

# **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 9<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM.

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

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

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

**083/20** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – County Councillor Hewitt-Cooper, District Councillor Greenhalgh (JG) and PCSO Dury had sent their apologies.

**084/20** COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS - the reports from NHC and JG which were circulated by email prior to the meeting were noted.

NHC's report included information on the following points:

- Corona Virus Update and Outbreak Management Plan.
- SCC Financial outcome for 2019/20 and SCC Covid19 Finances - estimates additional costs of around £47m to help communities deal with coronavirus.
- Climate Change.
- One Somerset: The business case to move to a Single Unitary authority across Somerset will be available on [www.onesomerset.org.uk](http://www.onesomerset.org.uk) from 7th July and will cover in detail the reasons for the recommendations and the substantial benefits to the residents of Somerset.
- Registration Services: Birth registrations are now making a phased return in Somerset following the gradual easing of coronavirus restrictions.
- Library Services: Somerset Libraries are planning the phased re-opening of library buildings with the aim to start welcoming people back in July.
- Commonplace: A new interactive online mapping tool has been launched to enable members of the community to flag up areas of concern in a specific area where changes to walking, cycling and travel could make a positive difference

JG's report - During the last 3-4 months the focus of the Council has very much been on dealing with Covid 19 including shutting the offices in Cannards Grave and moving to home working and virtual meetings. The report included information on the following points:

- MDC's Section 151 Officer (Finance Director) Paul Deal is leaving the Council and an acting S151 Officer has been appointed from Dorset CC.
- The cost to the Council for Covid 19 is still to be finalised and will be reported in due course.
- The accounting function has now been fully transferred back from Capita to the Council.
- As part of the fallout from Covid 19, MDC will be directing more effort on establishing and linking cycleways and footpaths.
- As part of a working group the council has been mapping the areas in Mendip where the existing bus service provision does not meet demand and a survey will be circulated to all parishes shortly to collect data on existing services and ideas for improvement.
- Progress on the Local Plan Part 2 continues with further consultation now planned by the Planning Inspector for September. A working group has also been established to look at Part 1.

- A new Economic Hub is being established as a “one stop shop” for both new and existing businesses to access support post COVID-19.

The above reports are available in full on the PC website.

085/20 REPORT FROM AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY- No report available.

086/20 CODE OF CONDUCT – Declarations of interest and dispensations. None.

087/20 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were approved and it was resolved that the minutes will be signed at a later date when physical meetings are re-convened.

088/20 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

- Gulley in Lintern Close down which petrol or diesel had been poured – the Clerk confirmed that the matter had been reported to SCC Highways Department who are responsible for road gulleys and drains. The Environment Agency had also been informed in case there was contamination of the water course.
- Reinstatement of verge in Southview – Bristol Water had apologized for the poor reinstatement and had confirmed that they would return by the end of this week with topsoil and grass seed to reinstate the verge. JD to let the Clerk know if the work has been completed. **Action: JD and the Clerk.**
- Grant application for the replacement for the safety matting in the playground – the Clerk reported that the application would be submitted by the end of the following week. **Action: The Clerk.**
- Cutting/trimming back the playfield path hedge – work to trim the hedge has been done by HC. The Clerk will speak to the solicitors acting for the late owner again to get the hedge cut well back off the path. **Action: The Clerk.**
- Serious incident in Ditchat village regarding two dogs not under control which has been reported to the Dog Warden and the Enforcement Officer at Mendip District Council (MDC) – CE reported that no response had been received from MDC. The Clerk will forward the information on the incident to the police. **Action: The Clerk.**

089/20 MINUTES - The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were approved and it was resolved that the minutes will be signed at a later date when physical meetings are re-convened.

090/20 MATTERS ARISING - from the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

- Prior Approval for change of use of agricultural building to a dwelling house (Use Class C3). Barn 3, Land at Snagg Lane, Alhampton Ref: 2020/0976/PAA - the Clerk reported that the Planning Officer had confirmed that the Parish Council would be consulted should this become a full planning application.

091/20 PLANNING

- MENDIP LOCAL PLAN PART II EXAMINATION Proposed Main Modifications consultation - the way forward for the examination, and the documents – ED29 Inspector’s Additional Hearings Guidance Note and ED30 – Inspector’s Additional Hearings Matters and Issues were noted.
- It was noted that planning permission has been granted for the following:
  - Erection of seven new dwellings following demolition of existing bungalow. Folly Orchard, Ditchat. Ref: 2019/2134/FUL.
  - Construction of equestrian menage, Wraxall House, Wraxall. Ref: 2020/0485/CLE.

092/20 CLIMATE CHANGE - the amended proposal for the PC to join Local Authorities across the UK by recognizing a Climate Emergency was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by HH and passed unanimously. RJ confirmed that he will set up a group.

093/20 FINANCE

- a) Balance of accounts as at 30/06/2020 – verbal report from the Clerk. The balance of all accounts is £27,084.91 with £16,912.17 in the reserve account.
- b) Approval of Parish council payments and authority to sign cheques for the following:
  - 1) Tony's Garden Services for grounds maintenance on 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> June - £210.00.
  - 2) Miss P Griffiths for Clerk's salary 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 - £700.16.
  - 3) HMRC for PAYE/NICs 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 – £175.00.
  - 4) Miss P Griffiths for Clerk's expenses 1st April to 30th June 2020 - £18.44.
- c) The payments to the following were noted:
  - 1) Mr A Gillard for grass cutting on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 - £70.00.
  - 2) Came & Company for PC insurance - £490.07.
  - 3) Longhill Accounting for audit 2019-2020 - £90.00.
  - 4) SALC for affiliation fee 2020-2021 - £201.08.
  - 5) SALC for Clerk's training - £25.00.
  - 6) Tony's Garden Services for grounds maintenance on 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May - £140.00.

094/20 Local Government Reorganization (LGR) in Somerset.

- a) It was agreed unanimously to support the proposal that the recommendations in the report commissioned by SLCC (Somerset) and SALC should be adopted by any new arrangement in Somerset. It was confirmed that the response should be returned to SALC and the leaders of the District Councils and SCC.

The response to the report sent by SALC was agreed: As a Parish Council we are pleased to be consulted and support the proposal for the following reasons:

  - Because the recommendations at last take into account the role and importance of parish councils in the overall scheme of local government.
  - The report gives parish councils a stronger voice and a platform from which to influence the shape and nature of local government in the future.

095/20 It was agreed that the response to the Local Government Association consultation on a new model code of conduct is that the PC would be satisfied with this model subject to the following comments:

With reference to the new Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, we see no reason why the interests of spouses/civil partners/cohabitees should not be included in the following categories:

- Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation
- Licences
- Securities (they only now appear in subsection (ii) but should appear in the whole category, as before)

Such interests were included in previous adopted versions and we consider that such inclusions were, and remain, appropriate and necessary.

The Clerk will submit the response. **Action: The Clerk.**

096/20 PLAYGROUND

- a) It was noted that the playground will be reopened on a date to be advised once the signage regarding COVID-19 were ready. **Action: The Clerk.**
- b) The inspection, checking, cleaning of equipment and risk assessment which was completed on 3<sup>rd</sup> July was noted.
- c) Actions, if any, following the risk assessment to be completed prior to the re-opening of the playground - none other than erection of the signs. HC agreed to continue with the

weekly inspections and to undertake a surface clean of the equipment. **Action: The Clerk & HC.**

- d) Any matters of report – RJ reported that a parishioner had expressed concern about dog faeces being left on the field known as the 'Cricket Pitch'. HC will put up some 'Be a responsible dog owner' signs. **Action: The Clerk & HC.**

097/20 HIGHWAYS

- a) Update on items/matters for repair previously reported - noted that considerable work had been done on the road from Folly Corner to Arthurs Bridge. The broke gully cover on the pavement by Jonathan's Corner which had been damaged by a lorry, involved in the road repairs, parking on the pavement has been reported. The damage has been marked by the Highways Department.
- b) New matters for report to the Highways authority – None.

098/20 FOOTPATHS, BRIDLEWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY.

- a) Update on matters previously reported – the damaged fingerpost and stile opposite the Court in Alhampton and the step stile on the north side of the bridge on footpath SM 6/31 which need to be repaired are still outstanding. The Clerk will report these matters again. **Action: The Clerk.**
- b) Any matters for report – The Clerk will report that there is no stile over the fence in the field at the beginning of footpath SM 6/11 by Snagg Lane, although there is a gate in the fence, it is not in line with the path as shown on the definitive map. Also, the path is blocked at the point that the footpath meets the river and along the river bank. **Action: The Clerk.**

099/20 HEALTH & SAFETY – None.

100/20 CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.

- a) Correspondence – The Clerk will circulate the Clerks and Councils Direct magazine and leaflets from CPRE in the 'Round Robin'. **Action: The Clerk.**
- b) Reports/items for information.
- 1) Update on Support group for COVID -19 pandemic - The Clerk reported that the support group continued to give help when requested.

101/20 ITEMS OF REPORT AND INCLUSION ON AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

- a) Chairman – CE suggested that if the deadline for a response to the recently circulated draft Walking and Cycling Manifesto for Somerset is after the date of the next meeting then this should be an agenda item. If it is before then Councillors should consider responding as individuals. The Clerk will check the deadline date. **Action: The Clerk & all Councillors.**
- b) Members – nothing to report.

Signed: Chairman to Ditchheat Parish Council.

Dated: 29<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020 (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE) 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 remotely due to COVID-19 unless otherwise advised on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 7.30 pm.

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE and NOTICEBOARDS FOR AGENDAS AND DATES.