

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHEDZOY PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 22nd May 2023 FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING.

Present: - Cllrs. Graham Bentley, Mary Clothier, Russell Harmes and Simon Howes.

Also present: - Cllrs. Andy Dingwall and Diogo Rodrigues (SC).

In attendance: - The Clerk (Chris Fry).

1. **Apologies:** - Cllrs. Marion Dethier and Rodney Young (attending the initial LCN meeting and joined this meeting later) and Karen Medland.
2. **Minutes of the last regular meeting of 17th April 2023** were taken as read, agreed and signed.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes.**

a. Footpath Officer's activity.

Ian Medland's report included: -

His recommendation that the Parish Council does not accept the offer of an additional strimmer from Somerset Council for the following reasons.

1. It is an old model with poor vibration reduction which would limit the recommended constant usage time to about 2 hours.
2. It may require servicing on receipt, at a cost of about £100 including service items.
3. Future servicing costs would have to be borne by the Parish Council (every 100 hours use – 3 years for mine).
4. Somerset Council will not provide insurance cover for its use. This would involve an annual premium of an unknown amount. Also, preparation of risk assessments will be required.
5. The second volunteer has received personal issue of all the safety and other equipment he needs, so now we will only need to share use of the Somerset Council machine, which I have. All costs and insurance will be covered by SC for his use of that machine.

It has been a busy time now the weather has improved.

The footpaths that cross the back of the church wall leading to Ward Lane and then part way across Northfield, BW 8/14 and BW 8/2, were quite overgrown, although clearly regularly used and some residents maintain the sections at the back of their properties.

A village resident and his son have done sterling work in clearing significant sections of footpath BW 8/2 along the edge of North field as well as footpath BW 2/7 from Bradney Lane towards Northfield, which is a big help in keeping the footpaths open and usable.

At Greening Corner Community Orchard, the required 1m in from the road edge has been cut back to improve visibility, and also around the remaining trees. The path across Greening Corner has been cleared as well as a path to the bench.

The stone steps at Ward Lane have been cleared and some of footpath BW 8/11 from that point, along the field edge to Ward Lane opposite White Hart Cottages, near the church. John House was ploughing whilst Ian was strimming and generously offered to cut the remaining majority of the path for him, another massive help.

Update on previously reported issues: -

The householder of the temporary home has responded to the letter from the Parish Council and fixed the fence and post which had been obstructing the footpath behind his property.

King Sedgemoor Drain Path update: -

Glyn Edwards from Somerset Council has updated Ian that the process of official re-position of footpath BW 8/6 beside King Sedgemoor Drain instead of in it, has begun. After confirming it is not a time limited process, he has placed it on their long-term issue register but it is not regarded as urgent. He says his role will be limited as mostly it will be legal issues to resolve with landowners, which will doubtless take time.

Ian has sought clarification as to whether the displaced path can legally be used and maintained, before the path is officially and legally sanctioned in its new position.

Letter request.

Gillard Farms cultivate Northfield and for the majority leave a reasonable width of footpath around the field edge. The one place which needs the minimum 1.5 m width is along where the fence has been fixed and the householder's temporary accommodation is right on the boundary. Unfortunately, it is no more than 0.5 m and has been ploughed to that width for a number of years, which forces people using the footpath to walk very close to his home. Ian asks that the Parish Council write to Gillard Farms asking that when the field is next ploughed, at least 1.5 m width be left. More would very much be appreciated by the householder's family.

b. Chedzoy Climate Change project update.

Mary Clothier said that on-going maintenance was being carried out (although she fears for the long term and permanent requirement here), with weeding along Front Street and the Foraging Lane leading to Red Track. A further “day of action” is planned for 11th June. The watering requirement during the summer months will be a very large task.

In the Autumn a further 480 trees in the Wildlife Corridor (edge of Mr Gillard’s field) will add to the 600 already planted there in November to complete the hedge leading to the ponds.

2000 trees have been planted so far.

c. Chedzoy Village Design Statement – update.

This is likely to be a long-term project (Othey’s design statement took five years to complete). The sub-committee of Graham Bentley, Marion Dethier, Russell Harmes and Simon Howes have yet to hold their initial meeting.

d. Postal Service.

The Clerk read an email reply to his complaint about the dire state of the postal delivery service. The Royal Mail apologised for the problems and said there had been local issues in the Bridgwater area which had now been resolved. He said that the daily delivery service had been restored, at least in Bawdrip (where he lives). There does appear to be a problem in covering rounds when the regular staff are off sick.

Diogo Rodrigues said he understands Ian Liddell-Grainger (the MP) has been complaining about this issue.

e. Glebe House entrance.

The Clerk reported that the householder has today been seen installing a low fence to stabilise the slate piles.

4. County Councillors’ report – Diogo Rodrigues reported as follows: -

a. SCC 2023 year-end/Somerset Council Initial budget.

The financial position remains somewhat vague currently. He learned at a recent Corporate Resource meeting that future financial reporting could be done on a quarterly rather than a monthly basis.

b. Bus Subsidy.

This has been extended at the £2 maximum single fare until the end of October 2023 and thereafter at £2.50 until October 2024. There is a push by the several bus companies operating throughout Somerset to introduce a uniform season ticket scheme.

c. Westonzoyland Road.

There are confirmed plans to install a new speed limit to replace the national one currently in place.

Andy Dingwall reported as follows: -

d. Chedzoy Lane/A39 cycle way entrance.

This is scheduled for completion by Autumn 2023.

The appreciation of the Parish Council was expressed to Carole Edmunds for her work in highlighting this issue.

e. Local Community Networks.

Andy said 8 to 10 meetings were planned per year. Marion Dethier and Rodney Young are absent this evening at the initial meeting of the Levels and Moors LCN

f. Pot holes.

£4.8 million has been ring-fenced specifically to improve the pothole problem.

g. New Childminders in Somerset.

A "Golden Hello" of £250 is planned to encourage more places to be found.

h. Somerset Recycling.

Somerset has climbed to 28th place out of 228 local councils, with a recycling rate of 52.4%.

i. Road closure notifications.

Andy confirmed that Wessex Water were believed to have been following correct procedures. He said that fines have been issued to BT for road closure breaches around Frome. Simon Howes commented that the Parish Council were monitoring the practices employed by Wessex Water and to

encourage them to communicate planned road closures with the Parish Council earlier than previously, and at least at the same time as residents were being notified.

5. Planning - No new applications –

6. Correspondence.

a. Frys Lane.

The Clerk confirmed that a request had been made between meetings to himself and Marion Dethier, the Chair for the Parish Council to support a resident of Frys Lane's request to Somerset Council Highways to restore some support along the lines that had been extended some years ago to assist in keeping the state of the Lane as reasonable as possible.

Marion had felt this was a reasonable request and it would be best to give the support without waiting for the next PC meeting.

The Clerk was asked to place the Chedzoy drainage problems in general on the agenda of the next meeting.

b. Somerset Council Chair's Awards for Service to the Community.

With the closing date for nominations being 30th June, the Clerk was asked to place this on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

c. Somerset Waste Services success.

Covered under item 4(h) above.

d. Clerk's and Council's Direct magazine.

The May 2023 issue has been received.

7. Matters arising from the correspondence: - none.

8. Finance.

Balances after due allowance for any outstanding items: -

Lloyds bank current account: - £17427.91 (PC £16107.07, CCCP £1320.84).

“ “ deposit “ : -£2.48.

Cambridge BS EA account: -£10322.17 (earmarked funds. Interest rate 1.5% - before the most recent base rate rise)..

Four cheques to issue: -

No 833 £285.00 payee CN Fry (May net salary).

No 834 £83.93 “ “ (Fingerpost restoration materials – via BACS).

No 835 £1580.00 “ Wynns Hill Farm (replacing cheque number 812 – now out of date).

No 836 £800.77 “ Zurich Municipal (insce. Premium 2023/2024 – 3-year LTA).

The Clerk has kept all councillors abreast of his efforts to find a good quality insurance company at a competitive cost alternative to that suggested by Gallaghers.

A motion to switch to Zurich on 3-year long term contract, at £800.77 for the initial year, was proposed by Simon Howes and seconded by Russell Harmes. All in favour.

The premium is some 20%+ less than that quoted by Hiscox Insurers.

The Precept for 2023/2024 t £8692 has been received.

The internal audit has been completed without any queries raised, save for the Clerk's heating and computer/printer allowance being overdue for review. The Clerk said he was intending to cease claiming the small heating allowance, but he was considering applying for the “working from home” allowance in due course. This matter would be reviewed by the Parish Council if such a request was made.

9. Any other business.

a. D-Day 80th anniversary – June 2024.

Mary Clothier brought up the matter of the beacon lighting arrangements for this event. Details are expected nearer the time.

b. Chedzoy Community Speed watch

Karen Medland has reported that, following analysis of the SID data, the Police have decided not to proceed with the formation of a speed watch team in the village. Apparently the data revealed an average speed of 32 mph which is below the level considered appropriate. The Police have commented that the SID seems to have had a beneficial effect on traffic speeds in the village.

There was some scepticism felt among councillors about the process of averaging adopted by the Police and the Clerk was asked to speak to Karen Medland to see if she feels that the matter should be pursued.

c. Playing Field grass cutting.

The Clerk said he had heard nothing regarding the new plans for cutting the grass following the retirement of the former contractor. Mary Clothier said she was taking over the Chair of the Playing field committee shortly and she would look into the position and report back to the next PC meeting.

d. Allotments – management and letting procedures.

It was generally felt matters regarding this needed reviewing and it was decided to take up the offer from a tenant to give the councillors a guided tour of the allotment site, and the Clerk was asked to arrange for this to take place at 6.45 pm ahead of the next meeting. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

e. The footpath in the churchyard.

Russell Harmes reported that a complaint had been received from a wheel chair user who experienced difficulty in accessing a relative's grave because of grass which was encroaching on to the tarmac path in the churchyard.

Following a discussion, the Clerk was asked to have a word with the Footpath Officer to try to determine the rights and obligations of the relevant parties and if any action was possible.

(Since the meeting the Clerk has discovered that the maintenance of paths within the church yard is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council and he will therefore bring the problem to its attention).

Date of next meeting Tuesday 20th June 2023 (avoiding a clash with the next LCN meeting).

There being no other business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.05 pm.