

ANNUAL MEETING of DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL

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PRESENT: Councillors Hutton (RH) – Chair of the meeting, Harrison (HH), Dando (JD), Greenhalgh (JG), Yeoman (RY) and Hughes (LH).

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss P Griffiths – Clerk to the Council.

065/15 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON of the Parish Council for the year 2015 – 2016 and signing of declaration of acceptance of office or to approve arrangements for the receipt of the declaration of office if elected Chairperson is not present at the meeting. On a proposal by HH and seconded by JG it was resolved by unanimous vote to elect Charles Evans as Chairman for the year 2015 – 2016 and that the Declaration of Acceptance should be signed prior to the next meeting.

066/15 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON for the year 2015 - 2016.
On a proposal by HH seconded by LH it was resolved by unanimous vote to elect Roger Hutton as Vice-Chairman for the year 2015 – 2016.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Opportunity for members of the public to address the Parish Council.

Mr Simon Clifford introduced himself and explained why he was interested in being co-opted on to the Parish Council.

067/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.
Apologies for absence from Councillors Evans (CE) and Clark were received and approved. PCSO Dury had also sent his apologies.

068/15 CODE OF CONDUCT – Declarations of interest and dispensations.
a) Declarations of interest on items included on the agenda – HH declared a personal interest in Items 078/15 as a member of the Parish Plan Steering Group (PPSG).
b) Requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests – none.

069/15 CO-OPTION TO FILL THE VACANCY ON THE PARISH COUNCIL - to receive nominations for co-option and to vote on any nominations received.
Simon Clifford was nominated by LH and seconded by RH.
RESOLVED – by unanimous vote to co-opt Mr Simon Clifford (SC) on to the Council. SC signed the declaration of acceptance of office and joined the council meeting.

070/15 REVIEW OF COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP TO OTHER BODIES.
a) Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC).
b) Somerset Playing Fields Association.
c) Community Council for Somerset.
d) CPRE.
RESOLVED – to continue with the membership of the above organizations.

- 071/15 ELECTION OF MEMBERS' TO SPECIAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY.
- Highways and Road Safety – JG & CE.
 - Footpaths and Rights of Way - RY.
 - Parish Council website – RY & the Clerk.
 - Playground – CE & HC.
 - Finance and Budget (including checks of the Parish Council Finances) – JD & LH.
 - Mendip District Council Strategic Plans, Housing and Planning – HH & RY.
 - Other: Standing Orders – LH; Press and media – CE, SC and the Clerk; Insurance – RH and Legal – LH.
- RESOLVED to elect the councillors as detailed above.
- 072/15 CONFIRMATION OF USE OF ADOPTED POLICIES and approve draft policies/procedures and consider if others are required:
- Standing Orders – adopted 17th June 2010 revised April 2014.
 - Financial Regulations – adopted May 2014.
 - Code of Conduct – revised and adopted July 2012.
 - Freedom of Information Act Scheme & Schedule of Charges – revised May 2014.
 - Disciplinary Procedure (Draft).
 - Complaints Procedure (Draft).
- It was RESOLVED to confirm the use of the above policies a) – d) and to adopt policies e) and f) with amendments to f) the Disciplinary Procedure as discussed.
- 073/15 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO PARISH ORGANISATIONS.
It was RESOLVED that the following councillors represent the PC as follows:
- Jubilee Hall committee – HC.
 - Parish plan steering group (PPSG) – RY & HH.
- 074/15 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2015 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- 075/15 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 23rd April 2015.
- Update on possible breach of planning conditions at the Fir Tree Café site caused by creation of access at the junction with the A37 – The Clerk read out the email from the Planning Enforcement Officer at MDC who had now visited the site and spoken to the owner of the site; he will discuss the matter with one of the Senior Planners. It was noted that in the meantime a new entrance had been created into The Lodge opposite, which will add to the problem and make an already difficult junction/situation worse. The Clerk will report the additional problem to MDC. **Action: The Clerk.**
 - Flooding/pooling of water at the eastern end of Jacobs Lane – HH reported that although an improvement the work was not quite finished; the contractor was expected to complete it in the next couple of weeks.
 - Telephone kiosk in Ditchat by the old Post Office – The Clerk reported that BT had confirmed again that the kiosk was on the plan for removal but were unable to give an accurate date but it was expected it would be removed by late in the summer.
 - Dog exercising and fouling on former playground at Linterns Close – the Clerk reported that the matter of the fence has been passed to the asset maintenance officer at MDC who will liaise with the Clerk. MDC have indicated that dog fouling signage however is the responsibility of Environmental Health (EH). A request for signage will be passed to the EH department who have not yet contacted the PC. The advice from MDC is that signage is only advisory and it is not a legal requirement to have Dog fouling signage present for a prosecution, just witnesses. So if the PC want to have signs put up the PC may be expected

to pay for them. It was agreed that prior to any decision on the signs JG would speak to the owner of the dog requesting that the dog is not allow to foul or be left on its own in the area. The Clerk will continue to follow up with MDC. **Action: JG & the Clerk.**

- e) BT cabinet by the Coronation seat recess - it was noted that the cabinet had now been moved to the opposite side of the road and re-sited within BT's own site. JG reported that the area has not been returned to the same condition as prior to the cabinet being installed. In particular one of the two man-hole covers has not been seated correctly and was therefore a trip hazard. It was agreed that any councillor who saw the contractors in the village will request that the man-hole cover is replaced correctly. The Clerk will contact BT via the link sent to the Clerk by LH to inform them about the problem. **Action: All councillors and the Clerk.**

076/15 PLANNING

The following planning application was considered:

- a) Change of use of agricultural farm machinery area into a replacement car park, Maryland Farm, Ditcheat. Ref: 2015/0939/FUL. **Outcome:** Unanimous 'Recommend approval' subject to the following comments:
- The Parish Council is extremely concerned about the safety on the public footpath which crosses the entrance to the proposed car park which with the change of use from farm machinery to smaller faster vehicles will also increase the use of the carpark. The onus must be put on the applicants to make it safe for pedestrians who should be given priority and have the right of way. The PC does not believe that the proposal as stated on the plans is adequate.
 - The applicants should also be required to improve the provision of the drainage of the footpath as there has been a long standing issue of pooling making the path impassable on occasions.

077/15 FINANCE

- a) Internal Audit for year ended 31st March 2015 – the report from the internal auditor was considered. The Internal auditor has suggested in his report that the PC consider moving to electronic banking – the Clerk will seek advice from SALC. The auditor also highlighted a specific action point to improve the transparency of the PC. It is noted that £646 was refunded to one of the councillors in respect of building materials to repair the Ditcheat-Alhampton footpath. While there is nothing to suggest that these materials have been used for anything other than the purpose stated the council minutes do not comment on the progress being made on the repair and it is suggested that some sort of periodic progress report be made, especially in years where expense is relatively high (as is the case for 2014-15). The Clerk will discuss with CE. **Action: The Clerk.**
- b) The accounts for 2014/2015 were approved and signed.
- c) Annual Return – Section 1 Statement of Accounts; approved and signed.
- d) Annual Return – Section 2 Annual Governance Statement; approved and signed.
- e) The review of the options for the insurance policy - the Clerk reported that quotations from three companies had been requested and received. AON, Zurich and Came & Company had each provided quotations based on the current policy schedule. It was resolved that subject to due diligence checks by RH and the Clerk to ensure that the cover remains as previous that the quote from Came & Company will be accepted for a single year only. **Action: The Clerk and RH.**
- f) Bank balances as at May from latest statements – the Clerk reported that the balance of all accounts as at the date of the meeting was £20,121.69.
- g) Approval of Parish Council payments and authority to sign cheques.
- 1) Community Council for Somerset £40.00.
 - 2) SALC membership fee - £186.09.

3) Wicksteed Leisure for annual inspection and risk assessment - £72.00.

4) Tony's Garden Services for grass cutting on 10th and 20th April 2015 - £130.00.

RESOLVED: that the above expenditure is approved and the cheques signed.

h) RESOLVED: that the Clerk is confirmed as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

i) RESOLVED: to appoint Longhill Accounting as the Internal Auditor for the year 2015 – 2016.

j) Assets Register – was reviewed. The Clerk explained that the Asset Register had been amended to reflect the actual purchase cost of the assets in order to comply with the external audit requirements. The amendment was agreed and the register updated.

k) Risk assessment – was reviewed; no amendments required.

078/15 PARISH PLAN

Update on action plans – HH gave an update on the action plans:

- Action plan 1 – A Ditchat village wide traffic survey is planned for September.
- Action plan 2 – Litter and dog fouling appear to have improved but incidents of fly tipping are on the increase. All parishioners are requested to report any fly tipping to MDC and to inform the Parish Plan Steering group (PPSG).
- Action plan 3 – The report of the survey indicated that there was some interest from young people in the parish to participate in activities however unless appropriate volunteers come forward and some/more interest is shown by volunteers no further progress can be made. SC reported that the CCFRC were running activity days during the summer including a family fun day.
- Action plan 4 – awaiting the consultation by MDC on the allocation of development sites.
- Action plan 5 – the team are looking at the wild environment and following an article in the FTN the group are hoping to keep a seasonal diary starting on 1st June. A further meeting will be held later in the summer.

079/15 PLAYGROUND

a) The quotation for the cutting back of the overhanging tree branches and shrubs alongside the playground was considered and accepted. The Clerk will instruct the contractor to complete the work.

b) Any matters of report.

080/15 HIGHWAYS

a) The proposal by SCC to introduce a 24 Hour Clearway on parts of the A361, A37 and A371 was considered and agreed that no comments were necessary.

b) Update on repairs previously reported - noted that West Lane had been repaired.

c) Agree matters for report to the Highways authority - nothing new to report.

d) Concern was expressed that it appeared that the lorries going to and from the Gregory Depot at Evercreech may be using the route through the village of Ditchat as a short cut. It was agreed that before any action could be taken it would be necessary for all to note the date, time and registration of the lorries which did not appear to be collecting or delivering within the Parish. **Action: All Councillors.**

081/15 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.

a) Update on matters previously reported:

1. The absence of the stile and boards to cross the ditch on path SM 6/33 (path that crosses Jacobs Lane).

2. The board across the road side ditch on SM13/7A.

The Clerk will follow up on the above.

b) Any matters for report: –

- RY reported that following a walk which involved the Mendip Ramblers it was noted that the stiles on the footpath from Sutton to Alhampton were in a poor state. The Mendip Ramblers had indicated that they would be prepared to help with the installation of new

gates in place of the stiles. The Clerk will contact the Rights of Way team for advice on how to proceed. **Action: The Clerk.**

- The footpath by Church Lane which used to be maintained by a parishioner, who has now left the parish, is starting to become overgrown. The path will be monitored and unless a new volunteer takes on the maintenance a working party will be required later in the year to clear the path.
- The footpath from Kite Lane to Alhampton where the work on levelling the path is being done is becoming overgrown – the working party undertaking the work on the path would be pleased to receive a mower which would be used to keep the grass cut back.

082/15 OFF STREET PARKING BY CHAMPS WAY, ALHAMPTON.

Update on present situation and agree actions to support the project - the Clerk reported that Mr Mant who is prepared to donate the land to create space for off road parking and Dan Bennett from Aster Property were very concerned that MDC who own the freehold to the footpath that runs up to the 4 properties do not want to relinquish the land. Dan Bennett corresponded with MDC in early March who had indicated that MDC were arranging for the land to be valued so that either ownership of the land could be transferred or an easement to construct the driveway could be arranged. However, MDC had made no further contact. It was agreed that as the District Councillor for the parish JG would take up the matter with the relevant departments at MDC. **Action: JG.**

083/15 FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLOR ATTENDING 'THE RENDEZVOUS'.

JD attended the May 'Rendezvous' – nothing to report.

084/15 HEALTH & SAFETY.

Nothing to report.

085/15 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.

The Clerk reminded all councillors that they would need to complete a 'Register of Interests' form which should be returned to MDC and a copy given to the Clerk. **All councillors.**

086/15 ITEMS OF REPORT AND INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

a) Chairman - nothing.

b) Members:–

- JG raised the matter on behalf of the FTN editorial committee of the précis minutes of PC meetings. The editors are unable on occasion to publish the complete précised minutes due to the limited amount of space in the magazine. The need to publish a précis of the minutes in the FTN magazine was questioned as the draft minutes are put on the notice boards and on the PC website. The mater will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: The Clerk.

- SC reported that the bid for funding the floodlighting at CCRFC had been rejected.

Signed: _____ Chairman of Ditcheat Parish Council.

Dated: 2nd July 2015.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 2nd JULY 2015 AT 7.30 pm in the Church Room.

If necessary a Planning meeting will be held on 11TH June 2015 the Church Room.

PLEASE CHECK THE NOTICEBOARDS FOR AGENDAS AND DATES.
MEMBERS OF THE PARISH AND PRESS WELCOME.