matters:**

Approved Planning Application P/VOC/2025/00323, (location not specified), which involves raising the garage roof to create ancillary accommodation within the loft space and converting part of the ground floor to provide access. Tree works have now commenced on the site.

#### **Community Infrastructure Level (CIL):**

Cllr Orchard noted that John Halliday, the internal auditor, had raised the question: "Can you keep on rolling out reserves?" Following a brief discussion regarding Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds and general reserves, it was agreed that the Chairman would like the Reserves Policy to be reviewed in the near future. This will enable informed decisions to be made about financial planning for the coming years.

Cllr Firrell's proposal that the time for regular meetings be moved from 7.30 pm to 7 pm was agreed unanimously.

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday, 8th July 2025 at 7 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.

Debbie Hollings

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

Litton Cheney Parish Council

#### **Appendix a:**

#### **Finance Report 20th May 2025:**

Parish Funds	Total
Balance brought forward as at 1st April	£29,931.60
Income to date	£6,023.57
Expenditure to date	£433.49

<b>Parish funds total</b>	£35,521.68
Of which the following is held in reserves or CIL	
Earmarked reserves	£16,100.00
CIL	£9,742.00
Playground (ringfenced)	£100.00
Community Fund (ringfenced)	£423.00
<b>Total reserves/CIL held</b>	£26,365.00
<b>Approved spend since last reported/meeting</b>	
Chilcombe Bridge - Paid	£854.30
Fingerpost Repair - Paid	£427.24
LATCH Storage Batteries (From CIL fund)	£3,000.00
<b>Total</b>	£4,281.54
<b>Income since last reported/meeting</b>	
Interest	£23.57
Precept - Tranche 1	£6,000.00
<b>Total</b>	£6,023.57
<b>Invoices/Payments for approval at time of publishing agenda</b>	
Scheduled: May & June Clerk's wage	£858.48
Clerk Travel Expenses x 2 extra return journeys to Litton Cheney	£24.30
Bridport Town Council BLAP Contribution	£47.98
LATCH Hire of Meeting Room 2024/2025 meetings plus 20/5/2025	£80.25
R.E Randall Refurbishment of 2 x second hand litter bins	£141.68
<b>Total</b>	£1,152.69