

WEST & MIDDLE CHINNOCK PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 14th February 2024

Cllr Bennett - Chair
Cllr Cawley
Cllr Griffiths
Cllr Partridge
5 Members of the General Public

Cllr Ashton
Cllr Cockrem – Deputy Chair
Cllr James (from 24/1144)
Clerk: Kim Duller

Public Forum: No questions from the Public Forum

24/1140 **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Griffiths.

24/1141 **Declarations of Interest:** i) Cllr Cawley, Allotments. ii) Cllr Bennett, Community Playground Committee. iii) Cllr Ashton, Councillor for Crewkerne Town Council, Hinton St George Parish Council and Somerset Council. Member, National Farmers Union and National Association for Shooting and conservation.

24/1142 **To Approve and Sign as Correct the Minutes from the Parish Council Meeting, 13th December 2023. Previous Minutes Resolved. All in Favour.**

24/1143 **Matters Arising Not on Agenda: None.**

24/1144 **Co-option of Angela James to become a Parish Councillor.** All Members had received Angela James application form and questionnaire. The Clerk confirmed that all legislative criteria to become a Parish Council had been met. **Proposed, Cllr Cockrem, seconded, Cllr Partridge. All in Favour. Resolved.** The Chair formally welcomed Cllr James. **Action: Clerk to send Cllr James new Member paperwork, induction and training opportunities. On behalf of Members and residents, the Chair welcomed Cllr James to the meeting. (Cllr James formally joined the meeting).**

24/1145 **SCC/SSDC Councillors Report:** January report previously circulated. Cllrs Patrick and Hewitson apologised for being late due to attendance at 3 other PC meetings in the area. Budget from SC being announced on 20.02.24. Still not sure on what services are being cut. After a budget has been agreed, more information will be known. Council Tax reduction scheme will be available to eligible residents; last year uptake low. Clerk will post details on social media. Yeovil Town Council will be financially supporting Yeovil recreation ground to prevent its closure. A Somerset wide flood forum has been set up and the PC was asked to forward any relevant details to Cllr Hewitson. It was confirmed that CCTV will be continued in Yeovil, after initial plans to stop it. It was also confirmed that as footfall has continued to grow at the Westlands Entertainment Centre, there are no plans for closure. The plans to further develop the Octagon are still in the pipeline to go ahead as the Arts Council are keen that this becomes a regional hub in the South West. Somerset Council are working with the Arts Council and are looking at the project as an opportunity for major regeneration. Cllr Ashton left the meeting at 20.05 to talk to Cllr Patrick and returned to the meeting at 20.10.

24/1146 **Planning:**

a. Applications:

- i) **Fortunes Well 22/00724/FUL, Higher Street, West Chinnock:** Previous submissions have already been made; new plans had been received. The Clerk confirmed that due to the on-going concerns of residents, the Parish Council, and various agencies, including Highways, Waste, Emergency services and flooding that a request had been made to extend the consultation period to 15.03.2024. (Full details on Somerset planning portal). After discussion the main concerns were confirmed as access, lack of adoption of the Road, concerns raised by the emergency services, and Waste department, and the dangerous position of the access to the site. Concerns were also raised that the timeline between a GTH meeting in November and subsequent meetings with those involved are not in

chronological order. **Action: Clerk to seek clarification and advice and from the Senior Planning Officer.**

- ii) **Eastall Farm 24/00020/HOU, Lower Street, West Chinnock. (Revised Application of 23/00260/HOU): Replacement of conservatory roof, replacement of various windows and doors. Creation of Swimming pool:** After discussion, Members did not have any comments relating to the application for the swimming pool, conservatory roof and doors and felt the new application had a significantly lower impact than the previous application. However, concerns were raised regarding the restrictions relating to access to the site over the public footpath which had been submitted again by the Footpaths Officer on this and on the previous application relating to the change of land to C3 request. It was suspected that this is "Standing advice". **Action: Cllr Cockrem to take advice from the Footpaths Officer. If out of time for the application response, Clerk to submit a response subject to conditions from the Footpaths department being met. It was noted that no-one from the Footpath team has visited the site, despite queries having previously been raised.**
- iii) **Pine View 24/00030/HOU, Higher Street, West Chinnock: Proposed single storey rear extension & interval alterations:** Previously discussed by the Parish Council. **Clerk has submitted no objection, subject to conditioning for 3 car-parking spaces.**

b. Determinations:

- i) **23/02957/COU at Eastall Farm, Lower Street West Chinnock. Change of use of land from agricultural to C3 residential to enlarge the residential curtilage of the main dwelling. Refused.** A copy of the full determination has been published and is available on the Somerset planning portal.

b. Planning Enforcement:

- i) **Hollowell Hill: C/F from last meeting, no further update.**
- ii) **Smith's Hill:** Further works commenced. The Clerk requested has requested an update from Cllr Patrick and the original lead planning Officer. **Action: The Clerk to continue to chase for an update.**

c. Planning Queries: None

Finance:

- a. **To ratify 24/25 West & Middle Chinnock precept: Resolved at the Extraordinary meeting held on the 29th January 2024.** (See Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting 29th January 2024). The Clerk explained that the Extraordinary meeting had been held due to the financial challenges facing Somerset Council and the lack of information available for Parish Councils to make decisions for their own Precept. The decision on the Precept had been taken as late as possible before the due submission date of 2.02.24 to gather as much information as possible on the expectations relating to devolved services which would/could become the responsibility of the Parish Council in the future.
- b. **To agree Minutes from Extraordinary Precept meeting 29.01.24: Resolved. All in Favour. Minutes signed by Chair.**
- c. **To formally approve the 24/25 budget. Previously discussed at Extraordinary meeting held on 29th January 2024. Resolved. All in Favour**
- d. **To Agree Qtr. 3 Accounts:** NC confirmed he had internally audited the accounts and all were in order with the exception of one query. **Action: Clerk to check whether the payment for a £20.00 donation for Remembrance Sunday was made.**
- e. **To pay Qtr. 3 and interim expenses to the Clerk: £201.77. Agreed**
 - i. **To pay Clerk backdated national hourly rate rise from April 23: £237.08 Net, PAYE £59.28. Agreed.** Cllr Cockrem asked if the HMRC complaint had been resolved. The Clerk reported it hadn't.

24/1147

f. **Delegated Powers Payments and Previously Agreed Invoices:**

- i. **To note payment of £410.00 for the grant towards refurbishment of new play equipment in the play area located at W&MC school (used by the local community, out of school hours) and £640.00 for caretakers cost to open and close the play area during term time.** Both payments were made to the Playground Association as already agreed at the December 2023 Parish Council meeting.

24/1148

Allotments:

- a. **Allotment Inspection 24/25:** Will take place late spring. Date TBC. Email will be sent out giving notice of date of inspection.
- b. **Vacant plots:** 2 x ¼ plots and 1x ½ plot now available. (20a and d and 15c).
- c. **Rent Review: Clerk and Cllr Partridge to meet to review.**
- d. **Issue of 24/25 Tenancy Agreements: Beginning of March 2024**

24/1149

Matters arising from 13th December 2024 meeting:

- a. **Youth Shelter:** Concerns were raised regarding low level vandalism and neglect. Young people are using motor scooters and accessing the site. **Action: Check legal status of land as change of use had previously been granted. Chairman to review the paperwork relating to both land change of use and Youth Shelter. The Clerk confirmed that if a waiting list existed for residents wishing to rent of allotments, change of use would be difficult.**
- b. **Core Policy Review: C/F**
- c. **Asset Register: C/F**
- d. **Dangerous Parking on Scotts Way next to school – heading west past the church:** This item was passed to the PC from an Officer at SC after a query from Cllr Patrick. It was discussed that the main parking issues occur at drop off and pick up time at the school outside Stoneways and also, occasionally on a Sunday for disability access to the Church. (Closer to the West entrance at the Church). It was however noted that there is some parking starting to take place by parents outside of the Church. It was felt that the church disability access parking was not an issue; however the parking during school hours was creating a hazard and dangerous. It was felt it would be unlikely yellow lines could be installed as they cannot be enforced. A letter is sent out to parents attending the school reminding them of safety when parking. (Clerk to check frequency). It was also suggested extended use of cones at busy times. **Action: Clerk to write to school to ask how the situation with parking, which has now become even more dangerous, can be solved to protect pedestrians and other road users and facilitate discussion and resolve the situation. Cllr Patrick and Highways Officer to be copied in.**

24/1150

Reports & Correspondence:

- a. **Update: Community Play Area School:** It was confirmed that a total of £8253.00 had been given towards both grants and caretakers costs relating to the children's play area since 2005. It was queried whether the existing caretakers will need to be paid between August 23 and August 24 and whether there were any contractual issues with the existing caretaker and Somerset Council/School. NC explained he wouldn't know the cost until the end of the school financial year. NC confirmed that he had been trying to get a meeting together with the school, PC and Playground committee, but will not be able to do this until April 24. A discussion took place around the suitability of timed locks. **Action: All parties to meet and discuss a way forward, via Teams if necessary, including insurance implications and the contractual relationship between the school and the "community" dating back to when the play area was originally commissioned. (Noting that it is believed that contracts were not signed).**

Cllr Ashton to forward information regarding the timed open and close lock and release systems and any further ideas. All Councillors asked to contribute to ideas.

- b. **Update: Somerset Council financial challenges, devolution and implications:** No further information until the Somerset Budget has been accepted by government. The Clerk confirmed that the query relating to ownership of the W&MC recreation ground has been resolved. Somerset Council has now confirmed in writing that it acknowledges full ownership of the recreation ground by the Parish Council, including evidence at Land Registry.
- c. **No Purchase Order, No Pay policy, Somerset Council:** The Clerk explained that no invoices can be raised without Purchases Orders from SC.
- d. **Local Community Networks:** There had been talk of a Highways meeting and how LCNs could work together, however this was cancelled and is being rescheduled. Concerns have been raised by local PC Clerks that the LCNs are being dominated by the larger Towns, with not enough emphasis placed on the needs of the smaller communities such as W&MC.
- e. **Clerk Report: Scott's Way/A356 Flooding:** The Clerk explained that she and other Members of the Parish Council are in regular contact regarding a number of issues relating to flood damage, flooding and ditches. It was confirmed that the Highways team are making weekly visits and inspections of the site to check the barriers placed along the river and confirmed that the Highways Superintendant and his Deputy were also checking the area. Local residents and the Parish Council are also monitoring the area. The recent flooding which has impacted the whole of Somerset has caused further collapse along the river bank. This in turn has caused large vehicles to drive onto the verge on the opposite side of the road, and caused a large gully to form, and collapse. (This was reported immediately and has been filled). The ditches are becoming filled with silt, dropped from the flood waters and the Highways team are also aware of this. Money has been confirmed as being set aside to carry out remedial works in the area, however works cannot commence until the Somerset Council budget has been agreed and other priority works around the County have taken place. Unfortunately if the road becomes any worse it will have to be closed due to safety reasons.
- f. **Footpaths: update:** Cllr Cockrem confirmed she had now completed her five online training sessions and is officially now Footpath Officer for the village. She has received a pair of secateurs and also has some Right of Way markers. Cllr Bennett and other Members congratulated her on her "graduation" and thanked her perseverance in completing the course.
- g. **Drains, Potholes and Hedges: Clerk, by exception:** The Clerk explained that there were numerous potholes and gully's which are appearing in West & Middle Chinnock; some have been reported by the Clerk, and some by residents. The Clerk explained that whilst the majority of potholes remain water logged they cannot be maintained. However encouraged everyone to keep using the Somerset Council portal to report concerns.
- h. **Council Tax Support for Residents:** The Clerk reported that many residents in the County do not realise they are eligible for Council Tax Support. Cllr Patrick and the Clerk will be promoting the Council Tax reduction scheme.

24/1151

Correspondence & Matters for Wednesday 13th March 2024 Agenda.

- a. **Agenda items, including Members Reports:** To be forwarded to the Clerk before Thursday 7th March 2024.

Meeting closed 8.40pm

Next Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 13th March 2024

7.30pm, Village Hall, West Chinnock