

# CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Chaffcombe held in the Village Hall on Monday 14th April 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

### Attendance and Apologies

Those present:

Mrs M Butler (Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council)  
Mrs G Wills (Vice Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council)  
Mr D Bracher (Councillor Chaffcombe Parish Council)  
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)  
4 members of the public

**Apologies** - Mr R Bale, Mr S Robinson

### 1. Report of the Chair of the Parish Council covering activities for the years 2024-25

Chaffcombe 2024-25

#### Chard Reservoir

In May Hannah Stanton the Warden at Chard Reservoir gave a report on the ongoing activities at the Reservoir, the projects currently underway and the work of the volunteers. She also updated the Council about the proposal to remove some trees and build a wall alongside the reservoir and Chaffcombe Road.

#### Wall and tree removal at the Reservoir

A public meeting with representatives from Somerset Council was held in August to explain to the Parish Council and residents the proposed works at the Reservoir. These works are being carried out following a mandatory flood risk survey. This identified work which must be carried out to prevent the consequences of dam failure which would be catastrophic and result in extensive flooding with risk to life over a wide area. Part of this work involves removing some trees and building a wall alongside the Reservoir and Chaffcombe Road.

A second public meeting with representatives from Somerset Council and two of the engineers responsible for the work was held in November. A detailed presentation was given of the need for the work and the thinking behind it. A video of a 3D model was also shown.

#### Local Community Networks

Local Community Networks (LCNs) meetings have continued throughout the year. The main concerns in our local LCNs were to do with flooding. The other main concerns are resilience and response to emergencies.

Parish Councillor Vice Chairman Geraldine Wills has been attending the meetings to represent Chaffcombe Parish Council.

#### Somerset Council

Somerset Council has managed to balance its budget this year but is still in serious financial trouble with a large deficit. A number of staff have been made redundant and there is concern that by next year it will have to make a s114 declaration, which is an effective bankruptcy notice. Charges are to be made for emptying the dog waste bins.

A new local plan is being prepared and a boundary review is underway.

#### Footpaths

Due to Somerset Council cut backs the number of Rangers covering footpaths will be reduced and budgets will be cut. Parish Councils are being asked to take more responsibility for maintaining their parish footpaths.

#### (a) Restricted byway CH5/71 – Paintmoor Lane

Part of this byway has been closed due to a dangerous bridge. There is currently a dispute over who is responsible for repairs.

#### (b) Parish Footpaths Generally

Monthly footpath walks have been carried out for most of the year. A number of issues have been reported to Somerset Rights of Way. Three trees came down in the January storm and were removed.

### Flooding

The attenuation pond was completed earlier in the year. During heavy rain in January the Village Hall was flooded for the first time ever. Volunteers swept out the water and mud and cleaned the Hall and luckily no lasting damage was done. There are proposals to create some holes in the back wall so that in the future water can escape.

### Orchard Plot

The brambles were cut in November 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.

The temporary barrier at the bridge is still on the list to be made permanent.

A crack has been reported on the railway bridge. This has been passed to the department responsible for bridges at Somerset Council.

### Planning

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

### Precept

This was increased to £3,500 this year to cover the cost of emptying the dog waste bins.

### VE Day Commemorations

It was decided not to hold an event in Chaffcombe because there are already a number of local events.

### 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.

Mary Butler, Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council 2025

## **2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2024**

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were available and were signed by the Chair as a true record.

## **3. Public Voice.**

### **(a) Reservoir**

Cllr Bracher reported that the volunteers at the Reservoir are to become the Friends of (Chard Reservoir), although the name has not yet been decided, and they are looking at charitable status. He said the Reservoir Warden and volunteers value the involvement and input of the Parish Council.

### **(b) Road Closure at the Reservoir**

The road is likely to be closed for up to 12 weeks for the work to remove the trees and build the wall at the Reservoir. The tree roots need to be removed and this will involve disturbing a lot of the road. The machinery can be pulled back by arrangement to allow lorries to access the farms and for emergency vehicles during the day. It is not clear if emergency vehicles will have access during the night. Discussions are ongoing to resolve this.

Councillors feel it is necessary to have a one-way system coming down Knapps Lane and up Summer Lane and Cricket Lane, all three Lanes which are very narrow with limited passing places. Again discussions are ongoing to see if this can be made a formal one-way system. If not it was suggested that advisory one-way signs are made to try to avoid the congestion likely to result from vehicles using both Lanes in both directions. It was also noted that Cricket Lane is in a very bad condition with large pot holes.

(c) Potholes

Cllr Wills will report the largest pot hole at the top of Cricket Lane.

(d) Gateway in Knapps Lane

It was noted that at the gateway towards the top of Knapps Lane there is a deep rut off the road and it could potentially damage a car pulling in to use that as a passing place.

(e) FWAG

Cllr Bracher reported that he is in communication with FWAG who are planning to visit the village to look at flood prevention work.

(f) Drains

Highways have cleared the drains recently. Debris has been a problem preventing water from flowing away.

The meeting finished at 8.10 p.m.

Mary Butler  
Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council.