

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHEDZOY PARISH COUNCIL HELD BY TELEPHONE CONFERENCE
CALL ON MONDAY 15TH JUNE 2020 AT 7.30 PM.**

Present: Cllrs Marion Dethier, Brian Gale, Nick Griffiths, Simon Howes (Chairman), Pat Lennard, John Paige and Rodney Young.

Also present: - Cllrs Anthony Betty (SDC) and Liz Perry (SDC).

In attendance: - the Clerk (Chris Fry).

1. **Apologies:** - Cllrs David Hall (SCC).
2. **Minutes** of the previous meeting of 11th May 2020 and the Annual Parish meeting of 25th May 2020 were taken as read, approved and signed.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes (and other various recent meetings):**

a. Coronavirus Report (Local).

John Paige reported that requests for assistance from parishioners has quietened down, and that good neighbourliness was evident throughout the village. He has received requests from people living in isolation who are interested social group meetings just to chat and generally socialise amongst themselves. One such gathering has already been held in the field behind the village hall in fine weather, which was very well received, and a further one is due to take place soon. John said he would like to get hold of a large gazebo in case the weather was showery. These gatherings are primarily aimed at the more vulnerable group of villagers who will be likely to emerge from the lock-down later than others. John said he would be arranging a house to house flyer around the village to advertise this and anyone interested should contact John.

b. Truespeed – current position.

Simon Howes reported that the final connection to households appeared to be well under way with a good number of people already connected and seeing the benefits of high speed broadband. The Truespeed engineers and support team are reported to be proving exceptionally polite and helpful in assisting people with teething problems.

c. Sheep worrying from dogs along the KSD footpath.

The Clerk reported that he had liaised with the Bawdrip Clerk, who had ordered 10 bright yellow dual purpose signs to erect at both entrances to the footpath, covering both sheep worrying and dog fouling.

d. Poor visibility at the Ruggs Drove junction with the Westonzoyland Road.

With the verges on either side of the junction now having been cut back, it was generally agreed that the poor visibility issue has been improved. The Chairman suggested that any future problems should be advised to SCC Highways via the Clerk.

e. Earmarked funds for the eventual Churchyard extension enclosure.

This topic relates to the balance of the Cambridge Council Easy Access account held by the Parish Council (£12372.04). As requested at the previous meeting, the Clerk presented a report based on his knowledge of the subject as follows:-

“In the early 1990’s, and in recognition of the eventual need to provide additional room for burials when the churchyard becomes full, the Oxford University Trust offered to gift a strip of land behind the churchyard to the Parochial Church Council (PCC), so long as the PCC covered the costs of the transaction. In full awareness that, to accept such a gift, the PCC would be responsible for the upkeep of the land, they declined the offer, which was subsequently made to the parish council, who were pleased to accept. The legal costs of approximately £650 were paid to Messrs Barringtons in due course.

A condition which was included in the transfer deed states that the new land must be enclosed by (at least) a stock proof fence, with a gated entrance. The “clapper” stiles in the churchyard are to remain in place.

The Land Registry Title number of the parcel of land is ST 91758 with the Clerk holding a copy of the Land Registry Title plan.

On the 8th April 1993 an Agreement was signed between the Parish Council and Mr D A Gillard, creating a Licence for Mr Gillard to farm the land and keep it in good condition and repair, with due provision that the land would be surrendered back to the Parish Council within six months of the tenant being given notice of the land being required for burial ground use.

Back in the early 1990’s it was estimated that the churchyard would become full many years ago, but there is at this present time still considerable space to fill. In the ensuing years since the above transactions, the Parish Council has, very sensibly, built up the funds as and when possible, to endeavour to ensure sufficient monies are available for the enclosure work when it is needed”.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his report, noting the importance of recording this for future reference. He suggested that a full minute of the position here should be made for future clarification purposes. All agreed.

f. Moor Drove bridleway dilapidated gates.

Simon Howes reported that these gates have been renewed on a “like for like” basis at the expense of the landowner and that the drove appeared to be

accessible for use as a bridleway. He recommended that the matter now be treated as resolved. All verbally agreed.

g. Chedzoy Strategic Plan.

Simon Howes said that the draft document which had been drawn up by John Paige some time ago, should be deferred until after lockdown when a subcommittee may be formed to carry the project forward in the appropriate manner.

All verbally agreed.

h. Grass verge in Manor Road at the junction with Front Street.

The Clerk reported that the poor state of this verge was raised once again by a concerned villager, and that SDC Clean Surroundings has inspected it, only to confirm it does not fall within its responsibility, but they were consulting with the County Council and we await developments.

i. Chedzoy litter pick 7th March – report.

The Chairman summed up the position. The litter pick had been a great success and in fine weather with thanks to a large group of volunteers who had filled a significant number of refuse sacks.

The aim is to make this an annual event in early March each year.

j. Poor water pressure.

The Clerk received a letter from Wessex Water some considerable time ago, in which it apologised for the problems experienced in the village, which it had taken steps to rectify. The Chairman checked verbally with each councillor who each confirmed the problem appeared to have been resolved.

k. Trees in Somerset – Conference report - January 29th 2020.

The Clerk reported as follows:-

The County of Somerset has a comparatively low density of trees when county figures are examined. The low sea level of much of our county renders it prone to regular flooding which is often severe.

Following on from the “Somerset Wood” inspirational initiative, in which parishes throughout the County were invited to sponsor the maintenance of trees planted in memory of the fallen in the Great War of 1914-1918, there is a drive on to identify suitable areas of land which would benefit from tree planting. We are all aware that this can help mitigate the effects of flooding.

Some 50+ delegates attended the January conference at Monkton Heathfield, which was addressed by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory group (FWAG), on the many benefits to be gained from such actions as letting hedges grow out and leaving verges uncut.

The training events which were planned throughout 2020 have been disrupted by the pandemic emergency but they will be re-arranged when possible.

For more information go to the web site at:-

www.reimaginingthelevels.org.uk

The Chairman suggested that the matter of tree planting was of importance to the community and should be considered for inclusion in the Parish Plan in due course. All agreed.

4. Somerset County Councillor's report – none:

5. Sedgemoor District Councillor's report. Anthony Betty reported as follows:

- a. **Business grants:** - eventual demand exceeded supply.
- b. **Car parking charges:-** these are being reinstated throughout Sedgemoor with special dispensations for health service personnel.
- c. **On line survey on electric vehicles:** - this survey closes soon.

Liz Perry reported as follows: -

- a. **Non-essential shops** in Bridgwater opened today.
- b. **Recycling centres** are increasing opening hours and restrictions based on allowing odd / even car registrations on alternate days has been lifted.

6. Planning. No new applications.

Proposed Solar Park (not yet submitted for planning).

Simon Howes gave a brief outline of his understanding of this proposal, saying the only virtual meeting he had been invited to attend had been simply an "initial awareness" session and should not be considered as formal community consultation. Anthony Betty continued by saying the proposal appears to have stalled, with the drainage board yet to comment. The relevant land owners have not reached agreement with Enso Energy regarding use of the required land, which is a necessary first step, and the promised "community engagement" and house to house flyer to all households in the three parishes involved has yet to happen. The Clerk said he had

failed on two occasions to obtain paper copies of the proposal for distribution to Cllr. Brian Gale and Pat Lennard who do not have full internet access.

All agreed that we can only await developments and be ready to engage in a formal community engagement process if and when this is initiated by the developer.

7. CORRESPONDENCE.

a. Poor state of the footpath approaching the motorway footbridge.

A parishioner has raised this issue with the Clerk. It has been reported to the Clerk of Bridgwater Without parish council as this falls in their area. – Information only.

b. Hinkley Point work on the T Pylons from Bridgwater to Loxton.

The Clerk reported on a letter he received from the National Grid (allegedly sent to all households in the parish) which confirms that although no pylons are to be sited in Chedzoy, work on the route from Horsey Level to Loxton, south of the Mendip hills (from where the line goes underground), will involve work on the A39 close to the parish. Later on in the programme the existing WPD pylons will be removed.

Due to the current lockdown the planned public information events and face to face parish council briefings have been postponed, but they will be rescheduled as and when restrictions on social distancing and public gatherings are lifted. In the meantime a community portal for each parish on the route of the overhead line has been set up, which is accessible from the homepage, as follows: -

www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk/inyourea

c. Bus shelter tree problem.

Cllr. Rodney Young reported on a problem drawn to his attention by a concerned parishioner about the berries from a yew tree at the bus shelter, which the school children step on and carry a mess around.

Following a discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should check that the tree in question is not protected by any Tree Preservation Order (TPO), and Rodney said he would make enquiries about possible remedial work.

This to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Cllr Marion Dethier kindly has since reported that there does not appear to be a TPO in place.

d. "Your Somerset" magazine distribution.

The Clerk expressed his appreciation to John Paige in arranging the speedy house to house distribution of a special edition of the publication with information of specific relevance to the Pandemic. John said he was assisted by a team of several villagers.

e. Playing Field plans to reopen.

The Clerk reported on an email received from the Chair of the Playing Field committee about plans for the eventual reopening of the playing field. The sum of £4000 has been raised for the installation of a new fence along the frontage of the field, including the incorporation a self-closing gate (which should be dog proof). The fence will be one metre in height. They are appreciative of the Parish Council covering the grass cutting costs.

The committee members have an ongoing problem of having to transfer the contents of the litter bin at the site to their own household rubbish for collection, and the fact that there is invariably dog mess amongst it. They are asking for parish council support in an approach to SDC for a dog fouling bin to be installed. The parish council is only too aware that any such bin would require parish council funding for installation and would be subject to annual charges of around £400 per bin. This question is periodically raised within the parish council and the cost has been (and still is) not within the parish council's budget. It is hoped that the new fence will prevent fouling in the playing field and it was suggested that new signage could be included in the installation to remind dog owners to take their mess home with them.

The Clerk was asked to communicate this with the Chair of the Playing Fields Committee.

8. Matters arising from the correspondence..

None.

9. FINANCE

Balances after allowing for all payments due:-

Lloyds Bank current account: -	£ 6025.37
" " " "	£ 2.48.
Cambridge BS Easy Access	£12372.04.

The Clerk pointed out that the second tranche of the 2020/2021 Precept - £4250 – due to be received later in the year

Two cheques were issued as follows:-

No 692 £ 121.95 Payee HMRC (paye April/May/June plus £7.55 P11D surcharge for Clerk's mileage).

No 693 £ 152.47 “ MR CN Fry (net June salary).

10. Any other business and date of next meeting.

No “Any other business”.

Date of next meeting – Monday 20th July 2020.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

