

The Charltons Parish Council

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“Draft” Minutes of The Charltons Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 9th May 2022, in The Reading Room, Hillway, Charlton Mackrell following the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7.00pm and followed by the ordinary Parish Council Meeting

Councillors Present:

Tamzin Elliott (Chairman)
Nick Blackledge
Alan Crawley

Bob Adams (Vice-Chairman)
Susie Crang
Dennis Elliott

In Attendance: D.Cllr Charlie Hull, the Clerk and five members of the public.

1. **Minutes** of The Charltons Annual Parish Meeting held remotely on 6th May 2022 were received and confirmed as a correct record.
2. **Parish Accounts.** Copies of the Draft Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022 (unaudited) were previously distributed for information and presented by the Clerk.
3. **Reports from District and County Councillors.** Cllr Hull congratulated Dean Ruddle and Tim Kerley on being elected as the new Somerset County (new Somerset Council) Councillors for Somerton Division. D.Cllrs Hull and Capozzoli have one year remaining as District Councillors. Cllr Hull was unsure which Local Community Network (LCN) The Charltons PC would sit under, most likely either Somerton or Street. LCNs would be the decision making bodies sitting under the new Somerset Council, made up with two Somerset Councillors on each LCN and several councillors from PCs within the area.
4. **Parish Reports.**
 - a. **The Charltons Parochial Church Council.** Liz Bale, Churchwarden, read out the report on behalf of Andrea de Berker. “The Parish of the Charltons is part of a Benefice with Kingsdon and Somerton. Our vicar Reverend Alan Symonds retired in January. We are now in the process of recruiting a replacement. We have consulted the village and the school as part of developing a Parish profile and are very happy to receive comments about the church and the potential new vicar. We anticipate that it could be over a year before we have a replacement vicar.
We are fortunate to have hard working teams maintaining services including Sunday services, weddings, funerals and baptisms, the two church buildings, churchyards, village cafes, winter warmers, the Open the Book programme in the schools here in the Charltons and Somerton, pastoral care and prayer groups. We also have an active team of bellringers who recently commemorated the sad passing of our

wonderful Post Master, John Bowman, by ringing the bells in Charlton Adam for 15minutes last Wednesday morning enabling many people to gather at the church, sit in the memorial field or reflect in their own homes.

The village café has received funding via the Parish Council which has enabled us to support village causes including the Youth Club, the school, the Community Centre roof fund and Project Charltons for the first seven months of this year. We are also grateful for the funding we receive for the maintenance of the churchyards and for the support we receive from the wider village community.

b. The Charltons Community Centre and Memorial Playing Field Trust. Rick Harrison presented the report on behalf of Mr Michael Whitaker, Chairman of The Trust. “The Charltons Community Centre & Memorial Playing Field Trust have managed to get through the worse of COVID thanks to a couple of grants from the South Somerset District Council.

We are pleased to report the Memorial Gates have now been refurbished which was a point raised at the last Parish Meeting.

Our main income stream remains the Pickleball sessions and some private parties have started to be booked again.

We conducted a survey which went out to every home in the area and the results have been published with a copy available on the Centre's web site which has had a face lift and a new URL www.charltonscommunity.org We have a working party set up to plan the improvements which will include a new roof, insulation of the building, repurposing the ground floor accommodation to include a Village Cafe which was high on peoples' wish list.

We are currently looking into having plans drawn up and seeking any required planning consents which is going to cost approximately £4/5,000. We will be seeking grants to cover these costs and have so far had fairly positive response from the National Lottery Community Fund who like our proposals and will happily receive an application once we have quantified the costs. The improvements will be handled on a phased basis and these will be put to the community once they are finalised but they will be in line with the results of our consultation.

Project Charltons have made a fantastic effort and vastly improved the playground and we have seen children's party bookings for the hall on the back of these improvements. Report by Project Charltons is being made at this meeting.

We are also in contemplation of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which should improve the way that potential grant providers will view the Trust. We are having a presentation about this at our AGM which is being held at the Community Centre on 8th June.

We look forward to seeing Parish Councillors at the Platinum Jubilee Weekend events that we are holding over the Jubilee Weekend 2 to 5 June, leaflets are here please feel free to take one. We will be lighting our Platinum Jubilee Beacon which we have requested a donation from the Parish Council to pay for its manufacture and installation. We were planning to get John Bowman to light it, and have now asked Christine to do it in John's memory. If any Councillors would like to help by serving behind the bar, tea tent or barbecue, please just let me know. Money raised will go towards the Community Centre Improvements and 15% of profits will go to a Ukraine Support/Relief organisation.

We look forward to working closely with the Parish Council next year to make the Community Centre a focal point of the local community.”

c. Project Charltons. Dee Powell presented her report. “We are now well into our fourth year of fundraising to achieve our vision of providing an area at the Memorial Field that meets the needs of everyone aged from 0 – 100yrs+.

We are delighted with our achievements so far. By this time a year ago we had completed phase 1. I am now pleased to report that the sensory seating area is completed. This was largely funded by an anonymous donor who we are extremely grateful to and who in turn is extremely happy with the result and indeed has invited friends from outside the village to come and see it. We must also mention and thank the many volunteers from our villages that gave their time, energy and skills in the autumn months to create the abundance of colour and variety of flora that the area displayed in the spring. As the spring runs into summer the plants and bushes will gradually mature providing an area of rest and tranquillity.

Maintenance of the garden is of course a challenge. We knew this would be one of our more difficult hurdles but we have a rota for watering and working parties of volunteers to weed! It is an area very much admired by residents and as such valued, so we are encouraged to believe we will be able to keep on top of it. We continue to invite and welcome volunteers.....every little helps!

The opportunity for residents to mark the lives of their loved ones with memorial benches has been warmly welcomed. There are three at present and several more have been ordered.(We do hope to have one for John Bowman very soon)

We have continued to fund raise and submit requests for community grants. Throughout the summer months of 2021 we provided a pop-up café every Friday from 3 – 5.00pm. To kick start 2022 we had a Fun Run (5km) and Hot Chocolate morning in January, in February we made a half-term Treasure Hunt trail and in April we had a jumble/boot sale. In July we will be having a Murder Mystery Evening courtesy of Charlton House!

Consequently we have been able to enter the next phase of our project and within a matter of weeks the slide and clamber nets will be installed on the mound quickly followed by installation of the much anticipated zip-wire.

Our thanks go to our wonderful community for their ongoing encouragement and support.”

d. The Giraffe House Pickleball Club. Rick Harrison presented the report on behalf of Peter Snart-Smith, Chairman of the Club. “The Giraffe House Pickleball Club has kept going through the very difficult and challenging times of COVID isolation and social distancing. Not only have we managed to retain the strength of membership but have now grown to over 65 members which is far and beyond our original expectations.

One great factor about Pickleball is that it is a great outlet for many senior members of our community with active members well into the 80s. We have members from most of the surrounding villages and as far as Sherborne.

The club has held friendly matches with other South West clubs and our members are travelling to regional competitions and events. We have recently held Coaching sessions for our members and had a massive take up filling three days of coaching on four courts at Caryford Sports Centre.

We are proud of our association with the Charltons Community Centre and look forward to seeing the proposed improvements especially a new roof and improved insulation.”

e. The Charltons Tennis Club. Dee Powell presented her report. “Our tennis court continues to be a great asset to the community. It is used regularly throughout the whole year and enjoyed by our 50 + members and many pickleball players too.

We changed the subscription fees last year for various reasons. We also agreed on a 50% discount for those who had been fully paid up members during the pandemic to compensate for the months the court was locked because of COVID. The fees now are £30.00pa per household. Children can join free of charge but must have an adult

to sign their membership form. Adults who live alone can bring along friends to play for no further charge.

We are concerned about people climbing over the fence...it is becoming quite damaged. I think all we can do is ask the community to keep an eye out and alert me if they see anyone climbing in.

We have started our monthly coaching sessions again and are all enjoying being back playing. The pandemic really makes you value what opportunities you have and how much they are missed when taken away.”

f. Hallr Wood. The Clerk presented the report on behalf of Deb Millar. “After the disruptions of 2020, we have been very glad to return to a more normal schedule. The woods are busy nearly every day!

During the pandemic and lockdowns, we were asked to continue with our young adult students with EHCPs who were classified as vulnerable and in need of ongoing provision. They completed a kit form additional shelter for their college course work, a comprehensive tree survey and also tackled regular arboreal and woodland management tasks for their portfolios.

We also hosted a men’s group which has remained active and meets weekly and we hosted two courses of Woodland Art therapy in collaboration with ACE Arts in Somerton.

Blue School SEN/ nurture group: The Blue School finally returned to the woods on 16th March 2021 although we had been delivering to their pupils on the school grounds once schools opened again. Sessions are still run in the Blue School grounds each week for year 7. We currently have 13 students in the woods, all with high needs and are excited about our overnight camp planned for the end of June.

Individual Referrals: We continue to get requests but aren’t taking any for now for logistic reasons.

Wednesdays: We have large demand for our general jobs days. This has evolved out of our lock down Men’s group. We have a fantastic group of highly skilled and willing volunteers combining getting jobs done with support for those with additional needs seeking companionship and purpose.

Community Volunteering Days: We have run two Sunday volunteer days, mostly working on tree maintenance and hedge planting.

Other regular users of the wood:

Charlton’s Pre-school. Kim regularly brings the Pre-school on Tuesdays, using their own Squirrel camp, even during lockdowns. (12 children).

Charlton Mackrell Primary School. Kim also brings the reception children every week on Thursdays, to Squirrel Camp, once lockdown rules had eased.

During lockdown, Kim brought the entire school (those attending because they are classified as vulnerable or children of key workers) every Friday- this was up to 28 children, and they used the main site. You could hear them for miles around!

We also ran a session each for each of the 3 classes using inspiration from the Art in Woodlands sessions. (78 children) These sessions were free to the school.

Bridgwater Pupil Referral Unit. The PRU has been using the site regularly on Thursdays and Fridays lockdown rules permitting. Their donations are helpful extra income towards projects and repairs.

Wilder Play. We ran sessions in May, June and July for local families.

Evercreech Primary School. After several deferrals we were finally able to run a short nurture programme for children in years 4 - 6.

Avalon School. Attend on Thursday mornings as part of our heavily subsidized Wild Music Project and want to keep coming

Other events:

We held our annual bird survey on 15th May 2021 in lieu of our usual volunteer camp out. The nightingales have very sadly, not returned last year or this year.

Cabinet of Living Cinema 10th July We were approached by CLC as a venue to host an event as part of their 100 years of Cinema Tour. 70 people attended and we were able to comfortably seat everyone above the stage for the performance (a screening of 10 short European films - mostly animations- with a live soundtrack from 5 musicians). This was a first time outdoor film experience for us and it was great to see what can be managed despite being off grid.

St Gilda's Catholic School Day out for Year 5 Class July 13th On request, we offered a day out to 30, year 5s to help build communication and foster team work. We had been recommended by SSDC Countryside Team. Many of the children had never experienced anything comparable, a large proportion were from ethnically diverse families with a high incidence of disadvantage and poverty.

Summer Holiday Activities:

August 4th Inclusive Woodland Playscheme. We delivered a day of mixed activities to 21 children, many with additional needs with financial support from the Somerset Inclusion Team.

August 21 Spindle Music afternoon. This was open to families who attended with their children. The weather was not good (storm warnings) so take up was poorer than expected.

Open Day Sunday September 19th 2:00-6:00. We had a lovely, well attended event (we reckon it was 87 adults and 35 children plus our team of helpers) with a singing workshop from Dora and the usual wonderful green wood working demonstrations and stalls from Joss the blacksmith who volunteers with us, Andy Tree Pirate and Ben the young photographer from the village and also Wild Roots. We had a raffle which raised £87 for Wild Roots Growing for Well Being project.

December 19th Inclusive Winter Celebration. We delivered an afternoon of activities, music and stories to 17 children and 33 adults. We had a grant from Somerset Inclusion Team (£250).

Support from Grove Developments. We have been running sessions with groups of children for 15 years using collected rain water and bringing in drinking water. So, we were really grateful to Peter Robinson of Grove Developments who offered to help us with our water situation. We now have a bore hole dug and are trying to sort out a suitable off grid pump to access the water. This will only be used for hand washing and washing up but once sorted, it will make a big difference to our operations. Thank you so much to Grove for this help.

Sunday 25th September 2022 2:00-6:00; Hallr Wood Open Day (Part of the Big Green Week)"

g. The Charltons Youth Club. The Clerk presented the report on behalf of Kate O'Boyle. "We have continued to see good membership numbers despite the ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic over the last 12 months. On average we have 12-15 attendees at our YC sessions every Wednesday.

We continue to employ 2 Youth workers through CYP to run the club sessions which costs the club approx. £5000 per yr.

Fundraising continues to be key focus. KOB attempted to set up a Friends of CYC in January to help with running fundraising events, but only 1 parent volunteered to help. So we decided to focus time on applying for grants which yields higher returns and have limited the number of fundraising events we are able to run.

We were delighted to receive a grant of £2000 from Arts Council England to create a Platinum Jubilee Banner which will be used during the Charltons Jubilee weekend

celebrations. We have collaborated with Nina at ACEarts Somerton to help produce the banner.

The Community hall committee are planning a fundraising Barn dance for youth club during Jubilee weekend.

The Horticultural Society have also offered to give 50% of profits from a village cafe they are running in July.

We would like to thank the PC for their continued financial support for YC.”

h. The Charltons’ Historical Society. Although the report was not received in time for the meeting, Celia Mycock submitted her report for the minutes. “In 2021/2022 The Charltons Historical Society have continued sharing information via our website and public Facebook page. Topics have included the 1921 school logbook; the former garage on Ilchester Road; the Memorial Gates on the Playing Field; and the release of the 1921 census.

Our original Secretary, Janet Baillie, died aged nearly 100 in December 2020 and, on 31st July 2021 at Charlton Adam Church and in the Community Hall (of which she was also founding Secretary), we assisted her family with a celebration of her contributions to life in The Charltons.

At the end of March 2022, we facilitated the deposit of original archive records from ourselves and two other local organisations (the School and the Memorial Playing Field & Community Centre Trust) at the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton.

Recently, we have been working with the Parish Council to encourage contributions to the new Local Heritage List and we will submit our own suggested places for the LHL as well as providing information to others wishing to nominate.

Research enquiries and volunteers to help catalogue the Society’s archives are welcome.”

5. **Matters Raised by Members of the Public**.

a. Gateway to the Memorial Playing Field. A resident acknowledged support from the PC following the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2021, at which she raised the issue of the poor state and lack of maintenance of the Memorial Gates. She was advised to contact the Trustees of the Memorial Field with information regarding the dedication of the gates in June 1952. The gates were recently beautifully restored and rehung in time for the anniversary of their dedication. She wished to record her thanks to the PC and, most especially, to the Memorial Playing Field Trustees for their action and ongoing maintenance of this heritage and site of remembrance in their care.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.55pm and was followed by the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting.

SIGNED.....

DATED.....