

MEETING of DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 18th JULY 2019 AT 7.30PM AT CHURCH ROOM, DITCHEAT.

PRESENT: Chairperson – Councillor Evans (CE) and Councillors – Clark (HC), Harrison (HH), Dando (JD), Travis (RT) and Hughes (LH).

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

BY INVITATION: District Councillor John Greenhalgh.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – There were no members of the public present.

101/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies for absence – Councillor Hutton (RH). County Councillor Hewitt-Cooper (NHC) and PCSO Dury had sent their apologies.

102/19 CO-OPTION TO FILL THE VACANCY ON THE PARISH COUNCIL – No nominations were received. The Clerk reported that interest had been shown by two parishioners and the relevant information including an application form sent to them, but no response had been received. CE will follow up. It was agreed that all councillors should make efforts to promote and encourage parishioners to come forward for nomination to be co-opted. RT reported that he had spoken to parishioners at the school gate, but no one had expressed an interest. Agreed that RT will contact members of the Friends of Ditchheat School (FODS).
Action: CE and all Councillors.

103/19 A resolution (under the public bodies admission to meetings Act 1960) to exclude the public and press from Item 122/19 on the agenda on the grounds of confidentiality was passed.

104/19 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS – No report from NHC. JG gave a report as follows:

- Following the elections back in May where the Conservatives lost 22 seats a lot of experience and expertise was lost. As a result of these losses and the number of inexperienced councillors two Conservative members have been asked to help manage committees, normally the prerogative of the majority party. Nigel H-C is now the vice chair of Planning and Philip Ham is chair of Scrutiny.
- The Cabinet has been changed from 4 portfolio holders with assistants to 8 portfolio holders with assistants.
- The initial training programme especially for new councillors had to be re-scheduled as several of them could not make the dates proposed. This was particularly difficult for new members on the Planning and Licensing boards as they have to have been trained before the Boards can meet. The programme is now well under way and will be completed by end September.
- I now sit on the Audit Committee and the Scrutiny Board, the two senior committees in the Council.
- A Member Development Group has been established to review the training needs and requirements of all councillors.
- Planning, including Enforcement, has a full establishment of staff and a new Group Manager Planning and Growth, Julie Reader-Sullivan, is now in post as well.
- There have been many complaints about the NASS festival last weekend and the Council is well aware of them. Specific remedial actions were put in place to cope with the festival goers leaving the site on Monday and this eased matters considerably. A full

debrief will take place as soon as possible with the organisers and the multiple agencies responsible for the festival. One key area to be investigated will be the decision by the organisers to change from split ticketing whereby previously attendees arrived over two days to having all 20,000 of them arrive on one day.

- 105/19 REPORT FROM AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY – None. PCSO Dury is away.
- 106/19 CODE OF CONDUCT – Declarations of interest and dispensations.
a) There were no declarations of interest on items included on the agenda.
b) There were no requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests.
- 107/19 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 108/19 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 16th May 2019.
a) New signs for playground – The Clerk reported that an alternative quote had been sought for signs similar to the existing for £35.00 plus VAT. It was agreed to re-word the sign to include that all dogs must be kept under close control or on a lead. **Action: The Clerk.**
b) Lintern Close – The Clerk confirmed that a notice will be put in the FTN. **Action: The Clerk.**
c) Parking at Southview – CE reported that he had informed MDC that the PC did not wish to purchase the land but wanted the District Council to grant formal permission for vehicles to be parked off road using some of the grassed area.
d) Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018 - The Clerk reported that having investigated believed that the website was compliant but that further advice and guidance had been received so will make further checks and report back. **Action: The Clerk.**
e) Repair of wooden fence alongside the river by the Alham Bridge - RH had investigated this matter and the Clerk reported on his behalf that neither the Highways Department nor the Estates Department of SCC were prepared to pay for the repair of the fences. Agreed that the Clerk should contact both the Highways Department and the Estates Department at SCC to confirm that the PC believed that the damaged fence on the left before the bridge going out of Alhampton must be repaired as this was a serious hazard for vehicles pulling over to the left to allow vehicles coming over the bridge from the other direction. Without the fence there was a danger that drivers of vehicles would not realise that there was a deep ditch on the side of the road. Ideally the fences on the other side of the road should also be repaired. **Action: The Clerk.**
f) Red Ensign for Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September – CE Reported that the Chairman of the Royal British Legion had provided the CE with a flag. The Clerk will contact the Tower Captain -Roger Yeoman to confirm that he will arrange for the flag to be flown on Merchant Navy Day. **Action: The Clerk.**
- 109/19 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 110/19 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 13th June 2019.
a) Proposed development of Folly Orchard – The Clerk confirmed that the meeting organised by Orme was held on 9th July 2019 and had been publicised in the FTN.
- 111/19 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

112/19 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 4th July 2019 – None.

113/19 PLANNING

1) It was noted that planning permission has been granted for the following:

- a) Longhill Farm. Ref: 2019/0581/FUL.
- b) Land at Back Lane – approval of conditions. Ref: 2019/1091/APP.

It was also reported that the full application reference 2018/1937/FUL for development at Folly Orchard had been withdrawn. (This is the original application).

114/19 CLERK'S SALARY – It was confirmed that the Clerk's salary should rise in line with the National Joint Council for Local Government Service agreed new pay scales – an increase of £83.28 per year.

115/19 FINANCE

a) Internal Audit for year ended 31st March 2019 – the report from internal auditor highlighted the following points:

- 1) One item of expenditure had not been formally approved by the PC – this had occurred when the Clerk had been absent and will be noted and checks put in place to reduce the likelihood of this occurring again. **Action: The Clerk.**
 - 2) An invoice received and accepted by the PC for VAT reclaim purposes did not technically meet the full criteria for a VAT invoice as the rate of VAT was absent from the invoice. The error has been noted and future invoices will be checked prior to being accepted for payment. **Action: The Clerk.**
 - 3) The PC should consider adding cyber risk to the risk register. Noted – matter to be discussed at next full meeting. **Action: The Clerk.**
- b) The accounts for 2018/2019 were approved and signed.
- c) Annual Return - Section 2 Statement of Accounts; approved and signed.
- d) The reconciliation of the bank accounts for the first quarter of the year 2019/2020 was approved and signed.
- e) Cash book balance as at 10th July of £19,631.85 was noted. The defibrillator fund remains at £982.00 with £140.50 in the signpost fund of which £60.00 has been committed for the repair of the village name sign for Ditchat.
- f) Approval of Parish Council payments and authority to sign cheques.
- 1) Mendip District Council (MDC) for Election Services - £101.00.
 - 2) CPRE membership fee - £36.00.
 - 3) Parochial Church council for room hire from 20th December 2018 to 4th July 2019 inclusive - £90.00.
 - 4) Clerk's salary 1st April to 30th June 2019 – £700.16 if pay award agreed otherwise £683.53.
 - 5) HMRC for PAYE/NICs 1st April to 30th June 2019 - £175.00 if pay award agreed otherwise £170.83.
 - 6) Clerk's expenses 1st April to 30th June 2019 - £23.50.

RESOLVED: that the above expenditure be approved, and the cheques signed.

g) The payments for the following were noted:

- 1) Tony's Garden Services for grounds maintenance for June 2019 - £140.00
- 2) Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) - £35.00 by direct debit.

116/19 PLAYGROUND

a) Annual inspection and risk assessment – it was confirmed that Wicksteed Leisure should be instructed to carry out the inspection and risk assessment. **Action: The Clerk.**

b) Any matters of report:

- CE reported that he had been informed that people were exercising dogs off the lead in the playground. Agreed that the number of signs informing that dogs should be

keep under close control preferable on a lead should be increased to make it clear at each entrance to the playground. The Clerk and LH will clarify the legal status of the wording 'must be' as opposed to 'should be' on the new signs. **Action: The Clerk and LH.**

- CE reported that all of the matters raised on the annual inspection and risk assessment that the PC agreed to have done had been addressed. Further matters may be identified when the next inspection is completed.

117/19 HIGHWAYS

- a) Update on items/matters for repair previously reported – None.
- b) New matters for report – the fingerpost sign on the A371 by Arthurs Bridge pointing to Ditcheat is obscured by the overgrown hedge. CE will investigate to see if the matter can be dealt with voluntarily. **Action: CE.**

118/19 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.

- a) Update on matters previously reported – none.
- b) Any matters for report –
 - 1) CE reported that one of the trees planted on the wide verge by Highbridge has died. The Clerk will arrange for a replacement to be planted in the Autumn. **Action: The Clerk.**
 - 2) The Clerk will send a letter of thanks to Mrs Cheasley for clearing the Grove Path in Ditcheat. **Action: The Clerk.**

119/19 FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLOR ATTENDING 'THE RENDEZVOUS'.

June – HC reported that a parishioner had expressed concern about the very slow broadband speed at Wraxall.

July – CE had been asked about the missing name sign in Ditcheat (which is being repaired).

JD volunteered to attend the August Rendezvous.

120/19 HEALTH & SAFETY - None.

121/19 SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL CHAIR'S AWARD – Congratulations to CE, Chairman of Ditcheat Parish Council who received an award for Service to the Community of Ditcheat.

122/19 PROTOCOL FOR MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE.

The draft protocol prepared by LH was discussed. Agreed that LH will amend the draft after consulting with the Church Wardens and the Tower Captain. The Clerk was authorised to purchase a Book of Condolences up to a sum of £40.00. The protocol will be finalised and adopted at the August meeting. **Action: The Clerk and LH.**

123/19 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) Correspondence – The Friends of Haddon Wood had sent an invitation for the PC to participate in a 'Tree-sure Hunt' in the wood on 22nd September. This involved the PC and other invited organisations displaying a 'tree' to publicise the work of the PC.
- b) Reports/items for information.
 - 1) Closure and subsequent reopening of post box in Ditcheat - the Clerk reported that an email had been sent by a parishioner expressing concern about the closure of the post-box in Ditcheat due to the road closure caused by the work to replace the water main. The Clerk had responded confirming that the post box had been re-opened but tht it may be necessary close it again should it be necessary to close the road at Ditcheat Hill.

124/19 ITEMS OF REPORT AND INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

- a) Chairman – nothing to report.
- b) Members – HH raised the matter of how the recent NASS event at the Bath & West showground had impacted negatively on the parish. The main impact was the increase in traffic which had caused major holdups on the A371; the large amount of litter that had been left by attendees of the event walking from Castle Cary station to the event ground and concern for the pedestrians and drivers of vehicles who were at risk of being involved in an accident due to the large numbers of pedestrians on the A371. Resolved that the organisers should be notified of the PC concern and of the cost of clearing up the large amount of litter and that a contribution to the cost of removing the litter should be given to the PC. Agreed the Clerk and CE will draft an email. **Action: The Clerk and CE.**

Signed: Chairman to Ditchheat Parish Council.

Dated: 8th August 2019.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 8th AUGUST 2019 AT 7.30 pm in the Church Room.

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