WEST & MIDDLE CHINNOCK PARISH COUNCIL

West & Middle Chinnock Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 12th November 2025

Cllr Bennett - Chair
Cllr Cawley
Cllr Griffiths
Clerk: Kim Duller
3 Members of the General Public
Cllr Ashton
Cllr Cockrem

25/1378 **Public Forum**: **Community Playground:** The Chair declared an Interest in this item as part of the Playground Committee. (See item 25/1380). Neil Cochran explained the rocking horse in the under 8s play area was broken. As a result, and due to insurance purposes, the play area cannot be opened to the public when there is no supervision. It was confirmed it can still be used by the school when supervised during school opening hours. **Action i) Tom Jones is getting a quote for repair. ii) Follow up with School to agree any contribution to costs of repair. iii) PC to consider if it can support cost to repair.**

25/1379 **Apologies for Absence:** None.

25/1380 **Declarations of Interest: i)** Cllr Ashton, Hinton St George, Parish Council, Merriott Parish Council and Somerset Council. Member, National Farmers Union and National Association for Shooting and Conservation and Somerset Rivers Authority. **ii)** Cllr Bennett, Playground Committee. **iii)** Cllr Cawley, Allotments.

25/1381 **To Approve and Sign as Correct, the Minutes from the Parish Council meeting 8th October 2025. Resolved. All in Favour.**

25/1382 **Matters Arising Not on Agenda: i) Defibrillator Maintenance Costs:** The Clerk provided a summary of costs relating to maintaining the two defibrillators in the village. Current funds remaining from Fundraising £452.00. £4.25 monthly charges, pads for defibs approx. £75.00. A discussion on budgeting for continued funding and potential PC contributions took place. **Action: Clerk to get further detail on costs. ii) Riverbank Repair Scott's Way:** The Clerk reported she had only just received news from our Highways lead that the contractor due to undertake the works had missed the date to commence the works. The Clerk had been advised this was due to new legislation relating to a license required from the Environment Agency, as the tributary is now classed as a "main river". Seasonal restrictions apply with the deadline of 31st October. **Action: i) Clerk to obtain further information and liaise with Cllr Hewitson. ii) Clerk to confirm if the funding is still ringfenced.**

25/1383 **Somerset Council, Councillors Report:** Councillor Hewitson gave a report. Initial feedback on Somerset Council Deficit £100 million, which has narrowed, however optimism about being able to balance this year is not realistic. Workforce has been reduced and 1 in 4 officers have gone, thus lowering wage cost. Major pressure on SEND budget with the increase in EHCPs, which is also a national issue which the government is trying to solve. New interactive map of gullies and drains is now available, with schedules for PCs to access. **Action: Cllr Hewitson to send the October and November local Councillors newsletter to the Clerk and check she hasn't been taken off of the mailing list.**

25/1384 **Planning:**

a. **Applications:**
   i) Fortunes Well 22/00724/FUL, Higher Street, West Chinnock: Cllr Hewitson reported no further update, but that other applications which have come in later are being considered. **Action: Cllr Hewitson and Clerk to write to the case officer for a further update.**
b. **Determinations: None**

c. **Planning Enforcement:**

i) Smiths Hill Development:

i. **Query regarding unlawful felling of Trees:** The Clerk explained she had sent a detailed summary of the original complaints and concerns raised regarding the felling of trees to Cllr Hewitson in order that he can follow up with the resident who has queried the felling, to establish if the Tree Officer will be taking any legal action. The Clerk explained she had been told that the Tree Officer had acknowledged that the felling of some of the trees was unlawful, however that the re-planting scheme would go towards mitigating this. Cllr Hewitson confirmed the Tree Officer is currently on paternity leave so he cannot follow up any further. **Action: Cllr Hewitson to follow up once the Tree Officer is back from paternity leave.**

ii. **Query regarding water run from the development:** The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to Highways and they have now taken over the case from the enforcement officer. A letter has been sent to the developer to ask him to rectify the pipe in accordance with the original planning conditions. **Action: Clerk to keep the PC updated.**

25/1385 **Finance:**

a. **To Approve Qtr 2 25/26 Accounts:** Subject to internal audit: The internal auditor approved the accounts. **Action: Clerk to add back in petty cash in the 3rd Qtr. accounts £5.45.**

b. **Budget Review:** The Clerk presented estimated year end figures, and confirmed all was on track, with no unexpected expenditure. There had been a CIL payment made, which the Clerk will report back on, at the next meeting. Two potential items for budgeting expenditure next year were discussed; potential election charges, approx. £4.5K per parish and statutory tree survey in relation to the Rec requirements. **Action: Clerk to research both items and report back to the PC before the Budget meeting. (To be held prior to the next PC meeting on 10th December 2025.)**

c. **Results External Audit PKF Littlejohn:** 3 queries were raised. 2 queries were immediately dropped when paperwork was presented to the auditor for review. The third query related to a calculation mistake as a result of the Asset Register being on a word document rather than Excel. **Action: Clerk to put the Asset Register onto Excel format.**

d. **To note the receipt of £2,119.66 CIL.**

e. **To Pay Any Routine Invoices:**

i. Somerset Landscapes Invoice SLL36193, September 2025 £383.59 Inc. Vat, **Resolved.** All in Favour.

ii. Somerset Landscapes Invoice SLL36295, October 2025 £296.79 Inc. Vat, **Resolved.** All in Favour.

iii. National Allotment Society Membership: £70.00 ex Vat, **Resolved.** All in Favour.

f. **Delegated Powers Payments:**

i. Clerks Salary October 2025 £438.17**: Resolved.** All in Favour.

ii. HMRC and NI October 2025, £117.72: **Resolved.** All in Favour.

iii. PKF Littlejohn Audit Fee £210.00 ex Vat**, Resolved.** All in Favour.

25/1386 **Allotments:**

i. **Bird Flu:** Government guidance update due to the increase in the number of cases nationally. **Action: Clerk to share update with Allotment holders who have chickens and also publish on PC Council website and FB page.**

ii. **Waiting List:** One on the waiting list and one other enquiry.

iii. The Clerk & Chair are liaising with the Allotment Society regarding cultivation standards. **Action: Clerk and Chair to present findings to the PC**

25/1387 **Matters arising from 8th October 2025 meeting:**

a. **Dog Fouling update:** Cllr Hewitson confirmed there is no named contact for dog fouling complaints at the Council anymore. **Action: The PC to advise residents with concerns & complaints to use the Somerset Dog Fouling portal on the Somerset Council Website.**
b. **Social Media Post:** Reference comment regarding the PC on FB in October 2025. Post was removed.
c. **Grit Bin Poop Hill:** The Chair and Cllr Cawley will fit the new bin which has arrived, on the bank at Poop Hill. The company responsible for the lorry which broke the bin has agreed to reimburse the PC for the bin. The Clerk has asked for a donation/compensation to the village for re-building the verge and new concrete slabs. **Action: Clerk to follow up.**
d. **LCNs:** A consultation meeting took place in Ilminster, with very poor attendance. Only one council was represented. The review is ongoing with no outcomes yet. The case is being made again for re-organisation of local areas. The results of the review have not yet been published.
e. **Register of Interest Forms:** Two received, two need to be completed. Cllr Ashton does not have to submit a ROI form as his has already been submitted in his other role. **Action: Clerk to cross reference on the Council ROI section and 2 outstanding Cllrs to submit their forms to the Clerk.**
f. **Parish Councillor Recruitment:** No further pro-active recruitment until election process is confirmed.

25/1388 **Reports & Correspondence:**

a. **Local Elections 2026:** Implications for Parish Council. Previously discussed under item 25/1385.
b. **Briefing Note on Somerset Planning Changes: Action: Clerk to circulate.**
c. **New Cricket Net, Recreation Ground:** The Clerk has spoken with SLL who have asked for a specification and pictures of the nets, location, layout of proposed nets etc. before they can decide if any additional cost will be incurred. It was also queried whether the youth team is proposing to ask for a hard wicket to be installed. **Action: Clerk to liaise with the youth cricket team lead and SLL, reporting back to the PC. Clerk to also check strimming schedule with SLL against the PCs contract.**
d. **Youth Goal Storage Recreation Ground: A discussion was held.** The Chair explained that the goals were originally due to be stored next to the storage shed in the Rec and chained up, after the area had been cleared by the youth football club. The club has emailed the Clerk and requested storage at the side of the Rec. A number of concerns were raised by the PC relating to potential safety issues and obstruction for grounds maintenance. **Action: Neil Cochran agreed to liaise with Eliza and the PC to find a solution for safe storage. Clerk to send NC original proposal with photos.**
e. **Theft of Digger on Smiths Hill Development:** Minuted to raise awareness. Reported to police. **No Action Required.**
f. **IT Policy:** Training options to be considered. **Action: Cllr Griffiths and the Clerk to review.** Gov.uk domain to be introduced as single point of access for the PC email in readiness for statutory requirement in April 2026. **Action: Clerk.**
g. **Assertion 10 Data Security:** Cllr Griffiths and Clerk to continue to review.
h. **Drains, Potholes and Hedges:** Two drains have been reported which are heavily silted and blocked. Maintenance concerns have been raised. **Action: Clerk to liaise with Highways.**
i. **Clerk Report by Exception:** Nothing to report not already reported.
j. **Footpaths**
    i. Footpath Officer is still in post and actively supporting PCs.
    ii. The broken gatepost reported at the last meeting on the Broadstone Farm/Eastfield Lane footpath, has been repaired.

iii. A complaint has been received regarding a live electric fence across a stile/brook on the way to the airfield footpath. This has now been removed.

iv. A complaint has been received regarding the gate to the Rec (Pavilion end) being left open and safety issues relating to dog and children being able to leave or enter the Rec, unaccompanied. **Action: Cllr Cockrem agreed to put some "please close the gate" signs on the gate.**

v. Footpath behind Layne Terrace: Currently no issues.

25/1389 **Correspondence & Matters for Wednesday 10th December 2025 Agenda.**

a. Agenda items, including Members Reports: To be forwarded to the Clerk before Friday 5th December 2025.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Next Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 10th December 2025

7.30pm, Village Hall, West Chinnock

Members of the Parish Council would like to invite local residents to join them after the close of the 10th December 2025 meeting, for Christmas Drinks & Nibbles

Provided by Parish Councillors and the Clerk