

CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 16th May 2022 at 7.30 p.m.

1. Attendance and Apologies

Those present:	Apologies	In Attendance
Mrs M Butler (Chair)	PCSO John Martin	Mr Tony Yates, Flood Warden
Mrs G Wills (Vice Chair)		3 Members of the public
Mr R Bale		
Mr D Bracher		
Mr S Robinson		
Mrs S Osborne (District & County Councillor)		
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)		

2. Result of the May Election

The following councillors were elected to the Parish Council: Robert Bale, David Bracher, Mary Butler, Stan Robinson and Geraldine Wills. Sue Osborne and Val Keitch were elected for the new Somerset County as councillors for the Ilminster ward which includes Chaffcombe. Sue Osborne will also remain as District Councillor covering Chaffcombe until the District Council is dissolved in 2023.

3. Election of the Chair of the Parish Council

Mr Robinson proposed Mrs Butler as Chair, seconded by Mr Bracher. All councillors were in favour and Mrs Butler was duly elected as Chair of the Parish Council.

4. Declaration of acceptance of office by the Chair

Mrs Butler signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

5. Election of the Vice Chair of the Parish Council

Mr Robinson nominated Mrs Wills as Vice Chair, seconded by Mr Bracher. All councillors were in favour and Mrs Wills was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Parish Council.

6. Declaration of acceptance of office by the Vice Chair and other councillors

All councillors signed the declaration of acceptance of office and all councillors completed their Register of Interests forms.

7. Report by County / District Councillor

Cllr Osborne reported that the next full meeting of the new County Council will be at the end of May when the Chair and Leader of the Council and individual portfolios will be announced. The process of uniting the County and District Councils will be accelerated with the aim of bringing them together. The budget will be set in February 2023. Local community networks are being set up. Somerset unitary will be one of the 4th biggest in the country and will also have one of the largest debt levels. A question was asked about how much the re-organisation will cost the tax payer. Cllr Osborne replied that it should lead to the release of a substantial amount of funds. It is also anticipated that staff losses should come from natural wastage as people move to other jobs or retire. In theory the public should not notice any change.

8. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held on Mon 28/02/22

The minutes were approved and were signed by the Chair.

9. Review Insurance cover and inventory of land and assets.

Insurance cover is with BHIB Insurance and it was agreed to continue with BHIB. There have been no changes to the assets held by the Parish Council as listed in the Notes to the Accounts.

10. Review Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment.

No changes were proposed.

11. Review Membership of external organisations.

Currently the Council is a member of SALC and also pays an annual fee to the information Commissioner (ICO) by direct debit. No changes were proposed.

12. Dates and times of ordinary Council meetings for year ahead.

It was agreed to continue with meetings every 3 months on the third Monday of the month, Dates for the year ahead are:

- 15th August 2022,
- 21st November 2022,
- 20th February 2023,
- 15th May 2023
- and the Parish Meeting on Monday 17th April 2023.

13. Planning Applications

There were no planning applications.

14. Highway matters.

The number of unmarked potholes which are getting worse was discussed and the fact that when the contractors arrive to do the marked holes they will not do the unmarked ones even though they may have deteriorated and in some cases are dangerous. Cllr Osborne will request a drive/walk around by Highways to look at the specific problems in Chaffcombe and also at the road opposite the waterwheel where the carriageway is deteriorating.

The blocked pipe by the waterwheel was also discussed. It was suggested that the problems should be reported in a more formal manner. Mr Bracher and Mr Yates will look at the issues in Chaffcombe and report them formally.

15. Footpaths

(a) Avishayes Estate Footpath CH4/16 Proposed Diversion around the clocktower

Rights of Way have reported that there has been one objection to the Avishayes footpath diversion around the clock tower. They have a policy that if there are any objections at all, even if only one, the application will be rejected. When there is an objection the application would need to go to the Planning Inspectorate for approval and SCC do not have the resources to take an application to the Inspectorate. Therefore just one objection means the application is automatically rejected. It might be possible to take the application to the Inspectorate if the landowner agreed to meet the Council's costs.

Councillors felt that rejection of the application is disappointing because it was felt that the diversion is an improvement on the existing official footpath and the application had been approved by the Parish Council. It was remarked that the proposed diversion had been a permissive footpath for some time and there is no reason why it cannot remain as a permissive footpath. A landowner is free to create a permissive footpath over the land. Councillors felt that the proposed diversion could remain as a permissive footpath.

It might be possible to claim that the proposed diversion is a historic path. The deadline for ensuring that historic paths are registered as footpaths is 2026 but there is a considerable backlog.

(b) Whitemoor Hill

The bridleway to Whitemoor Hill has re-opened.

16. Flood Warden Report

The weather so far this year has not been very wet compared to last year so the things which have been put in place have not been tested. However the things that have been done should help to protect the vulnerable properties. The temporary barrier on the road has survived despite being hit by large vehicles but it too has not been tested in heavy rain. It is hoped that this can be made permanent in the future. A suggestion was made that it might be possible to raise the profile of the bridge.

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) visited and were very helpful. They can provide funding towards some of the work. We have been in touch with SCC and there is a Flood Warden meeting in June at Donyatt. There are ditches that need to be cleared, previously done by the land owner but not being done at the moment.

A positive meeting was held with another landowner to discuss other mitigation measures that can be taken such as the widening of the stream.

17. The Pound

Sandbags and a container have been placed in the Pound.

18. Orchard Plot

A victoria plum tree has been planted to replaced the dead mulberry tree.

19. Queen's Jubilee Celebrations

Programmes for the celebrations on Friday 3rd June have been printed and delivered to everyone. The bunting is going up the Sunday before. Mugs have been given to all the children in the parish and there are coasters as prizes on the day. There are 10 spare mugs at a cost of £3.50 each. The sausages and burgers, plus vegan alternatives, have been bought from Bookers. Catering is for 120 people.

20. Annual Governance Review

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

21. Presentation and approval of accounts to year end 31/03/2022 and approval of Annual Accounting Statements

Accounts to 31/3/2022 were distributed by email and approved by all Councillors and 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 was signed by the Chair.

22. Internal Audit

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

23. Accounts payments and receipts

(a) The balance at the bank as at 31/04/2022 - £11,593.79

(b) The following cheques were raised:

000388	- £ 243.84	- S Morley reimburse Central Design Ceramics, Jubilee mugs
000389	- £ 274.48	- BHIB Insurance
000390	- £ 163.70	- Salary and admin expenses
000391	- £ 37.40	- HMRC, paye
000392	- £ 0	CANCELLED
000393	- £ 242.99	- I Butler reimburse Sandbags and Container
000394	- £ 226.32	- I Butler reimburse Belts and Slates for Waterwheel

4. Broadband

Openreach Fibre installation works

Ms Wills reported on the installation works as follows:

I am happy to report that the recent road closures, although somewhat inconvenient, have enabled the troublesome ducting to be sorted out where necessary, and that Openreach are hoping to have the network completed and ready for orders by the end of the month/first week of June.

Before then the network will undergo testing and I will be informed when this is going to happen so I know when the system is going to Go Live.

The vouchers are not finalised and payment made until each resident signs up for their new fibre broadband. We have had a long wait to get to this point, and our voucher contract has had to be extended to allow the vouchers still to be viable.

I imagine that all voucher holders are champing at the bit to get their new fibre up and running. Openreach have asked that they would appreciate it greatly if all residents could sign up to their new provider within a couple of weeks of time the system goes live and deals become available. For this reason I have already emailed all voucher holders with information that hopefully will assist them in working out what level of provision they would like, and other considerations such as "landline" connections which they need to decide on when ordering. Michael Otterbeck has kindly offered to give informal help and guidance to any resident who feels it is beyond their pay grade to know what they are likely to need, and SMS of Chard will be happy to assist with advice or practical help in setting up systems.

When I am informed of the Going Live date I will email everyone again to warn them and to ask them to be ready to sign up to their chosen provider. I will ask everyone to confirm to me when they have signed up so I can check if there are any outstanding orders for any reason, to make sure no-one misses out and all the vouchers are finalised.

Residents need to be aware that the actual connection to their homes will be done by their provider, not by Openreach, and may take a couple of weeks from the time of ordering to be completed.

Geraldine Wills / 16th May 2022

25. Matters and Items to Report

Bonfires in the Pound

Rubbish is getting dumped in the Pound and burnt. It is illegal to accept other people's rubbish and dumping rubbish in the Pound is flytipping. It is also dangerous to have large bonfires near to thatched properties. It was agreed to put up a laminated notice on the gate. **ACTION - The Clerk**

26. New email address for clerk

Clerks are advised to have bespoke email addresses and not to use personal ones. The clerk has therefore set up a new mail box within her email account which is: chaffcombeclerk@talktalk.net which should be used for official emails. The existing one will still work as well.

27. Date of next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council

The next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council - Monday 15th August 2022 at 7.30 p.m. at Chaffcombe Village Hall

The meeting finished at 9.10 p.m.

Mary Butler - Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council