

Minutes of the meeting between Chideock Parish Council and Councillor Laura Beddow at Chideock Village Hall on Tuesday the 8th of August 2023, at 9:30 am

Present: Cllr George Dunn (Chair), Cllr Anna Dunn, Cllr Mick Downes.

In attendance: Clerk, Cllr Laura Beddow.

Apologies: Cllr Peter Hunt, Cllr Vanessa McAra (Vice-Chair).

The meeting commenced at 9:48 am.

1. Introduction

The Chair thanked Cllr Beddow for her attendance, and she confirmed that she was happy for notes to be taken of the meeting and published subject to review. The apologies of Cllr Hunt and Cllr McAra were noted.

2. Cllr Beddow to give an overview of her Council Portfolio.

Cllr Beddow described aspects of her portfolio, noting her responsibility for waste services; environmental health and regulatory services (not including planning); community sector grants; voluntary sector interactions; Town and Parish Councils of which there are 164 in Dorset; and community safety, which includes community safety patrols up to West Bexington, Weymouth, and Portland.

Cllr George Dunn enquired as to the overlap between her portfolio and the work of PCC David Sidwick. Cllr Beddow noted the overlap and mentioned that her and PCC Sidwick both sat on the Strategic Rural Crime Reduction Board, but contrasted the strategic team and the operational team, telling CPC that she largely works with the operational team on the council which liaises with the police day-to-day. She told CPC that this year, the Crime and Safety Partnership are focusing on antisocial behaviour and safety, in particular night-time safety whether rural or otherwise.

Cllr Beddow commented that Dorset Council performed well in waste services for a largely rural authority, noting that in this particular area, urban authorities had an advantage as the longer distances involved in rural authorities typically implied larger costs. She told CPC that just over 3% of waste and recycling in Dorset last year went to landfill with all other waste repurposed. She added that the bulk of this remains within the county, though some does go to northern Wales.

Cllr Beddow told CPC that her portfolio also includes communities-focused work, such as Homes for Ukraine, Cost of Living work, and cultural work. She noted that Dorset has a strong cultural offer and mentioned that Dorset Council funds the Arts Development Community, which she noted was a unique relationship, as no other council has a dedicated company charged with delivering cultural strategy.

3. General signage and road management – for example problems of illegal parking at Seatown.

Cllr George Dunn brought to Cllr Beddow's attention the issue of seasonal illegal parking in Seatown, who responded that her personal experience at the location as well as her experience with Lyme Regis has left her familiar with the issue. Noting that it is a problem for local residents, Cllr George Dunn asked Cllr Beddow how best CPC could address this issue.

Cllr Beddow agreed with the importance of the issue and compared it with the issues of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and illegal overnight camping facing residents of West Lulworth that were discussed at their most recent Parish Council meeting to which she was in attendance. She commented that TROs can be a blunt instrument to attempt to address the issue of overnight camping and illegal parking; while they can discourage (though not entirely solves) camping and illegal parking), they can also affect negatively residents of the area who can be left without legal overnight parking, and it was difficult to find the appropriate balance. She noted that this issue was particularly acute in Chideock which has limited parking facilities.

4. Noting her lack of expertise on the issue and suggesting that CPC may be interested in work done by Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Beddow told the meeting that West Lulworth had attempted to address the issue by doing a walk-through with Community Highways officers to discuss various measures. One such measure that Cllr Beddow noted was introducing marked bays, however she commented that this too was a blunt instrument and also gave rise to issues regarding enforcement and policing.

Cllr Beddow asked CPC if a walk-through with a Community Highways officer had been conducted in Chideock. CPC responded that one had been done with focus on the issue of access relating to Duck Street into Sea Hill Lane due to the narrow roads often receiving large vehicles such as campervans and vans servicing the Spar in Seatown, but not to address the issue of parking at Seatown. Cllr Beddow asked what the outcome of the walk-through as it related to those matters was; CPC responded that the conclusion was that there was not much that could be done.

Returning to the issue of parking at Seatown, Cllr Downes noted that there was an existing order relating to seasonal parking at Seatown beach during May through September, and that the issue was the lack of enforcement. He told the meeting that CPC had been told that enforcement teams would stop at the beach on the way from Lyme Regis to Bridport but CPC's perception is that this does not happen, and noted that were an enforcement officer to do so, they would not be able to remain for any extended period of time. He commented that the issue is exacerbated by the presence of the large carpark owned by Palmers Brewery, as the presence of cars at this car park induce other drivers

into the general area and subsequently park along open spaces at the beach. Cllr George Dunn noted that this was legal out of season, but illegal during the season to which the conversation related. Cllr Mick Downes informed the meeting that there was a record of a child injury when cars tried parking at the beach due to the large number of children playing at the beach in the summer and the convoluted flows of traffic as visitors attempt to park in spaces that are proscribed during the summer season. He reiterated that the legal instruments are in place to address these issues, and that his concern was regarding the lack of enforcement.

Cllr George Dunn asked Cllr Beddow about the possibility of width restrictions, with Cllr Downes adding that in previous years the size of vehicles – and in particular, the vehicles of tourists and visitors – was just about reasonable, but this year it seems that they have increased in size and are now causing issues. Cllr Beddow responded that this would be a possibility; this would require application for a TRO and an associated consultation. Cllr Downes suggested that given the increasing size of vehicles, it may be appropriate to find alternatives. Cllr Beddow asked what alternatives there are. Cllr Downes suggested that if there is appropriate access to the campsite for its own caravans through Doghouse Lane (noting that there are land ownership issues), then it may be feasible to use this route also for other traffic, rather than Mill Lane and Sea Hill Lane. Cllr Beddow responded that if the land is privately owned then there can be no compulsion on the owner to allow such use, but that a conversation with the owner could be had. She suggested that it may be worth corresponding with Highways to get a recommendation, and if they find that there is this issue and they have this recommendation, this may be useful in discussions with the owner. She compared the situation to that of Lulworth, which includes Lulworth Estate which is also privately owned. She noted that the community does not wish to prevent visitors as the area benefits from the success of the site providing youth employment, but rather that they wish for there to be management of the situation, giving the examples of COVID volunteer groups to marshal people and enforce one-way systems. Cllr Beddow asked CPC what their relationship was with WDLH, suggesting that if the relationship is not entirely positive, it may be useful to involve Highways officers in discussions as they can be seen as a neutral mediating party.

Cllr Beddow told CPC that she will send an email to ensure that enforcement brings attention to Seatown, while noting that there are few enforcement officers. Cllr Anna Dunn asked if such officers were uniformed; Cllr Beddow confirmed that this was the case. Cllr Anna Dunn mentioned that during the holiday season, double parking can cause gridlock, and noted that in such situations WDLH have in the past sent people down to make traffic flow one-way through Doghouse Lane to relieve traffic.

CPC noted that they had received complaints of visitors driving down Mill Lane (already difficult due to the lack of passing points) who have not taken notice of

walkers, been abusive, and honked horns, and told Cllr Beddow that this had to stop. Cllr Downes noted that half of this road is a designated highway D-class road, but the second half becomes a bridleway, the ownership of which is in dispute. Cllr Beddow told CPC she would follow this up with the appropriate parties.

Cllr Beddow spoke about the difficulty of appropriate fines for violating TROs and PSPOs, noting that for some visitors from areas like London, the cost of the fine for illegal parking in these areas is approximately the cost of parking in London. She informed CPC that Dorset Council have been told that they can increase fines for parking violations and fly-tipping, but noted that a consideration that conflicted with the upward pressure of creating a deterrent effect is the likelihood of payment; if people are unable or unwilling to pay, this will entail going to court, which is costly for the council. She reiterated that she would follow up on enforcement teams, noting that as enforcement teams are not able to permanently patrol the area, enforcement must work by creating uncertainty in when enforcement teams will arrive so that individuals are incentivised to act as though they will arrive during their stay.

Cllr George Dunn told Cllr Beddow that CPC lacked evidence of drivers being abusive and that the Parish Council has requested that residents collect registration numbers when incidents occur for the purpose of records. Cllr Beddow responded that she is personally aware of the issue having grown up in the centre of West Lulworth. She therefore understands that the situation can get to a point where frustration leads to weariness, and hence not making a record of every issue. She also recognised that this commitment can be of disproportionate benefit to people getting about their day, and as such, Dorset Council understands that lack of evidence does not imply that the issue does not exist.

5. Problems of general enforcement – dog fouling and “No dogs on Seatown Beach May – September”

Cllr George Dunn raised the issue of dog fouling at Seatown Beach which he noted was privately owned. He informed Cllr Beddow that no dogs were allowed on the beach – or any part of the beach – for certain months of the year, but that this was not enforced. He commented that it was not easy to erect effective signage communicating this prohibition as the signage would have to be erected on fencing owned by Palmers. It was mentioned that there are signs, but not in suitable places to allow for enforcement. He said, therefore, that Dorset Council had to say what locations would be appropriate for signage. Cllr Beddow responded that she was able to action that. She asked about the origin of the PSPO; Cllr Downes responded that this was put in place by Dorset Council after the previous consultation on PSPOs.

Cllr Beddow expressed her belief that if dog-owners were to clear up their dog litter, this would not be an issue, and told CPC that she understood from her

experiences at beaches local to her that this was an issue that needed to be addressed. She noted that the team leader who deals with these issues was Janet Moore, who she described positively. She suggested that it was likely the enforcement services should have more officers, but noted that budget constraints were a factor, and that Dorset Council must make sure they are appropriately balancing enforcement and policy development – hence the current consultation regarding PSPOs. She noted that some Parish Councils have opted out of PSPOs as these parishes have only a small amount of greenspace in their village centres and these represented the only places that dogs could be exercised off-lead. She expressed her belief that it would be useful for Ms Moore to look at the issue of signage. She asked whether Palmers were opposed to large signs communicating the prohibition; Cllr George Dunn gave his perception that this had been made clear to the Parish Council previously, Cllr Downes noted that there exists permission for a sign at the entrance to the car park informing people about pollution in the river. He added that the campsite nearby allows dogs, and hence visitors with dogs should be able to exercise their dogs here. Cllr Beddow asked if WDLH informs visitors that dogs are prohibited on the beach; Cllr Downes responded that there are signs and expressed his belief that the onus should be on visitors to check using online services whether dogs were allowed on local beaches. Cllr George Dunn told the meeting that two or three people had said to him that it is a pity that a similar scheme to Charmouth cannot be replicated whereby the beach is partitioned into sections that allow dogs and sections that prohibit dogs, but noted that as the beach is privately owned, the Parish Council and Dorset Council had no formal say on such arrangements. Cllr Beddow encouraged CPC to respond to the ongoing PSPO consultation, so as to help the efforts of Ms Moore.

Cllr Beddow assured CPC that she would discuss these issues with Ms Moore, noting that for both enforcement of the PSPO relating to Seatown and enforcement of illegal parking might improve with encouragement. She also suggested that regarding the discussion relating to sectioning the beach, it might be useful if Ms Moore came to visit the site. Cllr Anna Dunn told Cllr Beddow that action must be taken before October as dogs are allowed on the beach after that time; Cllr Beddow assured CPC that action would be taken well before then.

6. Questions

Cllr Downes brought up the topic of mobile homes and the associated disposal of sewage, describing the modern and older methods. He told the meeting that having looked online, he found that the nearest facilities for emptying such tanks were at Bridport Recycling and at Newlands in Charmouth. Noting the volume of visitors at the Golden Cap site, he asked what these visitors do with the blackwater (that is, sewage waste). Cllr Beddow responded that she does not know off the top of her head but she will be able to find out. Cllr Downes asked if it might be the case that visitors to Golden Cap mistakenly believe that

the correct method of disposal is emptying tanks into the drainage systems on or near the site. He added the context that WRAG had been measuring high levels of faecal matter at times that were not corresponding to times of storm overflows. Cllr Beddows assured CPC that she should be able to get answers on this matter as there should be licencing and other documentation.

7.

Cllr Downes gave the example of the campsite near Doghouse Lane, which he described as quite small. He told the meeting that the drainage system there is comprised of a single manhole cover, and said that if one lifts the wooden cover, the only signage indicates that one should not dispose of nappies in that system, but that there is a lack of notification regarding disposal of other materials which would have harmful environmental impacts. Cllr Beddow asked if tankers are ever seen going on site to collect waste – Cllr Downes responded that he was unsure but noted that the site have a mains station and pumping system for caravans on site that is linked into the proper sewage system. Cllr Beddow told CPC that as before, she should be able to identify the method of waste disposal the site uses.

8. Cllr Downes noted that PCC Sidwick regards noise pollution as antisocial behaviour. Cllr Beddows asked CPC if it is interested in a noise camera – Cllr Downes responded in the affirmative. She told the meeting that she had a meeting with PCC Sidwick recently at which they had discussed a small budget for pilot schemes for noise cameras for six or seven spots. She informed CPC that she would be meeting with PCC Sidwick again in three weeks and could raise CPC's interest to him and told the meeting that CPC had been placed on the list of parishes for the scheme. She then asked whether Chideock had implemented a Community Speed Watch (an exercise whereby if a driver is spotted exceeding the speed limit, they receive letters of warning and a house visit depending on the number of previous violations). Cllr Anna Dunn informed Cllr Beddow that Chideock had a Community Speed Watch in the past, but Dorset Police and CPC disagreed on appropriate locations for the exercise. Cllr Beddows informed CPC of a pilot scheme using an automated camera system but suggested that if the Community Speed Watch had not been effective in the past, then a noise camera may be a more useful measure to address the issue of noise pollution. Cllr George Dunn asked what the financial arrangements for these schemes would be. Cllr Beddow responded that PCC Sidwick's budget and that of the Dorset Council would be used to purchase the automated community speed watch cameras initially to then be shared by Parish and Town Councils in Dorset to trial the effectiveness of such a system in their areas so as to determine whether they would wish to purchase one for themselves. Cllr George Dunn confirmed his interest in these schemes, and CPC instructed the Clerk to draft an email to Cllr Beddow expressing CPC's interest in both pilot schemes.

9. Cllr Anna Dunn noted that during COVID, an experiment was conducted dropping the speed limit on Chideock Hill to 30 mph. She noted that air pollution

in this time was measured to be decreasing but argued that this was due to reduced traffic due to restrictions in movement during lockdowns. Noting that the 30-mph limit was now in place and enforced due to roadworks, she asked for confirmation that the diffusion tubes near the site were working and currently being monitored. Cllr Beddow told CPC that she would ask Ms Moore about this and asked CPC which group manages the diffusion tubes; she was told that National Highways had installed them, and that they were managed by Dorset Council, though noted that at the last meeting with Dorset Council, they were unable to find the mean average over the year, and hence CPC did not have the most recent figures. Cllr Beddows concurred with Cllr Anna Dunn's concern regarding the impact of speed limits on pollution. She assured CPC that Chideock was on the radar of Dorset Council, and she finds herself regularly discussing the village with Cabinet and officers. She reiterated that after the meeting she would follow up on the actions discussed and stressed that she was eager to get things moving on the pilot schemes discussed. Cllr Anna Dunn asked to confirm that if it is found during the roadworks that air pollution has increased that there is a mechanism to revert the limit. Cllr Beddow said she was unsure, but that they would certainly try. She told CPC that the purpose of air quality monitoring is to reduce pollution, and hence she could not see why Dorset Council would not share CPC's interest in reverting the speed limit in this eventuality.

Cllr Beddow told CPC that they were able to email her at any time with their issues. CPC thanked Cllr Beddow for her attendance.

10. The meeting closed at 10:36 am.

Action	Responsible individual	Item	Notes
Write to Cllr Laura Beddow to confirm CPC's interest in participating in the pilot schemes for noise cameras and the automated community speed-watch.	Clerk	5	As with all correspondence, upon drafting, the item will be circulated among CPC for approval/amendments.