

## MINUTES OF CHARLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 4 JAN 24

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CHARLTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday 4 January 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Tom Blanden (Chairman), Marion Adkins, Philip Baffour, Liz Garforth-Bles, Hannah Piet, David Rawlings, Lord Suffolk, Philip Thompson, Jenny Walker; M Bromley Gardner (Clerk); Wilts Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall; 2 members of the public.

1. Apologies. None.
2. Public Questions/Receipt of Petitions. None.
3. Declarations of Interest. Marion Adkins said that she was the auditor for the Recreation Centre which was to be raised in the next item.
4. Urgent Items at Chairman's Discretion. The Recreation Centre Committee (RCC) wanted to ask for funding support for a Village Hall project. The Chairman said he would take this subject today so that any decision could be reflected in the precept decision.
5. Minutes of Last Meeting. The Minutes of the PC meeting of 2 Nov 23, having been circulated in advance, were approved and signed. No outstanding actions.
6. Finance. Currently £25,914 in the account. The following payments were authorized, after which the account balance would be £25,560.
  - cheque 572, Tom Blanden, for SID batteries and charger (retrospective), £141.38.
  - 573, Charlton PCC, 50% of annual Chat cost, £212.43.
7. Old Well House Planning Application PL/2023/09661. The PC considered the retrospective planning application for the gate and fence higher than one metre, and decided to object. Reasons for the objection will be found in the response. **Action: Clerk**
8. Precept Part 1 - Baseline. The Tax Base had reduced by 0.26% to 246.36. The PC was heading for an end-of-year reserve of about £10,800. After discussion Cllrs agreed that a reserve of about that amount was right for the PC.
- 8a. Support to Village Hall. The Chairman of the RCC explained that the Village Hall needed a hearing loop; 3 quotes had been received and the chosen one, representing best value, was for £1200 + VAT; and he requested a contribution from the PC. Marion Adkins, the RFO, said that the PC already had £1200 in the account earmarked for support to the RCC and proposed that the PC should pay the entire bill and donate the hearing loop to the Village Hall, also reclaiming the VAT. The PC agreed. **Action: RFO**
9. Highways Matters.
  - a. Improve Signage. The Wilts Council proposal for new and improved signage etc had been agreed at LHFIG on 3 Oct. It wasn't possible to predict with any accuracy when the work would be done, and we may not get any notice.
  - b. Additional Measures. The Clerk had submitted a LHFIG request for the agreed additional measures the PC wanted on the western approach – white gates and yellow backing to the first speed limit sign. This would appear for the first time at LHFIG on 16 Jan 24.

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- c. VAS at Double-bend. The decision had been taken at the last meeting to wait until the £60K had arrived and then consider the subject again. Then within days, on 12 Nov, another vehicle had demolished the garden wall of No 28 – the right hand of the 3 attached cottages straight ahead. The driver was reported as having said he had not seen the bend.
- d. 2<sup>nd</sup> SID. The Clerk had still not yet placed the order for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SID, waiting until there was certainty about the pole and socket.
- e. Recent complaints. The Clerk had fielded 3 recent complaints: the broken road surface on Bullocks Horn Lane, the same on Pink Lane at Elm Hill, and a large puddle outside Conigre House. While not sympathetic to any he would nonetheless raise all 3 with our Local Highways Engineer who would be visiting soon.
10. SID. The Chairman and David Rawlings reported that the SID had been working only intermittently because the amount of sunlight this winter had been too low to fully charge the batteries (and Elizabeth Threlfall reported that this was happening in other villages also). A new set of batteries had been bought and also a charger; the old batteries would still work after charging, so we now had 2 working sets and could change the batteries every 2 weeks. There was damage to the front cover of the display screen, which may have been caused by vandalism.
11. Cutting the Verge East and West of the Village. We now had the quote for the verge cutting agreed in principle at the last meeting: £112.50 (+ VAT) per cut for 2 or 3 cuts. After discussion the PC accepted the quote. **Action: Clerk**
12. Improving Footing at Gate on CHAR 7. The landowner's conditions for allowing the work meant that the PC would need to take legal advice, and that it was most probably not possible to use our intended contractor (as, being retired, he didn't have work insurance). The Clerk would contact Wilts Council Rights of Way team now. **Action: Clerk**
13. Precept Part 2 - Decision. The budget for the year combined with the target reserve agreed in Part 1 added up to a 15+% increase in the Band D cost. While in cash terms this is very small, the % increase was too great for the PC. Noting some risks that could be taken with the expenditure, and accepting that the reserve would be smaller, the PC agreed a target % increase limit of about 5%. The PC then agreed a precept of £10,000, a 5.26% increase, resulting in a 5.54% increase in the Band D cost (up £2.13 to £40.59).
14. Community Emergency Contacts. Philip Thompson offered himself as another Community Emergency Contact. **Action: Clerk**
15. Increased Aircraft Numbers. The PC had seen the email sent by a Murcot resident suggesting that the PC comment on increased aircraft noise caused by Bristol Airport Air Traffic Route Network changes. The PC had also seen a comment by another nearby local resident, Chairman of a local PC, and an ex-Air Traffic Controller, disagreeing with the first email. One Cllr had noticed more and lower-flying (able to identify the tail markings) aircraft overhead but said that they weren't a problem. The PC decided to take no action.

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16. Planning. Report on Planning Applications:

- Considered by the PC since the last meeting:
  - (Old Well House – at Item 7).
  - Bluebells Barn, erection of gate (retrospective) – 5x No Objection, 4x outstanding, deadline 10 Jan
- Decided by Wilts Council since the last meeting:
  - none.
- Not yet decided: Land off Pond Lane (BESS), Land at Somerford Farm (BESS), Land at Stonehill (BESS), Purlieus House (removal of Agricultural Occupancy restriction), Minety Sub-station extension. Minety Solar Farm variation of conditions, New House Farm, Land North of Queen Street, Land to East and South of Minety Substation (grid connection cable).
- Appeal: Land West of Bullocks Horn Lane (convert storage building to residence).

17. Councillors' observations and items for the next meeting. Philip Baffour agreed to print off copies of PC minutes and post to the Park Street noticeboard for the foreseeable future. The Chairman would give him a key.

**Action: Philip Baffour, Tom Blanden**

18. Dates of Next Meetings. 7 Mar, 9 May, 4 Jul, 5 Sep, 7 Nov. APM am Sat 6 Apr.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Chairman