

CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Chaffcombe held in the Village Hall on Monday 15th April 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

Attendance and Apologies

Those present:

Mrs M Butler (Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council)

Mr D Bracher (Chaffcombe Parish Councillor)

Mrs S Morley (Clerk)

2 members of the public

Apologies - Mr R Bale, Mr S Robinson, Mrs G Wills

1. Report of the Chair of the Parish Council covering activities for the years 2023/24

Chard Reservoir

In May Hannah Stanton the Warden at Chard Reservoir gave a report on the ongoing activities at the Reservoir. There is an active group of volunteers and an increase in the number of activities that can be organised. There are more visitors who are generally being very responsible with their rubbish and litter does not appear to have increased. They have had a Green Flag award for a number of years for their environmental impact.

Coronation Celebrations

A commemoration tree, a weeping cherry tree, was planted in the triangular piece of land outside the Pound and a BBQ was held in the Village Hall in May to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. The day was warm with no rain or wind so the event was held in the Village Hall car park with lots of tea, coffee and cake. It was agreed that the event was a great success. Councillors thanked Parish Council Chairman Mary Butler who organised the day.

Defibrillator

A new defibrillator, jointly funded by the Village Hall and the Parish Council, has been installed with a lease for the next 4 years,

Local Community Networks

Local Community Networks (LCNs) were set up by the new unitary Somerset Council to bring parishes and towns together to discuss common issues and find ways to resolve them. Parish Councillor Vice Chairman Geraldine Wills agreed to represent Chaffcombe Parish Council at these regular meetings.

Somerset Council

Somerset Council has indicated that it is in serious financial trouble with a large deficit. It has avoided having to make a s114 declaration, which is an effective bankruptcy notice, but will have to make cuts to services. These have not yet been announced. They will be making approximately 1,000 redundancies.

Footpaths

(a) Footpath CH4/16 Diversion Avishays Estate

No objections were received to the footpath diversion. It is now fully open and seems to be well used. The old footpath has now been closed and the stile removed.

(b) Footpaths CH4/20 and CH4/21 (South of the A30)

The high single stile at the top of the timber staircase has been replaced by a new single metal self-closing gate. The two double stiles to footpath CH4/21 have also been replaced with new metal kissing gates.

(c) The two sections of Footpath CH5/40 Mill House

This is being watched to see if they are being kept accessible.

(d) Parish Footpaths Generally

Monthly footpath walks have been carried out for most of the year. Chaffcombe Voluntary Footpath Liaison Officer reported that 79 hours were spent walking and maintaining the parish path network.

Flooding

The Volunteer Flood Warden is no longer residing full time in the village so sadly had to resign and the post is still vacant. Parish Councillor David Bracher has continued to work with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Somerset Highways to provide a long term solution to the problems of flooding in the village. There were no flooding incidents this year. Work on the ground work for the attenuation pond at Woodlands is proceeding with funding supplied by FWAG. This should catch water coming off the fields. When the pond is finished the risk of flooding will be much reduced.

Orchard Plot

The brambles have been cut and the contractor will be asked to do it each year in November or December before the snowdrops flower.

Highways

Ongoing problems with blocked drains, potholes etc have all been reported to Highways and a number of problems have been successfully dealt with.

Planning

There have been a few planning applications during the year. Phosphate levels are still affecting local planning applications.

Precept

This has been held at £3,000 for another year.

Internet Banking

The Parish Council is in the process of setting up an internet banking facility, particularly because local banks are closing and it is becoming difficult not to be able to bank on-line.

Website

The website administered for the village by Lewis Bates, continues to provide residents with information about events, both past and future, together with lots of beautiful photos uploaded particularly by Lewis and David Bracher. For such a small village our website is truly one to be proud of.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the life of the Parish: my fellow parish councillors, our two unitary councillors, our volunteer Footpath Warden, our volunteer website administrator, our Clerk and everyone else in the village, too many to name, who give their time to make Chaffcombe a wonderful place to live.

2. Public Voice

- a) Somerset Council Cuts - a question was asked about what cuts are being made and what plans the Parish Council are making to deal with them. At the moment we do not know the full picture so we cannot make any financial plans for the cuts.
- b) Reservoir - Questions were asked about the work at the Reservoir and the costings for the sluice gate. Somerset Rivers Authority are dealing with this Cllr Butler will contact them for more information. Cllr Bracher said that the Parish Council needs to be kept informed about the work because it is within the Parish boundary.
- c) Speeding in the village - Speeding motorists have been reported to the Police who have come out to monitor the road. The Police said to ring 999 if vehicles are speeding which are a danger to the public.

Meeting finished at 7.55 p.m.

Mary Butler, Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council 2024