LITTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting
held on 4th November 2026 at 6pm at Litton Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr Saxby in the Chair
Cllrs Gregory & Howe

IN ATTENDANCE: G Turner, Clerk

3234 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors Brunt & Rooke.

3235 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - none.

3236 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Nine members of the public were present.

3237 MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED FOLLOWING THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS - There were no agenda items that required the exclusion of members of the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1.

3238 TO CONSIDER A FORMAL OBJECTION RECEIVED REGARDING THE COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION TO REMOVE THE WHITEBEAM TREE ON LITTON DALE VILLAGE GREEN (MINUTE 3169) - INCLUDING THE MATTERS RAISED IN RELATION TO ARBORICULTURAL ADVICE, VISUAL AMENITY, BIODIVERSITY, REPLACEMENT TREE PLANTING, PARKING IMPACTS AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ON THE CONSERVATION AREA -

The Chairman explained that Councillors had convened the meeting to discuss concerns raised about the Whitebeam tree located on Litton Village Green. Members of the public were invited to address the Council.

The Council clarified that no external request or proposal had been made to remove the tree. Consideration of the tree had arisen solely through the Council's ongoing programme of tree inspection and maintenance.

Members of the public raised a number of concerns, including:

- Whether the Council had obtained sufficiently independent professional advice regarding the condition of the tree.
- Whether the tree could be retained through crown reduction, staking, bracing or other management techniques rather than removal.
- The ecological and biodiversity value of the tree and the impact of any potential loss.
- Concerns that the tree had been leaning for many years and questions as to why intervention had not been considered earlier.
- The importance of retaining mature trees given wider concerns about climate change.
- The potential loss of habitat and the length of time it would take for any replacement tree to achieve a similar ecological value.

During the discussion, a member of the public reported having received advice that the tree was safe. No written report or supporting evidence was presented to the Council.

In response, the Council explained that:

- The tree had formed part of the Council's wider tree management programme.
- Observations made by councillors had been discussed with professional tree contractors during routine inspections.
- Professional advice received indicated that the increasing lean of the tree may be attributable to prevailing winds and ground conditions.
- Concerns had been raised regarding the adequacy of the root system and the potential for root failure.
- The Council had a responsibility to consider public safety and its duty of care in managing trees on land under its control.
- Any formal application for works to the tree would require approval from the Peak District National Park Authority, which would provide an independent assessment before any works could proceed.

The Council further advised that:

- The current position was based on professional advice received from the Council's appointed tree contractor.
- No final decision to remove the tree had been made by the National Park Authority.
- The contractor would be required to submit the appropriate application together with supporting justification.
- The National Park Authority would determine whether consent should be granted.

The Council confirmed its commitment to replacing the Whitebeam and noted that several saplings had already been planted as part of ongoing biodiversity and habitat enhancement efforts.

Members of the public were advised that they were free to submit their own comments and objections directly to the Peak District National Park Authority should a formal application be made.

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and contributions.

It was noted that when considering the original resolution:

- The Council had acted upon professional advice from an Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor who recommended its removal having regard to the significant lean and its proximity to the road.
- The removal of the Whitebeam tree would remain subject to the statutory approval process administered by the Peak District National Park Authority.
- The Council would continue to consider both public safety and environmental factors when managing parish-owned trees, especially when they are close to roads and/or on village greens.
- It was acknowledged that a young replacement tree cannot immediately compensate for the carbon storage or habitat value of a mature tree. However, replacement planting would establish a new generation of tree growth whilst maintaining tree cover and enabling future carbon capture on the village green.

Councillors considered whether any new evidence had been presented that would justify revisiting the Council's previous resolution. It was concluded that no substantive new evidence had been provided which would warrant overturning the original decision.

Councillors noted the concerns raised by members of the public but considered that no alternative professional arboricultural evidence had been submitted that would warrant reconsideration of Minute 3169.

RESOLVED: To continue to follow the professional advice received regarding the Whitebeam tree and, if appropriate, support the submission of an application to the Peak District National Park Authority for its consideration. No works shall be undertaken unless the necessary consent is granted.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7pm.