

CHIDEOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Chideock Village Hall on Tuesday 26 March 2024 at 10am.

Present: Cllr George Dunn, Cllr Anna Dunn, Cllr Vanessa McAra, Cllr Peter Hunt, Cllr Caroline Parkins.

In attendance: The Clerk and 1 member of the public.

The Parish Council meeting commenced at 10.00.

3060 Apologies.

Dorset Ward Councillor Simon Christopher and PCSO Bishop sent their apologies.

3061 Grants of Dispensations.

None received.

3062 Declarations of Defined Pecuniary Interests.

None made at this point in the meeting.

3063 Minutes.

- a) **RESOLVED** to accept and sign, as a true record, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 27 February 2024.

Proposed by Cllr Anna Dunn, seconded by Cllr McAra, carried unanimously.

3064 Dorset Ward Councillor and Police Reports.

a) PCSO Bishop's e-mail update: -

"Fortunately, there is not much to feed back at this time, but on the 6th of March, there was a theft of a vehicle at Langdon Woods and a handbag stolen.

Whilst there has not been a specific incident in the Chideock area, there has recently been a livestock worrying incident in another area I cover. I would like to take this opportunity to remind Dog owners/walkers to ensure dogs are always under control, especially when going into fields where there may be livestock. Best practice is to keep a dog on a lead in a public area and when entering a field and only letting a dog off when you know the field is completely empty (putting the dog back on a lead when someone else enters the field). If anyone would like any advice, please contact me.

b) Cllr Simon Christopher's e-mailed update is appended to the minutes.

Standing Orders were suspended for the following item.

3065 Democratic Period.

Mr Richard Benjamin said that the Village Hall had been given a Hallmark Award from Dorset Community Action in association with the Association of Dorset Village Halls. This recognises that the Village Hall is well run and maintained. This gives the discount on the hall insurance.

A Vote of Thanks to the Village Hall Committee for all the work they put in on behalf of the village. Proposed Cllr Parkins, seconded by Cllr McAra, carried unanimously.

Standing Orders were resumed.

3066 Reports / Updates by the Clerk and Councillors.

Items 1 to 4 on the Actions and Information List were noted.

3067 A35 Matters.

Items 5 to 15 on the Actions & Information List were **NOTED**.

AGREED that the Clerk asks National Highways for an update, with timescales, for the installation of Average Speed Cameras now that the Order for a permanent 30 mph limit on Chideock Hill has been Made.

Item 14 – A35 Parishes Meeting. Cllr George Dunn said that he has not had a response to his e-mail that he will chase this up.

3068 River Winniford and Water Pollution Issues.

a) Dorset Council.

No updates.

b) Wessex Water.

Item 4 on the Actions and Information List was **NOTED**.

c) Winniford River Action Group.

Items 16 to 18 on the Actions & Information List were **NOTED**.

AGREED that the Clerk should send West Dorset Leisure Holidays the contact information of Andy Mears, Wessex Water.

3069 Motions Received with Notice. None.

3070 Planning Matters.

a) Applications.

P/LBC/2024/01179 3 Mews Cottages - Replacement windows.

Chideock Parish Council supports this application. Double glazing is essential to reduce heat loss and noise pollution and to contribute towards the national carbon neutral targets.

P/HOU/2024/00858 Lushays Brighthay Lane - Demolish garage and erect single storey extension. Demolish outbuilding and erect 'potting shed' annex.

Chideock Parish Council supports this application.

P/LBC/2024/00859 Lushays Brighthay Lane - Demolish garage and erect single storey extension. Demolish outbuilding and erect 'potting shed' annex.

Chideock Parish Council supports this application.

b) Determinations.

None.

c) Appeals. No new appeals lodged.

d) Other Planning Matters.

i. AONB, Lighting / Dark Skies, Dorset National Park, Conservation Areas.

Nothing to report.

ii. Enforcement, Retrospective Planning Applications.

Nothing to report.

iii. Other.

Items 19 and 20 on the Actions & Information List were **NOTED**.

3071 Finances.

Items 22 to 24 on the Actions and Information List were **NOTED**.

a) Payments.

i. Clerk's Salary and Expenses for March	£306.22
ii. HMRC – PAYE Jan, Feb, Mar	£266.40
iii. Village Hall Hire – 26 March	£22.00
iv. Ken Hussey – Clapps Mead Inspection	£47.50

Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Parkins, carried unanimously.

b) Budget Monitoring Prediction to 31 March 2024.

The Budget Monitoring Prediction of a probable underspend was **NOTED**. The exact amount depends on whether the SWARCO rent payment for the three Foss Orchard car park spaces used for the electric car charging points is received by 31 March.

c) Actions to be taken at Financial Year End.

RESOLVED that the following the financial actions to be taken at Financial Year End: -

- Clapp's Mead Reserve budget of £1,000 to be transferred to the Clapp's Mead Reserve Fund.
- Foss Orchard Car Park Resurfacing budget of £250 to be transferred to Foss Orchard Car Park Maintenance Fund.
- Foss Orchard Riverbank budget of £250 to be transferred to Foss Orchard Riverbank Fund.

- Community Fund budget of £500 to be transferred to the Community Fund.
 - Village Clock Service budget of £250 to be transferred to a restricted reserve for payment of the clock service contract for 2023-2025, under the power granted by the Parish Councils Act 1957, s.2.
 - Recharge of Parish Election Costs budget of £500 to be transferred to a restricted reserve.
 - Salt / Grit budget amount of £200 to be transferred to a restricted reserve.
 - War Memorial Maintenance budget of £250 to be transferred to a restricted reserve.
 - Any budget underspend to be put towards Grants to External Bodies.
- Proposed by Cllr George Dunn, seconded by Cllr McAra, carried unanimously.

d) Grants to External Bodies.

Item 5 on the Actions and Information List was **NOTED** and discussed in more detail.

Cllr Hunt declared an interest in the application for a grant by the Parochial Church Council of Chideock and said that he would only speak to explain what was proposed and would not vote on that grant.

RESOLVED that the following grants be made: -

Winniford River Action Group - £1,000 (Local Government Act 1972 S137).

Chideock Village Hall - £925 (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19).

Bridport Citizen's Advice Bureau - £400 (Local Government Act 1972 s142).

Proposed by Cllr McAra, seconded by Cllr Parkins, carried unanimously.

PCC of Chideock - £1000 (Local Government Act 1894 - Section 19A added 2023).

Proposed by Cllr McAra, seconded by Cllr Parkins, carried with Cllr Hunt abstaining.

a) Vire Funds to Cover Increased Grants to External Bodies.

The total grant agreed amount agreed of £ 3,325 exceeds the budgeted amount of £1,835 by £1,490.

RESOLVED that the part of the shortfall will be taken from the expected budget underspend and the balance will be vired from the General Contingency Reserve.

Proposed by Cllr Parkins, seconded by Cllr McAra, carried unanimously.

e) Foss Orchard Car Park.

Items 26 to 27A on the Actions & Information List were **NOTED**.

3072 Clapps Mead Playing Field.

a) Playing Field Update.

Items 28 and 29 Actions & Information List were **NOTED**.

b) Friends of Clapps Mead.

i. **RESOLVED** to grant permission to the Friends of Clapps Mead to hold a classic car event in May and a Fete in August, subject to the usual conditions: -

- A strict understanding that no vehicles are allowed on the Playing Field except those in the Classic Car event and those delivering and removing equipment for the Fête.
- No parking at all on the field.
- Any damage to the surface of the playing field to be made good by the organisers.
- Any electrical equipment and supplies to be correctly set up and made safe for the public.
- Main gate to be kept closed once the event starts.

Proposed by Cllr McAra, seconded by Cllr Hunt, carried unanimously.

ii. **RESOLVED** in principle to pay for the children's entertainer at the August Fete, the money to be taken from the Community Fund.

Proposed by Cllr Parkins, seconded by Cllr McAra carried unanimously.

3073 Dorset Rights of Way, Dorset Highways and Flood Management.

a) Rights of Way.

Items 30 to 32 on the Actions and Information List were **NOTED**.

b) Dorset Highways.

Items 33 to 34A on the Actions and Information List were **NOTED**.

c) Flood Management.

Items 35 and 36 on the Actions & Information List were **NOTED**.

RESOLVED -

i. to purchase a new store for the sandbags and

ii. that the sandbag store should be moved to Clapps Mead Playing Field.

Proposed by Cllr Anna Dunn, seconded by Cllr Parkins, carried unanimously.

3074 Consultations. None.

3075 Correspondence.

There were no other items of correspondence to be brought to Councillors' notice.

3076 To confirm the date and time of the next meeting of Chideock Parish Council meeting.

The next scheduled meeting is at 10am on Tuesday 30 April 2024.

The meeting closed at **12.05 pm.**

Action	Responsible individual	Item	Notes
Request update from National Highways re Average Speed Camera installation	Clerk	3067	Actioned and response received
Chase A35 Communities re meetings	Cllr G Dunn	3067	Actioned and response received
Pass Wessex Water contact details to West Dorset Leisure Holidays	Clerk	3068	Actioned
Investigate replacement for the sandbag store	Clerk	3073	Outstanding
Invite Jonathan Hill to the Annual Village meeting	Clerk	N/A	Actioned and response received – REFUSED.

Cllr Christopher's E-mailed Report –26 March 2024.

A few brief notes prior to the meeting.

There is continuing correspondence with National Highways re recent night time closure of the A35 and indeed with Dorset Council Highways intended further work on Seahill Lane

In 2021, building on the progress already made by the historic borough, district and county councils, Dorset Council undertook a huge programme of work to further reduce carbon emissions from our buildings.

This work was funded through the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, a scheme set up to provide grant funding for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency projects in public sector buildings.

Over a year, Dorset Council installed energy saving and renewable energy measures at over 200 council-owned sites (including schools, leisure centres and libraries).

The full impact of the programme will not be known until technologies have been operating for a year, but it is predicted that the whole programme of work (which has included over 350 measures) could be expected to save as much as 9 million kilowatt hours of energy each year.

As its annual programme gears up for spring, with extra funding Dorset Council is set to bolster its proactive measures to look after its roads. This includes more pothole repairs, resurfacing and preventative treatments to manage road condition and maintain highway safety.

£2.068 million each for the years 2023/24 and 2024/25 from the Department for Transport (DfT) Network North fund, from reallocated HS2 government funding, together with other maintenance and pothole funds, will be dedicated to carriageway maintenance in the council area.

The council is also allocating an additional £6.03million from its own budget for highway maintenance. This will be invested in more proactive maintenance to preserve the condition of its roads.

Cllr Ray Bryan, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment, said: "This extra funding will help us speed up our programme, reaching more roads before cracking or potholes appear, fixing potholes or making bigger repairs.

"This investment will help us keep our network in a good condition and reduce the number of reactive repairs."

Cllr Bryan also emphasised the importance of proactive maintenance, stating: "It has been proven that early, preventative maintenance is the most cost-effective way to maintain roads."

The council is awaiting confirmation of further government funding.

Pothole repair includes extensive patching of the wider area surrounding the defect, instead of just repairing the immediate pothole. This aims to reduce the likelihood of further potholes forming. A new method, called thermal patching will also be tested. This will reduce CO2 emissions by heating up existing asphalt (tarmac like surface), adding new binding materials and aggregates, and recompacting the road to form a permanent seamless repair.

Reflections on the first term of Dorset Council

Dorset Council Leader Spencer Flower wanted to reflect on how much we have achieved over the last 5 years.

"Dorset Council has come a long way since May 2019, when the first all-out elections took place. As Leader of Council, I set out my ambition to work across the council chamber to achieve the best outcomes for the communities of Dorset.

This ethos of our cross-party working has been judged as a success and, in recognition, I was honoured to be short listed for the Local Government Information Unit's 'Council Leader of the Year 2023' award, from over 200 nominations nationally. The annual awards event took place in November 2023, when I received my certificate as one of the final 5 nominees. I value this recognition of our focus on ambition, outcomes, and achievements.

Budget setting and savings

Budget setting can be a challenge, but the administration has enjoyed majorities of between 47 and 70 in budget votes, which many observers consider to be a ringing endorsement of our approach and ethos. One of the key reasons for this has been early member participation in reviewing and understanding budget pressures and ambitions. I give great credit to the involvement of the 2 scrutiny committees.

Dorset Council operates 2 budget cafes, which are open to all 82 members to attend, 2 scrutiny committee reviews, followed by Cabinet and then Full Council for decision. This approach has enabled strong councillor participation in budget setting not previously experienced prior to the creation of the new unitary Dorset Council.

Very early on, the council established a comprehensive transformation programme, which included initial convergence of 6 councils into one, saving about £11 million a year, followed by the benefits of economies of scale and service redesign, with the aim of saving circa £70 million during the first 5 years of the council. Dorset Council has achieved £96 million in savings to date, and we are expecting to reach approximately £120 million by the end of the first 5-year term.

All these savings have been reinvested into front-line services; mainly Adult Social Care, Health & Housing, and Children's Services, ensuring there have been no cuts to front-line services which are so vital in maintaining and improving social wellbeing across the communities of Dorset.

Embracing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has been a huge success. However, it certainly has not been an easy ride, particularly coping with the worst global pandemic in 100 years, and the future looks challenging without an uplift in central government funding. Dorset gets very little Revenue Support Grant (RSG), just £700,000 in 2024, compared to other local authorities: those largely in inner city areas get an RSG allocation ranging from £20-30 million a year. This is not fair, and I continue to lobby hard for change.

Shire county areas have been poorly funded for decades by successive governments. The Local Government sector needs a new funding formula, which applies proper weight to rurality and the aging demographic. In Dorset, we have 30% of the population who are over 65 years old and rising, compared with the national average of 19%. The burden of additional costs for social care currently falls on the local taxpayers which is unfair to the people of Dorset.

As with all councils, we must set a balanced budget. Dorset Council, having benefited from transformation savings, has been able to achieve this statutory requirement, without any cuts to front-line services, which makes us an outlier in the Southwest and compared to other unitary councils across the country. "

Council Tax Premium on Second homes and empty houses in Dorset.

Dorset Councillors have approved proposals for a council tax premium on second homes and an amendment to agree an earlier commencement date for the existing Long Term Empty Homes premium, under the new flexibilities for councils provided in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which received Royal Assent in October 2023.

For those properties classified as Long-Term Empty and Unoccupied a 100% premium will, from 1 April 2024, be applied after one year rather than the existing 2 years.

The introduction of the 100% council tax premium on second homes will come into effect on 1 April 2025, making a total council tax charge of 200%. Unlike empty dwellings, there is no requirement for a property to have been used as a second home for a fixed period of time before the premium can apply so it becomes chargeable from day one that a property is considered a second home (or dwelling periodically occupied).

Where exceptions are provided for in law and once final regulations have been provided, Dorset Council will adopt and apply such exceptions. The council website will be updated as soon as this information is available.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt has announced that land managed under environmental agreements will qualify for agricultural property relief (APR)

Jeremy Hunt MP announced the move in the 2024 spring budget, saying it will come into force from 6 April 2025. The scope of the extended relief is reasonably broad and will cover "land managed under an environmental agreement with, or on behalf of, the UK Government, devolved administrations, public bodies, local authorities, or approved responsible bodies", which includes the Environmental Land Management scheme in England and the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme in Wales as well as other types of agreement.

The relief requires that the land was deemed 'agricultural land' for two years immediately before the change, but not that it was used for agricultural purposes or would have qualified for APR.

This extension to the relief also avoids the "cliff edge" that would happen at the end of an environmental agreement providing that the "land continues to be managed in a way that is consistent with that agreement."

The current scope of APR is a potential barrier to some landowners and farmers making long-term land use change from agricultural to environmental use.

Additionally, it has been confirmed that APR will not be restricted to tenancies of at least eight years,

Furnished holiday lets tax regime abolished.

The chancellor also announced plans to abolish the Furnished Holiday Lettings (FHL) tax regime from 6 April 2025, meaning that short-term and long-term lets will be treated the same for tax purposes. This has caused significant concern among those with diversified farming enterprises that rely on FHLs as a vital source of income.

FHLs have long been recognised as a crucial element in sustaining the rural and agricultural economy. For many farmers, the integration of FHLs into their farming operations has been a lifeline, helping to provide sustainable cashflow amidst fluctuating agricultural markets and challenging weather conditions.

England and Wales have an opportunity to develop a world-class agricultural policy based on the premise of 'public money for public goods'. Moving away from previous subsidy models, new voluntary agricultural schemes pay farmers and land managers to deliver environmental and nature-friendly outcomes. For these schemes to work, farmers need to have confidence that they will benefit their business.

Farm technology fund opens.

Grants for productivity and slurry management items are available now in England through the latest round of the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund. It is my understanding the deadline to apply is on 17th April 2024. Farmers, foresters, and contractors active in either sector can apply for one grant from each of three themes.

Features include: -

- Between £1,000 and £50,000 towards productivity items such as direct drills and real-time forage analysers
- Between £1,000 and £50,000 towards slurry items such as robotic slurry

On Tuesday I will be required to attend a finance (Pensions) Committee meeting of Dorset Council at County Hall which will impact on my availability for the Chideock PC meeting. I remain available for surgery appointments in the pre-election period,

Best regards

Simon

Councillor Simon Christopher
The Dorset Councillor for the Marshwood Vale Ward
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