**WEST & MIDDLE CHINNOCK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 9th February 2022**

 **Cllr Bennett - Chair Cllr Partridge**

**Cllr Coleman – Deputy Chair Cllr Cawley**

**Cllr Cooke Cllr Tinkley Clerk: Kim Duller 9 Members of the General Public**

**Public Forum:** **i) Recreation Ground Redevelopment:** A discussion took place between Neil Cochran (NC) and the Chair, Cllr Mark Bennett regarding the disbanding of the informal Rec re-development committee and the basis of the decision. The Chair had previously thanked the committee for their hard work via email and reiterated this again. The Chair gave a summary of the reasons why the committee had been disbanded based on the change of ownership of the Rec from SSDC to the PC. The Chair continued by explaining, the PC need to demonstrate due diligence and ensure all residents have the opportunity to be individually consulted, stressing the importance that everyone’s voice in the village is heard and also a duty of care to consult with all residents to ensure the effective spending of public funding. The Chair explained that the Recreation Ground had more protection from any future development under the ownership of the Parish Council as a community asset, than staying in the hands of SSDC, especially with the move to a Unitary authority planned. The Chair confirmed he had outlined all of this in an email to the existing committee. NC explained he had concerns with the discussion and that an email had not been shared regarding the vote to disband the informal committee. The Chair confirmed that he was happy for the original email to be shared, subject to the Clerk checking GDPR. The Chair called another vote at the meeting and all Members were still in favour of the original decision. **RESOLVED** The Chair stressed again that he hoped that every Member of the previous committee would stand on the new committee and working parties. The Chair confirmed that he will be contacting the original Consultant who worked on the plan and explained the single current plan on the table will not stand up to scrutiny and he hoped to have a number of options based on consultation with the residents. The Chair explained the basis of the proposed consultations and confirmed these will be publicised with residents in April/May 22 to coincide with the release of the new Census data. JN volunteered to be on a committee. **ii) Jubilee Projects. A number of projects were proposed by Public Forum residents:** a) In stitches group, knitting crowns and making pom poms to put around the village; would also like to include a couple of workshop afternoons where residents could come along and make pom poms and either take away or use to decorate the village. Also a committee meeting at the gardening club the following week, so waiting to hear if any ideas. b) Lou White (not attending) considering organising a Country fair and organising a “big” Jubilee picnic on the Rec. Lou has been in touch with her Country fair organiser contacts. This would be on Sunday 5th June 2022. It could be an opportunity for village groups to run stalls, run activities. Idea is residents would bring their own food, but perhaps run a bar with the Muddled Man. (TBA) c) PCC may be involved for a service or sing along. d) Village Hall: proposing a disco on the Friday evening 3rd June, covering the decades of the queens reign and also a perhaps a children’s disco earlier in the day. Also proposing a Jubilee Tea & cake on the 2nd June 2021. JN mentioned scarecrows being discussed on Facebook. JN suggested splitting the Country fair and picnic to the 4th & 5th, however all agreed that it was preferable to have one integrated event. There were also suggestions of a parade around the village as part of the Country Fair/Picnic which LW is organising. Street parties were discussed; however there were a number of factors which the public and PC felt would not be appropriate to hold a village wide street party. ***Action: There are other ideas being put forward. Clerk to re-publicise to residents to come forward with ideas to potentially access funding and also to be able to coordinate all ideas and activities together in one Villages wide “leaflet/booklet” and posters for the whole of the celebrations.***

**22/898 Apologies for Absence:** The Chair explained that Cllr White had resigned as a Parish Councillor. The Chair thanked Cllr White for his contribution to the PC and wished him well in the future. The Parish Council will be advertising for a new Councillor to take on Councillor White’s portfolio. Due to elections in May the Clerk is in the process of checking whether a new Member can be co-opted.

**22/899 Declarations of Interest:** i) Cllr Cawley Allotments. ii) Cllr Coleman, any footpaths on Broadstone Farm land. iii) Cllr Bennett, Playground Committee.

**22/900 To approve and sign as correct the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8.12.2022.** Noted: Neighbourhood plan previous items in Minutes, Jonathan Naughton referred to as JC, it should read JN. JN queried church yard tenders from the previous meeting. The Chair explained this would be discussed later on the Agenda. JN queried if there were Minutes of the Precept meeting. The Chair explained there were, however these were not relevant as the decision taken at a draft Budget meeting to raise the precept had been overturned and the precept was remaining at the current level. This would be explained at a later item on the agenda and then the details of the new budget would be published once it was finalised. **All in Favour. Resolved**

**22/901 Matters arising, not on agenda: None**

**22/902 County Councillors Report:** Cllr Keating has stepped down. ***Clerk to ask when Marks last official day is and when there will be a new SCC Councillor taking up the post.***

**22/903 SSDC Councillors Report:** Cllr Patrick sent apologies. Newsletter received and circulated to Members. Queries relating to planning to be discussed under planning item. ***Action: Clerk to follow up on when the date of Public meeting for Chinnock Hollow meeting will take place.***

**22/904 Planning:**

1. **Applications: None.**
2. **Applications since time of the agenda: None**
3. **Determinations since time of agenda:**
4. **21/03366/HOU The Old Flax Mill, West Chinnock.**
5. **Twindown Mead, Middle Chinnock (Re-submission).**
6. **Planning queries: None.**
7. **Planning Queries: New build on Smiths Hill:** Water constantly running down from the site and pooling on Lower Street, which is dangerous when there is a frost and concerns regarding the stability of the site. Concerns that this is linked to springs on the land not being able to now soak away. It was also noted that the highway (Hollowell Hill) has also now started to disintegrate. It was noted that Hinton St George has also had similar issues with a site, where flooding concerns had been raised prior to permission being given. It was also noted from a resident who was walking his dogs that there was oil running down from the site, with the water. ***Action: Clerk to contact highways and Wessex Water.***
8. **Planning enforcement: Hollowell Hill 19/00026/FUL**. The Clerk has still not received confirmation of the enforcement which was submitted in Octobe*r.* Further to the Clerks request for residents to submit individual enforcements request, one has been submitted, however there are issues with the enforcement portal. Cllr Patrick emailed a planning Officer with the breach relating to the lighting, however there is no feedback from the enforcement team on whether the other list of enforcement queries have been logged, including the caravan on the site, the number of additional buildings, the construction of the barn in accordance with the plans, use of the land as amenity land rather than agricultural, and whether conservation conditions are being met. Members felt that as they had significant input on the original application and conditioning on the site, that they should be allowed to put in an enforcement notice as well as residents otherwise this undermined, completely the role of the Parish Council. JN repeated the difficultly of collecting evidence and explained that the planners have twice previously tried to inspect the site in previous years, but for whatever reason didn’t. There now seems to be a change in enforcement and no-one is quite sure why the original enforcement issues are not being addressed with at least a visit. Cllr Coleman commented that there was now no enforcement Officer in pos*t.* ***Action: Clerk to query.*** ***Action: Clerk to check with Cllr Patrick if the enforcement portal is now working. Action: Clerk asked to request a formal response as to why the enforcement has not been acknowledged and report back to Members.*** JN explained he would talk to SSDC Cllr Patrick to query a number of issues. The discussion concluded and whilst the Members were mindful of the staff shortages in the SSDC planning team, the lack of communication on this matter was not acceptable. ***Action: Residents should continue to submit enforcement notices or if they cannot contact the planning team.*** A visiting Cllr from Hinton St George/Merriott confirmed they were having similar problems over a listed building enforcement query and it was suggested joint working between the Parish Councils.

**22/905 Finance:**

1. **22/23 Budget: Background:** A budget planning meeting had been held in Dec 21, which recommended an increase in the precept in order to fund some new precept items. On-line discussions were then held in January (due to increase in COVID cases) and sensitive to the current economic situation, Members agreed, and voted upon not raising the precept due to concerns with increased utility bills and cost of living which were likely to have an adverse impact on residents in the following year. The Chair and Clerk had re-forecast a draft budget which will be finalised once the yearend figures are confirmed. The figures in the budget were then discussed. One of the sensitive discussion budget items which had been under discussion was raising the precept in order to pay for grass cutting at the churches. The Chair has had discussions with Rev Nick and the accounts from both churches had been examined. It was agreed that Middle Chinnock Church, with the current accounts would not justify an increase in precept, nor West Chinnock Church, however as there was a community fund within the new budget, both churches would be able to bid for a grant from the village grant budget and a decision would be taken based on the same criteria as other applicants. Concerns were raised by ZG that the figures put forward by Middle Chinnock church did not give a true financial picture and new accounts are due. It was reiterated that both Churches could also apply for part of the grant. Certain items remain earmarked which have been carried over, including drains. The general reserve is slightly higher than normal, however brings the PC in line with the national policy and local policy in terms of cash reserve recommendations. A vote was taken to accept the draft budget, with the Precept remaining at £15, 000 and no increase. Cllr Tinkley proposed, Cllr Coleman seconded, 3 in favour, Cllr Partridge abstained. **Resolved** The online vote from 27th January 2022 to keep the precept at £15,000 was ratified. **Resolved**
2. **HMRC:** The Clerk explained that HMRC were sending letters saying that the PC was being fined for late payment of PAYE. The Clerk confirmed that PAYE had been paid on time and similar issues had happened before. The Clerk has handed all of the paperwork to the payroll company to investigate. ***Action: Clerk to report back at next meeting.***
3. **To consider quotes for plot 20, Allotments:** The quotes had previously been circulated to Members and the Clerk gave an overview. Cllr Cooke to abstain. A vote was taken to recommend Peter Cockrem, Plant Hire. Proposed by Cllr Tinkley, seconded Tony Cawley, all in favour. **Resolved.**
4. **Clerks Expenses Qtr’s 2 & 3:** £211.87. All in favour **Resolved**
5. **To approve Qtr 3 Accounts:** Inspected by the Internal Auditor, Neil Cochran with some minor amendments.

**Commentary:** There were 3 grass cutting invoices and a training invoice included in the accounts which were not listed in the Minutes. The Clerk had investigated as follows:

SLL invoices: 1. July SLL invoice £215.40 included in October 22 Minutes 2. October SLL invoice £215.40, queried in November Minutes; paid under delegated powers when confirmation of invoice was deemed correct and not listed under delegated powers in December Minutes. 3. SLL September Invoice £215.40, paid by delegated powers in October, not included in November Minutes. 4. SALC Training invoice for Members £90.00: Invoice discussed in November Minutes under finance, however there was no clarification of who the training was for. The Clerk checked with SALC and when the query was answered, paid under delegated powers. ***Action: Clerk to be more diligent when paying under delegated powers and ensure the delegated payments are discussed and logged at the next PC meeting.*** The Chair thanked Neil Cochran for undertaking the audit. Qtr 3 Accounts approval: Proposed: Cllr Partridge seconded Cllr Cawley, all in favour. **Resolved**

1. **Delegated Powers payments: None.**
2. **To Pay any routine or previously agreed invoices: None**

**21/906 Allotments Update: Report on items since time of agenda**

1. **Plot 20:** Discussed item 22/905.c
2. **Tarmac has been laid at entrance:** This has improved access, however was not commissioned by the PC. The PC can therefore not be responsible for any liability for issues which may arise as a result of the current tarmac laying. SCC Highways are aware that this work has been carried out. **Action: Cllr Cawley to remove cones which are on the highway.**
3. **Inspection reports sent out:** A few plots were earmarked for re-inspection in March 22 and only one which was due for re-inspection in January. This inspection has taken place and the plot has passed the inspection. All plotholders are aware of the March 22 inspection.
4. Plot 18b has been handed back and is available to rent. There is already a resident on the waiting list and they will be offered either the ½ or ¼ plot’s which are available.
5. Allotments to be re-advertised to add to waiting list.
6. The Clerk confirmed she had received a thank you for the tarmacing at the allotment entrance which had improved access, from an existing allotment holder.

**21/907** **Matters arising from the 10th November 2021 meeting:**

1. **Queens Jubilee:** Previously discussed in the Public Forum, however it was confirmed that the grant funding “pot” available to groups/residents for events would be £1000.00. A query was raised by JN if the PC were still considering Beacons for the Jubilee. The Chair explained that this was discussed by the PC before Christmas after the community had not come forward with ideas after 2 previous “reach outs”. However the PC had been optimistic that this would change in the New Year after further advertising. This was successful and a number of ideas come forward which was very positive. The Beacon at the time was considered as a fallback position. National Beacons are happening and maybe one in Chiselborough. ***Action: Cllr Bennett agreed to take discuss the potential of a Beacon on Balham Hill with the landowner.***
2. **Smokey Hole & Smiths Hills Trees overhang, outstanding Risk Assessment:** Previous Councillor, Cllr White had confirmed to the Clerk that an inspection has been carried out on all of the land owned by JM which faces on to the Highways in West & Middle Chinnock and that there were no issues. He also confirmed that JM was covered by liability insurance. The Clerk reported that now, all landowners with land in West & Middle Chinnock facing on to Highways have confirmed ongoing risk assessments. The Clerk highlighted the difficulties being experienced in Chinnock Hollow, and the resultant lengthy closure. Item now to be taken off of the Agenda.
3. **Grass Cutting, Churches West & Middle Chinnock:** Previously reviewed under item 22/905.a
4. **Community Playground review price increase:** NC explained the contribution had not risen in real terms and the £370.00 paid last year by the PC was due to the reduction in overheads due to COVID, however the PC had paid £520.00 in the year previous to this. **All Members agreed this was reasonable.**
5. **Parish Resilience Plan:** No feedback received from PC Members to Cllr Cooke from the previously circulated papers relating to flood plans. The Clerk had reached out to 2 local villages of a similar size to W&MC who confirmed that they did not have a formal flood plan. They did however have informal Flood Wardens, who were local residents who had taken on the role, both having a vested interest. **It was RESOLVED that the West & Middle Chinnock informal approach with community self resilience was working well and a formal plan was not needed for the time being.**
6. **Riverbank Collapse, Scott’s Way:** i)Still on-going relating to legal responsibility of trees which have fallen into the river and are causing the riverbank to erode due to blockage and change of flow. Meeting set with the Chair to meet owners of land on 19th February 2022. Chair to confirm with Clerk in order that the Merriott PC Chair can be invited. If the river bank continues to erode, the Road will be closed as on Chinnock Hollow. Ii) **Lower Street, debris in River, Chinnock Brook:** Keith Dodge confirmed that he had reported this to the Environment Agency and it hasn’t been moved. **Action: Clerk to liaise with KD and chase.**
7. **The Knapp:** Some trees on the Knapp have been removed after the owner of Tree Cottage made an application for removal. The path for the vehicle access to Tree cottage still requires maintenance and the PC had received reports relating to this from residents who use the footpath on the land. The Clerk explained that the owner of Tree Cottage has previously been asked to rectify this.
8. **Neighbourhood planning:** A lengthy discussion was held. **No Actions or Resolutions.**
9. **Wildflower Seed Giveaway:** There was concern raised by Cllr Cooke on the amount of work required to carry out effective re-wilding, which residents in the meeting and Members agreed with. The land on the way to the Rec from Lower Street was still considered to be a potential site. NC suggested a wider discussion with the owners and explained he had already had discussions with the owners regarding the Rec development and the “boggy” piece of land. ***Action: Cllr Bennett to contact owners of land to discuss proposal for wild flowers, upgrading of path and also drainage, leading to the Rec. Action: Cllr Cooke to follow up wildflower discussions with the school.***
10. **Bench West Chinnock Church:** The PC had previous to COVID, awarded West Chinnock Church £250.00 towards a bench for use by the community.Rev Nick was keen to use Yarcombe Timber, good quality and local company. The quote is more than money agreed, depending on the specification. The cheapest was £300.00. The Clerk explained the £250.00 allocated was a contribution and the church could match fund if they wished. ***Action: Cllr Coleman to have a discussion with Rev Nick and agree a way forward. JN suggested an appeal. The Chair advised JN this would be for Rev Nick to organise, not the PC.***

**21/908 Reports & Correspondence:**

* 1. **Fly Tipping:** At least 5 incidents reported in the past 2 months, possibly more. Easy to report and SSDC will remove the rubbish when it is reported.
	2. **Clerk Report Dec 21 – Jan 22**
		+ 1. Members reminded confidentiality of emails and their responsibility under the code of conduct. Members must use the GDPR confidentiality clause on their emails.
			2. Phone Box Rota: 6 residents have come forward and Rota will be organised.
			3. May Elections – Clerk has circulated information to Members on their responsibility for the May elections. Cllr Coleman stressed to new Members, there is a significant amount of paperwork.
			4. Broadband, Middle Chinnock: Following helpful discussions with JG, the Clerk had spoken at length to the SSDC consultant responsible for supporting South Somerset. Recommendations: i) If there is an immediate need for higher speed internet it was suggested that residents use satellite. KONNECT was one which was mentioned and also Astra and Starlink. Prices seemed reasonable compared to a BT high speed internet connection in West Chinnock. ii) Residents to check current contract with their existing provider. Residents to check whether they are paying for a higher speed, especially if they are on a contract which hasn’t been checked for a few years.

iii) Wait until 2023 for Wessex internet who will be connecting Middle Chinnock & West Chinnock 2023. iv) Use 5G, however the villages do not have access to this at the moment. (TBA – when available).

* 1. **A30 Roadwork’s, Feb-May 22:** The Chair raised concerns that the PC were not given notice of the Roadwork’s and how they coincided with the existing Crewkerne ones. Cllr Patrick has been supportive with getting signs for traffic management and preventing Lorries coming through the village.
	2. **Footpaths, Cllr Coleman:** Still a reported non- action for a sign on the bridge between Bridge farm and Broadstone.
	3. **Drains Audit and Action Plan Update:** Now that Cllr White has left there will be a gap in terms of managing drains reports. Cllrs’ Bennett and Cawley will take over reporting and the Clerk to hold on to the master project plan and keep it updated. **Hedges:** Cllr Bennett thanked Broadstone Farm as well as Cyril Bailey for the recent hedge cutting.
	4. **Potholes:** Most have been marked. Little Silver still not been actioned, nor Eastfield Lane. JG has sent photos to Cllr White. ***Action: JG to send pictures to the Clerk of Little Silver potholes.***
	5. **Recreation Ground Redevelopment Project:** Previously discussed in the Public Forum.
	6. **Parish Work Plan: Resolved.** The work plan is to be stepped down as it wasn’t being updated. Review at a later date.
	7. **Parish & Town Councils Annual Conference Feb 22:** Cllr Bennett to attend, if not recording to be circulated.
	8. **Elections May 22 –** previously discussed under Clerks report.

**21/909** **Correspondence & Matters for Wednesday 9th February 2021**

1. **Dog Fouling:** Cllr Cooke has collected photos, which the Clerk has been reported to SSDC. If there is no response, the PC to intervene and agree a village wide campaign. The Clerk referred to previous case studies from successful from campaigns which have reduced dog fouling.
2. Thanks to be passed to a local child from the PC who was litter picking with his grandad. ***Action: Clerk.***

Any Agenda items to be forwarded to the Clerk before Thursday 3rd March 2022

**Meeting closed 9.40pm**

**Next Meeting**

**Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 9th March 2022**

**7.30pm Village Hall, West Chinnock**