

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHEDZOY PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 18th JULY 2022 AT 7.30 PM.

Present: Cllrs. Mary Clothier, Marion Dethier (Chair), Russell Harmes, Simon Howes, Karen Medland and Rodney Young.

Also present: Cllrs Diogo Rodrigues and Andy Dingwall (SCC), Anthony Betty and Liz Perry (SDC).

In attendance: The Clerk (Chris Fry).

1. Apologies: None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of 22nd June 2022 were taken as read, agreed and signed.

3. Matters arising from the minutes:

a. Footpath Officer's report: -

Ian's report details his hectic and heavy workload in endeavouring to keep the substantial village footpath network clear. During the summer growing months the can only be to clear as much as is possible in the limited time Ian is able to devote to it.

Footpaths BE 8/1 and 8/15 behind the church between the playing field and Ward Lane have been cleared, requiring brush cutting rather than strimming. The steps at Ward Lane leading to footpath BW 8/11, which runs behind Eastfield has been cleared. Ian responded to a request from the Chedzoy Climate Change Project (CCCP) to clear the road edge at Greening Corner and he additionally strimmed around the damaged fruit trees and wooden bench. Ian also assisted the CCCP by clearing the overgrowth covering the juniper bushes beside BW 8/12 behind Sibleys Farm. All very time consuming.

The fingerpost at the start of Moor Drove (Red Track) (BW 8/23 opposite Parchey Cottage is now missing and SCC have been advised.

There is a significant problem at the pedestrian gate at the beginning of BW 8/6 at Parchey of dog mess being both left in bags hanging on the trees (Ian cleared 9 in all), and being piled up into a heap just inside the gate.

Ian suggests the parish council write to all the households in the vicinity appealing for their help in trying to witness the culprit/s. Anthony Betty has pointed out that a simple witness statement is sufficient to bring prosecutions for this type of offence.

Following a discussion the Clerk was asked to write an appropriate letter to each house in Parchey, also to liaise with Ian to draw up a further Facebook appeal for voluntary help on the footpaths, possibly naming say three dates when perhaps a group could come forward.

b. Chedzoy Climate Change Project update (CCCP).

The Clerk is arranging with Tamlyn's land agency of Bridgwater to professionally mark the boundary of the strip of land behind the church which has been regained to facilitate the project. It is hoped this might be done during July.

After the first two years or so and following the completion of the bulk of the work in installing the CCCP, Steph Bryan is stepping back from her leading role in the project, with the parish council taking responsibility for completing and then carrying out maintenance work, which will be on-going. Mary Clothier and Karen Medland are jointly kindly taking a lead and the matter will be a permanent item on future parish council meeting agendas. It was agreed to hold a short meeting on this issue at the conclusion of this meeting.

c. Jubilee Beacon equipment.

The Clerk reported that he has been to see John Paige who confirmed that he has the equipment and he is proposing to install it securely at the bus shelter garden, if that is the wish of the parish council.

A discussion took place concerning the need to liaise with Karen Medland and Mary Clothier about the best place to position the beacon during the autumn maintenance of this area.

The Clerk will advise all concerned parties.

d. Amenity grant applications.

The Clerk was asked to read out the three applications: -

1. Chedzoy village hall committee.

This application draws attention to the current CVHC's policy of allowing all village organisations, including the parish council, free use of the hall for their public events. With the recent escalating heating and lighting costs, and bearing in mind the further substantial increases expected later in the autumn of 2022, a request for a grant of £250 is being made.

Simon Howes started the discussion and pointed out that the hire charges for the regular meetings alone would exceed this figure, and he proposed that the requested figure is entirely reasonable and should be granted. This was seconded by the Chair with all in favour.

2. St Mary's Churchyard.

The PCC treasurer has applied for a substantial increase in support to £1200 this year (up from £552 the previous year), which would ensure that the basic grass cutting costs are covered, thereby allowing the modest funds held in the Churchyard restricted fund to be used for other necessary maintenance, such as the weed control of the ground gutters which hasn't been attended to for the last two years at least.

Following a discussion it was agreed that a sum equal to the amount of grant provided in the previous year would be approved but that more information was required before the parish council could consider if it was able to increase the grant as requested. The Clerk was asked to reply to the PCC requesting supporting evidence as to amounts needed for which items of maintenance. It was pointed out that any increase in grants given would require an increase to the precept charged to households in the parish and that this would need further discussion by the parish council

The matter is to be placed on the agenda of the September meeting for further consideration.

3. Chedzoy Playing Field Association.

This application points out that this association is run by a small group of working parents. Apart from the annual amenity grant from the parish council, they receive no other regular funding.

Regular annual fixed costs amounted to £794 in 2021/2022, consisting of: -

Land rental £351 (the lease is up for renewal at the end of 2024 and the association have been warned to expect an increase), health and safety inspections £260 (three

inspections), third party insurance £168 and membership of the Somerset Playing Fields Association £15.

In the year ended March 2022 fund raising again became possible following the pandemic and £1356 was raised by three events. The front fence and gates, which had been in a poor state of repair for some time and were becoming not only dangerous but also unsightly were replaced at a cost of £3837, achieved thanks to a village hall grant of £3000, £150 from Gwilliams of Edington and the balance from the Somerset Fund.

The association currently holds sufficient funds to cover this year's fixed costs.

The fence along the left hand side of the field is now in desperate need of replacement and represents a health and safety risk as it runs alongside the play equipment. Estimates for the replacement are anticipated to be well in excess of £3500.

In addition to support at the same level as last year (£270), the CPFA are hoping for some help towards the replacement costs involved here. A discussion took place regarding the potential to source part of the required funding from the levy charged to developers as this may be an appropriate use of these funds.

It was decided to ask the CPFA for more details of the actual costs involved here and an appropriate motion to this end was proposed by Mary Clothier and seconded by Rodney Young with all in favour.

The Clerk was asked to advise the CPFA appropriately and place the matter on the agenda of the September meeting for further consideration.

The Clerk was asked to contact Liz Perry in order to ascertain what funds are held by SDC with respect to levies charged to developers (via CIL) who have undertaken work in Chedzoy.

e. Allotment field entrance.

The Clerk reported on his visit to the allotment holder who has been cutting the grass along the entrance lane to the allotment field and who is requesting some help in covering the fuel cost involved.

The Clerk pointed out that the parish council is responsible for maintaining the entrance. He also said that the parish council is not permitted to either make any "profit" or for that matter incurring any "loss" in the administration of the allotments.

Current rental income from the tenant's amount to £180 pa with costs of rent to Oxford University (the landlords) of £80 pa and water rates for the past year running at about £55. The parish council therefore currently expects to have an excess of about £45 in the coming year, which should cover the cost of fuel being requested without needing to increase tenant rents.

The clerk was requested to obtain receipts for fuel purchased.

The Clerk was asked to monitor the situation in future.

f. Chedzoy Lane cycle path extension.

As agreed at the last meeting, the parish council sent supporting emails to SCC Highways on the proposal to reconfigure the entrance to the cycle path to enable cyclists to safely join the cycleway before having to negotiate the road junction of Chedzoy Lane with the A39.

Lawrence Hackling of SCC Highways forwarded the communications to the Small Improvement Scheme Team. Andy Dingwall confirmed that funding has been allocated and the necessary procedures are in train to hopefully achieve completion by the end of 2022.

g. Councillor training.

Reports were given by the councillors who recently attended the councillor training zoom session from SALC and the planning training by SDC at the Canal side Centre in Bridgwater.

h. Community Orchard vandalism.

The Chair reported the distressing news that all the trees at Greening Corner had been maliciously snapped off about a fortnight ago. The PCSOs covering the village had been advised but to date no contact from them has been made. Karen Medland had managed to obtain a crime reference number. Diogo Rodrigues kindly offered to contact the Neighbourhood Policing Manager to establish the current position, and he will keep the Clerk advised.

4. County Councillor's report: -

Andy Dingwall and Diogo Rodrigues reported as follows: -

a. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

With the date that the Somerset unitary council comes into being on 1st April 2023 (fast) approaching, there is necessarily a large number of council staff involved in the preparations. An audit of the estimated 2000 assets of the individual constituent council is being carried out.

b. New CEO.

A full SCC meeting is being held on Wednesday 20th July 2022 and the appointment of a new CEO for the unitary council will be confirmed.

c. Budget deficit.

The estimated £14.4 million deficit in this year's SCC budget is anticipated (with current inflationary pressured) to rise to approximately £44 million in the first year of the unitary authority.

d. SCC Household Support Fund.

This can provide short term urgent financial help to Somerset residents who are struggling to afford household essentials, and details have been posted both on the village notice board and the website.

For more details go to: -

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/somerset=household-support-fund/>

e. Local Community Networks (LCNs).

Somerset councils have set out their plans for developing the new LCNs, groups that will be established in every part of the county to support decision making at its most local level. Anthony Betty outlined that other parishes had raised concerns at the risk of a need to increase precepts to cover costs required to deliver any services devolved to LCNs and

if matching reductions were not forthcoming in Council Tax households would be effectively paying twice for some services

Simon Howes expressed his wish for parish councils to be consulted as this concept develops to ensure any changes are made in the best interest of residents.

5. District Councillors' reports: -

Liz Perry and Anthony Betty reported as follows: -

a. SDC grant aid.

Liz advised that there was a possibility of SDC grant aid currently being available for schemes such as the fencing at the playing fields (discussed above), and she said she would email further details of the relevant SDC department to contact. The Clerk will advise the CPFA of any information he receives.

b. Solar Parks.

There is still no progress to report.

c. Northgate Yard development.

This is progressing well and on target for completion in autumn 2022.

6. Planning: -

- Reference number: 18/22/00003/EC.
Type: Listed building consent alterations.
Applicant: Mrs A Grimstead.
Location: Church Cottage, Ward Lane, Chedzoy Bridgwater TA7 8RL.
Coordinates: E.334120.8 N.137636.66'
Proposal: Replacement of 13no existing timber casement windows to the Front (south), rear (north) and side (east and west) elevations.

This proposal related to the replacement of windows and permission is required in view of the listed nature of the building.

A discussion took place, following which it was proposed by Rodney Young and seconded by Simon Howes that the following comments should be sent to SDC planners (all in favour)

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

b. Glebe House development.

Simon Howes raised a problem with the entrance arrangements of the development. The developer has placed piles of shale slates on either side of the entrance drive. As this slopes down to Front Street and the slate pieces are not secure, they are starting to encroach onto the footpath on Front Street.

Following a discussion the Clerk was asked to contact the developer and request they act on:

1. The need to contain the piles.
2. The requirement to install a French drain to prevent excess water falling onto the highway as required under planning consent.
3. The grass verges to be restored to their former state.

7. Correspondence: -

a. SCC Household Support Fund.

Covered under item 4(d) above.

b. SWP Briefing July 2022.

This has been received and highlights that “Recycle More – recycles more”. The recycling rate jumped from 50.2% in 2020/2021 to just over 56% for 2021/2022.

c. SDC Chairman’s Awards “Keep Sedgemoor Tidy”.

On 1st July ten community groups, volunteers and Sedgemoor Clean Surroundings staff were honoured with awards by the Chairman of Sedgemoor District Council, Cllr Alan Bradford.

8. Matter arising from the correspondence: - None.

9. Finance:

Balances after due allowance of all outstanding items: -

Lloyds Bank current account £11266.93 (PC) £9966.08 (CCCP) £1.300.85
“ “ deposit “ £ 2.48.
Cambridge BS “ £ 12401.82 (earmarked funds).

Four cheques to issue:

No 797 £432.90 payee CN Fry (July and August net salary).
No 798 £ 96.95 “ “ (expenses).
No 799 £162.20 “ HMRC (paye Apr/May/June).
No 800 £100.00 “ SDC (uncontested election fee).

The new Lloyds Bank mandate has been lodged.

10. Any other business.

a. Bus shelter litter bin.

Karen Medland brought up the problem of the nasty smell emulating from this bin, probably caused by dog walkers depositing dog mess therein, even though it may be bagged.

Following a discussion the Clerk was asked to arrange to obtain a notice to attach to the bin asking persons notto deposit dog mess therein. If this is not effective then maybe a lid could be put on the bin.

The Clerk was also asked to liaise with the SDC Dog Warden to seek advice on the whole issue of dog mess throughout the village.

tina.kick@sedgemoor.gov.uk

The date of the next meeting – 19th September 2022.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.58 pm.

