

MEETING of DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 31st JANUARY 2019 AT 7.30PM AT CHURCH ROOM, DITCHEAT.

PRESENT: Chairperson: Councillor Evans (CE); Councillors Clark (HC), Dando (JD), Hutton (RH), and Travis (RT).

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Opportunity for members of the public to address the Parish Council. There were no members of the public present.

005/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies for absence from Councillors Kerr (SK), Hughes (LH), Harrison (HH) and Clifford (SC) were received and approved. The Clerk, District Councillor John Greenhalgh (JG) and PCSO Dury had also sent their apologies.

006/19 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS. Councillor Hewitt-Cooper reported on behalf of Councillor Greenhalgh covering both County (SCC) and District (MDC). JG report included the following:

- As the financial year is coming to an end, the Council has not had any unexpected overspends and expects to complete the year with a balanced budget or possibly a small overspend.
 - The budget for 2019/20 will be challenging but the Government Settlement has been helpful, particularly regarding councils retaining all of the business rates. However, there are various adjustments to be made about the apportioning of the rates so the final financial benefit for Mendip has yet to be agreed.
 - As part of its investment strategy Mendip has recently completed the purchase another property, an office block.
 - Mendip has, for the second time this year, activated its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol to enable rough sleepers to access safe and warm accommodation across Mendip. There are an estimated 30 rough sleepers in the District.
 - The report commissioned to look at the future of local government organisation across Somerset, precipitated by SCC's idea for a unitary authority, and consider the way forward has been delayed. Further updates as and when available but no changes, if any, are foreseen for some years.
 - For the first time for many months there is a full complement of planners in the Planning Department. The appointment of Head of Planning and Growth though remains outstanding.
 - As part of its development programme for members and parish councillors, Mendip ran a session on Conservation last evening.
 - Finally, planning has started for the local elections due to be held on 2nd May.
- NHC gave his comments as follows: It is expected that MDC will finish the year with a balanced budget. Further property investments have been made in Bristol. Severe Weather arrangements for the homeless caused a shelter to be opened; no one took up the offer. Government moves towards unitary authorities have now turned around and so it is unlikely that MDC will join with other District Councils. MDC now have a full complement of planning officers, although a Head of Planning and Growth has still to be appointed. SCC have the opposite problem with a severe shortage of planners; a lack of trained people available to be recruited is the problem. As a result, Devon are helping SCC. A training evening on Listed Buildings by MDC was very successful and further training, especially on Section 106 Agreements will be held after the May elections.

At County SCC are constrained by only £1.5million of the collected business rates staying at County level. The remainder goes to Districts. This is impeding the solution to many issues.

CE asked NHC to look into the high price of road salt being charged by SCC. CE to let NHC know of cheaper suppliers Action: NHC and CE.

- 007/19 REPORT FROM AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY- The Clerk read out the report which included the following incidents:
27th December – Report of a broken-down lorry on Wraxall Hill – Police attend to assist with recovery.
18th January – Report of the traffic lights not working along the A37 Wraxall. Highways informed and dealing.
24th January – Report of an accident in the village of Lamyatt – Emergency services attend.
29th January – Report of an accident on Wraxall Road near Ditcheat – Police attend.
- 008/19 CODE OF CONDUCT – Declarations of interest and dispensations.
a) Declarations of interest on items included on the agenda - none.
b) Requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests - none.
- 009/19 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 20th December 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 010/19 MATTERS ARISING from the meeting held on 20th December 2018.
a) Pooling of water at entrance to Haddon Wood adjacent to Jacobs Lane, Snagg Lane and Tinneys Lane – CE reported that work at Jacobs Lane was in progress. There was no progress on Tinneys Lane. The culvert under the western end of Snagg lane had been inspected by Highways on 21st Dec and declared clear, but the problem persists and needs reporting again. **Action: CE.**
b) Update on the repairs to the Alhampton notice board – The notice board is to be removed for repairs next week.
c) New signs for playground – Nothing to report.
d) Lintern Close – signs requesting dog walkers to clear up any dog waste. Nothing to report.
- 011/19 MINUTES - The minutes of the planning meeting held on 10th January 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 012/19 MATTERS ARISING from the planning meeting held on 10th January 2019. There were no matters arising.
- 013/19 WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT – Wraxall Road. By invitation - Mr Paul Hobbs. Apologies were received from Hobbs so this will now be on the Agenda for the meeting on 21st February. The matter cannot wait until a further meeting as work is expected to start in May. **Action: The Clerk.**
- 014/19 PLANNING:
a) Pre-application proposal which Aster Housing is considering for site adjacent to 1 Maryland Cottages, Smiths Lane. The initial sketch proposal for the site for a detached 3-bedroom house was considered. It was agreed that we would reply to Aster noting their proposal, but that we would await the full Planning Application before considering it fully. **Action: The Clerk.**
b) It was noted that planning permission has been granted for: Manor Lodge, Ditcheat. Ref. 2018/2504/LBC.
- 015/19 THE SOMERSET WOOD – The request for assistance to support the creation of the Somerset Wood was considered. Somerset County Council are in a partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton Parish Councils, to create The Somerset Wood, to commemorate the county's fallen in World War One. It was agreed that, in line with our standard policies, we should not support this initiative as it is outside of the Ditcheat Parish. **Action: The Clerk.**

016/19 FINANCE

- a) No balance for the cash account was presented. **Action: The Clerk.**
- b) The precept for 2019/2020 was unanimously agreed as £11,000 following a proposal by RH seconded by HC.
- c) The following Parish Council payments were approved, and cheques signed:
 - 1) Miss P Griffiths for Clerk's expenses 1st October to 31st December 2018 - £13.55.
- d) The large VAT repayment recently received did not appear to be on the documents presented. The Clerk was asked to clear any confusion at the next meeting. **Action: The Clerk.**

017/19 PLAYGROUND

- a) Playfield – the shroud on the elephant has now been installed and the spring is covered.

018/19 PARKING – The situation regarding parking at Lintern Close and Southview had been raised at the Rendezvous. It was agreed that CE will re-open discussions with MDC to try to seek solutions at both locations, as well as at Champs Way in Alhampton.
Action: CE.

019/19 FLOODLIGHTS ON DITCHEAT HILL AND DOG FOULING – Correspondence from residents of Ditcheat Hill regarding the concern about the floodlights causing a hazard for drivers and dog waste in bags being left along the road was discussed. As this is in Pylle Parish it was agreed that this was outside of our remit. As there is no Parish Council in Pylle the matter will be referred to MDC. **Action: The Clerk.**

020/19 HIGHWAYS

- a) Update on items/matters for repair previously reported. Repairs opposite the Manor House have been carried out.
- b) There were no new matters for report to the Highways authority.

021/19 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.

- a) Update on matters previously raised/reported:
 - 1) Replacement of gate posts on footpaths SM 6/23 in Ditcheat at back of the church. RH suggested that a parishioner willing to replace the post, who CE had contacted, should contact him to see if he had suitable post. **Action: CE.**
 - 2) CE will see if an additional fixing will cure the issues with the footpath gate at Priors Leigh on SM 6/9. **Action: CE.**
- b) Any matters for report - RH said that a stile adjacent to Eastern Trow bridge had collapsed. It was agreed that replacing with a metal kissing gate supplied by SCC and installed by DPC would be the best solution. **Action: The Clerk.**

022/19 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CARAVANS AND SITES – count of known sites in the parish as at 17th January 2019. It was agreed that there are no known sites in Ditcheat Parish.

023/19 FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLOR ATTENDING 'THE RENDEZVOUS'.

- a) The matter of parking at sites in Ditcheat (see 018/19 above)
- b) The Agenda and minutes on the Parish Council website are not uploading correctly
Action: The Clerk.

024/19 HEALTH & SAFETY - Nothing to report.

025/19 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) Correspondence:
 - 1) The press release from SCC sent via email from NHC about the proposal to bridge the budget gap was not available at the meeting. **Action: The Clerk to resend.**

c) Reports/items for information. None.

026/19 ITEMS OF REPORT AND INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

a) It was noted that arrangements for the village litter pick are in place for 16th March at 9:00am. This needs to be promoted with posters and an article in the FTN.

Action: The Clerk.

Signed: Chairman to Ditchat Parish Council.

Dated: 14th MARCH 2019.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 14TH MARCH 2019 AT 7.30 pm in the Church Room.

If necessary, a planning meeting will be held on 21st February 2019 in the Church Room at 7.30 pm.

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

DRAFT