

Chirton & Conock Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Parish Open Meeting
held at the Old School, Chirton
on Tuesday 16th May 2022 at 8pm
The public were invited to attend this meeting
email: clerk@chirtonandconock-pc.org.uk

Present : Philippa Radford-Howes (PRH), Gerald Lanfear (GL), Christopher Chapman (CC), Timothy Burgess (TB)

Attending : Susannah Lampard (Clerk)
Sharon Prance (RFO)
Cllr. Paul Oatway (PO)
Nine Parishioners

1 Introduction and Welcome by the Chair on the work of the Parish Council and Committees 2022-23.

The Chair was very pleased to welcome nine members of the Parish to the meeting.

Annual report by the Chair

It's been a busy year and wonderful to hear feedback about recent Coronation events in the village; the BBQ and Street party were well attended and we remember how successful Platinum Jubilee celebrations were, given the outside meeting-space restrictions and dependency on good weather. The period of mourning for the late Queen Elizabeth II, elicited heart felt messages of condolence, that are available on the website and the book of Condolence is archived in Devizes Museum. Events in Chirton are always well planned and memorable thanks to the enthusiasm of local volunteers. Following on from this the subject of events a lack of venue for the community, and therefore planning around the available funding, access and condition of the current old Village Hall has provoked discussion and interest. Community working groups will be on the agenda from June 2023 to collect contact details for individuals wishing to help form a working group with a long-term aim to get this community asset assessed and possibly up together and useable, (for further information or to Join the Committee please email the Clerk or Chair). Also for the coming year, plans to continue work on a project that has long been an aim for the PC for re-instatement of access to a designated footpath and permissive path extension, to aid pedestrians to walk off the street and away from the traffic in the Hollow. Another idea that gained support was benches/picnic tables. The subject was raised by a Parishioner and was well received and would be supported as a community meeting place. It has been hard to get people to join the PC but the working groups that have been formed for projects around the memorial stone placement and clearing the overgrown trees in Miller close for instance plus the

Donations to the phone box, food box and books, to mention a few, are being managed by Parish Members and the help much appreciated. Please remember the Litter pick is Sunday 4th June 2023 to meet at 2pm at the Old School Chirton and keep our village litter free and tidy.

2 Apologies:

Paul Mills, Vice Chair (PM). Cllr. Paul Oatway sent a message as he will attend another meeting and is therefore due to join the Meeting late.

3 Reports by Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer Year ending 31st March 2023

The past year has been busy with celebrations and long awaited projects taking place

Income

The Parish Council's Income was slightly more than last year due to an increase in Precept and a grant towards the cost of the jubilee. Overall, income and expenditure were similar, with a £50 difference between them.

Expenditure

During 2022-23 the Parish Council contributed towards the cost of horse crossing signs on the A342, purchased a defibrillator for Conock and installed a Sarsen Stone on the corner of Small Street and Miller's Close.

Similar to previous years the Parish Council again paid for every household to receive a monthly copy of the Redhorn News and continued maintenance of grass verges and bin emptying around the villages.

The Parish Council helped to fund and organise the very successful Jubilee celebrations in June, and more sadly helped with the late Queen's condolence book and flowers within the church.

Money has been earmarked for a number of projects which hopefully will go ahead over the next 12 months including improved rights of way and investigation into a 20mph speed limit within Chirton.

I would like to thank the Chair and Vice Chair for prompt authorisation of bank payments, and for the patience of all Councillors over the past year in digesting the myriad of financial information that has been distributed. It is very much appreciated.

Sharon Prance

Responsible Financial Officer

Thank you to all Councillors, also Tim Burgess, who joined the PC in January, for the hard work on behalf of the PC and the time, that they continue to give. Thank you to The Chair who has agreed to stay in post and Vice Chair who, although he gave his apologies, has kindly agreed to continue in his role. All Councillors are valued and work as a team to resolve issues reported, however long they can take. Thank you also for Councillor Paul Oatway's presence at so many PC meetings and his support and input regarding matters for further consideration and action by WC departments, for example to respond as he did to our request and gain funding in our area, for road surfacing works on the A342.

We continue work to resolve issues raised on behalf of and with the help of local community members and landowners, such as the additions and maintenance of Parish Assets for example the new defibrillator at Conock and works to clear gullies and ditches. Some projects prove to rely on WC timeframes and availability of services, however the continuity of resolve to reach conclusion is the aim of the Parish Council and working groups and where possible, for example at Miller Close, on the junction with Small Street, we are lucky enough to have been able to rely on the gift of labour from Councillors, local parishioners and farmers, to carry out the manually difficult and well planned

positioning of the memorial stone and clearance of overgrown trees and the donation and planting of new ones. This is an indication of how incredibly fortunate we are for their donations, time, and diligence.

The clerk and RFO continue to attend training courses and work on behalf of the PC and indications from the recent audit suggest that we are doing the job well.

Susannah Lampard

Clerk to the Parish Council

4 Report from Cllr. Paul Oatway

Paul covers a division which reaches from Oare to the Trenchard Lines and Chippenham to Tidworth. Previously mentioned Code of Conduct for Town and PC's is detailed and some additions do not apply to the PC. However, this new National code follows a more generic version (this will be reviewed and a policy revision will be adopted by the PC in due course).

PC election costs have been discussed and agreed by cabinet. The consultation was released as a memo by WC at County Hall and chargeable to PC's from 2025 and payable in 2027 at a cost of approx.£1.80/ household per election. PO does not support this agreement and has made his report to the Council. It was voted on and went through despite oppositions.

Government funding for rural transport for an 8 seat bus service, picking up/stopping in villages, by text or phone request, may be added to existing bus services and revolve around school times and access to and from Devizes and Marlborough and rail stations. 50 EV charge-points have been installed in Wiltshire including at Pewsey Vale Spots Centre.

Cabinet members for a highways action group has been created for assessment of HGV's using the A338. The focus there during a recent meeting attended by our Local MP and PO outlined our areas interest in road usage by HGV's however he sees the real issue of not one but three major roads and the A342 and A345 make it a collective issue for WC to understand and to invest into. Distribution centres at Amesbury and Andover are central to the routes taken from there and the increased weight and haulage issues. Senior councillors are agreed that these roads are not fit to be classified as A class roads. PO will continue to drive the message home, in support of funding for local A roads and raise questions on allocation of funds and expenditure elsewhere. On 23rd June PO has arranged to meet with a Senior WC highways engineer in Chirton in relation to the A342 as part of the highways scheme.

5 Open meeting to Parishioners questions and views.

A parishioner raised a local highways and footpaths issue with PO about the possibility of a footpath extending the approximate 4 miles along the A342 to Devizes. PO's response was that he would support as a viable option, footpath access to Devizes should the PC apply to LHFIC to seek approval for an item to be added to their agenda and discussed on behalf of the PC. The existing path from Devizes to Stert Valley needs to be kept clear of overgrowth.

A second representation regarding the village street and collapsed drains/gullies that may have been in disrepair for some years regardless of being cleared and camera work and pipe cleaning carried out, the problem remains. PO will arrange to meet with the member of the community to understand the problem more comprehensively and will aim to assist in finding a resolution.

Parishioners questions and comments, erosion of the banks throughout the village as well as drainage and flooding which were key to discussions and have the attention and support of the PC and Councillor Paul Oatway.

Pot holes

and flooding at Conock had been resolved since being addressed in 2019/20 however this problem continues to be an issue in other areas of the Parish. Paul understands and supports the need for further funding and agrees that allocation of funds is insufficient and often appears incomprehensible, however he will continue as he has in the past, to push for maintenance and improvements of roads in our area. The quality of Pothole repairs, it was remarked appear to be temporary as each time they are patched they re-occur.

A comment was received regarding Posts/Bollards installed by the church that contractors did a good job, however feedback from parishioners elicited complaint initially and comments that posts were viewed as not in keeping with the church, too many posts and too high. PRH reported that although some views were in approval of the addition of the highways approved roadside furniture as a visual and safe marker for the sweep of the bend and approved of the job, some comments gave rise to PC action and in April applied for 4 bollards to be removed and are waiting for a quote from highways. Early indications are that the PC may be liable for the entire cost of subsequent bollard removal work and this will be subject to a vote. The boundary line of the hedge opposite the bend and allowable width of overgrowth over the highway has been exceeded. A letter and dialogue last resulted in the hedge being cut back but once again it is overgrown and traffic is moving out into the centre of the highway to avoid it.

Chirton request for 20mph – In an initial speed assessment the required variable had been met which qualifies us for a possible 20mph limit. The PC were encouraged by the initial traffic survey, although keen to proceed, invited further engagement with residents and school. The next phase speed assessment throughout the village could be implemented at a cost of approximately £900 (a proportion up to 30% of £2,900) that may be payable by the Parish Council. The flashing variable traffic calming signage can be switched on over a longer period of time although the value of these signs may lose their impact over time. The discussion and agreement by the PC is an item for meeting in June.

6 Next Full Parish Council Meeting is 13th June 2023.

The Meeting was closed by the Chair at 21:00

Agreed and Signed:..... Dated:

Phillippa Radford-Howes (PRH) – Chair, Chirton & Conock Parish Council

Susannah Lampard
Clerk to the Council