

WEST & MIDDLE CHINNOCK PARISH COUNCIL
West & Middle Chinnock Parish Council Parish Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 12th June 2024

Cllr Bennett - Chair
Cllr Cawley
Cllr Griffiths
2 Members of the General Public

Cllr Ashton
Cllr Cockrem – Deputy Chair
Clerk: Kim Duller

24/1199
24/1200

Public Forum: No comments.

Apologies for Absence: Cllr James. The Chair confirmed that Cllr Partridge had sadly had to resign as a Parish Councillor due to work pressures. The Chair, Clerk and Members of the Parish Council thanked him in his absence for the contribution he has made to the Parish Council, in particular for the work he has done at the Allotments.

24/1201

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.

24/1203

To Approve and Sign as Correct the Minutes from the Annual Meeting of Parish Council Meeting, 8th May 2024. Resolved. All in Favour.

24/1204

Matters Arising Not on Agenda: The Clerk confirmed she had received guidance on decision making for Parish Councils during the run up to an election. This was read out and will be circulated to Parish Council Members.

24/1205

Somerset Council, Councillors Report: Circulated by the Clerk, no apologies received. The Clerk confirmed that the grass at Highfield is cut by Somerset Council. It was confirmed that Abri own the houses and parking spaces, however Somerset Council own the land in the centre. It was also confirmed that the visibility splays had been cut by Somerset Council on the A30 junction to at Foxwell Lane.

24/1206

Planning:

a. Applications:

- i) **Fortunes Well 22/00724/FUL, Higher Street, West Chinnock:** The Clerk confirmed that a further meeting had been held by the Parish Council after concerns had been raised that a number of the original items highlighted in the PC's planning response had not been addressed, including serious concerns that the planning officer, or other contributors such as Highways had not visited the site. **Action: Clerk to send further comments to the planning team once all feedback had been received from Members.**
- ii) **Eastall Farm 24/01151/HOU, Lower Street, West Chinnock:** 2 Councillors and the Clerk had met with the owners to discuss the plans for a further extension. Cllr Ashton explained that although the extension is large, he did not feel that there were any real grounds for refusal as it was not overlooking any other properties and considered it to be in keeping with conservation area. The use of zinc on part of the extension was discussed, however there were no concerns raised on this. (Further information had been sent to the Parish Council on the use of zinc, with examples of other buildings where Zinc had been used). The issue of the mound on agricultural land was raised, however the Chair explained this was not part of the application which was being discussed and was part of another planning application. **Action: Clerk to write to the planners to confirm that the Parish Council does not object to the application.**

- iii) **Planning Application Notification 24/01134/TCA, to fell a Tree, Brook Barn, Lower Street, West Chinnock:** The Parish Council has raised concerns regarding the felling of trees in the conservation area and the surrounding area without due diligence, since the Tree Officer Phil Poulton left the Council. This included the lack of any evidence to support the felling of specific trees and confirmation of their condition when the applications to fell are submitted. Also discussed was the lack of arborist's reports. Somerset Council had responded by explaining they have a lack of capacity in the team; however, the Parish Council Members still have concerns regarding the lack of evidence when applications are submitted. Cllr Ashton confirmed that Hinton St George Parish Council also have the same concerns, which they have raised with the recent permission of 6 large trees to be felled in the conservation area. The discussion finished with the Parish Council accepting that if the tree is rotten it should be felled, however not without clear evidence. **Action: The Clerk to request a response from the planners to the concern that due diligence is not being carried out and without the capacity to do this, tree felling applications should be put on hold. Also to consider whether a TPO should be placed on the tree, depending or not if the tree is damaged.**

- b. **Determinations:** None
c. **Planning Enforcement:**
i) **Hollowell Hill:** C/F no further update.
ii) **Smith's Hill:** No further works during the month.

24/1207

Finance:

- a. **Publication of Annual Accounts for Inspection:** The notice was displayed on 7th June on the Parish Notice Board and also published on the West & Middle Chinnock Community Website.
- b. **NALC updated Financial Regulations:** The Clerk explained that these were published just after the Annual meeting of the Parish Council. **Action: Clerk to liaise with Internal Auditor, Neil Cochran and report back at the next meeting.**
- c. **To pay SSL invoice 34546, April 2024 £285.38: Resolved. All in Favour.**
- d. **To pay SSL invoice 34655, May 2024 £285.38: Resolved. All in Favour**
- e. **To approve and pay costs in relation to the Annual Parish Meeting, 27th May 2024, £160.68 to Cllr James and £10.47 to the Clerk. Resolved. All in Favour.**
- f. **Delegated Powers Payments and Previously Agreed Invoices:**
- i. **Parish Council Insurance Renewal, Clear Insurance £621.80.** The Clerk explained that having explored alternative quotes, remaining with the existing insurer was more cost effective due to the insurance claim at Easter relating to a tree falling on the bridge at the Recreation Ground. **Resolved. All in Favour**
- ii. **SLL34446 March Invoice £166.94 (Agreed item 24/1194i May 24 Minutes). Resolved. All in Favour.**
- iii. **HMRC £191.86, payment relating to Clerks additional payment Qtr4 2023/24. Resolved. All in Favour.**
- iv. **To note standing order Cox & Co, 03.06.24. £30.00**
- v. **HMRC £95.20, May 2024. Resolved. All in Favour.**
- vi. **Clerks Salary £380.77 May 2024. Resolved. All in Favour.**

24/1208

Allotments

- a. **Inspection 8th June 2024:** The inspection took place and Carl Partridge will be writing this up and sending to the Clerk. Date TBA.
- b. **Plot Vacancies:** Plot 15a & b has a new tenant. 3 issues were outstanding, grass around the plot, previous items left on the plot and the exact location of the plot. **i) Action: Cllr Cawley offered to take the items away, trim the plot and explained he had already shown the new tenant the exact location of the plot to include the start and finish.**

It was confirmed that the tenant would be moving in at the weekend and would be allowed to park at the plot for unloading purposes only, but not to park there regularly. ii) **Action: A request by the tenant had been made to construct a 12ft x 8ft green house. Resolved. All in Favour. Cllr Cawley to confirm verbally that permission has been granted, Clerk to follow up in writing and keep permission on file. A contract has been issued and insurance confirmed. There will also be some small poly tunnels/cloches. There will be no need to instruct SSL to trim. Cllr Cawley to give the new tenant the combination to the lock on the site.**

- c. **A.O.B:** It was resolved that deposits would be taken based on the size of the plot and calculated accordingly by full, half and quarter. Prices of the rental of plots are not calculated in the same way due to the fact that the cost to administer smaller plots is the same as the larger plots. (Taken from national allotment guidance). Water charges would be based on size, using the same calculation as deposits. **Action: Clerk to write to Allotment holders to confirm pricing structure.**

24/1209

Matters arising from 8th May 2024 meeting:

- a. **Use of Recreation Ground as Private Business:** Correspondence has taken place regarding this matter and the Parish Council is confident the matter is now closed. Concern has been raised regarding stone which has been placed on a slope in to the Chinnock Brook by the bridge. After discussion it was felt that this was encouraging the general public to enter the water. It was agreed that this represented a risk to the public should be removed by the person/s who put it there. **Action: Clerk to confirm who has placed the stones on the riverbank and ask for them to be removed.**
- b. **Locking Recreation Gate:** This item was reversed from the last Parish Council meeting. However, the issue of vans parking overnight was discussed as one had recently been reported using the rec overnight. **Action: It was agreed there should be a watching brief as there is signage which prohibits overnight camping.**
- c. **Annual Parish Meeting Feedback:** The Chair reported that he, other Members, and the Clerk had received very positive feedback about the event from residents, village groups and organisations. He thanked everyone for their support and recommended that the event be held again in this format in 2025.
- d. **Youth Shelter:** C/F to next meeting, however the issue of rubbish next to the Youth Shelter in the bushes was raised. The rubbish was believed to be from clearing out the youth shelter which is now spotless. **Action: When the bushes have died down, the rubbish will be removed. The Chair asked Cllr Cawley to keep an eye on the situation.**
- e. **Dangerous Parking on Scott's Way:** It was agreed to take this off of the agenda as there have been no further complaints since the original complaint. **Action: If further complaints are made the Parish Council would be willing to investigate further.**
- f. **Community Play Area:** No further information received. NC will be organising for the new play equipment replacement pieces to be installed, but will need support as the school no longer has a handyman. **Action: The Chair offered support and NC will also be asking others for support. The school will then arrange for inspection.**
- g. **Tender, Grass Cutting Review:** C/F
- h. **Tree Maintenance Tender Review:** C/F
- i. **Payroll Company Review** C/F

24/1210

Reports & Correspondence:

- a. **Somerset Council Devolution Update:** The Somerset Council Clerks meeting had taken place; however, the Clerk had not attended and had not received any feedback. **Action: Cllr Ashton to assess whether there was any village critical information to share, from his contacts.**

- b. **Local Community Networks:** The Clerk confirmed that a Highways and Traffic Sub group of the Crewkerne and Chard LCN had taken place on 11th June 2024 however Clerks had not been given enough notice of the meeting and some had not received an invitation to the meeting. Cllr Ashton also missed the meeting due to issues with correspondence.
Action: The Chair asked Cllr Ashton to report back to the Clerk if there was anything which was business critical said/agreed at the meeting, once the Minutes are published.
- c. **Play Equipment Inspection Sovereign:** The inspection has taken place and all of the equipment was deemed safe. However, a new format for checking the whole of the Rec is now in place and needs to be filled in weekly, especially as more events are now taking place and the number of users at the rec is on the increase, which all agreed was positive. **Action: The Clerk has updated the existing recreation ground risk assessment to include all risks on the Recreation Ground and will pass it to the Chair for implementation. The PC needs to consider how those who do not have access to a computer will be able to fill in the risk assessment.**
- d. **Clerk Report by Exception 9th May – 12th June 2024:** i) Highways, no further update from last month except potholes have been marked up in Middle Chinnock. ii) The works at Scott's Way, in and by the river, will take place between June and October due to Salmon spawning outside of these months. iii) The drains at the top of Higher Street have been mended, but only in part. **Action: Clerk to follow up with Highways.**
- e. **Footpaths Update:** A new person has been appointed to fill the gap after the previous footpaths officer for this area had left Somerset Council. **Action: Clerk to find out details and pass to Cllr Cockrem.**
- f. **Drains, Potholes and Hedges:** Nothing further to report, although it was noted that some potholes have been filled around the villages.
- g. **Somerset Flood Newsletter:** Previously circulated. All to note.
- h. **Planning Team Overwhelmed:** An Email had been received by planning department saying they are completely overwhelmed; sent to Councillors, not to Clerks. It explained there would be no contact for 4 weeks. The Clerk questioned the ability of the Council to be fit for purpose, as this was happening across the Council.
- i. **SUEZ Waste Contract:** It was confirmed that Suez had requested an additional 25 million pounds to manage the waste collections.
- j. **Constitution Review Open:** There will be a reduction in County Councillors from 110 to 83 in boundary review.
- 24/1211 Correspondence & Matters for Wednesday 10th July 2024 Agenda.**
- a. **Agenda items, including Members Reports:** To be forwarded to the Clerk before Friday 5th July 2024.

Meeting closed 8.20pm

Next Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 10th July 2024

7.30pm, Village Hall, West Chinnock