

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHEDZOY PARISH COUNCIL HELD BY TELEPHONE  
CONFERENCE CALL ON MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021 AT 7.30 PM.**

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

**Also present:** - Cllr. Anthony Betty (SDC).

**In attendance:** - The Clerk (Chris Fry) and Ian Medland (Footpath Officer).

1. **Apologies:** - Cllrs. Nick Griffiths and David Hall (SCC).

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were taken as read, agreed and signed.

3. **Matters arising from the minutes:** -

**a. Coronavirus Report.**

John Paige reported that demand for assistance was now tailing off. Personally he is dealing with two parishioners.

**b. Replacement of footpath stile behind the Church.**

The Clerk reported that the two landowners had now agreed and the work can now go ahead.

**c. Maintenance of the Pig Lane outfall ditch.**

The Clerk reported that SCC highways has confirmed that the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) have in the past carried out maintenance of this outfall ditch. The pipe across the field remains the responsibility of the riparian landowner. An email enquiring details of any planned maintenance work has been sent to the IDB and a reply is awaited from the area supervisor.

The Chairman said it would be helpful to have any details of the village drainage system and asked the Clerk to see if drain location plans could be obtained.

The Clerk will make enquiries.

**d. Flooding in Manor Road.**

**1. Manor Road outfall ditch.**

A letter to the residents of Higher Road has resulted in two of the four getting their portion of the ditch in Manor Road cleared. It was agreed that more time should be given for the others to comply.

The Clerk was asked to monitor the situation.

**2. Fly tipping garden waste in outfall ditches.**

A letter has been sent to a resident in the Manor Road area about this problem. Following a discussion it was decided that the Clerk should send similar ones to more local residents as it seems there is more than one offender.

e. **Yew tree at the bus shelter.**

Rodney Young has obtained a competitive quotation from SDC Clean Surroundings or remedial work to be carried out as follows: -

With the yew tree growing close to the bus shelter and potentially damaging the boundary wall, with the limb on the property side (previously reduced some ten years ago) is now showing vigorous growth. To reduce the height by 60% and low growth over the road by approximately three metres, reducing other extended limbs to reshape.

**Price to include the removal of waste from site and organising the shutdown of power: -**

**£679 plus vat.**

They have pointed out yew and other dense conifers are popular nesting trees for doves and pigeons, given the density of the crown, it would be difficult to be certain that no nests were present. Given that power shutdown of the overhead cables would be required to carry out the work on the tree, they suggest that the job is booked in outside of the bird nesting season, to minimise the chances of disturbing active nests.

A discussion took place. The Clerk said the cost could be met from reserves (this has not specifically been budgeted for). A motion to proceed with the quote was proposed by Rodney Young and seconded by John Paige. All agreed.

Rodney confirmed he would accept the quote as presented on behalf of the Parish Council.

f. **Unitary Authority proposals.**

The Clerk reported on the recent subcommittee meeting, saying the general consensus had been that there was insufficient detail available to allow a joint parish council response to be made to the consultation. This applies to both the SCC "One Somerset" and the District Councils' "Stronger Somerset" proposals. The Chairman suggested that councillors or other individuals with any views on the matter may wish to lodge their own comments before the cut-off date of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

It now seems likely that there will be a local referendum on the issue.

4. **County Councillor's report:** - None.

5. **District Councillors' reports:** - **Anthony Betty reported as follows:** -

a. **Full SDC Council meeting.**

Anthony has been selected to serve on the development committee along with Liz Perry. This means that he will now have to exclude himself from any planning discussions at the parish council meetings.

b. **Solar Park.**

He said that planning assessments were being finalised. He presumes it is still the case that the applicants will eventually be leaflet dropping to all residents of the

three parishes concerned, Bridgwater Without, Chedzoy and Westonzoyland.

The matter is still very much in the embryonic stage.

## 6. Planning:

### a. Former Hanham's Yard development objection.

The Clerk reported that a householder of a neighbouring property, with objections, had expressed the view that her chance to bring her objections to the Parish Council before the meeting when it was considered were dashed because the usual local "planning notice" had not been displayed near the site. The parishioner has been advised that the Parish Council plays no part in the erection of these notices. It is understood that the District Council normally erects them on receipt of the application, but under Covid-19 restrictions it is left to the applicant to display them. The Parish Council has discharged its duty by ensuring that the agendas of the normal Parish Council meeting, including the meeting in question, had been displayed both on the PC web site and in paper form around the village.

In any event the District Council had received details of the neighbour's objections before the closing date for comments to be made, and she has advised the Clerk that she had also spoken with the planning case officer.

### b. Development outside the village's development boundary.

Concerns have been raised (between meetings) by a Front Street resident, whose new neighbour had advised him that he is planning to build a house in the field at the back of his house. The author of the email was under the impression that there was a boundary line that building was not permitted beyond. He enquired if such a planning policy was in place in Chedzoy. The Clerk sent an email to SDC planning department, who replied attaching a copy of the settlement boundary for the parish, which can be viewed on the interactive policies map: -

<https://webmaps.sedgemoor.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=local> plan 11 32.

The settlement boundary defines the built-up area of the settlement and, as the parishioner suggests development within the settlement boundary is generally supported. There are some circumstances where the Local Plan exceptionally allows development outside the settlement boundary, but only in certain circumstances and only where relevant Local Plan criteria are met.

The information was passed to the parishioner appropriately.

### c. Planning Breach at West Moor House, Ward Lane, Chedzoy Bridgwater TA7 8RN.

The Clerk reported a totally satisfactory result to the planning breach, with the parishioners having now moved into their new home and the mobile home having been removed together with the business advertising boards having also gone. The Clerk reported that the residents in question had responded positively throughout the process and their cooperation had been noted.

**d. Solar Park.**

See District councillors' report (item 5) above.

**7. Correspondence.**

**a. Drain Jetting in Chedzoy Lane.**

The Clerk has been advised that the regular periodic jetting of drains in this area will be increased to every two years instead of every four years with the next visit due to take place within the next three months, although this remains under the control of Somerset County Council.

**b. Local Authority meetings.**

A letter about the resumption of face to face local authority meetings on or after 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 has been received from the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government. The current special legislation allowing for remote meetings expires on 7<sup>th</sup> May and extending the legislation beyond that date would require more primary legislation.

After careful consideration, and bearing in mind the current heavy legislative programme, it has been decided not to extend the powers. Therefore it appears that face to face meetings will be re-starting, and the next Parish Council meeting, on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 will be in the village hall, with relevant Covid-19 regulations.

The updated guidance can be found at: -

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings)

**c. Repairing vehicles on the highway and ditch arisings on the verge.**

An email was recently received from a parishioner concerned at the ditch arisings left on the verge after the outfall ditch clearing in Manor Road, and the repair of vehicles in the Manor Drive area. After making enquiries the Clerk received a reply from SCC highway which confirmed the following: -

"In principle it is acceptable to place ditch arisings onto the verge, but if it produced litter or impedes maintenance of the verge then it would not be acceptable.

The District Council administers the Environmental Protection Act which, amongst other things does cover the selling and maintenance of vehicles for business purposes from the highway.

If anything is occurring on the highway which causes an obstruction then the police should investigate. If the concern is damage to the highway then SCC highways would investigate.

The information was passed to the parishioner.

**d. Footpath Officer's report.**

There is no formal report this month.

Ian Medland (Footpath Officer) attended the meeting and he thanked Marion Dethier for trying to correct a parishioner's misconception on the village Facebook page as to who is responsible for making all the improvements to the local footpath network.

Simon Howes (Chairman) thanked Ian for all the voluntary work he undertakes as Footpath Officer, is having a noticeable impact on local footpaths, and which is greatly appreciated by us all.

**e. Sparkling Sedgemoor.**

The Clerk read out an email about Sedgemoor's Clean Surroundings and Parks department's work in sprucing up the district in readiness for the public to enjoy as the Covid-19 restrictions are eased. The team cuts an average of 1.3 million square metres of grass, over 46,000 plants will be planted, over 100 hanging baskets, 19 flower towers and 30 planters will be looked after and watered throughout Sedgemoor.

**f. Easing of Covid-19 restrictions.**

The steady easing of Covid-19 restrictions is continuing.

**8. Matters arising from the correspondence. – None.**

**9. Finance.**

Balances after allowing for all items issued:

Lloyds Bank current account	£ 9580.67.
"    "    deposit    "	£ 2.48.
Cambridge E A    "	£12389.43 (earmarked funds).

Five cheques to issue: -

No 723	£216.40	payee	CN Fry (April net salary)
No 724	£91.61	"    "	(expenses).
No 725	£120.00	"	DM Payroll Services (payroll 2021/22).
No 726	£135.00	"	CN Fry (Bus shelter wall repair – to Mr A Fry).
No 727	£784.61	"	Came and Co (Ecclesiastical Insce 2021/22).

The first tranche of this year's Precept (£4000) has been received.

**a. Accounting year-end procedures – Adoption of Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021.**

This annual requirement is the first of the audit procedures. The Chairman confirmed the Clerk's view that the Parish Council complies with its statutory obligations in all respects and continues to exercise comprehensive control of all financial activity and transactions.

A motion to adopt the Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021 was proposed by Rodney Young and seconded by Marion Dethier. All agreed.

The form will now be signed by the Chairman and Clerk (Responsible Financial

Officer).

The expenditure on the bus shelter wall repair was authorised at the last meeting.

The Annual accounts and further audit procedures will follow.

10 Any **other business and date of the next meeting:** -

**Any other business. –**

**a. HRH Prince Philip – condolence message sent on-line (HM the Queen)**

The Clerk has previously suggested the idea of sending a loyal message of condolence to HM the Queen, following the sad death of Prince Philip – Duke of Edinburgh. This had been agreed by all and the Clerk posted the following message on the Royal web page.

“I should be grateful if you would accept the heartfelt condolences of Chedzoy Parish Council on the sad occasion of the death of HRH Prince Philip – Duke of Edinburgh.

The whole Royal family are in our thoughts and prayers at this time of sadness and grief.”

**b. Bus shelter garden wall – condition report.**

Following the removal of the bulk of the tree from the dividing wall (with School House), the contractor confirmed to the Clerk that the wall is in a safe condition, but that further work would be needed in the years to come. The neighbouring householder is happy with the outcome.

The trellis will be restored when the garden is planted later on in the year.

**c. Letter to farmers re mud on the road throughout the village.**

Following the last meeting a letter has been delivered to all the farmers in the village, reminding them of their responsibilities to clear up mud dropped on the road by both farm traffic and livestock, and the consequences for road safety.

One of the recipients took offence and derided the Parish Council on the village Facebook page. The view was taken that this is unreasonable as the Parish Council continues to go to some effort to resolve the ongoing problems of mud on the highway. It was felt that we have acted properly and in good faith, but further delays in the County Council clearing the drains are beyond the Parish Council's control.

**d. Climate Change Grant – release of monies.**

Steph Bryan is liaising with the grant committee secretary to agree a schedule for the release of the grant monies when it is required..

**e. Sibley's Barn – complaints about rubbish and recycling.**

The Clerk reported on complaints made about mess caused by the rubbish and recycling at Sibley's Barn, which is now used to house EDF workers from abroad. His step mother Lives at Sibley's Farm (next door to the barn), and she has confirmed

that, apart from this problem, she has no other issues of concern. The Clerk met the caretaker, Nigel, who is very keen to remedy the situation.

Following a discussion the Clerk was asked to let Marion Dethier have Nigel's telephone number so she can liaise on the Parish Council's behalf on the matter.

**f. Bus shelter garden – general poor state.**

The Clerk met with the garden contractors to discuss the general dismal state of the bus shelter garden since severe pruning of overgrown shrubs has taken place. He was assured that there is a plan to replant the area and to use wood chippings when the yew tree is cut back, as a ground covering material. The tree surgery will take place later in the year, after the bird nesting season.

The Clerk was asked to monitor the situation.

**g. Village Facebook page – recent contentious comments.**

A general discussion took place about the small number of negative Facebook posts that have appeared recently. It is felt that some parishioners may not appreciate the hard work that the councillors' put in, all on a voluntary basis, and the limits of the Parish Council's powers to act in some areas. Some people may be confused regarding the different boundaries and responsibilities between Parishes. District and County and frustrations are sometimes vented in the wrong direction.

It is felt these incidents are rare and isolated to one or two disgruntled individuals but it was hoped that planned improvements by the current proposed Unitary Authority reorganisation in the county would resolve any outstanding issues.

It was decided to monitor the situation.

**h. Speeding cars in the village.**

Marion Dethier has received complaints about this problem. The Clerk said the matter has been discussed just a little while before Christmas. With a 30 mph speed limit already in place and bearing in mind it was considered prohibitively expensive to install and monitor a speed indicator device, added to the fact that Bawdrip parish council were unable to locate the Speed watch equipment that is shared with Chedzoy, it is clearly not an easy fix.

Following a discussion the Clerk was asked to enquire again about the shared Speed watch equipment, also to request SCC highways to repaint the 30 mph rumble strips in Ward Lane and which have become eroded over time.

The matter will be considered again at the next meeting.

**i. Climate Change project – The enclosure of the churchyard extension.**

Simon Howes said that the Parish Council needs to make a decision on the type of stock proof fencing that is to be installed once the strip of land behind the church is returned to the Parish Council after the current crop is harvested. To this end he suggested a subcommittee be formed to meet at the site of the enclosure so this could be agreed. There is to be a meeting at the site at 9.30am on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April, with Steph Bryan, Simon Howes, Marion Dethier, the Clerk and any other interested councillors, to take matters forward.

The Clerk was asked to invite the churchwarden to attend.

**j. Overgrown hedge in Manor Drive.**

Pat Lennard brought up the problem of an overgrown hedge at the top corner of Manor Drive.

The Clerk was asked to have a word with the householder about it.

**Date of the next meeting: - Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 in the village hall at 7.30 pm.**

**There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.**