

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Litton Cheney Parish Council held on Tuesday 9th September 2025 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

Councillors Present:

Cllr John Firrell (Chair)	Cllr Quentin Blacke
Cllr Bill Orchard (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Rob Matthews
Cllr Andrew King	

Dorset Council Cllr Sally Holland
Ms Debbie Hollings (Clerk)

Two members of the Litton Cheney community.

1. Apologies for absence

None received.

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest received or dispensation requests.

3. Democratic time

No items for discussion were brought forward during this item.

4. Approval of Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 8th July 2025

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

5. Approval of Minutes of Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 12th August 2025

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

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

None

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

Cllr Holland presented her report.

Cllr Holland confirmed that Dorset Council has started the Local Plan Consultation with a deadline of 13th October 2025. She reminded those present that it is important to remember that the Local Plan is about proposed sites. Proposed sites have either been nominated by the landowner or have been identified from previous planning. The reason there are so many is because Dorset Council has to show that Dorset has enough land for the five-year plan to do all the building that the government are expecting it to do, which is to build 3,500 houses a year.

Dorset Council have arranged drop-in events for residents who wish to look at the plans and speak to officials. The Bridport event has been scheduled for Wednesday, 10th September at Bridport Town Hall. Cllr Holland will be present with the portfolio holder at Dorset Council for Planning and Planning Committee councillors. Cllr Holland reiterated that this is the opportunity for residents who are not happy with things to go along, find out about the plan and actually say something. It's really important for you to say something if you're not happy.

Cllr Holland will also be present at another drop-in event in Burton Bradstock on 3rd October 2025.

8. Clerk's/RFO's report.

8.1 Receive Clerk's/RFO's report.

The Clerk presented her report to the meeting.

8.1.1 Confirmation and approval of councillors' IT Cyber Security training following the adoption of the IT Policy by the Parish Council and all individual councillors.

Following a short discussion on the options available to the council, it was proposed and seconded by Cllr Firrell and Cllr King and unanimously carried that all councillors and the Clerk undertake the online Basic and Phishing Cyber Security training courses at £15 per course.

8.2 Receive the Financial update.

8.2.1 Approval of invoices for payment (appended to this agenda)

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

8.2.2 Approval of Schedule of Regular Payments (appended to this agenda)

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

8.2.3 To note the Clerk's salary increase in line with the National Pay Award and to note the Clerk's pay increase to be backdated to April 2025.

Councillors noted the increase in the Clerk's salary, having already approved the salary payment and backdated pay under Item 8.2.2

9. Discuss anti-social behaviour within the village confines, in particular instances of speeding. Decide how best this is dealt with as a result of consultations with Dorset Police.

This item was moved up the agenda to be discussed after Item 7.

Cllr Firrell confirmed that, as a result of comments made on Facebook about people speeding through the village and vehicle noise, he and Cllr Matthews had met with our PCSO Sarah Pilcher and discussed what the parish council can and cannot do. Cllr Firrell stated that he believed the parish council would not be immediately supportive of lowering the speed limit to 20 miles an hour, which has been suggested as a possibility. There are a number of significant hoops to jump through if we took that route. The requirements to justify a 20 mph speed limit are quite formidable. Cllr Firrell reminded all that the speed limit through the village had been reduced from 60 miles per hour to 30 miles per hour only in 2021.

Cllr Matthews made the point that where crimes of speeding and dangerous driving, etc, were committed, these should be reported to the police on each occasion. If the police do not know about the criminal and anti-social behaviour, they cannot do anything about it.

Cllr Matthews and PCSO Pilcher had discussed the requirements of a Community Speed Watch. This would involve a minimum of 5 people standing by the road with a speed gun and clipboards, recording the speed of vehicles as they passed by. All the volunteers would need to be trained by Dorset Police to carry out the procedure in the correct way. Community Speed Watch can only be implemented in certain areas. It cannot be where it could be dangerous if people saw the volunteers and decided to slow down quickly. It could only take place in certain areas in the village where speed can be monitored safely. It cannot take place if it's raining. It cannot take place early in the morning because it has to be undertaken in full daylight hours. Clearly, there are a number of restrictions on how people might be caught speeding.

If it were possible to train 5 volunteers in the village to undertake the monitoring, a minimum of 3 are required to be on duty for any information recorded to be valid. A driver would also need to be driving at 35 mph to be of interest to the police. This would be classified as speeding, where the limit is 30mph plus 10% plus 2.

Cllr Matthews confirmed that there is nowhere in the village that is suitable for a camera van to be sighted at any time. The Police could, however, use unmarked traffic cars and officers who would work outside of the vehicle with a handgun. However, this would only be of interest to the Police if they know about the issues that are happening in the village through the reporting of incidents. There needs to be a building up of a picture of where incidents are happening.

Following a question from one of the parishioners present, Cllr Firrell confirmed that there were no plans to request speed bumps to be added in Chalk Pit Lane. For that to happen there would need to be street lighting.

Cllr Holland confirmed that in order to be able to obtain a SID (Speed Indicator Device) in the village, it would cost around £3,000, and there would need to be a Community Speed Watch in existence. She also mentioned that it may be possible to request part of the funding towards a SID from a local business.

In conclusion, Cllr Firrell thanked the members of the public present for their input. Cllr Matthews reiterated that all driving behaviour that was antisocial, including speeding, the squealing of tyres, dangerous driving, etc, should be reported to Dorset Police. It was also reported that a small number of people had already volunteered to be part of a Community Speed Watch if needed. Cllr Matthews will follow up on this discussion and report further at the next meeting.

10. Parish Council Survey – Discuss and agree on DAPTC Smaller Parish Council survey responses. Deadline for parish council responses is 31st October 2025.

All councillors had completed the survey as individual councillors, and the Clerk has recorded where individual answers clearly had a majority of opinions. For those answers where there was no clear majority, decisions were finalised, and a decision was made to ask the clerk to take a final view on those answers where differing opinions were logged. There was general agreement that the Clerk would complete the Parish Council Survey on behalf of the Parish Council before the deadline.

11. Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation – Discuss and agree on the Council's responses. Deadline for responses 13th October 2025.

Cllr Firrell proposed that all councillors look at the questions on the Local Plan and if they have comments, let the Clerk know. The Clerk can then pool the answers in a similar way that was undertaken for the DAPTC Smaller Parish Council survey and submit a response from the Parish Council. All councillors agreed with this approach.

12. Dorset Council Local Transport Plan Consultation – Discuss and agree on the Council's responses. Deadline for responses 13th October 2025.

Cllr Firrell proposed that all councillors look at the questions on the Local Plan and if they have comments, let the Clerk know. The Clerk can then pool the answers in a similar way that was undertaken for the DAPTC Smaller Parish Council survey and submit a response from the Parish Council. All councillors agreed with this approach.

13. Proposal to set aside £150 for the purchase of a wreath for Remembrance Day in November, and also for the purchase and engraving of brass plaques to be attached to seven new wooden crosses commemorating those from Litton Cheney who gave their lives during WW11 on what will be the 80th anniversary/year of the end of the Second World War in 1945.

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

14. Approval for two delegates to attend the DAPTC "Fresh Start" event on 30th October at £75 per head.

Proposed and seconded by Cllr King and Cllr Orchard and unanimously carried. Cllr Firrell and Cllr Matthews will attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

15. Policy Review

15.1 HR Policies – Review and adopt the following new policies (required as referenced in the Clerk's Contract):

- a) Grievance Policy

- b) Disciplinary Policy
- c) Equality and Diversity Policy
- d) Sickness Absence Policy
- e) Health and Safety Policy
- f) Expenses Policy
- g) Whistleblowing Policy

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

15.2 Review of existing adopted policies:

- a) Community Bench Policy
- b) Data Protection Policy
- c) Email Policy
- d) Grants and Donations Policy
- e) Metal Detecting Policy

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

16. Councillors' Portfolios:

This item was moved up the agenda to be discussed after Item 14.

16.1 Planning: Cllr Orchard

Cllr Orchard presented his report. The application for solar panels at The Cottage, Main Street, Litton Cheney was supported. See Item 17.1.

The Clerk was asked to follow up with the Dorset Council Planning Team to find out if a decision has been made on the application for the replacement of White Thorne Cottage with a pair of semi-detached cottages.

16.2 Highways/Transport: Cllr Matthews

Cllr Matthews presented his report.

Following the change in Portfolio responsibilities, Cllr Matthews confirmed that he had recently met with both Stuart Smith, the Dorset Council Community Highways Officer and Dave Ingram, the local Flood Warden to introduce himself and to discuss current issues and activities.

Cllr Matthews has recently contacted Wessex Water to report the water emerging from beneath the carriageway at the entrance to Charity Farm. A technician established that the water was not from a leaking freshwater pipe or sewage. The issue was then reported to Dorset Council, via the website and CHO Stuart Smith investigated and has now put the leak onto the list of repairs to be carried out.

Cllr Matthews reported that he has been on a walk around the village with Flood Warden Dave Ingram. Riparian responsibilities of several landowners with a watercourse on their property were discussed. Water courses should be kept clear and unobstructed, and it appears that there are a number of owners who are not aware of their responsibilities. A reminder to those households may be the way forward before winter.

The B3157, Coast Road, will close at Goose Hill, Portesham, from November 3-14 daily between 9am and 4pm - re-opening to traffic overnight and at weekends.

16.3 Playground/ Playing Field/Allotments: Cllr King

Cllr King presented his report and confirmed that the gully under the boundary hedge has now been cleared. Special thanks to Jerry Walsingham for his help.

With regards to the playground, Cllr King has had visits from two play equipment suppliers to look at the existing equipment, with another one booked for 12th September. One quote has been received so far, with the other on its way. The figure of around £60,000 will be the cost to replace the tractor and the galleon in the playground, which is much more than expected.

Cllr King confirmed that of the current equipment, he would suggest that the front of the galleon be removed along with the wire climbing frame, which is beginning to fray and become dangerous.

Lowering his expectations of equipment available from the parish council's budget, Redlynch have provided a quote of £6,000 to supply and install a much smaller set of climbing equipment, a set of four timber climbing/balance beams. The parish council would need to clear the ground ready for the erection of equipment.

Cllr King will continue to investigate what is available and will hopefully be able to present a confirmed proposal at the next meeting in November. Cllr King suggests that a budget of £7,000 be set aside from the CIL fund and reserves. Cllr Firrell proposed that the community would be asked for their opinions on the spending of funds for playground equipment.

Cllr King requested help to ensure that the basketball court is swept as soon as possible, as it is currently slippery. Cllr Matthews offered to help, and arrangements will be made to resolve this issue during the following week, possibly with the use of the Premier Crew.

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

16.4.1 Handrail - The Rocks

Cllr Blacke presented his report.

Should a handrail on The Rocks footpath be considered? Cllr Blacke has obtained a quote of £40 per metre for the installation of a new rail. The total length of the path that requires this new handrail is approximately 40 metres, in total £1,600 (plus VAT if required).

The path itself is very slippery. Cllr Matthews expressed the opinion that it was not a new handrail that was needed but for the entire path to be resurfaced.

Cllr Firrell explained that Dorset Council were responsible for the maintenance of the path itself, and that it may be a good idea to ask the Countryside Ranger/Rights of Way Officer, Stuart Semple to inspect the site. Cllr Firrell also suggested that he, Cllr Blacke and Cllr Matthews view the footpath and try to find a possible solution.

16.4.2 Bench maintenance

Cllr Blacke requested the purchase of 5 ½ litres of Danish oil to help maintain the benches around the community. The cost of the purchase would be approximately £50. All councillors agreed that this purchase should be made, and approval will be given retrospectively at the next parish council meeting.

Cllr Blacke had reported to Dorset Council that a footpath in the Vineyard was blocked by brambles. Cllr Firrell will also advise the management of the Vineyard of the issue. **After note – now cleared.**

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

Cllr Firrell presented his report.

DAPTC have organised a Fresh Start event for the end of October 2025; the speakers will include the new Chief Executive of Dorset Council, and the event's main aim is to help bring Dorset's towns and parishes into a closer and more productive working relationship with the unitary council. Cllr Firrell and Cllr Matthews will attend this conference on behalf of Litton Cheney Parish Council.

Cllr Firrell confirmed that the finger post near the White Horse public house has now been fully refurbished.

The two trees scheduled for felling along White Way are still in place, and we have not received confirmation of when the work will take place.

Cllr Firrell recently attended the Question and Answer Session hosted by the West Dorset MP Edward Morello, along with approximately 30 other people. Mr Morello acquitted himself well.

17. Planning matters - To consider any planning applications, appeals or enforcements in circulation:

17.1 Planning Application P/HOU/2025/04880- Install 12 x Solar Panels to south facing roof of the car port at The Cottage, Main Street, Litton Cheney, DT2 9AW.

Following discussion, all councillors agreed that there was support for this application. The Clerk was asked to add the support to the application on the Dorset Council Planning Portal.

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

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

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

19. Clerk's Employment

19.1 Clerk's Probationary Review

Cllr Firrell to confirm in writing to the Clerk the outcome of the review.

19.2 Review and agree the Clerk's Contract.

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

20. Date of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 7.00pm on Tuesday 11th November 2025.

21. Meeting close.

Meeting closed at 9.09 pm.

Debbie Hollings
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Litton Cheney Parish Council