

# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING/VILLAGE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – 7.00pm  
Litton and Thorner's Community Hall

## MEETING NOTES

### **1. Introduction** – Parish Council Chairman – Cllr John Firrell.

Cllr Firrell welcomed parishioners to the annual Village/Parish Assembly. The meeting is essentially for the free flow of information to bounce back and forth within the community.

### **2. Dorset Council** – Ward Councillor 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."

### **3. Your Parish Council** – Bill Orchard/John Firrell.

Cllr Bill Orchard asked, "What did the PC ever do for us!". Roads, the parish council deals with all potholes, all problems regarding verges, and resurfacing. The council also looks forward to the time when parishioners also log these issues on the Dorset Council website.

Dog excrement, a big issue, and livestock. The impact of heavy wagons and associated issues are being worked on by Cllr Andrew Price, supported by Ward Cllr Sally Holland. Cllr Rob Matthews has been dealing with Openreach and Full Fibre and keeping a watchful eye on our superb playing fields is Cllr Andy King.

Cllr John Firrell is the councillor who often represents the parish council at Bridport Local Area Partnership and DAPTC meetings and events.

Planning; we are responsible for vetting each application and transmitting our recommendations back to the planning team. If we disagree, the case officer will need to listen to the parish council and issues are moved upwards to a development/planning committee. The new planning regulations means that the case officers will be able to deal with more issues themselves.

Cllr Firrell then took the opportunity to pay tribute to former Chairman Cllr Bill Orchard. Bill had been Chairman since 2015. He was thanked for his diligence, perseverance, and tolerance.

#### **4. Portfolios**

##### **Cllr Andrew Price. Roads.**

Cllr Price was intending to stand down at the end of last year, but was persuaded to be co-opted and see two major issues through. Ford Farm was one of these issues, and it is still an issue regarding planning enforcement. Though an improvement plan had been issued from County Hall, the matter is currently stalled. The landscaping scheme failed in 2020, and although replanting has taken place, it will take decades to screen what is on view.

The second issue Cllr Price has been working on has now received better news. With the support of both MPs over the past five years, National Highways is now reviewing our area of the local A35 highway as part of a safety review. This should eventually lead to the introduction of a formal weight limit and put a stop to the articulated trucks coming down Whiteway and through the village. Some versions of the satnav system (Causeway) used by truckers have now also been updated and are starting to make a difference.

Cllr Price believes we deserve better than what we get from DC as a busy village with a successful school and 2 large businesses. There are many issues with potholes and roads in villages, and he has tried to find out where we stand with regard to other local villages. No report has been made available on the state of our roads. In the meantime, some schemes are being worked on, and others are being put forward.

As Cllr Holland has already mentioned, we would urge parishioners to report potholes and similar problems. It does not matter if we repeat issues; it will get the reported numbers up.

One accident last year led to the addition of plastic bollards in an inappropriate place on Main Street, and following intervention from the parish council, the bollards were eventually removed.

New access has been created to Charity Farm.

Cllr Price confirmed that this would be his last report as a councillor and wished his successor Good Luck!

It was mentioned that caravans are getting stuck on Whiteway, at least 3 have needed to be helped recently. Cllr Price responded by advising that we cannot stop large vehicles such as caravans and HGVs from accessing the road from the A35. It is the much larger articulated lorries that need to be stopped from leaving the A35.

##### **Cllr Bill Orchard. Planning.**

As a parish council, we have debated earlier in the fiscal year whether we should contemplate additional affordable housing in the village. Jackie Cuff from Dorset Rural Housing Association came along to talk to us, and many of you here tonight came along to listen. Should there be exception sites within the village and towns? Exception sites have to be clearly attached to the village and would rely on a few local landowners to provide these plots, and this is highly unlikely as it is a Tier 4 area. A housing company would be set up to own the properties, and they would become a village asset. The Scheme is not worth pursuing if we are not able to obtain land for this purpose. Bride Place is unaffordable for many people. There has been a fair amount of house building in the village, and this has caused quite a bit of disruption. The upside is that the developers have to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to the parish council of £8 per square metre, and the parish council receives 15% of the levy. This fund has built up and will be spent on Infrastructure projects.

Q1. How much money from these payments is there available? Currently just over £9500.

The audience was asked, "How do people feel about affordable housing?"

Comments included:

“We should wait and see what happens with the Bride Place development” and “This does not appear to be ‘affordable housing’ at all.”

“Worth considering, should there be constraints, without certainty. Perhaps with the development being taken on by house associations or landlords.”

The parish council took the same stance.

### **Cllr Andy King. Playground and Allotments.**

Cllr King confirmed everything was going along fine with regards to the Allotments. All plots are being used, apart from two half plots. Nobody on waiting list.

Regarding the playing field, Dorset Council has done a good job of cutting grass and keeping things neat. The first summer cut makes everything look great. The parish council has been discussing additional things to we can do in the field, including using the funds from CIL. We will continue to discuss these in the parish council meeting after the assembly.

Andy has tried to get volunteers to help get things done at the playing ground that we would rather not pay contractors to do. Aimed at younger parents of those who use it, but sadly no one has come forward,

Has received lots of suggestions from the playground inspection of what can be done, and all equipment is currently working ok.

Q1 On entrance to the field, a large slab that has fallen into the stream, is that going to be an issue?

With regards to the slab, Andy does not know how it got there. It was confirmed by a lady at the meeting that she was present at a time when a local farmer with a tractor knocked it off into the stream. Andy will investigate, as we do not want it blocking up the stream.

Q2 Allotment gate on the left will need to be replaced,

Andy agreed that this will need to be investigated.

Q3 Any proposals/ideas of what can be put into the playground?

Comments:

“Maybe ask Thorner’s School Association Chair, Clare More, who may be able to contribute.”

“Climbing bars, monkey bars, a simple thing and not too expensive, my granddaughter’s favourite thing.”

“Twice been asked where is the playing field? Do we need a little sign at the entrance of the playing field. Assumed it was somebody’s driveway.”

### **Cllr Rob Matthews. Full Fibre.**

Openreach has been putting in the fibre over the past year. We have been pushing Openreach and helping residents who were having trouble. The village is now mostly connected; Chalk Pit Lane is still waiting. SSE has not yet granted permission to use the poles. Litton Hill residents should be connected by mid-June, and the rest soon after. Anyone who signed up for the voucher scheme with Openreach will need to sign up; otherwise, Openreach will be knocking on your door.

During January, the situation regarding the Christmas tree was discussed, and the question was asked why we do not go for a potted living tree in the Triangle. The location for the tree needed to be placed further into the Triangle, and the fingerboard would not be obscured. We could continue with a cut tree, on-going costs, or potted tree (planted in the Triangle or removed and cared for elsewhere), or a representative tree, e.g. Crafty type such as the one in West Bay.

Elizabeth Kingston has managed to obtain a free potted tree, and we would like to try it this year. Also, a quick question is “how do people feel about it being there all year round?” The general consensus in the room was ‘No’.

Q1 “Is there room for it adjacent to the bus shelter? Yes, but not good views of it.

Silver birch will not be affected, and the tree is potted, so it will not grow too much. We will try it this year, and if it looks ok, maybe leave it there.

### **Cllr Quentin Blacke – Benches, bridges, electric fences, hedges & dog poo.**

The village now has 7 benches, and a 7-bench walk historical walk leaflet has been created to follow a route around the benches.

The bridge at Chilcombe has now been replaced. After a good deal of lobbying and successful village fundraising, a lovely bridge has been built by Russell Randall and his son, Chris.

If you walk from Whitecross to Puncknowle, you will come across electric fences and, in some cases, even fall on the fences as well as dogs getting jolts. Following lots of nagging, through the Dorset Council portal, a safe crossing has now been put in place. You can report any problems on the DC portal; it does not have to be a problem in this parish. You can report anything in the county.

The police have put out a warning/reminder not to cut hedges between certain dates. It is a reminder to everyone about the Countryside Act 1981, where it is illegal to disturb birds by hedge trimming or cutting from the 1st of March and 1st of July.

Several fields have been ploughed now, and a local farmer has been asked to reinstate pathways.

Dog poo. One local farmer accused dog owners of not picking up poo and stated that dog poo could cause spontaneous abortions in cattle. Two new litter bins have now been placed at Whitecross and at the Snicket. Said farmer intends to purchase two bins and install at the edges of his fields. Dorset Council will service the two new bins.

### **5. Stepping up to the Plate – In recognition of those who do.**

Cllr John Firrell spoke about how when he first arrived here in 2002, one of the first things he got involved with was an organisation called Vital Villages, led by Elizabeth Kingston, the first meeting being held in Steve Kourik’s living room. We chatted about what we needed in the village, and one of the things we were looking at was the village shop. The other thing we wanted was a village hall. At the time, we had an old church hall attached to the church. As a result of Vital Villages, we produced a Parish Plan put together by Sally Dyke when she served on the parish council.

Regarding this hall, the parish council had arranged with a local farmer, Mr Pritchard, that the parish council would buy the plot of land and put a village hall on it. The farmer would also be allowed to build a house nearby. In 2005, we needed people to fundraise, design, and get the hall built. The Chairman of the Parish Council at the time was Freddie Spicer. The people who were on that committee included Philip Dyke and the hall you are now sitting in was designed by Philip. The contracting builder was CG Fry and Son. Eddy Fry made sure of that - nobody else was going to build the village hall in his village!. Bill Orchard was the quantity surveyor; it was a great time. At the time, the 2012 Olympics were taking all the lottery-funded money, so we needed to go cap in hand to raise money. Just goes to show how many people have contributed to the village and even now continue to contribute to this village. We have a wonderful school led by an exceptionally good Headmaster, a wonderful church, and a band of people that keep it going, and we have LATCH and with the help of the parish council, and CIL, it has solar panels and batteries.

Paul Kingston also deserves a mention as part of the original team who helped with the hall. He is also our historian in residence; and Paul has created a history route amongst other things. The village website will be updated so that you will be able to go to various spots in the village, click on

it and find out what role that part of the village played in wartime Britain. David Hearn deserves a mention as well, as he looks after the village website.

In closing, Cllr Firrell wanted to say that it was extremely sad to hear the news of Alan Moxon, the end of the Moxon dynasty in the village. People sadly pass on, but we still carry on.

DAPTC/BLAP are two pretty essential organisations. When we lost the West Dorset District Council, we lost the bridge between us and DC, and now have to go direct to DC, and DAPTC/BLAP are helping to re-form that bridge between all sides.

## **6. The Floor is Yours – Any questions or points you wish to raise.**

Q1 Planning matter continuing – Bride Place, formally part of Charity Farm.

A parishioner (Mr F Spicer) read out what should be the planning conditions in the approved planning permission although these have yet to be complied with.

Cllr John Firrell has heard from the enforcement officer that he has contacted the developer and is now awaiting a response.

The point was made that enforcement appeared to be snowed under.

Cllr Sally Holland is also aware of the issues with Bride Place.

## **7. What Next?**

Cllr Firrell reflected on the lack of younger people at the meeting, and that we do need to try to get others involved.

## **8. Meeting Closed**

Cllr Firrell thanked all those who attended.

Finally, a member of the public asked the meeting to thank the parish councillors for all their time, and not just meetings, that they give to the village. A round of applause was given.

End of meeting 8.15 pm.

Debbie Hollings  
Clerk/RFO