

# WEST & MIDDLE CHINNOCK PARISH COUNCIL

## Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 - Virtual Meeting

Cllr Bennett - Chair  
Cllr Collins  
Cllr Tinkley

Cllr Coleman – Vice Chair  
Cllr Dewsbury  
Cllr White

Clerk: Kim Duller

4 Members of the General Public

**Public Forum:** The Chair acknowledged it had been a difficult 2 months for the PC and residents and that COVID had played a major part in this. Both SSDC and SCC had redeployed staff and front line services had been impacted by staff shortages. He asked residents to be patient if the PC were unable to action requests immediately, but reassured everyone that the PC was actively supporting the community. The Chair also reminded the meeting that the Parish Council is a non political organisation. a) Jonathan Naughton asked a series of questions; i) The PC Work Plan had proved useful and he hoped this was still being utilised. The Business planning Meeting Minutes had not been displayed on the Website. Clerk to put display in February and to be signed off in the March meeting. ii) Pot holes on Smokey Hole Lane, JN felt that there were still a number which hadn't been filled, neither had the gullies at the side of the road. The Chair acknowledged that the pot holes/gullies at the side of the road had not been done; however felt that Highways had done a good job with the rest of the road. He also commented that the gullies and pot holes had quickly started to reappear after the recent poor weather and this was an on-going issue. iii) Precept £5000.00 for drains, query. The Chair explained that the PC has acknowledged that there is an on-going problem with drainage across the village and has therefore ring fenced an amount of money to address the situation. He stressed that it is important to look at the bigger picture into the cause of the ongoing issues as well as remedial works. The Clerk confirmed that SSDC had given her details of FWAG who are working with a number of Parish Councils to look at issues such as infrastructure and environment, impact on land management etc and that she would be contacting them in the next week. The Clerk confirmed she had been discussing a number of issues around the cause of the water/drains issues with Highways, including the increase in the number of springs appearing, road collapse, and land slip. JN offered to support. The Chair gave an example of a drain which appeared to be blocked outside of his house. The drain belonged to Wessex Water who inspected it. It transpired that the drain wasn't blocked and that it was caused by a rise in the water table due to all of the recent rain. iv) No money allocated to Neighbourhood plan, but JN noted that the Community plan still going ahead. The Chair confirmed the Community plan would be re-visited. The Chair felt that there was potentially no interest in a Neighbourhood plan but agreed with JN that if he would like to investigate how important a Neighbourhood plan would/could be for the village, that would be helpful in order to help shape what the Community needs in the future. More emphasis would be placed on the Neighbourhood plan if Somerset becomes unitary. v) Ridgway, no mention of article 4. The Chair suggested JN liaise with Cllr Tinkley. vi) Greenhams Hill, still no response. JN acknowledged this was an enforcement query submitted by him therefore he would follow up. vii) Cycling Strategy for Somerset; JN happy to follow up on this.

**21/761**

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr Cawley due to COVID-19 and lack of access to technology.

21/762

**Declarations of interest:** Cllr's Bennett, Coleman and Clerk, Recreation Ground Development Committee. The Clerk, legal transfer of the Recreation ground. Cllr Bennett, item 11.f Triscombe, Cllr White item 8.d.i Shiredown.

21/763

**To approve and sign as correct the Minutes of the Precept Planning Meeting held on 14.12.20. Resolved:** To defer approval until March Parish Council Meeting due to non publication. Clerk to post on normal public sites during February 21.

21/764

**To approve and sign as correct the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 02.12.20 Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 02.12.20 as previously circulated were taken as read and being a correct record. To be signed after lockdown.

21/765

**Matters arising, not on agenda: None.**

21/766

**Somerset County Councillors report:** Report received: Clerk to circulate.

21/767

**SSDC Councillors report:** Report received & circulated. SSDC Cllr Patrick reported changes to Council Tax by £5.00, but final vote to be taken later in the month; grants have been made available for people who are the most hard up during Covid and residents in the village may benefit. Road closures in Yeovil Town centre lifted; census is coming. Cllr Patrick mentioned embargoes on planning due to phosphates, however wasn't sure regarding any implications.

21/768

**Planning:**

**a. Applications since time of the agenda: None**

**b. Determinations since time of the agenda:**

- i) Smiths Hill. The Chair stated this was still contentious and raised the concern again that all 20 conditions had now been overturned questioning the validity of the national planning process. The Chair stated the PC would still like to confirm if there was any further possibility of appeal despite being advised that there isn't by SSDC. The Chair explained his concerns in relation to the bigger issues, previously discussed, including drains, springs and water run, which has all been acknowledged by highways and other agencies. Cllr Tinkley also confirmed disappointment that all of the conditions had been overturned. Whilst he acknowledged that some of the overturned conditions did not have a major impact, there were some that did, including change to the roof height, land works and excavation, retaining walls, run off, drainage and spring line, and over domination of the property on the site. He said the situation was problematic and was concerned that the feedback from the parish Council had just been dismissed. He stressed that the issues over springs and "water" was not going to go away, which has been acknowledged by highways and other agencies. JN said the PC shouldn't be too hard on itself as the national deficit on infrastructure was running at 12 billion a year. It was agreed the Clerk would continue to discuss with relevant agencies whether any appeal could be made. SSDC Cllr Patrick said that he would be working to ensure that all of the conditions are implemented and residents should contribute toward the effort to ensure that nothing slips under the radar.

**c. Planning enforcement: None.**

**d. Planning queries:**

- i) **Shiredown:** Cllr White confirmed that he had been in correspondence with the planners and they needed more information on the history of the building. Cllr White has replied back to the planners and is waiting to hear back.
- ii) **Planning appeal 12, Ridgway:** The PC have been made aware that a group of residents are responding to the planners; however the PC has no further information and is not involved in the appeal. There is no information on the portal.

Cllr Patrick confirmed that he was aware residents were unhappy with the decisions and he has tried to assist them, but has now been told that this is now a private matter.

21/769

**Finance:**

- a. **Resolved:** To approve Qtr 3 and ¾ year accounts 2020/21 as previously circulated and examined by the internal auditor, Neil Cochran. **All in favour.**
- b. **Noted:** payment of £200.00 for dismantling and removal of Dug Outs on the Rec, paid under delegated powers.
- c. **Resolved:** To pay Battens Solicitors part payment of fees to act for West & Middle Chinnock Rec Purchase £612.00 (VAT tba).
- d. **Noted:** Confirmation of Precept Submission.
- e. **To pay any routine or previously agreed invoices – None.**

21/770

**Allotments**

**Update:**

- i) **Update Inspection:** Inspection took place 8<sup>th</sup> December 20. Mixed findings, some managed well, some deviations. Reports sent out to all tenants. 9 tenants were fully compliant, 4 retrospective permissions and some needed further work to bring up to standard. The Chair reported that the aerial photograph provided by Cllr Tinkley demonstrates quite clearly where plots were not up to standard. Cllr Tinkley to take another photograph when the plots have been bought up to standard. A note will be sent out to all Tenants in February with a reminder of actions and confirm the date of the re-inspection to assess progress in March 21. (Date to be arranged with Cllr Bennett, Cllr Collins and Cllr Tinkley). Cllr Cawley had raised concerns regarding use of social media on the site. Cllr Collins to consider as part of the Tenancy agreement. Currently the only people allowed on the site are Tenants. In December 2x 1/4 plots and 2x ½ plots have been allocated. Tenancy agreements have been issued with the exception of 1x ¼ plot. A newsletter has been sent out and various other emails.
- ii) **Retrospective permissions requested:** Plot 17b; Agreed. Plot 8 and plots 11, 12, 13 permission to be delayed until plots is bought up to the Tenancy agreement standard. Plot 15d and 15c; Agreed. Cllr Collins to provide measurements of buildings on master list. Cllr Dewsbury also requires retrospective permission; Clerk to send out details to Cllrs to vote digitally. Cllr Collins to specify ratio size of “buildings” on whole plot, ½ plot, and ¼ plot and update Tenancy agreement. The Chair requested this be resolved a.s.a.p.
- iii) **Complaints Bonfires:** A second formal complaint has been received from SSDC regarding Tenants bonfires, a copy of which has been sent out to Tenants. Details were also sent out to tenants in the January newsletter, including guidance during the COVID lockdown.
- iv) **Management of Allotments:** There has been confusion over the informal Allotment Committee, however guidance has been given to explain that there is no formal Allotment Committee and requested that all matters relating to the Allotments are passed through the Parish Council via Cllr Collins. This seems to now be working well. It has been made clear that this is just a temporary situation in order to re-base line the Allotments and the PC are happy to reconsider an Allotment Committee at a later date. One more plot has been returned and this will be split into quarters, with the flexibility to have a half or whole plot. It will be advertised via Facebook and Parish Magazine.

- v) **Tenancy Agreements:** To be sent out in March 21 after the Allotment inspection. Upper Limit size per tenant under national guidance to be confirmed, Cllr Collins.
- vi) **Agreement of ¼ plot rent: Resolved:** £5.00. All in favour. All other plots rent to remain the same for 21/22

21/771

**Matters arising from the December 2020 meeting:**

- a. **Footpaths:** More of the outstanding maintenance reports have been completed and the new SCC Footpath Officer is carrying out action on reports more swiftly. **Action:** Take off agenda and put in work plan.
- b. **Recreation Ground, adjacent field written permission for steps: C/F Action:** Clerk to contact Rob Honeybun. Email address provided by Cllr Cawley. Cllr Cawley has confirmed that RH is happy however this will need to be in writing.
- c. **Great Tree Giveaway:** Trees arrived and distributed. Clerk requested recipients take photos of planting to send back to SSDC to help promote tree planting.
- d. **Smokey Hole Trees overhang:** Highways have inspected and have advised they are the responsibility of the land owner. Land ownership to be mapped and Highways to be asked to write to landowners. Some of the Trees on Haunts and right hand side of Smokey Hill have been risk assessed. The remaining trees at the Haunts and on the left hand side of Smokey Hole Lane will need to be risk assessed. **Action:** It was agreed that the Clerk would ask Highways to write to Mr Holloway and Mr Marks to undertake RI on the trees on their land and report back to the Parish Council.
- e. **Somerset Climate Emergency:** Not a PC main priority for 21/22. Take off main agenda for now and put on to work plan. Consider merit of activities as and when opportunities arise, but look to have a plan in the longer term.
- f. **Triscombe, Higher Street:** No further action due to COVID lockdown.
- g. **Locality Officer SSDC:** Cllr Collins has an update and he will contact the Clerk after the meeting.
- h. **Councillor Training:** All training completed from the induction. Outstanding ROI forms. Cllr Dewsbury has returned hers, 2 outstanding. **Action:** All Councillors to contact the Clerk if they would like any further training or updates. **Action:** Presentation for Code of Conduct training to be circulated by Clerk.
- i. **BT box renovation:** Oliver Patrick confirmed that renovations had nearly finished and there had been lots of community engagement. Decoration completely finished. John Grainger making new shelves and a display board. Hope to have an opening ceremony at some point. The Chair thanked Oliver for his hard work and for organising the renovation.
- j. **Bus Shelter:** Cllr Tinkley agreed to rub the seat down, but felt it best not to varnish during the winter and to wait for the warmer weather. The Chair thanked Cllr Tinkley for his offer of help.
- k. **Corona Virus: Feedback: Chair**
  - I. Local response: Ongoing. There have been some COVID cases in the village. Numbers in Somerset overall are high.
  - II. Direct legislative impact on Parish Council: Guidance as per previous lockdown.
  - III. Recreation ground: Guidance as per previous lockdown. No further signs needed at the Rec unless there are further changes.
  - IV. Concerns at local level: None, however the Chair urged all to “play their part” in stopping the spread of the virus.

**Reports & Correspondence:**

- a. **Parish Work Plan:** The plan had been updated and circulated. The Clerk thanked the Parish Council for the laptop computer which has meant life is easier for updating the website and social media. PCSO has changed, Clerk waiting for further contact from new PCSO, Wes. Yarlington land purchase is now being managed by Abri, which is the amalgamation of Yarlington and another company. Abri has apologised for the delay in the sale of the land and hopes to move quicker now. It was confirmed that Cllr Cawley has a very basic license to occupy, however it is not dated. Abri has also written to Cllr Cawley saying he cannot have bonfires on the site. Allotments, tree tagging and planting take off of the plan. OP gave an update on tagging. Unfortunately when flailing took place the driver did not see any of the tags and all the tags were destroyed. The landowner was very apologetic, so no need to keep monitoring.
- b. **Highways and Ditches Standing Item:** Ditch on the bottom of Poop Hill next to Honeybun land needs clearing, Other side ok. Trees also where the bank on Scotts way has collapsed. All unsure who owns the land, Bakers or Honeybun. **Action:** Chair to confirm. Highways have confirmed that it is likely a fallen tree has caused the bank collapse, clogging up the river, from the land on the other side of the river. Also the ditches on the other side of the Road, owner of the Millhouse, are blocked. Steve Ashton is the owner. **Action:** Clerk to notify Highways for them to write to land owners to clear the ditches.
- c. **Drains Standing Item:** No further comment on Drains. Chair and all Members to send any contacts for drain clearance companies.
- d. **Recreation Ground Purchase:** Nearly completed. The Clerk reiterated the PC will not ever be able to sell the land for commercial use and it must always stay as community Land and there is a covenant for this. Also that the land has a wider "flood" plain margin than previously assumed. The PC will have to take out insurance for indemnity of the concrete bridge which will be approx £100.00 per annum. The Clerk offered the opportunity for all Members to read all of the searches.
- d.i **Extra Item on Recreation Ground Gate being locked:** After discussion on whether or not the rec gate was being locked, either intentionally or not, or "faux" locking. **Resolution:** Remove the chain immediately. The Chair to see if he can weld a latch onto the gate so it can be closed. Cllr Tinkley proposed, Cllr Coleman seconded. It was also agreed that the Chair should notify Cllr Cawley as he had also been involved with the "faux" locking. JG to take chain off.
- e. **Recreation Ground Development Committee:** Quiet year due to COVID, hoping to get a zoom meeting organised in the next few weeks. Some draft plans have been created and feedback received. SSDC Cllr Patrick confirmed that SSDC has grants available for up to £12,500 or up to 50% of the project, whichever is lowest.
- f. **Letter from NALC Chair.** For information, previously circulated.
- g. **Riverbank Collapse entrance to Scott's Way:** Highways has put a safety barrier and markers by the collapse to advise the public. It is on the Highways work plan, however no confirmation of when any work will take place.
- h. **Thefts:** 2 Batteries from an electric fence and fencing have been stolen. It has been reported to the local PCSO and residents are asked to remain vigilant. Cllr Coleman confirmed that she has had a number of notifications from the rural crime group and reminded the PC that during the winter/dark nights there tends to be an increase in thefts, another reason to be vigilant.
- i. **Broken Road Markers Poop Hill:** Reported. Highways have put it on their action plan and have recommended that the markers be put on the wooden fence/barriers on the corner rather than the hedge. The job is listed on the SCC Highways work plan but there is no guarantee of when this will be done.

The cost of the markers is around £20.00 each. It was agreed that the PC should still write to Rob Honeybun to explain the situation, including the gate in the rec and the tree tagging. **Resolved:** To purchase markers and PC put them up. Proposed Neil Tinkley seconded Cllr Dewsbury.

- j. Use of Drones:** A number of queries had been raised with regard the use in rural areas, including where they can be flown, and guidance on taking pictures in relation to children, businesses and invasion of privacy. For example being flown in peoples gardens without permission. The Clerk confirmed that other Parish Councils are also seeking advice and guidance on the matter. **Resolved:** Cllr Tinkley confirmed he is a licensed drone user and kindly agreed to provide guidance (The drone and model aircraft code) which the Clerk will publish on the Parish Council Facebook page and on the website and Parish Magazine.
- k. Replacement Gate Greatfields:** A full discussion took place on whether the gate at Greatfields needed replacing. The discussion was extended due to querying right of access and rights of way over the Greatfields element of the land. Also discussed, consideration of the Landlord/Tenant relationship with the current Tenant and their rights to manage the land as part of their tenancy agreement. **RESOLVED:** It was agreed to carry out further research on the history of the Land to establish access rights including copies of the 1948 historic maps and previous land registry documentation relating to the sale of Greatfields and investigate a section 33 notice if relevant. Cllr Coleman to also liaise with the new footpath and Rights of Way officer at SCC and the Parish Council to seek legal guidance if required.
- l. Extra Item: Fly tipping on Foxwell Lane:** Has been reported, however concerns have been raised that it contains asbestos and specialist removal will be required. SSDC Cllr Patrick is aware of the situation. Clerk to report again. Also fly tipping just off A30 on left hand side. Cllr Coleman to report.
- m. Extra Item: Tarmac dumped at top of Lane leading from Broadstone Farm, from when pot holes were being filled during December.** Has been reported. Clerk to report again.

21/773

#### **Matters for the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 Agenda**

- a.** The Chair requested Members to let Clerk know regarding any matters to be discussed at the next meeting, giving as much advance notice as possible.

**Next Meeting Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 7.30pm Remote Meeting**

**Meeting closed 10.00pm**

