

CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 5th December 2022 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting scheduled for 21st November 2022 was postponed due to illness.

1. Attendance and Apologies

Those present:

Mrs M Butler (Chair)
Mrs G Wills (Vice Chair)
Mr R Bale
Mr D Bracher
Mr S Robinson
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)

Apologies

Mrs S Osborne (District & County Councillor)
Mrs V Keitch (County Councillor)
Ms V Bucknell
PCSO John Martin

In Attendance

Mr Tony Yates, Flood Warden
3 Members of the public

2. Public Voice

It was noted that there was an accident recently and the ditch has been damaged.

3. Report by District / Unitary Councillors

Councillor Osborne and Councillor Keitch sent their apologies.

4. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held on Mon 15/08/22.

The minutes were approved and were signed by the Chair.

5. Planning Applications - There were no planning applications.

6. Highway matters.

- (a) Proposed Relief Road for Chard - The Clerk contacted SSDC about the proposed relief road and was told that there is a report due to be published and that the proposed road is due to be discussed at the Area West Committee meeting. A resident present was concerned that there has been a public consultation which has already closed. The Clerk said that the Parish Council have not been notified about a consultation and that she will go back to SSDC to check the current situation. **ACTION - The Clerk**
- (b) Drain at Kerris Vean - It was noted that the water at this corner is a danger to those unfamiliar with the road. The work which is due to be done will involve a pipe across the road and clearing the ditch. The Flood Warden will liaise with Highways and provide an update on planned works at Woodlands and Kerris Vean.
- (c) Permanently wet spot outside the Kerris Vean drive - The wet patch was confirmed to be caused by a leak to Wessex Water pipes and has now been permanently resolved.

7. Footpaths

Tony Gray, Chaffcombe PPLO, sent his report which was read by the Chairman in Mr Gray's absence.

"Footpath CH4/16

I attended a Somerset Local Access Forum Meeting (SLAF) meeting on the 13th October when I expressed concern that an agreed footpath diversion could be blocked by a single objector without explanation. Almost immediately afterwards I received an e-mail from Russell Willcox Avishays Estate stating that he had heard from Rights of Way that the objector had withdrawn their objections to the planned diversion of footpath CH4/16 and that the process of preparing the legal documents for the diversion could proceed.

I have since had a meeting with the recently appointed local Rights of Way Ranger, Debbie Ebsay to discuss some Chaffcombe Parish Footpath issues when I made her aware of this planned diversion. Debbie advised that as the single Rights of Way council employee dealing with footpath legal matters she was rather overwhelmed at present and it could be some time before the paperwork is issued. I have suggested to Russell that in the interim the Estate might wish to set up the diversion route as a Permissive Path and Debbie gave me some signs that the estate could use.

However, Russell has now advised that he hopes that the paperwork will be expedited and for this reason will not proceed with a Permissive Path and will wait to carry out the full diversion works.

Russell has suggested that we meet in mid-December and I have e-mailed to confirm my willingness to attend, following which I will report further.

Footpath CH4/23 (part)

At my meeting with Debbie we discussed the short section of footpath CH4/23 along the A30 extending between Tolleys Lane mobile phone mast and the A30 (east) and the problems of keeping this path clear as it becomes rapidly overgrown along its length. In addition, the west end is invariably blocked by farmers silage bales and other materials deposited.*

Debbie confirmed that she does not have money in the budget for contractors to clear this and it was agreed that the parish should make no further attempt to keep it clear in view of the time and resources required. As there is a way round along the wide verge to the A30 which is clear to see it was agreed that no further work should be done to keep it clear. Resources both within the parish and Rights of Way would be better spent on keeping other footpaths clear.

Parish Footpaths Generally

Sections of the parish footpath network have been walked in recent times, rather spasmodically due to the aftermath of CoVid, but at present they are all clear to walk but further walks are planned."

* Mr Bale commented that the footpath along the A30 is not blocked by silage or hay bales. There is a small heap of woodchips which is not on the footpath. Mr Bale said he never puts silage or hay bales on the footpath and he does try to trim the hedge as far as he can reach. But that this particular footpath does not go anywhere.

Mrs Butler noted Mr Bale's comments and thanked Mr Gray for his report.

8. Flood Warden Report

- (a) Grant from FWAG and attenuation pond - The grant which was initially offered in advance of work is now likely to be given retrospectively. The grant will go to the land owner, not the Parish Council. Ongoing negotiations are now between FWAG and the landowner and do not involve the Parish Council. The proposed attenuation pond at the top of the hill will mitigate some of the risk and help with the management of storm water elsewhere in the village.
- (b) Properties at risk - There are still properties in the village which remain vulnerable to further flooding. Work has been done to alleviate the risk but more needs to be done particularly to the stream. This would require planning and the money to pay for the work which would be very expensive. FWAG might be able to help. Negotiations with the landowner are ongoing.
- (c) Temporary hump by the bridge - Following discussions with Highways no further work will be carried out for the foreseeable future.
- (d) Flooding generally - During the recent rain the water was diverting into gullies and all the defences were holding. Several residents have done a lot of clearing of ditches etc.

9. Broadband

Mrs Wills presented her report on the installation of Fibre Broadband as follows:

- "1. At the time of writing this there is just one property still awaiting connection, where there was a complication over the post code, hopefully now resolved.
- 2. There are just two vouchers that have still not arrived from the reissue; these are currently being resent.
- 3. There have been various issues with the new service, including difficulties with telephones, and these do have to be resolved by the householder direct with their provider. Various people in the village have been lending assistance to those who have felt out of their depth on tech issues, for which I am very grateful. But generally the fibre is providing a vast increase in connection speed and reliability, both with broadband and telephone..
- 4. I took over from Mike Otterbeck as Lead Customer with Openreach 2 years ago. Since then I have dealt with nearly 1900 emails and innumerable telephone calls. It has taken very nearly two years from the point when our scheme was accepted to the point, almost now reached, of everyone being connected (rather than the 6 months I was told to expect). I understand that the voucher scheme as we have it is currently in abeyance, so we did just get in under the wire. Two sets of voucher issues, an overrun of 3 months on the original rollout contract with Openreach, but we are finally nearly there.
- 5. The organisational performance of Openreach has left much to be desired. The voucher system has not been without its administrative failures either, and we have from time to time

needed to enlist the additional clout of our MP. But I am satisfied that the new fast connection will prove to be a benefit into the future and will enhance the liveability of Chaffcombe for its residents.

6. I am grateful to Mike for getting the show on the road, and also would like to applaud the patience and enduring good humour of all those who signed up for a fibre connection. It's been a long haul, but worth the effort, and if nothing else, I now know everyone in the village – and where they live – and their postcode!!"

Mrs Butler thanked Mrs Wills for her report and for all her work on the Broadband rollout.

Mr Bracher commented that at a recent table tennis evening in the Village Hall, a member of the group who is currently in hospital was able to watch play from his hospital bed via an internet connection.

10. Accounts payments and receipts

- (a) The balance at the bank as at 30/11/2022 - £10,098.00
- (b) An amount of £250 was collected in cash for the support of Nightingale which is set up to help refugees from Ukraine in the area.
- (c) The following cheques were raised:
- | | | | |
|--------|-----|--------|--|
| 000398 | - £ | 93.54 | - S Morley reimbursement Shaw & Sons, book of condolence |
| 000399 | - £ | 61.96 | - SALC, subs 2021 (uncleared cheque) |
| 000400 | - £ | 63.04 | - SALC, subs 2022 |
| 000401 | - £ | 173.49 | - Salary and admin expenses |
| 000402 | - £ | 37.40 | - HMRC, paye |
| 000403 | - £ | 450.00 | - Chaffcombe PCC, Churchyard maintenance |
| 000404 | - £ | 375.00 | - John Puddock, War Memorial & Orchard Plot maintenance |
| 000405 | - £ | 20.86 | - John Selley, for waterwheel |
| 000406 | - £ | 18.67 | - I Butler, reimbursement for waterwheel |
| 000407 | - £ | 9.73 | - I Butler, reimbursement for website |
| 000408 | - £ | 250.00 | - I Butler, reimbursement BACS transfer of cash donations for Nightingale for Ukraine (cash paid into bank account by Clerk) |

11. Precept

The Clerk presented a statement of income and expenditure to date. It was noted that the defibrillator is due to expire soon and will need to be renewed. The Parish Council paid 50% of the original cost. Last year there was an unrestricted amount of £7,234 carried forward of which £800 is designated for road improvements. Expenditure last year exceeded the £3,000 precept because of the need to clean the war memorial. There is currently a VAT refund of £330 to be claimed. Expenditure this year should come in at just under the precept of £3,000. After questions and discussion it was agreed to leave the precept at £3,000 for another year.

12. Local Community Networks

Local Community Networks (LCNs) are being set up in Somerset as committees of local groups including town and parish councils, voluntary groups, NHS, schools, police and other interested parties and residents. They will meet in locally in every part of the County to discuss what is most important for their area and will work together to influence decisions about their local area. LCNs will empower communities across the county.

A recent consultation document set out three possible options for the LCN boundaries. That consultation has now closed and the results will be determined in January. The Clerk was asked to re-circulate the consultation document with the details of the boundary options. **ACTION - The Clerk**

13. Matters and items to report

- (a) Warm Hubs Scheme - Spark Somerset are co-ordinating the warm hubs scheme.
- (b) Winter Service - Snow ploughing - SCC are appealing for farmers to volunteer to clear snow should there be a need to do so.
- (c) Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group are hosting a free woodland creation farm workshop.
- (d) Reservoir - Hannah Stanton's Assistant, Jack, is leaving because unfortunately there is no money available to continue his contract. He has been invaluable and helped to set up a number of initiatives.
- (e) Redscript Road - This has been left covered in mud from the work on the Golf Course. This is part of Cudworth and they will contact the Golf Club.

13. Date of next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council

The next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council - Monday 20th February 2023 at 7.30 p.m. at Chaffcombe Village Hall

The meeting finished at 9.00 p.m.

Mary Butler - Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council