

CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

COVID - 19 EMERGENCY

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held by remote connection using Zoom on Monday 3rd May 2021

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.

The Annual Meeting was brought forward by two weeks because the regulations governing the use of remote meetings ends on the 7th May, after which date all meetings have to be face to face. However the village hall is not re-opening until at least June so it was agreed to bring the Annual Meeting forward to comply with the requirement to hold the meeting in May.

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)
2 Members of the public

Apologies - PCSO John Martin

2. Election of the Chair of the Parish Council

Mrs Butler proposed Mr Dunthorne for Chair, seconded by Mr Robinson. There were no other nominations and Mr Dunthorne was duly elected as Chair of the Parish Council.

Mr Dunthorne thanked councillors for electing him as Chair for another year.

3. Declaration of acceptance of office by the Chair

Declaration of acceptance of office will be signed when possible.

4. Election of the Vice Chair of the Parish Council

Mr Robinson proposed Mrs Butler as Vice Chair seconded by Mr Bale. There were no other nominations and Mrs Butler was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Parish Council.

5. Report by County Councillor

Mrs Vijeh's report was circulated by email. A poll will be held to give the public the opportunity to vote on the One Somerset/Stronger Somerset unitary proposals. Every household will receive a ballot slip and results will be submitted to the Secretary State although the poll is only advisory, not binding. It comes at a cost of approximately £330,000 across the four districts. The Chief Executive of SSDC has resigned and an interim CEO will be appointed.

6. Report by District Councillor

Mrs Osborne reported that the District Council has brought forward its AGM to this week because of the end of the legislation allowing remote meetings. There is currently a legal challenge to the government underway over the ending of this legislation, particularly at a time when it is still difficult to arrange face to face meetings under the Covid restrictions and social distancing rules. As result there are a lot of meetings taking place this week to try to beat the deadline.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th February 2021

The minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council were approved and will be signed when possible.

8. Review Insurance cover and inventory of land and assets

Insurance cover is with BHIB Insurance. It was agreed to continue with BHIB.

9. Review Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment

No changes have been proposed to the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or Risk Assessment.

10. Membership of outside organisations

Currently the Parish Council is a member of SALC. It was agreed to retain this membership. The Parish Council is also registered with the Independent Commissioners Office (ICO) and pays the annual levy by direct debit.

11. Dates and times of ordinary Council meetings for the year ahead

It was agreed to continue with the usual third Monday in the month and to hold the meetings in the Village Hall unless there is another lockdown. It was also agreed to hold a parish meeting in July because the parish meeting in April on Zoom was so poorly attended. The dates of future meetings for the year ahead were agreed as follows:

- 19th July 2021
- 16th August 2021
- 15th November 2021
- 21st February 2022
- 16th May 2022
- + Parish Meeting - 18th April 2022

All meetings to start at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall unless otherwise agreed. The Clerk to check with the Village Hall.

ACTION - The Clerk

12. **Planning Applications** - There were no planning applications.

13. Highway Matters

- (a) Drain by Kerris Vean - Mr Dunthorne had a meeting with a Highways' Superintendent. Highways have agreed to take the ditch down on the way out of village so that water will flow down that way. The only other solution is to dig up the road and re-lay the pipe under the road but Highways will not do that. Mr Dunthorne will inform the land owner opposite Kerris Vean.
- (b) Knapps Lane - The drain at the bottom is blocked. Highways have been informed.

14. Footpaths

(a) Parish Footpaths 20/21 REPORT by Anthony Gray, Chaffcombe Parish PPLO

Despite the restrictions imposed by CoVid it has been possible to walk all of the Parish footpaths over the last 12 months at least once during this period. Some have been walked as Chaffcombe Monthly walks but these have been few in number because of periods when lock-down has been imposed.

I have been able to report to Somerset Rights of Way that at least 47 hours have been spent walking and clearing local footpaths despite these restrictions. The Rights of Way Team have also carried out a number of repairs to gates and stiles etc but of particular note is the extensive clearance of the bamboo thicket carried out by the local land owner through which the footpath to Sprays Hill passes.

As CoVid restrictions are now being eased I will re-start the monthly village walks as well as hopefully the Out of Village walks.

At the end of last year the local area Rights of Way Ranger Les Braunton retired and a new ranger has been appointed. At this time preliminary agreement had been reached with the Avishayes Estate about a diversion of a footpath over the estate which is currently blocked but with the advent of lockdown no further progress was made.

I have been attempting to resurrect this proposal but my efforts to correspond with the new ranger have not been successful to date, my e-mails have not elicited any form of response. I know that the Avishayes Estate owner is keen to resolve this issue so I will write directly to the Rights of Way Manager to see what the problem is.

- (b) CH4/16 Avishayes Estate - Mr Gray has chased SCC regarding the diversion to this footpath.

15. Broadband

The contract was signed a few weeks ago and an initial survey by Open Reach has been done. There has been some activity measuring up. We are waiting to hear the timetable for the next phase.

16. War Memorial

It was agreed in principal in February to have the war memorial cleaned but it was agreed to postpone it until we knew if the Parish Council would need to provide any funds for Broadband. Now that we know that the cost of Broadband is covered by the voucher scheme the cleaning of the war memorial can go ahead. Luke Grafton had quoted £765 to clean the memorial. Some reservations were expressed that it is very expensive for something that seems to need doing quite regularly. It was explained that it is a cleaned using a special machine which will not damage the stone.

Straightforward pressure washing would cause damage. After discussion all councillors were in favour of going ahead with Luke Grafton's quote.

ACTION - Mr Robinson

17. Annual Governance Review

This was approved by all Councillors and will be signed by the Chair.

18. Internal Audit

There were no recommendations or comments made by the Internal Auditor.

19. Presentation and approval of accounts to year end 31/03/2021

Accounts to 31/3/2021 were distributed by email and approved by all Councillors and will be signed by the Chair. The income and expenditure did not exceed £25,000 so the Council can declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review. Councillors were in agreement and the Certificate of Exemption will be signed by the Chair.

20. Approval of Annual Accounting Statements

The Annual Accounting Statements were approved by all Councillors and will be signed by the Chair.

21. Accounts payments and receipts

(a) The following income was received - precept - £3,000.00.

(b) The balance at the bank at 31/04/2021 was £11,952.22.

(c) The following cheques were raised:

000368	- £ 44.07	- S Morley, reimbursement of website costs
000369	- £ 248.81	- BHIB - Insurance
000370	- £150.10	- S Morley, salary and Clerk's expenses
000371	- £ 37.40	- HMRC - Paye
000372	- £ 25.00	- S Robinson, flowers for Duke of Edinburgh memorial

22. Matters and items to report

(a) Mr Robinson contacted all councillors regarding a floral tribute to the Duke of Edinburgh and all councillors were in favour. Mr Robinson arranged for a wreath from the Parish Council to be displayed outside the Church. There was also one from the Village Hall trustees.

(b) Mr Yates reported that there are still unpleasant items being left at the top Gaylards Lane.

23. Date of next Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council will be on Monday 16th August 2021 at 7.30 p.m. at Chaffcombe Village Hall.

There will be a Parish Meeting on Monday 19th July 2021 at 7.30 p.m. at Chaffcombe Village Hall.

The meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.

