

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHEDZOY PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 18th OCTOBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM.

Present: - Cllrs. Marion Dethier, Nick Griffiths, John Paige and Rodney Young.

Also present: - Ian Medland (Footpaths Officer).

In attendance: - The Clerk (Chris Fry) and one member of the public.

1. **Apologies:** - Cllrs. Simon Howes (Chairman), Pat Lennard, David Hall (SCC), Anthony Betty (SDC) and Liz Perry (SDC).

In the absence of the Chairman, Marion Dethier took the Chair.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of 20th September 2021 were taken as read, agreed and signed.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes.**

a. Footpath Officer's report and review of the situation with footpath in Northfield.

The Chair set the scene here. At a meeting earlier in the year the Parish Council decided to take a softer line with regard to the clearance of the cross field footpath in Northfield and runs parallel with the wall behind the churchyard. Factors behind this decision included the PC considering that, with the landowner cooperating with the early relinquishment of the lease on the strip of land required for the development of the Whittling Wood (Climate Change project), and the fact that he was allowing people to access the pond via a route that is not part of the footpath network, together with the need to avoid any potentially serious incidents like the one earlier this year which occurred on the path.

The matter was discussed and it was decided to revert back to the adherence of clearing the footpath to allow free access to walkers. Land owners are free to plough up these cross field footpaths, so long as they reinstate them within a fourteen day period.

A vote resulted in unanimous agreement to this course of action.

The Footpaths Officer requested the support and assistance of the Parish Council in the following matters: -

i. Footpath BW 8/6 running beside the KSD towards Greylake.

The entrance to this footpath has been locked closed for several years, denying access to walkers. Additionally, the neighbouring landowner has more recently deposited loads of earth on the footpath, thereby blocking it. The landowners (Environment Agency) acquired the land needed for the widening of the KDS in the late 1960s. Parish Council records show that the EA is reluctant to instigate enforcement action regarding the locked gate, even though the blocked footpath crosses its land.

Additionally it seems likely that the footpath may not have been diverted as it now appears to be submerged in the KDS itself.

Following a discussion the Clerk and John Paige agreed to have a word with the offending landowner in an attempt to get the footpath cleared.

ii. Bramble clearance on footpath BW 8/7 where Fry's Lane approaches Moor Drove.

Ian reported that his attempts to clear this footpath were being hampered by overhanging brambles preventing him from clearing the footpath with his brush cutter.

The Clerk and John Paige agreed to clear the brambles.

b. Climate Change Project Update.

The Fair Share Team requested that the Clerk contacts the appropriate landowner to obtain his agreement to the wiring off of the strip of land to be used for the Whittling Wood, together with his agreement to setting the boundary line of the strip.

The background to this request lies in the difficulty the FS Team is experiencing in obtaining quotations for the installation of the stock proof boundary fence that will eventually be installed. This delay is in large part due to the high world price of wood.

The Clerk held a telephone conversation with the landowner, who was fully agreeable and suggested that a Land Agent should be employed to establish the boundary line.

The landowner added that, as he has no intention of stocking Northfield, and he will be happy for the wire fence to remain in place until the world wood price volatility subsides.

Following a discussion, and bearing in mind that a sum of £10,000 is contained in the FS budget as a requirement from the PC to go towards the enclosure cost (against earmarked funds built up by the PC and deposited in the Cambridge BS account of £12,389.43), a consensus was reached at the meeting to cover the costs, so long as estimates are obtained before any final commitment is given.

Marion Dethier agreed to arrange the estimates and the Clerk was asked to obtain a couple of estimates from Land Agents for their services.

The Clerk has now received the necessary assurances from the PC insurers that adequate public liability cover is in place under the existing Ecclesiastical policy to cover the requirements of the licence agreement for the FS project.

He confirmed that he would now complete and sign the agreement and return it to SCC appropriately.

c. Drainage matters.

i. Pig Lane outfall ditch: -

The Clerk reported on a phone call he received recently from Lawrence Hackling of SCC Highways, advising that the Internal Drainage Board are not now prepared to carry out any further clearance work on this outfall ditch as they claim that it is not its responsibility. This contradicts previous advice from Lawrence that remedial clearance work was to be carried imminently. Lawrence is going back to Wessex Water about the matter.

Lawrence asked if the Parish Council would agree to approach the landowner to advise him that it might turn out to be his responsibility to clear the ditch. The Clerk responded by saying he thought the PC had neither the expertise nor the professional knowledge of drainage matters, and so was clearly not competent enough to assist.

ii. Drainage problems in Chedzoy Lane outside Temple Farm.

Both Lawrence Hackling and David Hall advised the Clerk by telephone that there seems to be a satisfactory result here. The recent jetting reports have revealed that two sets of tree roots are blocking the outfall ditch, together with a broken pipe, and SCC Highways have agreed to clear these obstacles and renew the pipe.

d. Speed Indicator Device.

John Paige reported on his investigations into the overall effectiveness of SIDs. He said research data from Gloucestershire County Council showed that SIDs were effective in reducing traffic speeds, and furthermore, permanently sited SIDs appear to have an increasingly beneficial effect as time passes.

As Simon Howes is looking into costings it was felt appropriate to place the matter on the agenda of the November meeting so that a full discussion could take place.

4. **County Councillor's Report** – none.

5. **District Councillors' Repots** – none.

6. **Planning** – no new applications.

Anthony Betty (SDC) has advised by email that Enso (Solar Park developers) have carried out a further consultation exercise in North Petherton for a solar park there. He said he has heard nothing further with regard to the local solar park proposal, but he will keep the Parish Council updated.

7. Correspondence.

a. Unitary Authority preparations – report on the T and PC conference of 7th October.

The Clerk attended this conference and gave a brief report to the meeting. A dedicated team is working flat out on preparations for the new single unitary authority for Somerset, which is due to come into being in March 2023. There are many laudable aims to create a more efficient and accessible authority, with PCs being assured that they will not be forced to take over any more services, unless they specifically wanted to do so.

Wiltshire, Dorset and Cornwall are examples where unitary status has already been created, and all seems to be working satisfactorily in those cases.

John Paige wondered how the role of Parish Councils will be affected.

More consultation exercises will follow.

8. Matters arising from the correspondence – none.

9. Finance – balances: -

Current account £14,473.76 (PC £9,535.44 – FS £4,938.32)

Deposit “ £2.48.

Cambridge “ £12,389.43 (earmarked funds).

Seven cheques to issue (three amenity grant cheques signed following the last meeting, one FS cheque signed between meetings).

No 748 £270.00 payee CPFA (amenity grant 2021/22).

No 749 £168.00 “ CVHC (“ “ “).

No 750 £552.00 “ Chedzoy churchyard (“).

No 751 £901.48 “ SW Bryan (plant/tree supports, rubber belting, easy wrap, buckle tie, bamboo pegs, stakes, tree tags/labels and canes) – **FS**.

No 752 £216.40 “ CN Fry (October new salary).

No 753 £36.15 “ “ (expenses).

No 754 £162.20 “ HMRC (paye Jul/Aug/Sep).

Two VAT reclaims submitted for £132.34 and £269.90 totalling £402.24 (up to 31/03/2021).

The Precept second (final) tranche of £4000 received for 2021/2022'

The Clerk reminded councillors that the Precept setting exercise for 2022/2023 will take place at the November meeting.

10. Any other business and date of next meeting.

Any other business.

a. HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacons – 2nd June 2022.

An update from Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageant Master the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacons, has been received advising of timings for the Beacons on 2nd June 2022.

A guide to taking part in this event is available to view or download from: -

www.queensjubileebeacons.com

The Beacons will be lit at 9.15 pm.

John Paige and Simon Howes are kindly looking into this and the Clerk as asked to place it on the November agenda.

Date of next meeting Monday 15th November 2021.

There being no further business the meeting was clods at 8.37 pm.