

# CHAFFCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Monday 18th August 2025 at 7.30 p.m.

### 1. Attendance and Apologies

#### Those present:

Mrs M Butler (Chair)  
Mr S Robinson (Vice Chair)  
Mr D Bracher  
Mrs G Wills  
Mrs S Osborne (Somerset Councillor)  
Mrs S Morley (Clerk)

#### Apologies

Mr R Bale  
Mr Tony Gray (PPLO)  
Mrs V Keitch (Somerset  
Councillor)

#### In Attendance

4 Members of the public

### 2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council held on Mon 19/05/25

The minutes were approved and were signed by the Chair.

### 3. Report by Somerset Councillor

Cllr Osborne reported that there will be a Boundary Commission review on the possible changes. The consultation is now closed. The final decision will be in December. The consultation had run from June to August. Usually there are not too many changes. The aim is to make the population of wards broadly equal with up to 4,500 voters plus or minus 10%.

There are temporary arrangements in place for contacting the planning department. The consultation time for applications is likely to be reduced.

Somerset Council have overspent on their budget in the first quarter. The Council is going through a transformation process modernising and using a lot more tech, including more online services. The Council is hoping for massive savings due to the transformation project.

The LCNs should report by October on the long term future of the LCNs.

Cllr Butler thanked Cllr Osborne for her report.

### 4. Planning Applications

There were no new planning applications.

### 5. Footpaths

Chaffcombe Parish Council Footpaths PPLO Report August 2025 is as follows:

"Since my last report work has been carried out to replace the high stile at the top of Sprays Hill with a timber kissing gate, and two stiles to fields behind Little Paintmoor in Paintmoor Lane have also been replaced with metal kissing gates provided by Rights of Way, so increasing the number of stiles within the parish which have been changed to make access easier for all.

I have made contact with the Rights of Way Ranger about the footpath between Paintmoor Lane and Touches Lane about the state of two stiles and a stream crossing, as well as who is responsible for clearing the section of path alongside Paintmoor Plantation. I am awaiting a response.

I have also been in discussion with the Ranger about the possible reinstatement of the footpath along the top of the Reservoir Dam lost as a result of building the dam wall, even though the Council claim that this was not an official path.

Otherwise there are currently no known issues with the network."

Cllr Butler thanked Mr Gray for his report.

### 6. Reservoir

Cllrs Butler and Robinson had a meeting at the Dam with Kier to discuss the completion of the works and ongoing extra work such as the provision of a pedestrian gate. Cllr Butler remarked that Kier were very helpful during the work and opened the road several times when access was needed.

The work on the Reservoir dam has been completed and the road has been re-opened. Hannah Stanton reported that there has now been a pedestrian gate installed by the Anglers Car Park gate, which means that there is technically now 24/7 access to pedestrians and wheelchair users which wasn't the case up until a couple of weeks ago. This means people are still forced to use the road as a means of access, and at the present time there is not a plan to re-install the 'path' that was there

before, partly because there technically is not 'through access' by the sluice/dam like there used to be.

The path that was previously there was liked and well used by the local community, and many visitors alike, so Hannah Stanton is still trying to get something back for that. She will also be laying grass/wildflower seed down in the autumn as directed by the guidelines within the project to re-establish vegetation in that area.

It was noted that cars have been parking on the road by the new wall. The road is very narrow and there is nothing to say that parking is not allowed. Cllr Butler will contact Hannah Stanton who had previously put up 'no parking' notices.

## 7. Highway matters.

### (a) Road closure and works at the Reservoir

The work is finished and the road is open.

### (b) Temporary barrier at the bridge

Highways have been reminded about the work outstanding and the job is still out for completion.

### (c) Crack in the railway bridge

It is not clear who has responsibility for the bridge. It used to fall under Sustrans but it is thought to have passed to National Highways. Cllr Wills will chase this again and will let Chard Council know because the bridge is outside Chaffcombe Parish boundary and is actually in Chard. Cllr Osborne will also try to find out what is happening.

**ACTION - Cllr Wills**

### (d) Removal of loose stones between the bridge and the telephone box

Highways are aware of this.

## 8. Flooding

(a) Flood Warden Mike Otterbeck has contacted Highways regarding the blocked drains next to the telephone box, enlarging the drain at the Village Hall, as well as items (b) and (d) above under minute 7. Highways have replied that they are short staffed but the matters have been raised and noted.

(b) Holes were knocked in the wall in the Village Hall Car Park which should stop the Hall flooding in the future.

(c) It was noted that the drain by the phone box is full of debris and that the drains in Knapps Lane need clearing. Highways have been contacted. They would like the blocked drains reported on line.

(d) A good meeting was held with FWAG followed by a visit from Highways. Creating an attenuation pond to deal with the water which comes down Summer Lane has been suggested. We have not heard back from FWAG regarding permission to go into the field to do the work which is likely to be grant funded. Cllr Bracher will follow this up.

**ACTION - Cllr Bracher**

(e) The attenuation pond at the top of Knapps Lane is working well.

(f) Sandbags have been provided for Chaffcombe Gate.

## 9. LCN Meetings

The last meeting in June was mainly procedural.

## 10. Dog Bins

The Clerk has not had a new quote for emptying bins every two weeks.

**ACTION - The Clerk**

## 11. Payments and receipts

The following online payments were made:

|            |          |          |          |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| 18/08/2025 | S Morley | Clerk    | £ 166.89 |
| 18/08/2025 | HMRC     | Paye     | £ 37.60  |
| 30/08/2025 | I Butler | Sandbags | £ 171.36 |

## **12. Banking**

The Clerk reported that a lot of banks are now charging or are about to charge for community current accounts. HSBC do not charge.. It was agreed to set up a new account with HSBC.

**ACTION - The Clerk**

## **13. Requirement to use a .org or .gov email address via a website**

New regulations have been issued in the latest edition of the Practitioners' Guide which requires all councils to have a .org or .gov council email address linked to a council owned website by March 2026. It will no longer meet requirements to have a gmail or hotmail etc email address.

Councillors agreed that the Clerk can liaise with the webmaster to set up the required email account.

**ACTION - The Clerk**

## **14. Matters and Items to Report**

### **(a) Speeding in the Village**

There is concern particularly at the bottom of Knapps Lane that motorists are speeding and the signs are not working as well as had been hoped. Electric cars are a particular worry because they are much quieter.

It was noted that recently on a number of roads speed limits have been imposed. It was agreed to try again to get a speed limit of at least 30 mph, preferably 20 mph, in the Village. **ACTION - The Clerk**

### **(b) Preparedness Survey**

This was completed in draft and the Clerk will complete and forward to County. **ACTION - The Clerk**

## **15. Date of next ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council**

The next Ordinary meeting of Chaffcombe Parish Council will be on Monday 17th November 2025 at 7.30 p.m. at Chaffcombe Village Hall.

The meeting finished at 8.45 p.m.

Mary Butler - Chair Chaffcombe Parish Council-