

The Charltons Parish Council

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Minutes of Parish Council (PC) Meeting held on Tuesday 16th April 2024
at 7.30pm in The Reading Room, Charlton Mackrell

Councillors Present:

Tamzin Elliott (Chairman)

Nick Blackledge

Alan Crawley

Mike Parsons

Kim Williams

Bob Adams (Vice-Chairman)

Susie Crang

Dennis Elliott

Adam Ware

In Attendance: Somerset Councillor Stephen Page, the Clerk and three members of the public.

Public Session.

A representative from the Reading Room Committee was present to confirm that the Committee would like the PC to consider signage for the Reading Room inside of the wall on the Village Green. Councillors confirmed that requests for signage would be considered at agenda item 24/28.

Reports from Somerset Councillors.

Somerset Councillor Stephen Page introduced himself having won the by-election on 28th March for the vacant seat in the Somerton division on Somerset Council (SC). He previously served four years on South Somerset District Council as the councillor for Somerton and Compton Dundon. He was looking forward to representing and working with the PC and its parishioners.

Cllr Adams asked for an update on SC's Section 19 report, which was commissioned to investigate the causes of the recent severe flooding events and to put forward ideas of how to prevent similar disruption in future.

Action: Cllr Page agreed to follow this up.

24/23. Apologies for Absence and to consider the reasons given.

Council to receive apologies for absence and, if appropriate, to resolve to approve the reasons given.

RESOLVED: None received.

24/24. Declarations of Interest.

Members to declare any interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Local Authority (NALC Model Code of Conduct) adopted May 2022.

(NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

RESOLVED: None declared.

24/25. Minutes.

To approve the Minutes of the PC meeting held on Tuesday 19th March 2024.

RESOLVED: The minutes were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

24/26. Planning.

a. To consider the following planning applications (PA):

i. **PA 24/00536/S73.** S73 Application to vary Condition 05 (Materials) to new materials schedule dated 2024 in relation to planning approval 13/04998/FUL for Erection of a permanent dwelling in association with existing equine use and associated realignment of existing earth bank. (GR 354263/129013) at Pleasant Spot Barns, Broadacres, Charlton Adam, TA11 7BA.

The Applicant was present to explain and discuss the amendments to the materials.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed unanimously to recommend **APPROVAL**.

ii. **PA 24/00642/HOU.** Extension and alterations to property with detached garage building at Pleasant Spot Cottage, Broadacres, Charlton Adam, TA11 7BA.

Cllr Adams advised that Pleasant Spot Cottage floods regularly and had already flooded a number of times this year, with flood water extending into the adjacent field to the east of the dwelling. This water flows into the garden of Pleasant Spot Farm situated next to the cottage and threatens to flood the property. Councillors were, therefore, concerned that the extension would exacerbate the flooding issue of both properties. Councillors noted that there was no drainage strategy included in the application and no schedule of 'materials'.

Councillors also commented on the size of the extension, which would increase the volume of the dwelling by approx. 50%. The extension should show deference to the original building, however, its scale and proportion dominates the Cottage. The final result would be two large buildings quite close together which are not in keeping with the distribution of the other dwellings in the area.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed unanimously to recommend **REFUSAL**.

iii. **PA 24/00867/HOU.** Single Storey Extension to the Principle Elevation at Still Waters, Station Road, Charlton Mackrell, TA11 6AG.

RESOLVED: Councillors considered that the proposed extension would be hidden behind a wall and would not affect any neighbouring properties and, therefore, agreed unanimously to recommend **APPROVAL**.

b. Somerset Council (SC) Decisions:

i. **PA 24/00272/LBC.** Proposed roof works to an existing outbuilding at Charlton House, Ilchester Road, Charlton Mackrell, TA11 6AD – **APPROVED**.

24/27. Finance.

a. Balance of the Council's Bank Account and Bank Reconciliation.

To report on the Council's Bank Account.

RESOLVED: The Clerk previously circulated the PC Accounts which were received and approved and bank balances at 31st March 2024 of Nat West Current Account £13,452.27 and Nat West Business Reserve Account £18,891.89, reconciled, approved and signed.

b. Accounts for payment.

To review and approve a schedule of items of expenditure (incl. VAT):

i. Coram Construction – Cllr Crawley Chapter 8 Training	£276.00
ii. Clerk's Allowances & Expenses	£57.70
iii. SALC Data Protection Training 19 Feb 24	£25.00

RESOLVED: Items of expenditure approved unanimously.

c. Charltons Memorial Community Trust Request for Grant.

To consider request for a grant of £3,000 towards the refurbishment of the Community Centre.

RESOLVED: Following a full discussion with a representative of the Community Centre, who was present to answer any questions on their application, councillors agreed unanimously to approve the grant on a date to be agreed following sight of the Project Plan.

d. Cary Fitzpaine Defibrillator.

To approve electrician estimate of costs for installation - £300.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed unanimously to pay for the costs up to £300. If the cost of the work was to exceed £300, the PC would need to be re-consulted.

24/28. Signage in the Charltons.

To consider requests received from organisations in the Parish for directional signage.

The Clerk reported on the current situation and how it had arisen. SC Traffic Management had recently driven through The Charltons and noticed several unauthorised, non-standard brown signs that had been placed around the village on SC street furniture and utility apparatus. This had also been brought to the attention of the PC as residents had noticed the increase in signage. SC's Traffic Engineer was, therefore, asked to investigate this issue with the PC. The Clerk informed SC that, following a request from the Community Centre for signage, the PC had consulted with SC who agreed that they would consider the installation of ordinary black and white information signs (minute ref 15/188.d) in accordance with Department for Transport (DfT) regulations. Locations were to be proposed and agreed. This was a verbal agreement with the County Councillor in post at the time and the Community Centre advised accordingly.

The PC had also previously considered a request from a non-resident for highways signage 'To The Church', however, it was agreed unanimously that this was not required (minute ref 22/90.)

The DfT has clear legislation in place that dictates what signing and lining is in place on the public highway, which must be followed and, if necessary, enforced. This ensures consistency and understanding across the country and avoids an over proliferation of signage. The PC considered this to be an important factor in the rural parish of The Charltons as a lot of hard work and time had been spent working with the community on the designation of The West Charlton and Charlton Mackrell Conservation Areas (CA).

SC confirmed that the signs would need to be removed as soon as possible as they are not authorised signs and do not comply with the DfT style of sign, however, they would not take any further action on the traffic mirror on Collins Lane and the 'no parking sign' on private property.

SC encouraged those responsible for erecting the non-authorised signage to attend the PC meeting and work with the PC on this matter. They reiterated that whilst the PC have no authorisation on highways signs, as elected representatives of the community, the PC can make requests to SC to carry out works and as requests by a few are not always the views of the whole community.

To better understand each organisation's requirements for signage and to subsequently find a solution that would be acceptable to the organisations, SC Highways and indeed the Parish as a whole, the Clerk had written to each organisation asking for the reasons why direction signs were required, the proposed locations and the format of the signs (considering the relevant DfT regulations). If the organisation was happy for SC to design the signs, it should indicate how the required signage would be funded and upon receiving the feedback, the PC would consider each request at its next public meeting and commence a dialogue with SC as appropriate.

a. Charlton Mackrell School. Cllr Adams reported that he had previously communicated with the School on this matter, who confirmed that the signs had appeared, although not formally approved. [Following the PC meeting the School confirmed that a sign at the end of Bonfire Lane would be beneficial].

RESOLVED: Cllr Adams would continue the dialogue on behalf of the PC with the School.

b. Charlton Mackrell Reading Room (RR).

RESOLVED: Following recent correspondence and at the request of the RR Committee representative in public session, the PC agreed that, following formal receipt of information requested by the Clerk above, it would investigate appropriate signage to be installed behind the wall on the Village Green that would comply with DfT regulations and for signage within a CA.

c. Charltons Community Centre and Memorial Playing Field.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed that upon receipt of the information requested by the Clerk above and approval of locations by the PC it would liaise with SC on behalf of the Committee as the provision in principle of signage was previously approved.

d. Charlton Adam and Mackrell Churches. Signage previously considered unnecessary (minute ref 22/90). Cllr Adams gave a copy of the front cover of a briefing paper from The Church Growth Trust on the need for consent for external signs and notices at church premises to a member of the church community present, so that they could search for the document online. The Clerk also suggested that it would help visitors if location information and directions were added to the Benefice of Somerton and Parish websites.

RESOLVED: Await formal receipt of information requested by the Clerk above if signage was deemed necessary and approved by the Diocese.

e. Hallr Wood. The Project Lead for Hallr Wood had contacted the PC to confirm that they were keen to not lose the traffic mirror near the War Memorial, Collins Lane as they sometimes took students across the road to the park and relied heavily on it for pedestrian safety. They were relieved and pleased that the mirror was allowed to stay, however, they haven't had a sign for Hallr Wood and would manage fine without one.

RESOLVED: Following further discussion the PC agreed to reply to the Project Lead that councillors are aware that on occasions they have put a temporary sign to Hallr Wood in the Village Car Park and, if it helped and they wished to make that arrangement permanent, please approach the PC who would give it urgent consideration.

There then followed a discussion with regard to misinformation printed in the April edition of The Charltons Village News in an article on the 'Village Signage Issue'.

RESOLVED: Agenda item for the next ordinary meeting.

24/29. Community Flood Action Group and Emergency Planning.

Update on the formation of a Community Flood Action Group.

RESOLVED: Cllr Adams reported that residents were in the process of setting up a Community Flood Action Group, four had formed a steering group to understand what this would entail and to start to develop a Flooding Action Plan. The Group had arranged a meeting with the Somerset Rivers Authority on 29th April. The Group would welcome input from Primrose Hill Park and Cllr Adams had contacted the owner of the Park who hoped that some residents would contact the PC. Cllr Adams asked that any interested Park resident could contact him or the Clerk if they would like more information.

24/30. Councillor and Clerk Email Addresses.

To consider setting up councillors and clerk with org.uk email addresses to comply with GDPR and guidance from the Somerset and National Association of Local Councils at an annual cost of £72 plus VAT.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed unanimously to set up addresses via the Parish Website provider.

24/31. Items for Report and Future Business.

a. Levels and Moors Local Community Network. The Chairman reported on the recent LCN meeting held on 25th March at which the Active Travel Working Group gave an update. Minutes would be circulated upon receipt. The LCN AGM was scheduled for June 2024.

Action: The Chairman asked if the Clerk could add information on Active Travel on the Parish Website once received.

b. Village Car Park. Cllr Adams reported that the 1st phase of repairs to the village car park was complete. He had asked for a quote to install an accu-drain with pipe and soakway at the entrance.

c. War Memorial. Cllr Crawley reported that Silverbirch Landscapers were unable to carry out the grounds maintenance works. Cllrs Blackledge and Crawley also reported that Stag Beetles were in residence in the tree stumps and the area could not be sprayed until they eventually went elsewhere. It was suggested that the stumps could be isolated and included to create a wildlife area. The vegetation could easily be dealt with and the remaining area re-turfed. The stone steps and path needed re-setting.

Action: It was agreed that a quote for one weeks work for vegetation/turfing and two weeks to carry out the stonework should be sufficient time to cover the work and quotes were invited.

d. Cary Fitzpaine, Rag Lane – speed mitigation. Cllr Williams reported that she had been approached by a resident concerned about the increasing number of vehicles that speed along Rag Lane in the hamlet.

Action: The Clerk agreed to ask SC Highways if a ‘black box’ speed trial could be carried out.

e. Chessels Lane/Primrose Hill – speed mitigation. The Clerk previously circulated an email from a concerned resident regarding speeding through Primrose Hill from the junction of Chessels Lane onwards to Tuckers Batch. Residents had contacted the police but there appeared to be no interest.

Action: Cllr Crawley agreed to ask the Police Enforcement Unit to assess if the location would be suitable to conduct Community Speed Watch. The Clerk agreed to ask the resident if they would like to volunteer and participate in the CSW if approved.

Cllr Crawley reported that when interrogating the data from the Speed Indicator Device on Kingweston Road it had recorded a speeder at 96mph and many speeders at 50s/60smph.

f. Crime Statistics and Reports. Cllr Crawley reported that there had been a recent spate of thefts from outbuildings.

g. Manure Heap/Muck Spreading. Cllr Parsons reported on the continuous strong pungent smell from muck spreading, that had been left and not incorporated into the soil and from the manure heap located close to properties along Kingweston Road, which had worsened over the last couple of months. This was not the usual level of odour from muck spreading/manure heaps.

Action: The Clerk agreed to speak to the Agent for Kingweston Estate to ask if the manure heap could be relocated further up the road, on the top field opposite the farm, away from residential properties.

Please notify items to the Clerk at least 24hrs before the meeting.

Next meetings: Annual Parish, Annual Parish Council and Ordinary meetings to be held on Thursday 16th May 2024, 7.00PM in The Reading Room, Hillway, Charlton Mackrell.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed:

Dated: