

CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

COVID - 19 EMERGENCY

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held by remote connection using Zoom on

Monday 17th August 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the public were invited to attend the remote meeting using Zoom and to contact the Clerk prior to the meeting with any questions or comments they wished to make. Due to time constraints members of the public were advised that they would not be able to speak at the meeting.

1. Attendance and Apologies

Those present:

Mr K Dunthorne (Chair)
Mrs M Butler (Vice Chair)
Mr R Bale
Mr D Bracher
Mr S Robinson
Mrs L Vijeh (County Councillor)
Mrs S Osborne (District Councillor),
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)
6 Members of the public

Apologies - PCSO John Martin

2. Minutes of the meeting held remotely on Monday 18th May 2020

The minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council were approved and will be signed by the Chairman when it is possible to do so.

3. Report by County Councillor

Councillor Vijeh's reports have been circulated to all councillors by email. She said there is nothing much to add to the report.

Unitary Authority - One Somerset - SCC have submitted a case to the Secretary of State to move to one unitary authority. SSCDC had previously agreed not to seek the unitary option but would go for greater collaboration between councils. The district councils are now looking at having two unitary authorities with an east / west split, not including North Somerset or Bath. This change of view is being challenged because it was not agreed at a full council meeting. More details will be available shortly.

If a unitary authority is formed it will mean the disbandment of all existing councils with the existing 280 councillors reduced to 100. Councillor Vijeh offered to arrange for the leader of SCC to speak to the parish council. The Chairman noted that he had recently attended a Zoom meeting at which the leader of SCC was answering questions.

Councillor Vijeh confirmed that if the unitary option goes ahead, parish councils will have the option of whether to take on more responsibility; it will not be compulsory.

Planning Reform - There is considerable concern about the Government's building strategy, particularly in small communities. Chaffcombe should not be badly affected but some small parishes will be very badly affected.

Covid-19 - It is quiet at the moment but there may be more cases when schools re-open.

4. Report by District Councillor

Councillor Osborne spoke about the need for parishes to engage with the Planning reforms which are currently out for consultation because of the fundamental changes to planning regulations. Smaller villages like Chaffcombe will probably fall into the protected category but there is no guarantee of this.

There is also a consultation out for changes to the Code of Conduct which will tighten how members deal with each other.

The budget will need to be changed to deal with the unexpected shortfall due to Covid-19. If any businesses have not yet claimed under the small business scheme they are urged to claim. The fund closes at the end of August.

The Planning Dept at SSDC is experiencing disruption. A number of officers have left including the Chief Planning Officer in July, leaving only 3 officers with case loads of approximately 150 cases each. One full time officer is working from home from Edinburgh. There is a recruitment drive to find new planning officers but it is proving difficult because there is a national shortage. One of the goals of a unitary authority is to need less planning officers.

5. Planning Applications

- (a) App No 17/02084/CPO
Proposal Importation of Inert Subsoil etc
Location Cricket St Thomas Golf Club, Windwhistle, Cricket St Thomas

This application has been approved unanimously by SCC.

6. Highway matters

- (a) Welcome to Chaffcombe signs and markings on road - the road markings have been done and all the signs erected. The sign by Crossways which is loose has not yet been fixed.
- (b) Damaged HGV sign at the top of Knapps Lane - the sign has been hit again and has been reported.
- (c) Knapps Lane tree felling - this work is now complete.
- (d) Parking by War Memorial - there have been several complaints about parking by the War Memorial. Mr Dunthorne will speak to the driver concerned. **ACTION - Mr Dunthorne**

7. Footpaths

- (a) Report by Chaffcombe PPLO - All footpaths within the Chaffcombe Parish network have been walked at least once during the past 2/3 months with minor cutting back and local repairs carried out. A number of issues have been reported to SCC Rights of Way for action and some remain to be completed, including the possibility of replacing the awkward squeeze gap barrier on Court Farm land footpath CH4/12 adjacent to The Old Rectory. It has also been noted that 2 drain pipes have been inserted in banking adjacent to North Lodge in Whitemoor Hill (possibly to act as land drains) when a trickle of water is adding to existing water running down the hill and could exacerbate problems with waterlogging on this hill in the winter. This will be kept under observation. It may be possible to restart the monthly village walks in September subject to Social Distancing rules if there is no further deterioration in the Covid - 19 situation.
- (b) Footpath CH4/16 Avishayes Estate - There has been no further progress on the proposal to reroute footpath CH4/16 crossing Avishayes Estate land. SCC have confirmed that the re-routing will take longer owing to various issues which need to be sorted out and the growing backlog at SCC. The Estate is trying to forestall any objections to the diversion by involving Ramblers and Open Spaces Society at this stage and it had been hoped to have a meeting with their reps which sadly has been delayed due to a sudden death. It is recommended that we should continue to use this footpath in the interim using the gateway part way up Whitemore Hill
- (c) Footpath CH4/1 Village Hall to Chaffcombe Gate - There is a lot of dog mess here. Hopefully the perpetrator/s can be identified and reported.

8. The Pound Wildlife Information Board

Mr Butler has said he may be able to do the board, although not at the moment. A quote has been received for £575 which seems expensive. It is not urgent and councillors agreed to wait until Mr Butler has the time available to do the board.

9. Broadband

There is no update on this. Open Reach are coming to do a survey. There has been an issue with Open Reach who are saying the cost is higher than previously quoted because they cannot run cables

via telegraph poles to Chaffcombe House and will need to go underground. Mr Dunthorne to speak to Mr Otterbeck who is co-ordinating the installation of broadband. **ACTION - Mr Dunthorne**

10. Accounts

- (a) The balance at the bank at 31/07/2020 was £10,383.06
- (b) The following cheques were raised:

000360 - £450.00 - Chaffcombe PCC - Churchyard maintenance
000361 - £200.00 - Salary & admin expenses
000362 - £ 50.00 - HMRC - PAYE

11. Matters and items to report

- (a) Local Government re-organisation - See report in minute 3 above
- (b) Village Hall Grant - The Village Hall successfully received a grant of £10,000 under the small business relief scheme.

- 12. Date of next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council** - Monday 16th November 2020 at 7.30 p.m. at Chaffcombe Village Hall or via Zoom to be decided based on Government advice nearer the time.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Ken Dunthorne / Chair