

DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 5th MARCH 2020, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM, AT CHURCH ROOM, DITCHEAT.

PRESENT: Chairperson – Councillor Evans (CE) and Councillors – Harrison (HH), Dando (JD), Hughes (LH), Derham (JDr), and James (RJ).

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

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

022/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Apologies for absence from Councillors Hutton (RH), Travis (RT) and Clark (HC) were received and approved. County Councillor Hewitt-Cooper (NHC), District Councillor Greenhalgh (JG) and PCSO Dury had sent apologies for absence.

023/20 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS.

The report from NHC was noted which included information on the following points:

- Somerset County Council's budget.
- The Climate Change Fund for Towns and Parishes.
- Covid-19 (Coronavirus).
- One Somerset – plans for a unitary authority.
- Brain in Hand – a personalised app to assist and support those with a mental health issue or learning disability.
- Children's Mental Health.
- Utility Companies prosecutions.
- Connecting Devon and Somerset – roll out of superfast broadband.

The report from JG included information on the following matters:

- The Scrutiny Board and Cabinet the Council has agreed a balanced budget for 2020/21 of £17m subject to an extraordinary full council meeting. However, there is a shortfall over the following four years of £6m.
- New corporate aims have been agreed and climate change implications will cut across all action plans. The new aims are to Make Mendip a fairer place; Deliver on our climate and ecological commitments and to protect and enhance our towns and rural communities.
- The future of local government in Somerset. SCC's preferred option is for a unitary council as initially proposed. The Districts within Somerset recognise change is needed but prefer future collaboration and integration with other districts as a quicker and less costly option.
- Electric Vehicles (EVs) are becoming more visible on the roads but charging points are few and far between in Somerset. There is an SCC strategy group looking at this, but MDC is looking for faster action.
- Publication of Mendip's Statement of Accounts was delayed last year as a result of lack of both resource and training. This has been addressed and no repeat is expected this year.
- Following a revised National Planning Policy and Framework this has resulted in an increased national target of building 300,000 homes a year with the effect of increasing Mendip's target from 420 to 604 a year. This meant that the Council could not meet its requirement of having a 5-year supply of land and, as a result of that and comments from the Planning Inspector on Mendip's local plan, means the Plan must be re-written in the next three years.
- Glastonbury Festival.

Full details of both reports can be found on the PC website or on request from the Clerk.

024/20 REPORT FROM AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY- The report included the following: 28th January – Report of an accident along Wraxall Rd – Emergency services attend.

31st January – Report of damage to a vehicle in Alhampton.

6th February – Report of a lorry broken down on Wraxall Hill – Police attend.

10th February – Report of an accident just after Wraxall Hill – Emergency services attend.

29th February – Report of a disturbance at the The Manor Inn, Ditcheat – On-going police enquiries.

025/20 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.

026/20 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.

027/20 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 23rd January 2020.

VE Day celebrations – CE reported that he would be discussing the matter with the Royal British Legion. LH confirmed that a church service will be held in Pylle and subject to repair of the flagpole a flag will be flown. **Action: CE.**

a) Update on the incomplete work by Bristol Water in Smiths Lane – The Clerk reported that Bristol Water had confirmed that the work was ongoing to find and repair the mains leak.

b) Litter pick - confirmed that all arrangements were in place for the litter pick on Saturday 21st March.

028/20 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held 13th February on 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.

029/20 MATTERS ARISING from the meeting held on 13th February 2020 - None.

030/20 PLANNING

a) The following planning application was considered:

1) Erection of single storey link extension to dwelling between house and annexe, Long Batch, Ditcheat. Ref: 2020/0403/HSE. **Outcome:** Recommend approval.

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

1) Erection of a single storey rear extension, Priors Leigh, Ditcheat. Ref: 2019/2887/HSE.

2) Certificate of Proposed Use/Development - Formation of agricultural access and laying of hardstanding for occasional parking of agricultural vehicles. Ref: 2020/0136/CLP. Land at Bolters Lane, Sutton.

c) It was noted that the following planning application has been withdrawn: The Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and replace with a dwelling house and extend residential curtilage, Ditcheat Hill Farm bungalow. Ref: 2019/2244/FUL.

031/20 FINANCE

a) Cash book balance as at 5th March – The Clerk reported that following receipt of the reclaimed VAT of £1,771.13 the cash book balance was £16,669.37 plus £681.11 in the Alhampton defibrillator project account; £140.50 in the signpost project account and £500.00 in the project account for the replacement of the safety matting in the playground.

b) Approval of Parish Council payments and authority to sign cheques.

1) Habitat Aid Limited for replacement tree - £65.00.

2) Clerk's salary for 1st January to 31st March 2020 – £700.16.

3) HMRC for PAYE/NICs for 1st January to 31st March 2020 - £175.00.

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

c) It was noted that payment had been made to the following:

1) Claire Downes for website support - invoice no 496-1076-5 - £105.00.

2) Claire Downes for website support – invoice no 513-1076-6 - £105.00.

032/20 PLAYGROUND

- a) Update on quotations for safety matting replacement and grant application – The Clerk reported that the application was complete except for the letters/petition/s of support which were required before the application could be submitted. HH will speak to a member of the Friends of Ditcheat School to get an update on progress regarding the letters of support from parents whose children attend the school. RJ agreed to speak to a parishioner who may be willing to provide support. **Action: HH and RJ.**
- b) Any matters of report –none.

033/20 HIGHWAYS

- a) Update on matters previously reported:
- 1) Pooling of water along the Wraxall Road.
 - 2) Blocked gully by dwelling known as Long Batch.
 - 3) Sunken gully, No Through Road, Alhampton.
 - 4) The blocked drains on Ditcheat Hill.
 - 5) The worn away white lines on the exit from Smith Lane, the 'Slow Down' signs at Jonathan's Corner and the 'road narrows' signage on the approach to the Alham bridge.
 - 6) Road condition - Ditcheat Hill, halfway up where the road forks right, road markings poor and road surface appalling.
 - 7) Problem with water constantly running down Ditcheat Hill.

The response from the Highways Department regarding the blocked drains and gullies is detailed below:

"An inspection of the gullies in Ditcheat has been arranged and any safety defects identified in accordance with the Highway Safety Inspection Manual will be actioned as necessary. As you will no doubt appreciate, we are currently inundated with drainage related issues which are being dealt with on a priority basis e.g. property flooding, main roads etc.

We operate a planned maintenance programme for cleaning highway surface water drains on all the roads that we maintain. How often we do this depends on where they are (the classification of the road) and the relative risk of flooding. The gully cleaning schedule is broken down into a number of sub rounds spread over a one-year period to ensure all rounds are carried out in accordance with the timescale allotted.

- Gullies in flood susceptible areas will be cleaned every year.
- Gullies in rural non-flood susceptible areas (outside a 30mph or 40mph speed limit) will be cleaned every two years.
- Gullies in urban non-flood susceptible areas (inside a 30 or 40mph speed limit) will be cleaned every four years.

The planned programme is subject to an annual review and adjusted to respond to the changing nature of risk and flooding on the county's road network.

Where defects or flooding are identified, outside the planned gully cleansing routine, these will be dealt with as necessary. Unfortunately, it is not possible to redirect the contractors Gully Sucker off of the planned rounds as this would have a knock-on effect to gullies in other parts of the network.

Any blocked drains can now be reported online or direct to the call centre which ensures it is immediately entered onto the system for inspection.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-blocked-drain-on-the-road/>

We hope this explains the current situation".

The Clerk reported that the worn white line signs throughout the parish have been put on the programme for repainting in the new financial year.

- b) New matters for report to the Highways authority included:
- 1) The road surface in West Lane is in a very poor state.
 - 2) There is a pothole on Folly Corner and on the southern side of the road leading away from Folly Corner the road has been eroded.

3) The left side of the Ditchheat to Alhampton road by Priors Leigh is again in a very poor state.

Action: The Clerk to report these matters to the Highways Department.

034/20 CLIMATE EMERGENCY – the PC considered the motion as proposed by Councillor James; that DPC to join Local Authorities across the UK by declaring a Climate Change Emergency. It was agreed that the motion needed to be revised and would be considered at the next full meeting of the PC. **Action: The Clerk.**

035/20 NASS EVENT – the Clerk gave an update on the progress that the organisers Vision9 had made regarding the new arrangements for the event to be held in July stating that all the concerns raised following the event last year regarding attendees walking along the A371 to the Bath & West Showground, the problems regarding discarded litter and noise appeared to have addressed and confirmed that a further consultation meeting will be held in June.

036/20 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.

- a) Update on stile in field opposite The Court, Alhampton – Matter is ongoing. **Action: HH and CE.**
- b) Update on the possibility of creating a permissible footpath from the Sutton road by CCRFC to join with footpath SM 6/17 going behind Moff Motors – The Clerk reported on behalf of RH that discussions were taking place with landowners and tenants.
- c) Any matters for report – The stile at the start of SM6/32 at the southern end needs replacing. **Action: The Clerk.** A map of the footpaths in the parish will be put on the noticeboards and on the website. **Action: The Clerk.**

037/20 FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLOR ATTENDING 'THE RENDEZVOUS'.

Points raised from The Rendezvous in February included the following:

- The Local Plan – Part II and the by the comments from Planning Inspector about the change of wording from 'up to 16 dwellings' to 'a minimum of 16' dwellings.

038/20 HEALTH & SAFETY – No matters raised.

039/20 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) Correspondence – the receipt of MDC's Corporate Plan for 2020 to 2023 was noted.
- b) Reports/items for information – The Clerk reminded Councillors about the invitation to the Parish Council workshop hosted by MDC.

040/20 ITEMS OF REPORT AND/OR FOR INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

- a) Chairman – the motion regarding Climate Change will be an agenda item for the next full meeting. **Action: The Clerk.**
- b) Members – None.

Signed: Chairperson, Ditchheat Parish Council.

Dated: 16th April 2020.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 16th APRIL 2020 AT 7.30 pm in the Church Room.

If necessary, a Planning meeting will be held on 26th MARCH 2020 in the Church Room at 7.30 pm.

PLEASE CHECK THE NOTICEBOARDS FOR AGENDAS AND DATES.

MEMBERS OF THE PARISH AND PRESS WELCOME.