

## **DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL HELD **REMOTELY**, as per the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) England Regulations 2020, ON THURSDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2020, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM. The meeting was held utilizing video conferencing software.

**PRESENT:** Chairperson – Councillor Evans (CE) and Councillors – Hutton (RH), Clark (HC), Harrison (HH), Travis (RT), Dando (JD), Hughes (LH), Derham (JDr), and James (RJ).

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

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – One member observed the meeting via remote access but did not address the Council.

**041/20** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – County Councillor Hewitt-Cooper (NHC), District Councillor Greenhalgh (JG) and PCSO Dury had sent apologies for absence.

**042/20** BUSINESS CONTINUITY MOTION to COUNCIL  
In light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and government advice, this council resolves that the proposed business continuity motion is adopted. See attached motion. The motion was agreed unanimously.

**043/20** PROTOCOL FOR HOLDING REMOTE MEETINGS – In light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and government advice, this council resolved that the attached protocols for holding remote meetings should be adopted. Agreed unanimously. Protocols attached.

**044/20** COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS – no reports for the meeting.

**045/20** REPORT FROM AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY- The Clerk read out the report which included 7 incidents.  
21<sup>st</sup> March – Report of a vehicle hitting fencing along the road at Lower Sutton – Police attended.  
22<sup>nd</sup> March – Report of damage to a window of a property in the village.  
1<sup>st</sup> April – Reporting of the gathering of a group of people in Alhampton – Police attended and offered words of advice.  
9<sup>th</sup> April - Reporting of the gathering of people along Ditchheat Hill – Police attended but no trace found.  
13<sup>th</sup> April – Report of a male seen standing near the public house, Wraxall Road appearing to be filming the traffic. Vehicles slowing unnecessarily and causing a danger – Police attend but male had left prior to their arrival.  
13<sup>th</sup> April – Report of horse riders not keeping the social distance of 2 metres from each other – Police attended and offered words of advice.  
19<sup>th</sup> April – Report of two males seen racing along Wraxall Hill then turning into a driveway before speeding off – No details taken – No further calls.

**046/20** CODE OF CONDUCT – Declarations of interest and dispensations - None.

**047/20** MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were approved and it was resolved unanimously that the minutes will be signed at a later date when physical meetings are re-convened.

- 048/20 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020.
- a) VE Day celebrations – CE reported that it is proposed that the nation sings 'We'll meet again' at 9.00 pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. The flagpole on the church tower is broken so unless it is repaired in time it will not be possible to fly a flag.
  - b) It was noted that the work by Bristol Water in Smiths Lane has been completed but that the verge had been left in a poor state. The Clerk will follow up with Bristol Water. **Action: The Clerk.**
  - c) It was noted that the litter pick was cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation.
  - d) It was noted that the replacement for one of the trees planted for the Jubilee has been planted. CE reported that the tree appeared to have taken well.
  - e) It was noted that the grant application for funding for the safety matting has not been submitted; RT agreed to follow up and to forward the petition to the Clerk. Other letters of support still required. **Action: RT.**
- 049/20 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – it was noted that this meeting has been cancelled. The next Annual Parish meeting will be held in 2021.
- 050/20 PLANNING
- a) The following planning application was considered:
    - 1) Change of use of an agricultural storage building to be used for accommodation and feeding of dairy cows. Agricultural Unit, Easthill Lane, Ditcheat. Ref: 2020/0648/FUL. **Outcome:** Recommend approval with the comments that the PC understands that the work has been completed.
  - b) It was noted that planning permission has been granted for the following:
    - 1) Demolish gate piers and re-instate closer to the highway, extend boundary wall to meet. The Manor House, Ditcheat. Ref 2020/0180/HSE.
    - 2) Demolish gate piers and re-instate closer to the highway, extend boundary wall to meet. The Manor House, Ditcheat. Ref 2020/0228/LBC.
    - 3) Erection of single storey link extension to dwelling between house and annexe, Long Batch, Ditcheat. Ref: 2020/0403/HSE.
- 051/20 FINANCE
- a) Cash book balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March – The Clerk reported the balance was £15,589.21 with £681.00 in the Alhampton Defibrillator account; £140.50 in the signpost project account and £500.00 in the Playground Safety Matting account. Following a query from RH the Clerk confirmed that there was still an invoice of £60.00 for the repair of the Ditcheat village name sign to be paid and that the remainder of the money in the signpost fund will be retained for other sign repairs.
  - b) Accounts for payment: Members agreed the schedule of payments.
    - 1) Clerk's expenses for 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 – £66.84.
  - c) The payment to the following was noted:
    - 1) Tony's Garden Services for grounds maintenance 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March - £140.00.
    - 2) Alistair Gillard for grass cutting of playground 1<sup>st</sup> April - £70.00.
 It was noted that as a temporary measure Alistair Gillard was cutting the grass in the playground whilst the contractor Tony Hurrell was self-isolating.
- 052/20 PLAYGROUND
- a) It was noted that the playground has been closed following guidance from Government due to the COVID-19 situation. CE thank RH and the Clerk for closing the playground.
  - b) Any urgent matters of report.

053/20 HIGHWAYS

- a) New urgent matters for report to the Highways authority - the Clerk will report the deep potholes in West Lane, Alhampton.

054/20 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.

- a) Any urgent matters for report – none.

055/20 HEALTH & SAFETY – nothing to report.

056/20 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) Correspondence – nothing in addition to that circulated electronically.
- b) Reports/items for information - the Clerk confirmed that the Annual meeting of the Parish Council will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> May as planned but remotely unless the advice from government regarding the COVID-19 pandemic is amended.

057/20 ITEMS OF REPORT AND/OR FOR INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

- a) Chairman – nothing to report.
- b) Members - JD reported that he had been advised by a parishioner that oil or diesel had been poured down the drain in Lintern Close. CE will investigate and the Clerk will if necessary, report the matter to Wessex Water. **Action: CE and the Clerk.**

Signed: Chairman to Ditchat Parish Council.

Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020, or sooner if urgent business necessitates, at 7.30 pm to be held remotely due to COVID-19 unless otherwise advised.

If necessary, a Planning meeting will be held on remotely as required at 7.30 pm. The statutory notice of three clear working days will be published on the website and parish noticeboards.

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

# DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL

## Protocol for meetings held remotely.

### Introduction

On 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 the government introduced The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 to allow local councils to meet remotely.

This protocol details how Ditchheat Parish Council will conduct business during the current pandemic and, subject to review, may be used in similar circumstances in the future.

- a. Ditchheat Parish Council is operating on the Zoom remote meetings platform.
- b. Ditchheat Parish Council has paid for a subscription and informed all councillors of how to access the platform. Councillors have been asked to contact the Vice – Chairman, Councillor Hutton or the Clerk if they have any technical issues in relation to access.
- c. When Regulations permit, the “place” where a meeting is held, or to be held, may include reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.
- d. For the purposes of any such meetings, a Councillor (a “member in remote attendance”) attends the meeting at any time if all the conditions in (e) are satisfied.
- e. Those conditions are that the member in remote attendance is able at that time:
  - 1) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance,
  - 2) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting, and
  - 3) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.
- f. Any reference to a member, or a member of the public, attending a meeting includes that person attending by remote access.
- g. An amended version of the usual meeting Notice will accompany the meeting Agenda and will be displayed on the Parish Council website and noticeboards. The meeting Notice will publicise any necessary remote meeting access details for use by the press and public.
- h. All non-confidential meeting papers will be accessible via the Parish Council website.
- i. Guidance on how to use any software necessary for remote attendance at any such meetings will be available on the Parish Council website.
- j. The Vice-Chairman will initially host the meetings; should the current situation be prolonged consideration will be given to the Clerk becoming the host of future meetings. An email invitation will be sent to councillors from the Vice-Chairman. They need to click on the link and enter the meeting ID number and the password.

- k. Before entering the meeting please turn off mobile phones and ensure that you are in a private place where there is little background interference/noise/people. It is difficult to hear on occasions and some might wish to use a headset with a microphone.
- l. The meetings will be chaired by the Chairman in the usual way and by the Vice-Chairman in his absence. Should the Vice-Chairman be unavailable then as per Standing Orders a vote will be taken following nominations for a councillor present to chair the meeting.
- m. Apologies need to be given in the normal manner.
- n. The public are invited to observe the meeting. If they have a question to raise, they have been asked to submit it in advance of the meeting.
- o. The normal required standards of behaviour and discussion must be applied in the same manner of a face to face meeting. Please also be patient with those who are less experienced in participating in this way.
- p. The meetings, in the interests of transparency, will be recorded as not all members of the public who would have wished to attend may be able to do so. The recordings will be held digitally by the Clerk for a period of a minimum of three months and a maximum of one year. Please therefore respect confidentiality and do not breach the code of conduct, and do not make enquiries about private matters, health, home etc.
- q. All attendees at the meeting, other than the Chairman and the host of the meeting, are asked to keep their microphone turned off unless they are speaking, when it should be turned on.
- r. A person requesting to speak may raise a hand either physically via video link, or via any specific functionality provided by the conference software in use. The Chairman will outline the procedure at the beginning of any such meetings.
- s. For the purposes of voting, "a show of hands" may include the methods defined by (r). If a show of hands is not be clear enough, at the request of any Councillor or the Clerk, the Chairman will call the name of each attending councillor in turn and request them to state whether they support a proposal, oppose a proposal or abstain.
- t. If a member in remote attendance is required to leave the meeting, owing to a disclosable pecuniary interest, or another interest as set out in the council's code of conduct, in a matter being considered at a meeting, that member must log out from the remote meeting for a period agreed with the Chairman, to allow discussion to continue without them. Once the agreed time has elapsed, or if notified by the Chairman via email or other remote messaging, the member should reconnect to the same meeting.
- u. If a councillor is deemed to have an interest in a matter and would normally leave a physical meeting, then they will be invited to leave and will receive a text message (or asked to wait in the waiting room) when they can be invited back into the meeting.
- v. There might be technical issues during the meeting and the Parish Clerk might have to ask for clarification, for dialogue to be repeated in order to make sure that everyone can be heard.

- w. If the Council resolves to exclude the public from part or all of a meeting, the Chairman will make a statement to explain reasons for the public's exclusion. On conclusion of the public business, the Chairman will thank the public for their attendance, notify Councillors that a new meeting invitation will be immediately issued by email to Councillors only, and close the remote meeting.
- x. Minutes will be taken from the meetings and displayed on the website in the normal manner. Minutes will be circulated after the meeting and signed when the council finally meets face to face.
- y. The protocol will be reviewed and updated annually and/or as required.

# **DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Business Continuity Motion to Council**

In light of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and government advice, that whilst the Council will take all reasonable steps to meet virtually in line with the legislation, this council resolves that:

- (a) Should the council be unable to meet for whatever reason, e.g. insufficient councillors for the meeting to be quorate, the Clerk be given delegated authority to progress all ongoing matters and projects and authorise all regular payments and incur expenditure in line with the council's agreed budget.
- (b) Any decisions taken under resolution (a) above will be taken, whenever possible, in consultation with the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman of council. A record of all decisions and expenditure incurred under delegated authority will be kept and reported to members when the council next meets.
- (c) The authority to decide the council's response to planning applications be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman of council. Whenever possible, members of the council will be informed of applications out for consultation and will be invited to submit comments to the Clerk.
- (d) The provisions outlined in resolutions (a-c) above will override any requirements to the contrary in the council's standing orders, financial regulations or terms of reference.
- (e) Should the Clerk be unable to perform her duties, a nominated Councillor will assume the role of Proper Officer and RFO in an unpaid capacity.
- (f) The Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, may incur expenditure from the project earmarked reserve where such expenditure will help the community's efforts to support those in need of assistance or prevent social isolation.
- (g) The business continuity of the council will be reviewed once physical meetings can be held.

## **DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL**

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO OBSERVE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS REMOTELY.**

The Parish Council welcomes observers of the virtually held council meetings. In order to do this please follow the instructions detailed below:

- Download the ZOOM software on to your PC/tablet or smart phone.
- Send an email to the Clerk [clerk@ditcheatparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@ditcheatparishcouncil.org.uk) using the email with which you have registered with ZOOM.
- You must include your full name, full address of where you live and a telephone number.
- You will then receive an invitation to join the meeting.
- Click on the invitation and you will then be placed in a virtual 'waiting room' and when the meeting starts you will be admitted to the meeting.
- Please ensure that you keep the mute button on at all times as you will not be able to speak at the meeting unless you have made prior arrangements with the Clerk.
- If the Council needs to discuss matters of a confidential nature you will be asked to leave the meeting and the connection terminated.

Pam Griffiths  
Clerk to Ditchheat Parish Council  
2020-04-19