

Clerk to the Council:

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Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 7th September 2021 at the Thorncombe Community Centre, commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr's J Higgs (Chairman), A Hiscock, M Stead, D Marsh and P Basham

In Attendance:-The Clerk (Mr J Vanderwolfe) and one member of the public

Draft until Approved

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| 396 | Apologies An apology was received from Cllr S Christopher |
| 397 | Declarations of Interest There were no Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct at this stage of the meeting |
| 398 | Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on the 6 th July 2021, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a true record. |
| 399 | Matters Arising The clerk updated the meeting regarding the registration of the playfield and associated footpath with Land Registry, stating that this was in the hands of the solicitor. There is a question at present as to whether the title deeds sat with the former Dorset Council or the church authorities. The chairman informed the meeting that we now had a four drawer cabinet, which is located in the hall; and would be added to the asset register. |
| 400 | Democratic Period A parishioner had asked through the chairman what Dorset Council were doing to accommodate the Afghan refugees; and what the local community of Thorncombe could do. The clerk would email Cllr Christopher on this point. |

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| 401 | <p>Dorset Council Report</p> <p>Covid-19 rates across Dorset are falling and are below the national and south west averages. The planning application in respect of Chard Junction Quarry was rejected at the recent Strategic Planning Committee meeting. Dorset Council has issued a communication stating that it is struggling to deal with the increased amount of planning applications being submitted. The large number of tourist has resulted in an increase in car park revenue. Dorset Council, he stated, appears to have coped well with refuse collection over the summer period despite pressure on staffing, and the well documented demand for HGV drivers. He stated that he continues to lobby the relevant portfolio holder for more road resurfacing in the area. He concluded by stating that there was at present a large debate around the possibility of additional funding for social care.</p> |
| 402 | <p>Accounts for Payment</p> <p>Resolved to ratify the following payments: HMRC PAYE £207.40, Dial a Grass Cut £380.00 and HMRC VAT £16.60</p> |
| 403 | <p>Financial Update</p> <p>The finance update was approved. Total financial assets as at the 20th August stood at £17,748.21</p> |
| 404 | <p>Community Shop Loan/Rent</p> <p>The clerk and the chairman had met with their legal advisor and were able to confirm, in line with the agreement between the Community Shop and the Parish Council that the present lease is due to end in 2029. If the loan is repaid earlier than that date it makes no difference to the lease, but of course would make a difference to the amount of interest payable depending when the loan was repaid. At the end of the lease period it would be up to the Council and the shop to agree a rent if the shop wished to continue in business. Generally, under council principles, this should be a market rent. The council could use that income for the good of the community, however the clerk, as the Proper Officer of the Council, felt that some of those funds should be earmarked for the upkeep and maintenance of the building, for which the council was of course responsible for as the owners of the asset. The council has no right to demand or interfere with the profits of the shop; which of course is a business that rents the building. Thee chairman of the Community shop, who was present also confirmed that she had taken legal advice, and confirmed that it was in line with what the clerk had just reported.</p> <p>The clerk made the point that it was important that the council continued to retain a reasonable reserve to cover the cost of dealing with such items as the roof or other structural problems that occur in any building.</p> <p>Cllr Hiscock asked for further clarification regarding the flat above the shop and whether it was freehold. The clerk would investigate this.</p> |
| 405 | <p>Code Of Conduct</p> <p>It was resolved that Thorncombe Parish Council would adopt the Dorset Code of Conduct.</p> |

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| 406 | Annual Parish Meeting After some discussion it was resolved not to hold a meeting in 2021 as the specified dates had passed, and it would have been difficult to hold such a meeting during the Covid-19 restricted period, but to hold on in 2022 after the commencement of the new financial year. It was suggested that this could be a more social event, possibly being held at the Social Club. |
| 407 | Grants The clerk had circulated the updated application form to all members some time ago. It was agreed to extend the deadline for acceptance of applications until the end of October 2021 so that they can be looked at in November. |
| 408 | Playfield Report .A number of committee meetings had been held, with another meeting scheduled for the 24 th September. The AGM will take place on the 19 th October. Somerset Playing Field's Association are to present an award to the committee at a presentation evening being held in Bridgewater on the 10 th September. |
| 409 | Bus Services Number of passengers is on the increase with the Thursday bus to Axminster seeing a 10% increase. It is hoped that Dorset Council will provide a grant of £2,000 towards the running of the bus services. Tatworth and Forton Parish Council has also been approached and it is hope to use the Tesco blue token scheme. A recent survey had revealed that people want more frequent buses to more places. They also wanted better connections with trains and cheaper fares. |
| 410 | Community Shop Shop was showing a profit and seems to have retained customers following the Covid-19 pandemic. |
| 411 | Allotments It was reported that the hedge needs trimming |
| 412 | Former Telephone Box A young lady in the village had agreed to do a mural on the side of the former telephone box. The box would be sanded down and the rust treated. |
| 413 | DAPTC Some zoom committee meetings had taken place |
| 414 | School Catherine Davis, the Acting Chair of Governors to Thorncombe St Mary's Primary Academy reported that at the end of the summer term there were 43 children at the school. No Standard Assessment Tests (SATS) for year 6 took place due to Covid-19, but the mock tests results and teacher assessments were pleasing. She reported that the children had enjoyed a range of visits and trips linked to the Active Thorncombe Strategy, which included a visit to Aria Dairy Farm on the Sadborow Estate and a team building event at Magdalen Farm. The Autumn term commenced with a total of 36 children registered at the school. The school's nursery provision has been relaunched as Little Acorns with an initial uptake of five children. |

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| 415 | Rights of Way It was reported that Blind Lane was overgrown and difficult to navigate at present. Chairman would speak to our ROW Warden to see if this could be resolved. |
| 416 | Planning Applications P/Hou/2021 & P/LBC/2021/01741 Linden Lea, Holditch: Demolish conservatory and erect garden room extension. Members supported this application. |
| 417 | Determinations The circulated list was noted |
| 418 | Planning Tracking Systems and Audit Following some discussion it was agreed that Cllr Hiscock would design a tracking system lined to the website that would show planning recommendations made by this council and details of items like site visits made. Concerns were raised that there was a rumour that Dorset Council were going to cease advising clerks of planning applications for their parishes. The clerk had not heard this but would ask Cllr Christopher to clarify the situation. |
| 419 | Correspondence Nil |
| 420 | Items of Urgency Nil |
| 421 | Next Meeting Tuesday 5 th October 2021 at 7.30pm |

Signed ----- Chairman

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