

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHEDZOY PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.30 PM.**

**Present:** - Cllrs. Mary Clothier, Marion Dethier (Chair), Simon Howes and Rodney Young.

**Also present:** - Cllrs. Andy Dingwall and Diogo Rodrigues (SCC) and Cllr. Anthony Betty (SDC).

**In attendance:** - The Clerk (Chris Fry) and Graham Bentley.

- 1. Apologies:** - Cllrs. Russell Harmes and Karen Medland and Liz Perry (SDC).
- 2. Minutes of the last regular meeting of** 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and the planning meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were taken as read, agreed and signed.

**Co-option to fill the Parish Council vacancy.**

Following the resignation of Brian Gale on health grounds, the Clerk contacted SDC Electoral Services department and followed their guidance, advertising the Notice of Vacancy. No request was received for an election within the statutory period and the Clerk was advised by the SDC authorities that the vacancy could be filled by co-option. Just one parishioner came forward, Graham Bentley, and with him being present at this meeting, his co-option was proposed by Mary Clothier, seconded by Simon Howes and unanimously agreed. Graham then completed his Declaration and Acceptance of Office and joined the Parish Council.

The Clerk will now advise SDC Electoral Services appropriately.

Brian Gale sadly passed away earlier this month and his funeral will take place at St Mary's Church in Bridgwater on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March at 11 am.

The Parish Council offers its sincere condolences to Brian's family. His long and rewarding service as a member of the Parish Council over many years was much appreciated by everyone in the village.

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

**a. Footpath Officer's activity.**

Ian Medland has submitted his report of activities carried out since the December meeting. He raised several queries including the matter of maps of the village footpath network not being posted on the PC notice board. The Clerk said these had been removed to allow space for the statutory financial notices to be posted last year, and he confirmed the maps have now been put back up. The problem of the partial collapse of a fence along the narrowest part of the footpath leading from the Church along the rear of the houses in Ward Lane has been inspected by the Clerk and he will now contact the householder about rectifying this, as Ian requested.

Ian also enquired if any progress has been made in the matter of the re-routing of the submerged footpath BW 8/6 at Parchey, following the involvement of the Parish Council earlier this year. In fact the Clerk received an email on the very day of this meeting from Glyn Edwards, soon to be the SCC Footpath officer covering Sedgemoor, requesting background information on the matter. Glyn appears to be somewhat anxious to take this matter on and the Clerk will forward Ian Medland's email of 5<sup>th</sup> January which contains the requested information.

Ian also brought up that SCC have offered a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand strimmer by our other trained parishioner, but that they will not support as in Ian's case. This additional strimmer would effectively belong to the Parish Council. Ian is currently awaiting costings details which he will pass on to the PC to enable a decision to be made on the acquisition.

**b. CCCP project update – future maintenance.**

In January Karen Medland circulated details of the necessary maintenance for the coming months. There is a further event, the Stoke Eco Fare, which Steph Bryan attended last year. After a discussion it was felt that there is not the capacity to commit to attending this year. Mary kindly agreed to advise Steph about this decision and the other one about not holding a Food Trail this year, either.

Three horse chestnut trees in a field just off the Red Track, prior to the Foraging Lane appear to have survived having been eaten by cattle, and now require more robust protection.

Once received, the remaining 800 trees needed to complete the Wildlife Corridor running from behind the Church towards the ponds in Northfield will require planting out. Watering, which was a somewhat onerous duty last year, will be carried out by the same team and in the same manner this year, thanks of course to the many generous offers of voluntary labour.

With Pollinator and Wellbeing surveys to be completed this year, the Clerk was asked to place the matter on the agenda of the March PC meeting.

**c. Speeding cars – Speed watch team formation.**

Since the last meeting, Simon Howes has downloaded the SID data and Karen Medland has forwarded this to the Police, as part of the set up procedures for a speed watch team in the village. Karen has got the five volunteers for the team and the site along Chedzoy Lane (in the gateway of AMS) is being risk assessed by the Police, training will follow when this is completed and Police checks will need to be carried out on the volunteers.

The Clerk will place this matter on the agenda of the March PC meeting.

**d. Chedzoy Village Design Statement.**

Anthony Betty gave a short talk on the procedures followed when the Othery Design statement was drawn up some 20 years ago. He supplied several hard copies of that statement. Three members of Othery PC, together with three willing parishioners formed the sub-committee, with one of the parishioners taking the Chair. Extensive photographic evidence was gathered on the types of housing design and fencing styles etc. A questionnaire drop was carried out to gather people's views and thoughts on the matter. Great care was taken to ensure the whole process was as inclusive as possible.

Once completed, the Design Statement was approved by SDC in about 2 – 3 months. The Parish Council has subsequently always consulted and referred to the Design Statement on all planning applications. Anthony assured the meeting the SDC does take the statement into account in their decision process.

The Chair said she had undertaken a large amount of research, including studying the "Chedzoy" book.

For a step by step guide on forming Village Design Statements go to: -

<https://sedgemoor.gov.uk/vds>

The Clerk was asked to place this matter on the agenda of the March PC meeting, when further discussion on the formation of the sub-committee and its structures can take place.

**e. Road Closure Notices.**

Andy Dingwall (SCC) is awaiting a response to his enquiries on this matter.

**f. First Aid Training.**

Since the December meeting arrangements have been made by the village hall committee for Right Way Training to hold a day-long first aid course in the village hall on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March. The Clerk has paid the necessary deposit via BACS and he will pay the balance in the same way when it becomes due. He received via the Chair a request for the Parish Council to provide a light lunch for the attendees. Bearing in mind the cost of the course is well below the figure set aside by the PC at the December meeting, this was agreed and the Clerk will settle up and reclaim the cost via his expenses.

It was pointed out that the volunteers will have to agree to their personal contact information being made public, for use in the event of an emergency.

**g. Surface water outside West End Farm in Chedzoy Lane.**

The Clerk reported on an email reply he received from Lawrence Hackling (SCC Highways), confirming that he believes that the highway drainage discharges into an open ditch at the site, which needs maintenance. If the landowner has not carried out ditch maintenance by April, Highways will raise an order with their contractor to do so, and check the drains at that time.

Graham Bentley said he had inspected a roadside drain at the site, and found it blocked solid with mud deposited by passing traffic. Highways will check the drains when carrying out maintenance, and so that particular problem should be covered at that time.

**4. County Councillors' report.**

**a. Budget projected overspend 2022/2023.**

This has risen to an estimated £24.3 million, with the largest share of the overspend being on adult and children's social care. Cutbacks will be made in CCTV provision and library services.

**b. Council Tax 2023/2024.**

This is due to rise by 4.99%.

**c. Public transport provision.**

Bus services continue to suffer from cut-backs. The £2 maximum single fare has been extended to the end of June 2023.

**d. Planning application notifications.**

We understand that the advance notices which are currently sent to neighbouring residents when applications are lodged, could be stopped as part of the cost-cutting measures.

**e. Hinkley Point.**

Andy Dingwall said the workforce is building up to about 7000 and delays in obtaining materials was being experienced.

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

With SDC ceasing to exist in just 40 days, not a lot is going on. There are two more planning committee meetings and one full council meeting to go.

Regarding planning departments following the new council creation, it is understood that the current (District) planning departments will continue for the time being at least.

**6. Planning - No new applications – progress on past applications: -**

- a. Reference number 18/22/00007 – Land at Parchey.  
Decision – Refused Planning Permission.
- b. Reference 18/22/00008 – Moggs Farm, Pig Lane.  
Decision – Prior Approval required.
- c. Reference 18/22/00009 – Field entrance in Chedzoy Lane.  
Decision – Granted Permission.
- d. Reference 18/22/00010 – “Kalina” Front Street.  
Decision – Prior Approval (of the LPA) is required and is hereby Approved Unconditionally.

**7. Correspondence.**

**a. Local Community Networks.**

Chedzoy has been placed in LCN area 16 – “Levels and Moors”, which is the second largest area behind Exmoor – and Chedzoy is on the very fringe of its area. Bridgwater and Bridgwater Without is in an area of their own (area 8).

Diogo (SCC) advised that the first meeting of our area will be held on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and the Parish representative must be a parish councillor.

**b. Telephone Box library and**

**c. Fingerpost at Cross Tree**

Both of these items were suggested for the agenda by Karen Medland. She has emailed to say that her friend, who has kindly agreed to guide the refurbishment necessary to both landmarks, suggests the work should be carried out in mid to late May 2023 and he will advise on the best type of paint to use.

The Clerk will place these matters on the agenda of the March PC meeting.

**d. HM King Charles III Coronation – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023.**

The Coronation procession and ceremony will take place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at Westminster Abbey. The Coronation programme also includes the “Big Lunch” across the country on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May (with the concert from Windsor castle in the evening), and the “Big

Help Out” community activity on bank holiday Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

For more information on the Coronation please see the Royal Family website.

Mary Clothier feels the Parish Council should take a leading role in the Coronation arrangements, and suggested the following activities could be appropriate for the bank holiday activities: - Litter picking, refurbishing the village benches, a cooking competition (including recipe building), a time capsule, orienteering and “bring a neighbour” to encourage inclusiveness (particularly among the elderly villagers who can feel somewhat isolated).

Rodney Young pointed out that the next Village Hall committee meeting was on 15<sup>th</sup> March, the next PC meeting is on 20<sup>th</sup> March and the deadline for “Clarion items is on 26<sup>th</sup> March, and so any programme of activities could be included.

The Clerk was asked to include this matter on the agenda of the March PC meeting.

**e. Voluntary drivers needed for medical appointments.**

An appeal by SCC has been launched for voluntary drivers to take people across Somerset with no transport of their own and need help to get to important medical appointments.

New recruits are needed to support both the NHS and social services.

To find out more about the role, and to apply, please visit: -

<https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/drive/>

**f. Somerset Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

With the new Somerset Council coming into being on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, there is a need to produce a new single SCI for the whole of the county that will set out how the Somerset Council will include communities and other interested parties in the planning process.

A consultation on the draft SCI is currently underway (1<sup>st</sup> February to 16<sup>th</sup> March). To view and/or comment on the document, please visit: -

<https://somerset.inconsult.uk/sci/consultationHome>

On receiving notification of this consultation on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, the Clerk felt that this deserved careful consideration by parish councillors concerning (as it does) future planning throughout the new Somerset council area, and he circulated details to all parish councillors the same day. The consultation ends before our March meeting.

A discussion took place, following which it was proposed by Simon Howes, seconded by the Chair and unanimously agreed that the following comments should be submitted as the Parish Councils’s response to the consultation:-

“Development to be focused in urban areas, brown field sites and in-fill within existing planning boundaries.

Green spaces to be protected ensuring that no development is to be allowed on green field sites or agricultural land other than where no other option exists within a 10 mile radius, and then only if suitable green field and wildlife enhancements are provided for by a levy.

Development of green spaces to be considered only if there is evidence that the majority of existing residents are in favour of any proposed development.

Parish Councils to be given a veto on any housing development over a given size (say 5 dwellings) and any application for commercial purposes.”

A short discussion took place with the above comments receiving unanimous support from the councillors. Bearing in mind the time constraints here, Simon Howes proposed and the Chair seconded that the comments as above be submitted on behalf of the PC, unless any councillor emails the Clerk to the contrary by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023. This was unanimously supported.

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

**9. Finance.**

Balances after due allowance for any outstanding items: -

Lloyds bank current account: - £10743.80 (PC £9248.36 CCCP £1495.44)

“ “ deposit “ : -£2.48.

Cambridge BS EA account : -£10332.17(earmarked funds).

Five cheques to issue: -

No 822 £285.00 payee CN Fry (April net salary).

No 823 £157.47 “ “ (expenses).

No 824 £399.00 “ “ (Right Way Training 1<sup>st</sup> aid course fee – via BACS).

No 825 £68.62 “ Dion Evert (grass cutting at allotment entrance 2022 season).

No 826 £40.00 “ Oxford Rural (allotment rent).

The Clerk was asked to seek clarification as to expenses incurred relating to cheque number 825 and so its issue has been delayed.

**10. Any other business.**

**a. PCC Mark Shelford – personal event invitation.**

A PC representative is invited to a councillor forum at Bridgwater Town Hall on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March, in the Bridgwater room from 17.00 to 19.00/

The SCC councillors said they would be attending and kindly agreed to report back appropriately.

**b. Homes in Sedgemoor open evening.**

A PC representative is invited to drop in to a corporate open evening on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023, with a chance to meet board members and colleagues at Homes in Sedgemoor who will be showcasing the work they do with their customers.

The SCC councillors said they would be attending and kindly agreed to report back appropriately.

**c. Bridgwater Quayside Festival – save the date – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2023.**

This free festival of events, street theatre, music and creative activities will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

For more information, go to: -

[www.bridgwaterquaysidefestival.co.uk](http://www.bridgwaterquaysidefestival.co.uk)

**d. 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D Day – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024.**

The official guide to taking part has been issued, with local communities being encouraged to participate in lighting a beacon in memory of the 150,000 who landed on five beaches in Normandy some 80 years ago come June 2024. The reason for the early release of this is to allow councils good time to make financial provision.

The Clerk was asked to forward details to all councillors and make a note to ensure consideration is given to this at the precept-setting exercise for 2024/2025.

**e. Frys Lane.**

A resident of Frys Lane (which is an adopted highway up to the field gateway) is understandably disappointed at the sorry state of the lane, with large quantities of muck and mud falling from farm vehicles that appear to come from Sibley's farmyard. It is usually left to the resident himself to clear up the mess. He has CCTV and has logged the large number of farm vehicle movements.

A comprehensive paper file of details was passed to the Chair just the day before this meeting, and following a discussion the Chair said that she would arrange to circulate an electronic copy to each councillor so they can consider the matter ahead of the March meeting.

The Clerk was asked to acknowledge receipt of the information and place the matter on the agenda of the March PC meeting for further consideration.

**f. Planning applications – possible notification changes.**

Councillors expressed their strong concern at the fact that it would appear the notifications currently sent to neighbouring residents when planning applications are lodged with SDC may be stopped as a cost cutting measure.

The Clerk was asked to email the Chief Planning Officer at SDC to ask for a yes or no response to the question about whether the applicant is legally required to post a planning notice at the site of a proposed development.

**Date of next meeting – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2030 at 7.30 pm.**

**There being no other business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.18 pm.**

