

MEETING of DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

MEETING (VIRTUAL) OF DITCHEAT PARISH COUNCIL HELD **REMOTELY**, as per the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) England Regulations 2020, ON THURSDAY 28th MAY 2020, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM.

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

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

058/20 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON of the Parish Council for the year 2020 – 2021. Following a proposal by JD, seconded by RH, it was resolved by unanimous vote to elect Charles Evans as Chairman. It was agreed that the Clerk will meet with CE to sign the Declaration of Acceptance which will be countersigned by the Clerk as the Proper Officer as soon as practical.

059/20 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON for the year 2020 - 2021. Following a proposal by CE seconded by HC, it was resolved by unanimous vote to elect Roger Hutton as Vice-Chairman.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Opportunity for members of the public to address the Parish Council. Two members of the public observed the meeting. Mr M Williams, planning consultant for both planning applications on the agenda, stated that he did not wish to address the PC but was available should the Council have any queries relating to the planning applications on the agenda. Mr Kerr addressed the Council to explain the rationale for his application to build a dwelling within the curtilage of the Mill House in Alhampton.

060/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - County Councillor Hewitt-Cooper, District Councillor Greenhalgh (JG) and PCSO Dury had sent their apologies.

061/20 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS – None as SCC and MDC are sending out frequent information particularly relating to the COVID -19 pandemic.

062/20 REPORT FROM AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY- PCSO DURY/BEAT OFFICER – None available.

063/20 CODE OF CONDUCT – Declarations of interest and dispensations.
a) Declarations of interest on items included on the agenda – RH declared a personal and pecuniary interest in Item 066/20 a) 2) as a friend and as a hydropower consultant to the applicant of the planning application.
b) Requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests - none.

064/20 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2020 were approved and it was resolved that the minutes will be signed at a later date when physical meetings are re-convened.

065/20 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 23rd April 2020.

- a) Gulley in Lintern Close down which petrol or diesel had been poured – the matter has been reported.
- b) Grant application for the replacement for the safety matting in the playground – the Clerk that letters of support had been received and the application will be completed in the next two weeks. **Action: The Clerk.**

066/20 PLANNING

- a) The following planning applications were considered:
 - 1) Full application – Change of use of land to residential, erection of a detached garage with associated hardstanding and the construction of a landscaped bund, Owley Farm, Ditchat. Ref: 2020/0740/FUL. **Outcome:** Recommend refusal for the following reasons:
 - The garage does not appear to be of a domestic nature in terms of its size and location in relation to the dwelling.
 - The Parish Council objects in principle to bunds being placed around domestic properties as it sets a precedent – previous bunds in this location were proposed and approved in order to screen industrial areas from residential areas.
 - There are no details regarding the size either height or width of the bund.
 - There are no details regarding the landscaping of the bund – previously proposed landscaping for the bunds adjacent to this site by the same applicant have been of a poor quality and badly maintained.
 - Despite what is mentioned in the application the Footpath SM 6/4 is affected by the application. The accompanying letter sent by the planning agent accepts that the PROW is affected. The Parish Council believe strongly that any changes to the PROW should be treated as with other applications by proper consultation. There are no details on this application for such a diversion/changes.
 - 2) Full application – Erection of detached single storey dwelling with associated access and landscaping, The Mill House, Alhampton. Ref: 2020/0827/FUL. **Outcome: Recommend refusal** for the following reasons:
 - The proposed application is a departure from the current development plan. Sustainability does not just refer to the dwelling itself – there are no facilities in Alhampton except the pub and infrequent bus services whilst Ditchat does have a shop and a school.
 - The maintenance of the hydropower turbine is not material to the proposed application as it could be maintained by any future owners of the Mill House should it be sold.
 - The PC does not consider that the reasons to overcome the development restrictions are sufficiently demonstrated.
- b) It was noted that planning permission has been granted for the following:
 - 1) Construction of equestrian ménage, Wraxall House. Ref: 2020/0485/CLE.

067/20 REVIEW OF COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP TO OTHER BODIES.

- a) Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC).
- b) Somerset Playing Fields Association.
- c) Community Council for Somerset.
- d) CPRE.
RESOLVED – to continue with the membership of the above organizations.

- 068/20 ELECTION OF MEMBERS' TO SPECIAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY.
- a) Highways and Road Safety - CE.
 - b) Footpaths and Rights of Way – CE and JD.
 - c) Playground – HC and CE.
 - d) Finance and Budget (including checks of the Parish Council Finances) – JD and LH.
 - e) Mendip District Council Strategic Plans, Housing and Planning – RH and HH.
 - f) Standing Orders - LH.
 - g) Press and media - The Clerk and CE.
 - h) Insurance - RH.
 - i) Legal - LH.
 - j) Other if/as required - TBA.
- RESOLVED that councillors would have specific areas of responsibility as detailed above.
- 069/20 CONFIRMATION OF USE OF ADOPTED POLICIES and PROCEDURES and approve draft policies/procedures and consider if others are required:
- a) Standing Orders - reviewed and amended.
 - b) Financial Regulations - reviewed and amended.
 - c) Code of Conduct – reviewed and amended.
 - d) Freedom of Information Act Scheme & Schedule of Charges – reviewed.
 - e) Privacy Policy – reviewed, no amendments.
 - f) Disciplinary Procedure – reviewed, no amendments.
 - g) Equal Opportunities Policy – reviewed, no amendments.
 - h) Business Continuity Plan – reviewed and amended.
 - i) Complaints Procedure – reviewed, no amendments.
 - j) Policy for the recording of Council meetings – reviewed and amended.
- RESOLVED to confirm the use of the above policies with the amendments. The Clerk will circulate the revised policies.
- k) Social Media Policy – RESOLVED to approve and adopt this policy as circulated.
- 070/20 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO PARISH ORGANISATIONS.
- a) Jubilee Hall committee - It was RESOLVED that HC will continue to represent the PC.
- 071/20 PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE – it was noted that RH has reviewed the current policy and has confirmed that it remains appropriate. The redundant telephone kiosk in Alhampton used to house the defibrillator has been added to the policy.
- 072/20 FINANCE
- a) Annual Return - Section 2: It was noted that the accounting statement has been completed and signed by the RFO.
 - b) The Annual Internal Audit report was received and noted. The Clerk will implement the changes suggested in the report. **Action: The Clerk.**
 - c) Annual Return – Section 1: The Annual Governance Statement was approved and will be signed by the Chairman and the RFO.
 - d) Annual Return - Section 2: The Accounting statements for 2019/2020 were approved and will be signed by the Chairman.
 - e) It was agreed that the PC would issue The Certificate of Exemption which will be signed by the Chairman and RFO and forwarded to the External Auditor.
 - f) RESOLVED that the Clerk is confirmed as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

- g) RESOLVED: to appoint Longhill Accounting as the Internal Auditor for the year 2020 – 2021.
- h) Assets Register – was reviewed; no amendments required.
- i) Risk assessment – was reviewed; no amendments required.
- j) Balance of accounts as at 28/05/2020 – the Clerk gave a verbal report. The cash book balance is £11,013.16 with total reserves of £16,912.17.
- k) It was noted that the payment to the Information Commissioner’s Office for Data Protection fee - £35.00 will be paid by direct debit on 30th May 2020.

073/20 PLAYGROUND

- a) It was noted that the grass cutting contractor has resumed the cutting of the grass.
- b) It was confirmed that in light of the current pandemic situation that the current grass cutting contractor retains the contract until the end on March 2021 with no increase in cost per cut.
- c) It was noted that a homeowner has been granted access to the small fenced off play area to facilitate house repairs.
- d) Any matters of report – it was noted that the notices sealing off the playground and the equipment had been removed indicating that against advice the equipment had been used. RH agreed to reinstate the tie wraps to try and prevent the equipment being used.
Action: RH.

074/20 HIGHWAYS

- a) Update on items/matters for repair previously reported – the potholes and the raised road surface on Moor Lane have been repaired.
- b) New matters for report to the Highways authority - none.

075/20 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.

- a) Update on matters previously reported – the damaged fingerpost and stile opposite the Court in Alhampton not yet repaired. The Clerk will report again to the Rights of Way department.
- b) Any matters for report – HH reported that the step stile on the north side of the bridge on footpath SM 6/31 needs to be repaired. **Action: The Clerk.**

076/20 HEALTH & SAFETY – Nothing to report.

077/20 CLERK’S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) Correspondence - none in addition to that already circulated.
- b) Reports/items for information.
 - 1) Update on Support group for COVID -19 pandemic - the Clerk reported that the group continued to give support to 15- 20 parishioners on a regular basis.
 - 2) The Clerk has agreed to distribute booklets concerning Wellbeing and Mental Health on behalf of SPARK and will seek assistance from the FTN distributors.
 - 3) There will be a Planning meeting on the 18th June 2020 which will again be a virtual meeting.

078/20 ITEMS OF REPORT AND INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

- a) Chairman:
 - CE reported that a serious incident in Ditchheat village regarding two dogs not under control has been reported to the Dog Warden and the Enforcement Officer at Mendip District Council (MDC).

- CE reported that another of the trees planted to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee has failed to thrive and needs to be placed in the Autumn.
- b) Members – JD reported that the grassed area, which was the old playground, off Lintern Close and the area in front of Southview is in a poor state. Also, the grass verge by Southview which had been dug up by Bristol Water had not been reinstated satisfactorily.
- Action: The Clerk.**

Signed: Chairman to Ditchheat Parish Council.

Dated: 9th July 2020.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 9th July 2020, or sooner if urgent business necessitates, at 7.30 pm to be held remotely due to COVID-19 unless otherwise advised.

A Planning meeting will be held remotely due to COVID-19 unless otherwise advised on 18th June 2020 7.30 pm.

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