

WEST & MIDDLE CHINNOCK PARISH COUNCIL

West & Middle Chinnock Parish Council Parish Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday 9th April 2025

Cllr Bennett
Cllr Ashton

Clerk: Cllr Griffiths

25/1295

Public Forum: i) The Chair and Cllrs agreed that Cllr Griffiths would act as Clerk for this meeting in the absence of the Clerk. ii) NC queried frequency of cut at the Rec by SSL currently informally approx every 2 weeks. This was agreed by the Chair. The Chair explained that the contract would be going back out to tender for a VFM review, however that the contract will remain the same until the new tender has been processed and a decision made. The Clerk has identified a further 2-3 companies who will be asked to tender.

25/1296

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Cockrem, apologies due to work commitments. Cllr Cawley.

25/1297

Declarations of Interest: i) Cllr Ashton, Councillor for Crewkerne Town Council, Hinton St George Parish Council, Merriott Parish Council and Somerset Council. Member, National Farmers Union and National Association for Shooting and Conservation. ii) Cllr Bennett, Playground Committee.

24/1298

To Approve and Sign as Correct the Minutes from the Parish Council Meeting held on 12th March 2025. Approved

25/1299

Matters Arising Not on Agenda: i) **Footpath Maintenance Volunteer:** Mr Carling has offered to maintain the footpath adjacent to the Fortunes Well site. The Chair explained it cannot be formally adopted, however the PC agreed that it would accept Mr Carling's offer to maintain that piece of footpath, although the land is not owned by the PC. **Action: Clerk to thank Mr Carling for his offer, agree the exact location, request that Mr Carling contact the neighbours before any clearing takes place and to also be aware of hedge cutting legislation.** ii) **A request from Phil Nichols to the Parish Council to nominate the following as Trustees of the West & Middle Chinnock Charities:** 1. Keith Dodge for the remainder of a 4-year term until December 2027. 2. Don Nye for the remainder of a 4-year term until August 2028. Phil Nichols had confirmed that both Keith and Don have agreed to the nomination. It was noted by the PC that in the last calendar year, the Trustees have been able to award grants of just under £247 to 'people in need' in West & Middle Chinnock. **Resolved.** All in Favour

25/1300

Somerset Council, Councillors Report: No apologies from Cllr Mike Hewitson or Cllr Patrick.

25/1301

Planning:

a. Applications:

- i. **Fortunes Well 22/00724/FUL, Higher Street, West Chinnock:** Amendments to the latest plans have been received. The Clerk had requested an extension to 14th May 2025 and this had been granted. Cllr Ashton confirmed that he is now on the planning committee therefore cannot comment as a Parish Councillor, as this would impact any further decision making at a later stage, in terms of pre-determination. The Chair explained that the Parish Council would inspect the latest plans, however felt it was important to focus on ensuring the original concerns raised by the Parish Council and residents had been addressed. Mr Vout, resident raised concerns that he had not been able to access the portal to comment and other residents had also expressed concern. **Action: Clerk to note any comments from residents and feedback to the Parish Council. Parish Council to comment on latest amendments.** Cllr Ashton agreed to speak to the planning team regarding the concerns raised about access to the planning portal.
- ii. **Application 25/00791/TCA: Notification of intent to fell 3 trees in the conservation area.** High Cross, Higher Street, West Chinnock. **For information only.**
- iii. **Application 25/00450/HOU: Proposed new detached garage and the relocation of the existing oil tank.** Pine View, Higher Street, West Chinnock. Previously circulated. **No comments from the Parish Council.**

b. Determinations Since Time of Agenda: None

Planning Enforcement:

- i) **Smith's Hill:** Complaints have been made by residents regarding removal of trees and an open drain pumping on to the highway. The Clerk has reported these complaints to the enforcement officer and new tree officer with a request that landscaping is stopped until the site has been inspected by the tree officer, as part of the conditions already placed on the site. Cllr Ashton explained that 2 new enforcement officers were in the process of being appointed and that this would assist with the backlog of outstanding enforcement cases. **Action: Clerk to update.**

25/1302

Finance:

- a. **To note increase in prices from Somerset Landscapes: Previously circulated. Resolved. All in Favour.** The Chair confirmed that the Parish Council will be re-tendering for the landscaping services in the villages in June.
- b. **To Pay Somerset Landscapes £285.38 Inc VAT: Resolved. All in Favour.**
- c. **To Pay W&MC Village Hall Invoice 24-25, £175.00: Resolved. All in Favour.**
- d. **To Pay Heating Village Hall, March Meeting 2025 £8.00: Resolved. All in Favour.**
- e. **To pay any routine invoices: None**
- f. **Delegated Powers Payments and Previously Agreed Invoices**
- i) **Clerks Salary March 2025 £425.38: Resolved. All in Favour.**
- ii) **HMRC PAYE March 2025 £99.80: Resolved. All in Favour.**

25/1303

Allotments:

- a. **Advice from NAS regarding Plot Inspections:** The Clerk is still working with the legal advisor and the South West Regional Advisor from NAS on modernising the Allotment Inspection and Cultivation Policy and bringing them up to date with national standards, and simplifying West & Middle Chinnock's current guidance.
- b. **Tenancy Agreements: All Issued.**
- c. **Vacant Plots: 16b and 20d**
- d. **Waiting List: None**
- e. **A.O.B:** The Chair noted that the Clerk was now acting as the liaison and appointed officer for the allotments in the absence of an appointed officer from the Parish Council.

25/1304

Matters arising from the 12th March 2025 Meeting:

- a. **Identification of Broken & Blocked Drains:** The Chair thanked Mr Dodge for his efforts on keeping various drains clear around the villages and noting where there are maintenance issues. The Chair confirmed the project to identify all blockages and drains which need maintenance has not yet been completed. **Action: The Chair/Mr Dodge.**
- b. **Dog Fouling:** No feedback received on improvement. **Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Cockrem.**
- c. **Reporting of Incidents:** The Clerk has encouraged residents via social media and the Parish Magazine, to actively report pot holes, maintenance issues on the roads, fly tipping, drain issues etc.
- d. **Tree Maintenance Tender: On hold as part of devolution review.**
- e. **Inconsiderate parking around the school: C/F.**
- f. **Youth Shelter: Greatfields Review of Paper Work:** Mr Vout asked why this item referred to "Greatfields". The Chair confirmed that the paperwork held by the Parish Council on both the sale of Greatfields and Quarry Farm was stored together. Mr Cochran confirmed that he had found the paperwork relating to the sale of Greatfields and the Secretary of State's permission on land use. Mr Cochran confirmed there were 3 key sets of information: The change of use for Quarry Farm related to the selling of Greatfields, change of use of Quarry Farm and the confirmation of access to the road at Greatfields. **Action: To "find" the change of use confirmation for Quarry Farm. It may be helpful to refer back to land registry as there was some crossover between Quarry Farm allotments and Greatfields Allotments.** Clerk.

Reports & Correspondence:

- a. **VE Day celebrations:** A meeting had been held in the Muddled Man with a group of volunteers and plans are underway. Further information to follow.
- b. **SC Bin Emptying Service: Action, agree after the meeting which bin will be removed (currently 2 bins, dedicated dog bin and one multipurpose bin) and whether the PC will empty the bin or contract with Somerset Council.**
- c. **Mobile Library Service:** Service still fully active. Poster has been placed in the Bus shelter and on Social Media.
- d. **Somerset Council Financial Situation:** No full Council meeting has taken place, therefore no update.
- e. **Devolution:** No full Council meeting has taken place, therefore no update. Cllr Ashton explained that all Councils on a nationwide basis will have to become Unitary Councils and also highlighted the difference in funding between LCNs in Somerset and Sussex, with a major discrepancy between a £3million budget in Sussex and £300,000 in Somerset.
- f. **Local Community Networks:** An on line meeting was held last week of the Crewkerne and district LCN, with only 4 PCs in attendance. Cllr Ashton confirmed the highways element of the LCN will carry on, as this has been helpful. A discussion was held regarding LCNs and their current inability in Somerset to meet the needs of small Parish Councils, and confusion over statutory powers. The internal auditors at Somerset have asked for a review of LCNs as they are failing to deliver what was “promised”.
- g. **Parish Councillor Co-Option, recruitment of non Parish Councillor Volunteers:** Mr Luff has offered practical support on key areas such as footpaths, reporting of drains, allotments. Mr Coyne has offered support on flooding. On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chair thanked them both for volunteering. **Action: Clerk to make contact.**
- h. **Bow Bridge/Scotts Way, Riverbank Maintenance:** It has been confirmed that there is definitely monies ring fenced in the budget for 25/26 for the works, however there is still no confirmation regarding the specification of works or when the works will start. Cllr Ashton has requested additional works to the project. The Chair explained there had been previous discussions with the landowners who are adjacent to where the trees are causing the river to divert. **Action: Clerk to continue to liaise with highways and local Ward Councillors to ensure these works remain a priority, including discussion with highways on the trees which divert the water flow.**
- i. **Clerk Report, by exception 12th March - 9th April 2025:** All covered in the previous discussions.
- j. **Highways, Drains, Potholes and Hedges:** Covered in previous items during the meeting.
- k. **Footpaths:** Nothing to report.
- l. **W&MC Annual Parish Meeting:** Date proposed 26th May 2025.

Correspondence & Matters for the Annual Meeting of West & Middle Chinnock Parish Council, Wednesday 14th May 2025. Please forward any items to the Clerk by Friday 9th May 2025.

The meeting closed 8.00pm

Wednesday 14th May 2025, Village Hall

Annual Parish Meeting 7pm

Followed by

Annual Meeting of West & Middle Chinnock Parish Council 7.30pm