

# The Charltons Parish Council

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## Minutes of Parish Council Meeting

held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025

commencing at 7.30pm in The Reading Room, Charlton Mackrell

### Councillors Present:

Tamzin Elliott (Chairman)

Alan Crawley

Kim Williams

Mike Parsons (Vice Chairman)

Adam Ware

**In attendance:** Somerset Councillors Kim Kerley and Stephen Page, the Clerk and three members of the public.

### ❖ Public Question and Comments:

A member of the public (MOP) who lives at the bottom of George Street, Charlton Adam, was present to discuss the recent flood events. The 'non return' valve on his main sewer pipe drain kicked in during the latest flood event and stayed shut for three days against the flooding and was back syphoning, indicating the high level of water there. He wished to pass on the knowledge that the culvert exiting the overgrown pond in the field/ground around Charlton Grange, which was covered with a grill, was damaged by a German bomber during the war and was never repaired, which may have exacerbated the issue and could be of some interest when looking at flood mitigation options.

### ❖ Reports from Somerset Council (SC):

**Councillor Tim Kerley** reported as follows:

Flooding. The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Community Flood Action Fund was open for applications for grants of between £3,000 and £20,000 for small works to reduce flood risks in Somerset. This could be used to employ professionals to map watercourses, identify issues and produce action plans. Farmer could also receive ground rent in return for flood mitigation measures.

Councils could also use the grant to fund contractors to help maintain drains. Kier contractors charge £1,400 per day to lift and jet between 80 to 100 drains and dispose the waste. Smaller parishes with fewer drains could share the cost with another parish or instruct their own local contractor.

There was also a 'Ditch Team' who charged up to £650 per day.

Cllr Kerley was at Edgar Hall, Somerton, following the evacuation of residents from Primrose Hill Park Homes, Charlton Mackrell on the night of 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and assisted in other areas of his Ward. He advised that if there was ever a need to close a road in The Charltons to prevent cars driving through during flood events, to call him at any hour of the night or day and he will put up 'Road Closed' signage, under his authority.

Budget. There was currently a £45m shortfall, however, it was expected that the Council would have a balanced budget for next FY. SC had been taking emergency action to reduce costs and plans to save a further £47m next year, including £34m by reducing the number of staff and managers employed by April 2025. The Government recently confirmed that SC will be allowed to raise Council Tax by up to 7.5%, an amount 2.5% above the national cap of 5%. This would be enough to 'limp' through, but this was not a good position for the council to be in. Cuts would be 'brutal' and impact non-statutory funding such as Highways. If this continued, the budget gap would continue to increase until 'bankruptcy date'. He believed

that there should be a review of council tax schemes and adult and social care or the problems would continue to worsen.

**Cllr Stephen Page** reported as follows:

'Heart of Wessex' Combined Authority. The Leaders of Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire Councils submitted a letter to the Government to confirm they wish to be considered as part of the Devolution Priority Programme, which was not approved.

Boundary Commission were reviewing the number and makeup of the SC electoral divisions prior to the 2027 elections.

Somerset Local Plan. Town and Parish Councils were encouraged to help inform the development of the Somerset Local Plan by submitting comments on areas such as housing and bus links.

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#### **25/10. Apologies for absence:**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**RESOLVED:** Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllrs Katie Armstrong and Susie Crang.

#### **25/11. Declarations of Interests:**

Members are reminded of their obligation to declare any Pecuniary or Other interests they may have under the Localism Act 2011 and NALC Model Code of Conduct adopted May 2022. (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Ware declared an 'Other' interest at item 25/16. on the agenda as a Trustee of The Charltons Memorial Community Trust CIO.

#### **25/12. Minutes:**

To approve the Minutes of the PC meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

**RESOLVED:** The minutes were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

#### **25/13. Parish Council Vacancies.**

To consider applications received and conduct vote to fill two casual vacancies on the Parish Council by co-option.

There were two eligible candidates for the two vacancies.

**RESOLVED:** One candidate was unable to attend the meeting, therefore, councillors agreed to defer his application for consideration at the next meeting.

Councillors asked the second applicant to explain his reasons for applying, after which councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions. The Chairman then asked for nominations.

**RESOLVED:** As no proposal for co-option was received, the Clerk agreed to continue to advertise the two vacancies, which would be on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

Councillors thanked the applicant for applying and suggested that he re-considers applying once he has lived in the Parish for a suitable period of time.

#### **25/14. Planning.**

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

i. **PA 25/00147/S73.** S73 Application to vary Conditions 02 (approved plans), 03 (materials) and 05 (external alterations) to reflect minor changes required to the design and materials and to discharge Conditions 04 (cladding) and 06 (surface water) where details are being provided relating to planning approval 24/00642/HOU; Extension and alterations to property with detached garage building at Pleasant Spot Cottage, Broadacres, Charlton Adam, TA11 7BA.

The Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) Maintenance Management Plan shows ground and surface water from the site being discharged into the ditch which runs from the eastern edge of the site, past adjoining properties along the side of Pleasant Spot Lane, into another ditch, which runs along the northern boundary of Broadway Road. The Broadway Road ditch

also takes the outflows from a number of local land drainage schemes to minimise surface water flooding of properties in Broadway Road. This ditch regularly reaches capacity, restricting the drainage schemes and causes flooding to gardens and the road. The SUDS Plan does not address the potential of the proposed scheme increasing the potential flood risk to neighbouring properties or third party land.

Councillors had no comments on the minor changes to the materials.

**RESOLVED:** Councillors wished to reiterate their response to PA 24/00642/HOU submitted on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and agreed unanimously to continue to recommend **REFUSAL** as the potential increase to the risk of flooding had not been addressed. The PC requests that the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) review the proposal to ensure that there is no further flood risk elsewhere.

**b. Somerset Council (SC) Decisions:**

i. **PA 24/02231/HOU.** Erection of new car port and storage area at The Chantry, West Charlton, TA11 7AL – **APPROVED.**

ii. **PA 24/02978/HOU & 24/02979/LBC.** Modification of existing workshop building to convert into bat roost at The Court, West Charlton, TA11 7AL – **WITHDRAWN.**

**25/15. Parish Council Accounts:**

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

To receive the full council accounts and bank reconciliation.

**RESOLVED:** The Clerk previously circulated the PC's Accounts, which were agreed and bank balance at 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 of Nat West Current Account £452.05 and Nat West Business Reserve Account £46,750.83, which were reconciled, approved and signed.

**b. Accounts for payment:**

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

i. PC page in Charltons News in 2024 £300.00

ii. SALC training inv 1590 – Cllr Essentials Part 1 £30.00

**RESOLVED:** All items of expenditure were approved unanimously.

**c. Lloyds Bank Online Banking Mandate.**

Council to approve the change in bank account from Nat West to Lloyds and signatories to sign the bank mandate.

**RESOLVED:** Cllrs Crawley, Parsons, Williams and the Clerk signed the bank mandate. Cllr Williams would hand deliver the mandate to Cllr Crang for signature prior to hand delivering to Lloyds Bank for scanning/submission.

**25/16. Request for Grant:**

To consider grant quest from The Charltons Memorial Community Trust (CMCT) CIO for £3,000 for financial assistance towards the redevelopment of the Community Hall and maintenance of the playing field in FY 2025/26.

Andrea de Berker, Trustee of CMCT, was present and answered questions from the Council.

**RESOLVED:** Andrea de Berker agreed to ask the CMCT Treasurer to submit an up to date copy of the Trust's Accounts to the PC. Councillors agreed unanimously to approve a grant of up to £3,000 to be paid upon receipt of invoices relating to the grass and hedge cutting in the confines of the playing field during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

**25/17. Flood Events – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025:**

Report and update on parish flood events.

**RESOLVED:** The Chairman gave her report on the meeting with Sarah Dyke, MP, on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025 on site at Primrose Hill Residential Park. Dr Paul Elliston, SC Community Engagement Officer (Flooding) was also present in order to meet with Primrose Hill residents and those impacted by the flooding in the parish. The Chairman and residents present were able to provide further information of the recurring flooding problems the whole Parish experience, in addition to the Primrose Hill site and the endless work of the residents and how they feel. The BBC

were also present and interviewed residents. Cllr Williams reported that Sarah Dyke also met with residents in Cary Fitzpaine, which was also affected by flooding.

The Chairman thought the meeting went well and was the first step in taking action to set up better aid and, more importantly, preventative actions for the future, with various meetings across wider communities being set up at a later date. Paul Elliston advised that there were various grants that are available and demonstrated a 'kit' with various equipment in it, which could be purchased by PC's. The Charltons could potentially be a good flagship for future plans as so much has already been done to help ourselves.

Sarah Dyke would host an event in Edgar Hall, Somerton in March, date TBC, at which all are encouraged to attend.

**25/18. Items for Report and Future Business.**

a. Dog Nuisance Charlton Adam. The Clerk reported that a resident contacted the PC to ask for advice/assistance on dog nuisance. Three small dogs routinely run loose on the road at the corner of Broad Street and High Street in Charlton Adam. The dogs were being a nuisance to passers-by and a hazard to other road users travelling around the blind bend. This matter had been addressed on numerous occasions directly to the owners by residents and SC but to no avail. The resident and the PC agreed that this was a matter for the SC Dog Warden and Police and action should be taken accordingly. The Clerk confirmed that she had submitted the resident's request to the police.

b. Annual Parish Meeting. Deferred to next meeting to discuss options/venue/format.

c. Clerk's retirement. The Clerk gave a brief outline of the recruitment process with the aim to fill the vacancy by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Draft job description, vacancy advert and contract had been sent to Somerset Association for Local Councils for checking and would then be progressed by the Personnel Committee. Cllr Ware, who had experience in recruitment, agreed to join the Personnel Committee.

d. Woodland Trust – Free Trees for Communities. Cllr Ware reported that he had successfully applied as a Trustee on behalf of the CMCT for a 'free tree pack'. 1,400 trees would be delivered in November 2025, however, the CMCT no longer needed them and he asked if the parish would like to plant them elsewhere.

**Next meeting:** to be held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 7.30pm in The Reading Room, Hillway, Charlton Mackrell.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....