

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHEDZOY PARISH COUNCIL HELD BY TELEPHONE
CONFERENCE CALL ON MONDAY 21ST DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM.**

Present: - Cllrs. Marion Dethier, Simon Howes (Chairman), John Paige and Rodney Young.

Also present: - Cllrs David Hall (SCC).

In attendance: - The Clerk (Chris Fry).

1. **Apologies:** - Cllr. Pat Lennard, Nick Griffiths and Brian Gale
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of 15th November 2020 were taken as read, agreed and signed.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes:** -

a. Coronavirus Report (Local).

John Paige reported that he was unaware of any Covid infections in the village. Following the recent introduction of Tier 4 and the tightening of Christmas regulations, a number of festive family get-togethers have had to be cancelled. John has received no new requests for assistance, but regular assistance continues to be given. He is particularly concerned about peoples' mental wellbeing and he will be making visits to the isolated and vulnerable of the village on Christmas Day itself. It is generally accepted that, with the relaxation of Covid rules over Christmas and the spread of the new variant of the virus, rules may well have to be tightened up following the holiday period.

The Chairman thanked John and the team for their continued efforts.

b. Blocked drains: -

1. Outside Temple Farm Chedzoy Lane.

The Clerk reports on the site meeting of 10th December 2020 at 12.30 pm. The attendees were: - Simon Howes, David Hall (SCC), Jeremy Fry (SCC Highways Officer for Sedgemoor), Chris Fry, Judith Denning (adjacent landowner) and Russell Harmes (neighbour).

Both Jeremy Fry and Judith examined the outfall ditches which take the surface water from the storm drains along this stretch of Chedzoy Lane. Jeremy said the water currently standing in the ditches indicated a possible blockage in the outfall and a reduced capacity to cope with the volume of rain water during periods of heavy and/or persistent rain. He said that the landowners were responsible for ensuring these ditches were kept clear and that SCC has jetted the roadside drains in the last couple of months, but he agreed to put in a fresh order for this to be carried out again now. Mrs Denning did not agree that the outfall ditches were any part of the problem, and she left the meeting before the end.

It was noted that it was open to any member of the public to report any highway drainage issues directly to SCC via the website. This address to be provided and posted in the next minutes.

2. Outside Palfrey House Front Street.

Steph Bryant reported to Marion Dethier that in the 10 years she has lived in Palfrey House, she has seen several flooding events, each getting worse than the last. She has suspicions that the Victorian drainage system may have suffered a collapse. She has reported each flooding event to SCC highways, and Lawrence Hackling has arranged for the gullies to be inspected recently and found them to be generally clear of debris. The Outfall ditch taking the water from the drain, is situated some distance away at the end of Pig Lane, and is in need of maintenance. This ditch is the responsibility of Wessex Water and Lawrence has sent a request to Wessex Water that it receives attention.

We await developments.

3. Flooding elsewhere throughout the village.

The Chairman brought up the recent issues of flash flooding in the Manor Road area. The Clerk recalled that some years ago Lawrence Hackling had agreed to take action to improve surface water drainage from Manor Road so long as the outfall ditch was cleared by the relevant householders in Higher Road.

It was agreed that the Clerk and Chairman draft an appropriate letter to be sent to the people concerned in an attempt to move this matter forward.

c. Climate Emergency Fund grant application.

The application has been submitted to SCC online and an acknowledgement received. David Hall pointed out that, with many staff being diverted to deal with the Covid emergency, the response times for the grant applications would be set back.

d. Brush cutter Training and Equipment.

Ian Medland (Footpaths Officer) completed his brush cutter training in mid-November and a new petrol trimmer, PPE and other necessary equipment was delivered to him in early December. Fuel and 2-stroke oil costs will be met by SDC. To save the parish council the cost of employing a contractor, he and his wife Karen spent seventeen hours voluntarily clearing footpath BW 8/14 immediately behind the churchyard wall of rogue cuttings and other ivy and nettles, as well as other garden waste. It took Ian five trips to the tip, using huge plastic bags kindly loaned by Jonathan Dethier, to dispose of the rubbish. He has also removed a lot of thick and stubborn ivy stems and foliage from the wall, which will help reduce further deterioration of the structure.

The Clerk explained that, due in part to a misunderstanding over expenses, together with the desire of the Parish Council to cover Ian's out-of-pocket expenses, a cheque for £19.95 will need to be sanctioned by the Council and issued to Ian to cover fuel costs for the disposal of the waste and for the costs of fixing the light in the former phone box (which Karen Medland now looks after).

e. Speeding Traffic through the Village.

The Clerk outlined a reply from the Bawdrip Parish Clerk to our suggestion of some sort of cost saving collaboration about SIDs (Speed Indicator Devices). Bawdrip hope to fund two solar powered devices from a grant application they have made under the SCC Climate Emergency Fund, but the project is on hold until they hear the outcome

of the application.

The speeding problem in Chedzoy seem to have subsided somewhat recently and the general feeling is that it is caused by vehicles passing through the village rather than by villagers themselves.

Following the Clerk's request, the Bawdrip Parish Clerk is endeavouring to locate the speed gun for the possible use by a revived Chedzoy Speed Watch Team, should the Parish Council decide on that course of action.

f. Footpath Issues.

Ian Medland has submitted his usual regular report, and he is encouraged by improvements to footpath BW 8/14 (which he considers the most neglected of all the footpaths in the village), which runs from the churchyard clapper stile down to Ward Lane. Following various problems Ian identified, neighbours of the path were approached by Chris Fry and the problems have been resolved, with the path levelled of piled up sloping earth in one place, garden waste removed after being thrown over the back fence and a lot of earth to be cleared by another following ground workings. Ian plans to strim it in the near future.

SCC have carried out the following improvements: -

Installation of a fingerpost on the steps Ian cleared in Ward Lane near Penzoy Farm. Doing the same in Front Street by Eastcote and the Old Chapel and in Chedzoy Lane opposite Temple Farm.
Replaced a rotten handrail on a footbridge behind West End Cottages Chedzoy Lane.

Ian has also repaired a wooden fence at the gateway between the church wall and White Heart Cottages. The first new Way marking discs have been fixed here also.

The Chairman expressed the Council's thanks to Ian and Karen for all their hard work and commented that we are seeing some excellent progress with regards to footpaths.

4. County councillor's report. David reported as follows: -

a. Flood risk throughout Somerset.

David reminded the meeting that it was at this time of year in 2013 that persistent heavy rain, coupled with high tides, that caused the terrible floods. We can only hope that is not repeated.

b. Somerset Rivers Authority.

David Hall is the Chairman and the last meeting of the year was held recently, when welcome confirmation was received that the deadline for spending allocated funds from the Local Enterprise Partnership has been extended beyond the former deadline of March 2021.

David concluded by taking questions and advising the meeting that he was at home all over the holiday period should any matters crop up that he can assist with, the Chairman or Clerk could contact him.

5. **District councillor's report:** - None.

6. **Planning:** -

a. **Application number:** 18/20/00007/LR.

Applicants: Mr & Mrs Houlihan.

Location: 24 Higher Road Chedzoy Bridgwater Somerset TA7 8QU.

Proposal: Erection of a first floor extension to the side (NW) elevation, incorporating a change to the main roof and garage roof. Existing single storey mono pitch roof to the front (NE) elevation to be extended.

The Chairman opened the discussion by saying he had reviewed the plans and it appeared that the extension appeared to be modest, the footprint of the dwelling would not be significantly altered by this proposal, and the number of bedrooms is not increasing so there should be no impact on traffic flow. John Paige said it was more a matter for the immediate neighbours who will have been advised on the proposal but no objections had been noted.

A vote resulted in unanimous support for the proposal and the Clerk was asked to send the following comments to SDC planners: -

"The Parish Council of Chedzoy supports this application and has no other comment to make".

b. **Sibleys Barn Front Street.**

Reliable rumours about EDF leasing the property and planning to use it to house up to 19 Hinkley Point workers prompted the Chairman to ask the Clerk to find out more from SDC Planners. Appropriate emails were sent to Stuart Houlihan, but to date no reply has been received. Concern covers such areas as: Covid safety, possible increased traffic congestion and what risk assessment has taken place.

David Hall agreed to contact EDF Community Relations, copying in the Clerk, to find out more.

An email has now been sent to Andrew Cockcroft – Senior Manager at EDF Community Relations, and he has confirmed that he will look into the matter and get back directly to the Clerk.

This will be on the agenda of the next meeting, and a diary note made to check a reply is received.

7. **Correspondence.**

a. **Somerset Waste Partnership Winter Briefing.**

Revised Christmas and New Year collection arrangements are advertised on the notice board.

b. **Somerset Bereavement support Services.**

An email has been received giving details of the Marie Curie free bereavement support service. It is felt particularly important as many people are facing losing a loved one in difficult circumstances.

For more details email:

Caragh.Porter@mariecurie.org.uk or Telephone: 07515133855.

c. Census 2021.

The next 10 year census is due on 21st March 2021 and an email has been received from Jill Loader from the Office for National Statistics, explaining her role in maximising completion rates and generating buy-in by promoting the importance of the census and the need to complete it.

Jill can be contacted at: jill.loader25@field.census.gov.uk

d. Somerset Wood Update.

David Fothergill – Leader of SCC and County Councillor for Monkton and North Curry, stating that 2000 trees have to date been planted in memory of the 11,281 men and women who left Somerset to serve their country in WW1 but sadly did not return. The next two zones for planting have been approved by Somerset West and Taunton Council, and staked out by local volunteers. 1500 more saplings are now being planted – in full compliance of Covid –19 restrictions.

Newly acquired drone footage is available to view on:

www.cfpc.co.uk and www.westmonkton.net

e. Scam Calls.

SDC are warning residents not to be drawn in by an automated telephone message supposedly from HMRC advising that, if you don't ring them back, you face arrest for non-payment of taxes.

John Paige said he had received one of these scam calls.

f. Christmas Rail Travel Arrangements.

GWR are advising that there is a restricted service operating over the holiday period.

Go to: <https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned.engineering/bristol>

g. Climate Emergency Strategy.

The five councils in Somerset have given the green light to implement the recently launched plan for Somerset to go carbon neutral by 2030.

The full strategy can be reviewed at:

www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency

h. Sedgemoor in Tier 2.

A Government poster detailing Tier 2 rules had been placed on the notice board.

i. Sophisticated Email Scam.

Aimed at Parish Clerks, this scam involves an email, supposedly from the Chairman (who can't be contacted and is at a meeting), instructing the Clerk to spend hundreds of pound on Amazon vouchers and to send them the codes. This has been noted.

j. Stronger Somerset poll.

The District Councils are claiming that twice as many residents would back their "Stronger Somerset" plan for a future Unitary Authority reorganisation, than the "One Somerset" plan, backed by the County Council.

k. Mass Covid-19 Vaccination.

Yeovil hospital has been designated as a hub for the mass vaccination roll-out.

8. Matters arising from the correspondence. – None.

9. Finance.

Balances after allowing for all items issued:

Lloyds Bank current account	£	6653.89.
“ “ deposit “	£	2.48.
Cambridge E A “	£	12372.04 (earmarked funds).

Four cheques to issue: -

No 714	£305.14	payee CN Fry	(Dec/Jan net salary).
715	£62.76	“ “	(expenses).
716	£114.40	“ HMRC	(paye Oct/Nov/Dec).
717	£ 19.95	“ I Medland	(out-of-pocket expenses).

Clerk's salary review.

The following statement is from the working group who have concluded their deliberations: -

Subject – Clerk's Pay Review.

At the meeting dated 16/11/2020 the Clerk presented a written request to review his remuneration package as no review had been conducted since 1/4/2015. The Parish Council agreed to appoint Councillors Marion Dethier, Rodney Young and Simon Howes to act as a sub-committee to research and propose a resolution which would be presented to the wider Parish Council for their consideration. The sub-committee has now concluded its research, including detailed discussions with the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC), and makes the following recommendations to the Parish Council.

We propose:

1. An increase in paid hours from 4 to 5 hours per week. This is on the basis of SALC's advice that a parish of our size and complexity would require approximately 22 hours per month to service, and is supported by our Clerk's view of the time required to

carry out his duties.

2. An increase to the hourly rate paid to our current Clerk from £11 (current) to £12.48 (proposed). This is on the basis that our Clerk's responsibilities fall within the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) LC1 level 16 (currently £12.48 per hour and subject to change).
3. That we adopt the NALC national salary award process to inform the Parish Council regarding future annual pay increases. We recommend that this should be initiated by the Clerk at the appropriate review date each year and that the councillors should receive any changes in the published NALC tables for a person at LC1/SPC16 as a recommendation to make any adjustments. Each proposed change would be subject to approval by the sitting council by majority vote and after considering affordability and other relevant factors.
4. Effective date – 1/4/2021.

On behalf of the Chedzoy Parish Council sub-committee set up to review Clerk's pay.

The above resolution was unanimously voted for.

10. Any other business and date of the next meeting.

Any other business. - None

Date of the next meeting Monday 15th February 2021.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.06 pm.