

CHESELBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023 at Cheselbourne Village Hall, commencing 7pm

Present: Cllrs R Sewill, C Byrom, G Waters, C Hampton, D Walsh, N Searle

Chair: Cllr A Taylor

Clerk: Mrs A Crocker

Also present: 3 members of the public.

Public Participation

Two new residents introduced themselves to the Parish Council and were welcomed to the village.

1. Declarations of Interest

23.29 No interests were declared and no dispensation requests had been received.

2. Apologies

23.30 Apologies had been received from Dorset Cllr Jill Haynes and PCSO Alison Donnison.

3. Approve minutes of the meeting held on the 15th May 2023

23.31 A copy of the minutes had been issued to all members prior to the start of the meeting. Cllr Hampton proposed them to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Byrom and agreed unanimously. The Chair signed the minutes in the presence of the meeting.

4. Matters arising for report only

23.32 Hayes Cottage planning application – This has now been approved.

Community Speed Watch (CSW) signs – Cllr Searle has spoken to the CSW co-ordinator who reported that they do not have any resources to provide new CSW signs for the village. However, the Police and Crime Commissioner has been approached for funding in order to get a uniformity of CSW signs throughout the County. Further information will be provided when it has been received.

Signs – Cllr Taylor did cut back some of the vegetation growing around the 30mph signs near to the Rivers Arms. However, it is already overgrown again. Cllr Walsh offered to assist Cllr Taylor cut it back once more.

Hedge alongside Hillside Cottage – The owner has been approached and is going to attend to the hedge which is leaning into Streetway Lane. The matter has also been reported on Dorset Council's website.

Listed Building Consultation – Cllr Sewell had attended the seminar and supported the initiative regarding environmentally friendly planning.

Grass cutting contract – This is now in place with Moses Smith as the contractor and the cuts have been undertaken for June. It was noted that the Church has also contacted him regarding their cutting requirements.

Grit bins – Cllr Sewell met Tom Bessant, who made the original request for additional grit bins along Drakes Lane, and indicated where he would like the bins to go on a map of the parish. Cllr Sewell will pass a map of the locations to the Clerk who will contact Highways accordingly. Costs, etc. will then be brought back to the September meeting.

ACTION: CLLR SEWILL & THECLERK

Electric Car Charging Points at the Rivers Arms – Cllr Searle reported that the owners of the Rivers Arms were positive about the charging points being installed on their parking area. Cllr Searle spoke to Christopher Whitehouse at Dorset Council and it has been agreed that Cheselbourne will be added to the pilot scheme when they start rolling them out from the town centres. Mr Whitehouse will be arranging a meeting with the owners of the Rivers Arms and the Parish Council to discuss this further, hopefully before the end of July.

Parking outside school – Cllr Searle noted that there is nothing further to report.

20mph application for the village – Cllr Taylor reported that the application had been submitted some months ago but nothing has been heard since, despite contacting Cllr Bryan of Dorset Council for an update.

5. Dorset Councillor’s Report

23.33 Cllr Haynes was unable to attend the meeting but her latest report had been issued to all members prior to the meeting, together with the Dorset Council Annual update. It is disappointing to note that there is still no information that is more relevant to the Chalk Valley Ward.

6. To consider the Police Report

23.34 A copy of the report was issued prior to the start of the meeting. It was noted that the 101 telephone number is no longer available and any police reports must now be made online. Cllr Searle will submit a report regarding this issue to the Village News and will also highlight the increase in ‘silent’ 999 calls.

7. Parish Councillors’ Reports

23.35 Cllr Searle – The Community Speed Watch volunteers were out on the 5th and 11th July. There will be a litter pick on the 8th July, commencing 10am.

Cllr Hampton requested that the Community Speed Watch team visit Streetway Lane and Cllr Searle agreed to have the site risk assessed.

Cllr Byrom – A very successful event, entitled ‘Birds, Butterflies, Bees and Bugs’ was held on the 10th June.

Cllr Waters – The river levels are low at the moment but there has been a lot of vegetative growth. Concern had been raised regarding the stretch of river running in front of the school. Subsequent discussions found that Dorset Council do not have a contract for maintaining the stream in this area and it was thought that Dorset Council are also supposed to be maintaining the stretch of stream in front of the village hall and playing field. Cllr Waters will contact Dorset Council regarding the village hall stretch as this has not been cleared and will ask them to clear the school section at the same time.

Cllr Hampton reported that he has been in touch with Neil Le Maire, Dorset Council Enforcement Officer, regarding the Brook Green footpath. Although the matter is still in the hands of the Dorset Council Legal Department, Mr Le Maire has been asked to seek alternative quotes for the path’s construction.

8. Finance

23.36 To approve the payments for June 2023

The following payments were requested:

C Byrom	Reimburse bark for play area	BACS005	276.88
C Byrom	Sign for play area	BACS006	10.64
Zurich Insurance	Insurance renewal 19.06.23 to 18.06.24	BACS007	253.00
Dorset Council	Grass cutting	BACS008	154.20
Dorset Tree & Garden	Grass cutting green & play area 26/5	BACS009	90.00
Play Area Inspection	Annual play area inspection	BACS010	90.00
Dorset Tree & Garden	Village green & play area 23/6	BACS011	90.00
Dorset Tree & Garden	Verge opposite bus shelter	BACS012	15.00
HMRC	May/June PAYE	BACS013	60.00
Barker-Fox	Internal audit ye 31.03.23	BACS014	57.46
A Crocker	May/June wages	BACS015	374.50

The total amount requested from the Precept is £1,471.68.

Cllr Taylor proposed the payments are made. This was seconded by Cllr Waters and agreed unanimously.

The following income had been received since the last meeting:

Wessex Water grant	1,075.00
CAG event	28.00
Donation to Play Park	192.29

23.37 To confirm the reconciliation of accounts and position against budget

A copy of the reports had been issued prior to the start of the meeting. No comments were made.

23.38 To receive and agree the Internal Auditor's Report for the year ending 31st March 2023

A copy of the report had been issued to all members and is available on the Parish Council website.

The recommendations made were noted and Cllr Searle proposed the report is accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Walsh and agreed unanimously.

The Notice of Public Rights for the year ended 31st March 2023 has been posted on the website and on the notice board. The period covered by the notice is Monday 3rd July to Friday 11th August 2023.

9. Planning Applications

23.39 P/FUL/2023/02983 - Cheselbourne Village School - Demolish existing prefabricated mobile classroom & erect 2 detached buildings for classrooms

It was noted that there was overwhelming public support for this application. The existing buildings are in a very poor state and the proposal will make a considerable difference in how the school is able to support the children. The Parish Council unanimously supports this application.

P/HOU/2023/03246 - Deya, Streetway Lane - Erect porch & rear extension, alterations to garage and demolish conservatory

The proposal does not increase the existing footprint and plans for the front elevation appear to be a considerable improvement on the current structure.

P/FUL/2023/02750 The Rivers Arms- Erect rear extension and alterations

As well as the extension to the rear of the property, the proposal includes a new entrance and a new decking area to the front extending into the parking area. The owners highlighted the poor state of their accommodation and facilities they currently have and the benefits of improving them can be justified. The neighbour has expressed considerable concern regarding the proposed work and a letter from the neighbour was read out to members. Members felt that, as this application could be quite controversial, they would like more time to consider it in greater detail. It was agreed that the plans on the Dorset Council website are confusing and unclear. It was noted that the proposal will impact the neighbouring property but, at the same time, the owners of the Rivers Arms need to be able to improve their facilities. In addition, the proposal appears to result in the loss of some car parking spaces and the possible impact this will have on the viability of the business was discussed. Members felt that no decision could be made at this meeting. Cllr Sewill proposed that he, together with Cllrs Taylor and Walsh attend the site and speak to the neighbour. A suggested response will then be circulated. This was seconded by Cllr Walsh and agreed unanimously.

ACTION: CLLRS SEWILL, TAYLOR & WALSH

10. To confirm the Annual Play Area Inspection Report

23.40 Cllr Byrom reported that the play park inspection was undertaken before the play area notices were put up and the mulch was put down. Many other points raised in the inspection report remain the same as last year.

There has been discussion about the future of the play park with the play park committee. A questionnaire was issued with the recent edition of the Village News to gauge parishioners' views about the site and what they wanted to do with it, namely - leave it as it is; undertake a small amount of work; or have a major refit. The deadline for the consultation is the 14th July and the steering group will then meet to discuss the way forward. The steering group is keen to start fund raising, possibly for some minor items or a full-blown development. The group will be looking at all the issues regarding access to the site and how to improve them. The new path from the village hall would be a 'game-changer', as the school would then be able to use the area much more easily and safely. The group is considering applying for National Lottery funding and funding from the Dorset Council Capital Leverage Fund. An application has been submitted for a Hall & Woodhouse Grant from their Community Chest. The Parish Council thanks Cllr Byrom for all the effort she has put in to the play park.

11. To consider the upkeep of the village bus shelter and book exchange facility

23.41 Cllrs Byrom and Taylor spent time cleaning the bus shelter and Ross McFayden of Southern Maintenance (Dorset) has offered to steam clean it and clear out the gutters. It was hoped this would be done within the next two weeks. The gutter does need to be repaired and costings will be brought back to the September meeting. The books will be removed whilst the cleaning is undertaken.

Councillors discussed if the book exchange facility was being used as originally intended or is it becoming a dumping ground for unwanted books? It was noted that the bus shelter is a Parish Council asset and, if the book exchange is to remain, people will be needed to keep it tidy and to maintain the books in good order. Cllr Searle suggested that a notice should be put in the bus shelter - stating that the Parish Council is thinking about closing the book exchange facility and asking parishioners for their opinions. Cllr Byrom offered to organise a notice and will also put something on WhatsApp Group.

ACTION: CLLR BRYOM

12. To consider the purchase of a new laptop

23.42 The existing laptop used by the Clerk is now quite old and many of the keys keep getting stuck. Cllr Taylor proposed that the Clerk is given a budget of up to £600 to purchase a new one. This was seconded by Cllr Walsh and agreed unanimously. It may be possible to part exchange the old one but, if not, it could be cleaned and donated to the school.

ACTION: CLERK

13. To consider the use of Drop Box as a communications tool for Councillors

23.43 Cllr Walsh led a discussion on the use of Drop Box as a secure way of storing files and documents which can be accessed easily by members of the Parish Council. Links to the documents would be given to councillors to enable them to access the files. A central document store would be set up with councillors having access but only the Clerk will be able to undertake any additions or amendments. It was agreed that this will be actioned once the new laptop for the Clerk has been purchased.

14. To consider the offer of additional funding for the verge alongside the bus shelter

23.44 Cllr Byrom reported that there is still a long term plan to develop the verge between Brook Green and the bus shelter as a wild flower area. At present it is being cut monthly to keep it tidy. A grant had been applied for and awarded from Wessex Water amounting to £1,075. They have subsequently offered an additional £500.

The contractor who offered to cut and clear the verge for £1,950 has been contacted to see if he is still able to undertake the work for that amount but no reply has, as yet, been received. The grant monies, together with the £950 from the Parish Council would mean £300 left over for spending on repairs to the bus shelter. Cllr Byrom suggested a notice should be put up on the verge explaining what work is being undertaken there. This can be linked to the Parish Council website via a QR Code where people would be able to find a more detailed explanation.

15. To receive an update on PlusBus and to consider proceeding with the scheme

23.45 Cllr Byrom has been attending the meetings hosted by Dorset Community Transport (DCT). Cllr Taylor reported that he, Cllr Byrom and Cllr Hampton met with DCT to discuss the operation of a bus service through the village. Essentially, the DCT minibus used for taking children to school which is then unused for most of the day, could have use as transport from Cheselbourne and surrounding villages to Dorchester every other Wednesday and Blandford every other Thursday.

To use the service, the public will register (at no cost) with DCT and then telephone them by 2pm the previous day saying where they want to get on. DCT will provide an approximate pick up time. To begin operating the service, an application has been made to Dorset Council for a grant of £5000. There is no financial commitment required from any of the parish councils in the area at this stage. The fares received by DCT in year one will go towards the costs for year two. Should this go ahead, it will need to be heavily publicised. The fare is likely to be £7 return.

16. To consider what action can be taken regarding the Brook Green footpath

23.46 In the light of the information given in item 7, this will be revisited at the September meeting.

17. Date of next meeting

23.47 The next meeting will be held on Monday 4th September, commencing 7pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.55pm

Signed: