

## **MEETING of DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 AT 7.30PM AT CHURCH ROOM, DITCHEAT.

PRESENT: Chairperson – Councillor Evans (CE) and Councillors – Clark (HC), Clifford (SC), Dando (JD), Harrison (HH), Hughes (LH) and Hutton (RH).

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

BY INVITATION: County Councillor Nigel Hewitt-Cooper (NHC).

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – There were 17 members of the public present. Mrs Vee Lees expressed her concern about the land adjacent to Folly Drive, where she lives, which had been put forward as a housing development site on MDC's draft Local Plan – Part II (HELAA site reference DIT008). Mrs Lees stated that whilst she was not against the development of the land in principle, she was very concerned about the numbers of houses which could be built due to the size of the site and according to the housing density suggested by MDC, which could be up to 74 houses if the whole site were used. This is considerably more than the 16 dwellings as indicated on the draft Plan. Mrs Lees went on to say that the Parish Plan had been written based on the responses from 80% of the residents in the parish which indicated that small scale development would be favoured.

Mr Roger Yeoman also raised objections about the size of site DIT008 going as far as to say that it would be irresponsible to allocate the whole 2.4 hectares site for development. Mr Yeoman went on to suggest that if 16 dwellings were developed on the site then the remaining part of the site could be planted as an orchard thus enhancing the biodiversity in the village.

Mr Brian Longman, the owner of site DIT008, then addressed the council to confirm that the land had only been put forward by his family in order to assist the village in meeting the requirements to find sufficient sites in order to provide the required housing.

001/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Apologies for absence from Councillors Travis (RT) and Kerr (SK) – were received and approved. District Councillor John Greenhalgh (JG) and PCSO Dury had also sent their apologies.

002/18 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS: –  
NHC gave an overview and update from Somerset County Council the general points of which are:

- There will be 3 new centres/schools for children with autism creating 48 places including primary and secondary.
- Business rate relief – the Government has determined that the SCC will be able to get it leaving £4m to find in the budget for the 2018/19 year.
- The collapse of Carillion does not affect SCC nor the Gigaclear contract for the roll out of fibre broadband which is a subsidiary of Carillion as there are contingency arrangements in place.
- Whilst there are legal issues concerning the Northern Distributor road it will continue.
- NC will forward the most relevant and appropriate consultations to the Clerk for distribution to Councillors and/or for consideration at PC meetings.
- The planning training session at MDC was well attended however NHC will take on board Councillors comments about the control of the sessions and discourage attendees from going off topic.
- The core services contracts are being renegotiated. Fusion Leisure have invested more than expected in the leisure centres in Mendip except for Tor Leisure Centre.

- A new Senior Planning Officer will start at MDC in February and an interim Planning Manager is working with the department to assist in improving the systems and processes in the department to aid efficiency and timescales.
- The Homeless Scheme in Mendip has been picked up by the national press as commendable.

CE read out the report from JG which included the following points:

There have been no major announcements recently. However, points to note are as follows:

- The Planning Department at Mendip is now back to full establishment with the appointment of a Principal planning officer and a temporary senior planner.
- To compensate for the ever-reducing government grant, due to end in 2020, the Council has decided to invest for revenue rather than cut back on services. Part of the strategy includes investing in commercial property and to date two contracts have been signed including a distribution centre in Chepstow. Rigorous checks are in place to ensure the financial stability of the site operators.
- Even with the decision to retain the Licensing function in-house rather than as part of the 5 Councils' partnership as originally planned, the 5 councils' contract is working well and generating significant savings.
- The re-cycling contract with Viridor is being terminated early by mutual agreement in 2020 and being put out to re-tender. This will enable the collection of more items kerbside, including more plastics, and the green bin collection cycle will move to every three weeks. It is worth noting that the recent media coverage about China reducing the re-cycled material it will accept does not affect Somerset as the kerbside sorting system here enables some 94% of the materials collected to be re-cycled in the UK.

003/18 REPORT FROM AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY- CE read out the report which included the following incidents:

15<sup>th</sup> December – Report of a van broken down on the approach to Wraxall Hill – Police attend to assist.

22<sup>nd</sup> December – Report of a disturbance along Snagg Lane, Alhampton – Police attend and make an arrest for drink driving.

26<sup>th</sup> December – Report of a lorry stuck on Wraxall Hill – Police attend to assist.

4<sup>th</sup> January – Report of a van broken down on Wraxall Hill – Police attend to assist.

8<sup>th</sup> January – Report of an attempted burglary in Alhampton.

8<sup>th</sup> January – Report of an accident on Wraxall Hill – Emergency services attend.

9<sup>th</sup> January – Report of a suspicious phone call from BT – Police attend – Call was found to be genuine.

15<sup>th</sup> January – Report of an accident on Wraxall Hill – Police attend and make an arrest for Drink driving.

004/18 CODE OF CONDUCT – Declarations of interest and dispensations.

a) Declarations of interest on items included on the agenda – HH declared an interest in 009/18 b) as chairperson of the Parish Plan Steering Group (PPSG); HC declared an interest in item 009/18 b) as a property owner/resident of Folly Drive; RH declared an interest in item 009/18 a) 1) as the applicant rents a property from him.

b) Requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests – none.

005/18 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

- 006/18 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017.
- a) Painting of fingerpost road signs – The clerk will contact the contractor who repaired the signs in Pilton to obtain a third quotation. CE reported that having spoken locally he had received favourable responses regarding assistance with funding the repair and painting of the finger sign posts in the Parish. The Clerk will clarify the cost of the finials on the first quotation received and the matter will be discussed at the next meeting. **Action: The Clerk and CE.**
  - b) Purchase of a new litter bin – The Clerk reported that having spoken to the supplier it will be necessary to purchase a banding kit and the specialist tool bringing the total cost to £139.20 plus delivery. The Clerk was instructed to place the order. **Action: The Clerk.**
  - c) Dumping of food waste along the Ditcheat to Arthurs Bridge Road – The Clerk reported that the Enforcement Officer will be placing 'No fly tipping' signs to deter the dumping of waste and litter. The situation should then be monitored, and any further episodes of food dumping reported as soon as possible. It was noted that bags of litter had been attached to the railings by Arthurs Bridge but that no signs of fresh food had been seen. **Action: All Councillors and the Clerk.**
  - d) Dates for PC meetings 2018 to 2019 have been confirmed and an email circulated.
  - e) Planning training session – Councillors reported that this was an interesting session however hoped that in future events questions from attendees would be better controlled.
  - f) Mural board in the bus shelter in Ditcheat - CE reported that the mural had been fixed back on the wall of the shelter but that it and the bus shelter although structurally sound were in a shabby state and in need of a cosmetic repair. The matter will be discussed at the next meeting. **Action: The Clerk.**
- 007/18 MINUTES - The minutes of the planning meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 008/18 MATTERS ARISING - from the planning meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2017 – None.
- 009/18 PLANNING
- a) The following planning application was considered: Householder application: Proposed lean-to conservatory to rear of dwelling. The Trap House, Ditcheat. Ref 2017/3255/HSE. **Outcome:** Unanimous 'Recommend approval' with the comment that although this is a listed building no Listed Building consent application had been received by the PC.
  - b) Mendip Local Plan Part II – Site Allocation – CE gave a comprehensive overview of the actions of the PC since the start of the Part 1 consultation back in 2014. It was clear that the PC had actively consulted with and sought the views of parishioners over the previous 4 years. After considerable discussion the PC resolved to respond to the formal consultation on the pre-submission draft of the plan that the PC considers that the plan in principle is sound however the PC will include in its response the omission of site DIT010, which had been included in the presentation to MDC full council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017. The PC will request that MDC should reconsider and include the southern part of the site DIT010 as suitable and should advise DPC of the reasons if it still considers the site unsuitable. Site DIT 009 – DPC considers this to be a suitable site. Site DIT 008 – again DPC considers in principle this is a suitable site but the area of the site is greater than that required for the suggested number of dwellings of up to 16. The PC would wish to see the site area reduced. Generally, the PC considers that its comments and those of the public remain relevant. The Clerk will respond accordingly. **Action: The Clerk.**

- c) Mendip Local Plan Part II – Notification of a proposed Local Green Space(s) on land registered in PC ownership - CE reported that the landowner had confirmed that the former cricket ground had been approved for change of use to that of a sports ground in March 1994. It was agreed that the land should be registered as a Local Green Space. The Clerk will advise MDC. **Action: The Clerk.**
- d) It was noted that planning permission has been granted for:
  - 1) The Old Farmhouse, Alhampton. Ref: 2017/2894/HSE.
- e) It was noted that the planning application for the erection of 3 dwellings on land at Back Lane, Ditchheat has been withdrawn. Ref: 2017/2298/FUL.

010/18 FINANCE

- a) Bank balances as per cash book at 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 excluding items on the agenda – the Clerk reported that the balance was £11,661.87. (This includes the reserved defibrillator fund).
  - b) Confirmation of the precept – resolved by unanimous vote that the precept be set at £10,700.00 – an increase of 2.85%.
  - c) Policy on requests for charitable or other financial donations – by unanimous vote the policy was adopted and will be implemented with immediate effect.
  - d) Approval of Parish Council payments and authority to sign cheques.
    - 1) Somerset Association of Local Councils – Affiliation fee - £191.96.
    - 2) Miss P Griffiths – Clerk’s expenses 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 - £90.00.
- RESOLVED - that the above expenditure be approved, and the cheques signed.
- e) The payments to the following were noted:
    - 1) Tony’s Garden Services for grass cutting in November 2017 - £65.00.
    - 2) Somerset Playing Fields Association membership fee - £15.00.

011/18 PLAYGROUND

- a) Purchase of a new litter bin –see matters arising above.
- b) Any matters of report – HC confirmed that the weekly inspections had been done and gave the Clerk the sheets for filing. HC reported that whilst doing the inspections she noticed that the shroud covering the elephant had a small split which if got larger would expose the moving parts and cause a hazard to the children. The Clerk will check when the shroud was last replaced and order a new one. **Action: The Clerk.**
- c) JD reported that a parishioner had complained about dogs being exercised in the playground. However, short of fencing the whole area in, nothing could be done except appeal again to all dog owners not to allow their dogs on the playground.

012/18 HIGHWAYS

- 1) Update on items/matters for repair previously reported –
    - The culvert under the Alhampton end of Snagg Lane appears to be blocked causing water to pool. The problem of water running down and across the road on Ditchheat Hill was still outstanding.
  - 2) New matters for report to the Highways authority:
    - CE reported that Highways had been informed about the potholes along the top road towards the A37 and the water pouring out of the manhole on Ditchheat Hill.
    - The problem with pooling of water at the end of Jacobs Lane continues. HH on behalf of the Friends of Haddon Wood will liaise with Highways about correcting the matter. **Action: HH.**
    - The gulley by the Manor Inn is blocked.
    - Moor Lane is in a very poor state with numerous potholes.
- The Clerk will report the above. **Action: The Clerk.**

- 013/18 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.  
a) Concrete footpath from Old Post Office alongside the village green – CE reported that he had tried to remove the trip hazards but that it may be necessary to smooth over with concrete or similar, the difference in the slab levels. **Action: CE.**  
b) Any matters for report: – None.
- 014/18 FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLOR ATTENDING 'THE RENDEZVOUS' – CE reported that three matters had been raised:  
1) Concern about the potential housing development in Ditchheat particularly on land to rear of Folly Drive.  
2) The state of the top road which has numerous potholes. (The matter has been reported to Highways – see above).  
3) Concerns about Travellers camp on Pye Hill – however this is in East Pennard Parish.  
It was reported that the PCSO for the area may attend future sessions.  
Volunteers required for sessions on 13<sup>th</sup> February; 13<sup>th</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> April
- 015/18 HEALTH & SAFETY - none.
- 016/18 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.  
a) Correspondence.  
1) Letter from East Pennard Parish Council – The Clerk read out the letter from the Chairman of EPPC regarding issues off the A37. CE will seek clarity of what action is required.  
b) Reports/items for information – none.
- 017/18 ITEMS OF REPORT AND INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.  
a) Chairman – nothing to report.  
b) Members –  
• Concern again about the speed in which cars are being driven on the road from Ditchheat to Alhampton. CE will look in to the matter.

Signed: Chairman of Ditchheat Parish Council.

Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2018.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2018 AT 7.30 pm in the Church Room.

If necessary, a Planning meeting will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 the Church Room at 7.30pm.

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