

**MINUTES OF CHARLTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**Held on Thursday 3 March 2020 at 7.30 pm in Charlton Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Anne Hodgkins (Chair), M Bromley Gardner (Clerk); and 11 members of the public.

1. Apologies. Parish Cllrs Viscount Andover, Philip Baffour, Liz Garforth-Bles, Hannah Piet, Philip Thompson; Cllr Toby Sturgis (Wilts Council); Simon Burne.
2. Wiltshire Council. In Cllr Toby Sturgis's absence (due to an Area Board meeting) the Clerk made a brief report based on a previous short briefing Cllr Sturgis had given.
3. Charlton Recreation Centre. Helen Sunderland, Chair of the Recreation Centre Committee, gave a short report, culminating in thanking the PC for its financial help.
4. Minutes of Last Annual Parish Meeting. The Minutes of the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting had been available at the back of the Village Hall for members of the public to read before the meeting started; they were proposed and seconded, approved and signed.
5. Chairman's Report. Cllr Anne Hodgkins reported on behalf of the Parish Council.
  - PC met every 2 months throughout the year, a total of 6 meetings.
  - Started the Council year in May with a full complement of 9 Cllrs, then a vacancy arose and Philip Thompson was co-opted. Marion Adkins stood down after 6 years as Chair and had taken on RFO from Philip Baffour. Currently 3 Cllrs from the wider Parish.
  - All PC agendas, Minutes and end-of-year accounts are published on PC website - website address published in Chat monthly
  - At last year's APM the PC had launched a system of information emails as we have no 'electronic noticeboard'. Currently only 7 residents have signed up to it; more were encouraged to join.
  - 9 planning applications in 2019, after an unusually large number (25) in 2018. We objected to one application, for 2 holiday lodges in the grounds of the new house outside the village off the B4040.
  - Further on Planning Applications – the two 50MW Energy Storage Systems just south of the Upper Stonehill electricity sub-station which had been permitted in 2017 and 2018 are now being built – and an application for a 3rd has just been approved. These are being built by a Chinese firm – Penso Power. There is a significant point resulting from these developments – at the personal instigation of Sir Richard Needham, former MP for North Wilts, and owner of the land on which these developments stand, we are to receive £1000 per year (and possibly increased to £1800 with the granting of approval for the 3rd site) index-linked for the up-to-30-year life of the projects, for community benefit funding; half comes from the companies involved and half from the landowner. The PC will be considering community benefit projects for the future and will welcome suggestions for its use from residents.
  - Precept for 2020/21: A few years ago the PC operated with very small reserves, meaning that on a number of occasions it felt it was unable to support ideas for improvements or enhancements due to insufficient money;

Chairman – signature and date

the PC has now, on a majority vote, decided to take steps to increase the PC reserves towards £10,000, to be prepared for emergencies and to be able to agree to projects that would improve the environment for residents. The Precept for the coming year is increased by £1500 to £10,000, the Band D charge increasing by £5.58 to £41.34.

- Traffic and Speeding – during the year Wilts Council ‘white lined’ the bend just east of the pub where the verge is narrow to encourage traffic to keep away from the edge – at no cost to us. Then significantly a couple of weeks ago our plan to acquire a Speed Indicator Device – a SID – came to fruition. This, and the CSW activity, are covered later in the agenda.
- Best Kept Village competition – last year Charlton came 1st in the county competition for the 6 villages which won their size categories in the previous 2 years. All those involved were congratulated, especially Jane Tsabet who led the project. The report had specifically praised the Village Hall, the cricket ground, the playground and the pub.
- The defibrillator was installed outside the Village Hall a year ago this February. I don’t believe it has yet been used for real – and long may that continue – but it’s there if needed.
- WW1 commemorative tree planting – 5 saplings were planted on 11 November 2018 to commemorate the 5 Charlton serviceman deaths at the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. During 2019 these very small young trees, barely twigs, disappeared – whether by vandalism or what we don’t really know. They have now been replaced by 4 from the same batch that had been grown on in pots specifically as reserves, and by one of the originals which was rescued. They have been given more robust protection and we hope they will survive. There will soon be a plaque to explain their purpose.
- War memorial – the PC has agreed a policy to remove the wreaths at Easter, but for this year only to leave them for VE Day 75.
- Two trees on the B4040 through the village died during the very hot summer of 2018 and were removed by Highways at no cost to us last year, once it was clear that they were not recovering. A third, very small, specimen is to go to make room for the SID.
- The BT phonebox was listed by BT for removal – more about this later.
- Brickell Legacy – Jenny Walker planted the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final tranche of bulbs last autumn. Many thanks to her for the work and to the late Dawn Brickell.

6. Finances. Marion Adkins handed out a detailed summary of the 2019/20 accounts. She forecast an end-of-year balance of unallocated reserves of £5358.

7. Traffic in Charlton. Anne Hodgkins first gave a Community Speed Watch update; the headline point was that in 2019 Charlton recorded 1 in 10 speeders (and of these 1 in 10 were excessive speeders, defined as 45 mph or more) compared with a Wiltshire average of 1 in 25 speeders. More volunteers were still needed for the team. She then spoke about the SID. It had been installed on 12 Feb. James Robbie had been trained to move the device in accordance with Wiltshire Council rules. We were currently trialling the SID with a view to agreeing a deployment policy at the May PC meeting.

8. BT Payphone. Anne Hodgkins explained that the phonebox had again been listed by BT for closure, after it had not been used even once in the past year. We had made a case for retention and had been supported by Wiltshire Council (albeit based on

Chairman – signature and date

conservation not on our practical argument). But what next? BT likely to try again in a couple of years. Four residents variously expressed the following views:

- Disappointment – needs re-paint, cobwebs, doesn't take cash, can get 4G on that corner (though that may depend on which provider).
- Support decommissioning.
- Unsafe door.
- Some home phone problems, no mobile, so phonebox still useful.

9. VE Day 75. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day (8 May 1945) was being commemorated nationally on 8-10 May this year. The National programme of events was printed on the reverse of the agendas. There was no strong support for a village tea-party or similar. There was acknowledgement of the 'Nation's Toast' event at 3pm on Fri 8 May, which it was believed the pub would enthusiastically support. It was not known whether the Charlton bells would be rung.

10. Best Kept Village (BKV) Competition. Having won in 2018 we were again in a separate 'Winner of Winners' competition (which we won last year), for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 years, for which the judging was in July. The report highlighted that some hedges alongside the footpath along The Street were obstructing the walkway. The Parish Steward was able to effect small street repairs – contact through the Parish Clerk.

11. Any Other Business. Some points were raised:

- The state of Bullocks Horn Lane.
- The village name sign on Tetbury Lane needs some re-lettering.
- Some hedges alongside The Street footpath needed attention.
- Encourage neighbourliness during the coronavirus outbreak.

The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 8.45pm.