

The Charltons Parish Council

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“Draft” Minutes of The Charltons Annual Parish Meeting
held as a consultative virtual meeting via Zoom software on Thursday 6th May 2021,
commencing at 7.00pm

Councillors Present (remotely):

Nick Blackledge (Chairman)

Alan Crawley

Tamzin Elliott

Bob Adams

Dennis Elliott

Darin Kay (audio only)

In Attendance (remotely): D.Cllr Tony Capozzoli, D.Cllr Charlie Hull, the Clerk and ten members of the public.

1. Full Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

Wessex Internet presented and answered questions on the new voucher scheme available to residents via Wessex Internet. Richard Culley, a resident and business owner in Keinton Mandeville who was working with Keinton Mandeville and The Charltons Parish Councils raising awareness of the campaign to introduce FTTP broadband to our community, also gave an update. An offer was delivered by BT Openreach on 20th April 2021 to bring FTTP Broadband to 446 residential and business premises around The Charltons, Lytes Cary and Cary Fitzpaine. Based on the addresses included, the average installation cost would be £1,167 per premise. The Government backed Gigabit Voucher Scheme is expected to cover the bulk of the costs, at up to £1,500 per residential premise and £3,500 per business premise.

Wessex Internet also has plans to bring FTTP broadband to the area as part of the Connecting Devon and Somerset contract. Their initial delivery is focused on properties which currently have less than 30Mbps connectivity, however they have indicated there is a potential to deliver to the full parish area through the same Gigabit Voucher Scheme if the parish secures interest from at least 35% of all premises. Richard is awaiting full details of their formal proposal, expected within towards the end of May 2021. Further information will be made available online at www.01458connected.co.uk.

2. The minutes of The Charltons Annual Parish Meeting held on 7th May 2019 were received and confirmed as a correct record.

3. There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting.

4. Parish Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020 (audited) and 31st March 2021 (unaudited). Copies of the Draft Receipts and Payments Accounts were previously distributed for information and were presented by the Clerk.

5. Reports from District and County Councillors.

a. D.Cllr Hull reported that residents would soon receive notice of the local poll on the future of local government in Somerset, which goes live from 17th May. The poll will ask voters to choose between two options being considered by the Government to replace the existing five councils; county council and the four district councils. The first option, “One Somerset”, is the plan for a single council proposed by Somerset

County Council (SCC). The second option, "Stronger Somerset", is the plan for two councils for Somerset, an Eastern and a Western Somerset council, proposed by Somerset West and Taunton Council and the other district councils of Somerset. The result of the poll would be sent to the Secretary of State to help form his decision due on 21st June 2021.

Cllr Hull reported that large planning developments were still on hold due to the ongoing issue with phosphates. He also reported that the new 'Recycle More' service would start in South Somerset from Monday, 28 June. He advised that residents take heed of the advice in the promotional posters and leaflets to help cut down on single use plastic as waste collections will be every three weeks.

b. D.Cllr Capozzoli reported that the new chief executive of South Somerset District Council (SSDC) would be Clare Pestell after the appointment was confirmed by Full Council. Clare, who had been serving as the Council's Director of Commercial Services and Income Generation since 2017, would take up the role on 7th June following the departure of current Chief Executive Alex Parmley, who is leaving South Somerset for a new life in New Zealand with his family where he will serve as Chief Executive of Waitaki District Council.

Cllr Capozzoli reported that there were issues with planning and planning enforcement, since he was recently notified that the planning enforcement officer was due to leave. He suggested that the PC contact Kirsty Larkin, Director (Service Delivery) with any planning issues in the meantime. The Area East Committee would meet next week, however, there were no delegated planning applications on the agenda for consideration.

Cllr Capozzoli reported that two new 'litterpick' stations had been installed, equipped with litterpickers and reusable bags for anyone to borrow and do their own clean up at countryside sites across South Somerset. The stations aim to encourage people to pick up a litterpicker and take care of the sites they visit about such as Yeovil Country Park and Chard Reservoir. Once the litter pick is completed, the equipment can be returned to the station, the litter put in a nearby bin and if possible, recycle any items.

(Cllr Capozzoli left the meeting at 7.50pm)

6. Parish Reports.

a. Tennis Club. Ms D Powell reported that the Tennis Club currently had over 50 members. In 2019 the tennis club agreed a partnership with the Giraffe House Pickleball Club who are based in the Community Hall. Two pickleball courts were marked out in red paint on the tennis court, which no one could have imagined just how valuable they would be. The pandemic meant they could not play indoors and consequently the tennis court had never been so busy. During April this year it had been booked for an average of 15hrs a week. From May 17th pickleball should be allowed back inside. The Youth Club also block book the court on Wednesday evenings from 6.00 – 8.00PM.

b. Ladies Fitness and Training Group. Ms D Powell read out the report on behalf of Louise Viljoen. "I have been running this group now for two years. I started with two clients and their dog! The group has now grown to 15 ranging in ages from pre-school to retiree's! We have been creative in the way we work, using picnic benches, football goal posts and steps! We are now enjoying the use of more equipment since the new play area was installed in March which is helping to make the classes that much more varied and exciting. We are all very much looking forward to the adult trim trail that is in the Project Charltons future plans. I have been advising the group on the best equipment to purchase. This will not only enhance my exercise classes but will encourage adults in the village who are unable to attend my class to work independently on their strength, mobility, flexibility and all round fitness. This will be a much needed extra resource for our community and will be a much welcomed aid

toward enhancing their mental health and well being. We know how important fresh air is! Being able to complete an exercise programme in the open air at a time which suits them personally, will be a massive bonus.”

c. Project Charltons. Ms D Powell gave her report. “The first phase of the plans were completed in March. The success of this venture is beyond our greatest hopes! The play area has been busy on a daily basis. It is wonderful to see families playing together and using the new tables to enjoy a picnic. Project Charltons have received many notes of thanks for their vision and work.

In addition to the new play area being an asset to the young families, it has also been welcomed as an extra valuable resource for the preschool. When the weather is so inclement the children are unable to visit Hallr wood, as it was this week with the very strong winds, the staff were able to bring the children to Memorial Field where they excitedly played on the new equipment and used the picnic tables to eat their snacks. One visitor to the park from Sherborne sent this message “Every time we come to the park (to play pickleball) it is really busy. Having a vision is good, implementing even better, but seeing it bear fruit is heart-warming! Really impressed and the benefits are there for years and years”

Over the Easter and early May Bank holidays we ran a pop-up café selling hot drinks and ice-creams. During these four days we had displays of Project Charltons vision for the Memorial Field. These illustrated what we had achieved so far and showed the costings, the next two phases planned and details of our journey, events, donations and publicity. We had a member of the group on hand to answer questions and concerns. Our next fund raising event is a walking jumble sale on 22nd May from 10.00am – 2.00pm. We will be serving hot snacks as well as tea/coffee and cakes at the Community Hall. Over twenty residents have booked to run a stall outside their homes.

Project Charltons are delighted with the overwhelming positive response they have received from the community and look forward to completing the sensory seating area very soon.”

d. Charlton Mackrell Primary School and Pre-School. Rebecca Cawley, Headteacher gave her report. “The school continues to thrive with 76 pupils on roll and an increase to 81 predicted for September 2021. The staff and school community have had a particularly challenging year, meeting the needs of the children during the lockdowns with home learning. Thanks to the village community every child had a computer to work on and could continue their studies. All the children have now returned to school with enthusiasm, and learning is thankfully back on track. We have opened up our clubs with music, sport, dance, crafts and a book club. The children have also enjoyed sports coaches for cricket, multi-skills and taken part in well-being sessions and Forest School at Hallr Woods. Finally, we have been able to start our baby and toddler group on a Wednesday morning, which has been very popular. We are very lucky to have the support of the local community who have helped with computers, Forest School sessions, money for new IT equipment and supported our competitions.” Rebecca asked for an update on the approval of the speed limit outside of the school and asked if a councillor might know when this work would be implemented, which the PC agreed to hasten.

ACTION: To hasten SCC for an update on the proposed 20mph speed restriction outside the school.

e. Charlton Mackrell Reading Room. Margaret Hutchins gave her report. “Because of Covid and lockdown there have obviously been no activities in the Reading Room for over a year, but it has enabled us to have repairs done to the car park area to improve the drainage. We hope it has solved the problem of occasional flooding in the lobby. We are about to decorate the toilets and side of the stage.

We have recently put in facilities for making the hall Covid safe, and hope that it will not be too long before we can return to some form of normality, welcoming people back with coffee mornings and other activities that are permissible.”

f. Youth Club. Kate OBoyle thanked the PC for its Covid-19 reopening grant last autumn, which helped pay for sanitising equipment and an additional youth worker to help manage social distancing. The Club ran 8 sessions of youth club for 15 members during Oct-Dec 2020. The Club had to close during the last Lockdown and have just reopened 3 weeks ago with numbers limited to 15. The National Youth Association had just confirmed this week that the Club could now increase numbers to 15 plus young people, so from next week they would be extending invitations to other villagers and to year 6 children from the village school.

The Club’s biggest concern is due to pandemic, they had not been able to run any fundraising events and sadly the Club's application to the Govt Covid youth fund was unsuccessful; they have just enough money to last until the end of the year.”

g. The Charltons’ Historical Society. Celia Mycock reported that there was no Society as such at the moment, however, there was a Facebook page and they would continue to keep the website running. They had recently completed a project to commemorate each individual casualty of WW1 from both Charlton Adam and Charlton Mackrell who are now named on The Charltons' War Memorial. They were also involved with advertising the recent census by putting up posters around the villages. The Society were willing to answer any questions or research queries and provided historical information when relevant to any planning applications. Volunteers were welcome.

h. Community Speedwatch. Alan Crawley reported that Community Speedwatch continued to operate at a minimum as there were only three members. More volunteers were required to do the course. There was a noticeable increase in the speed of traffic since lockdown had eased.

i. The Community Centre and Memorial Hall Trust. The Clerk read out the report on behalf of Mike Whitaker, Chairman. “The Community Centre and Memorial Hall Trust facilities have opened whenever Coronavirus restrictions have permitting over the last year. This has been helped by Government grants and hard work of the Trustees. Our significant news is the amazing new children's play area that Project Charltons have provided for our community. Work and fund raising continues, with further plans for more facilities for the young and old members of our community.”

j. Giraffe House Pickleball Club. The Clerk read out the report on behalf of Peter Snart-Smith, Chairman. The Club was founded in 2018 with its base at The Charltons Community Hall. Pickleball originated in the USA almost 50 years ago, and is becoming more and more popular in many parts of the globe. It is a ball and racket sport, played over a low net on a badminton court. Pickleball is suitable for all ages and abilities, and is played both inside and outside.

Our Club has proved extremely popular, and we now have about 50 members. Most members play just for fun, but we also engage in inter-club tournaments and hold social events. New members are always welcome. We are one of the very few clubs in the UK to be fortunate enough to have our own qualified Coach (Mitch Mitchell), who lives in the Parish.

Many villagers participate in playing Pickleball, but also help in the efficient running of a vibrant Club. As founder members, Rick Harrison and Dee Powell deserve special mention for their enthusiasm and untiring devotion to the Club. I would also thank the Tennis Club for allowing us to mark out two outside courts on their base; these have proved especially valuable over the last year during periods when inside play has been prohibited owing to Covid19.

For further details of the Club, please contact me: peterss1946@gmail.com.”

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

a. Gateway to the Memorial Playing Field. A resident wished to comment on the poor state of the Gateway to the Memorial Playing Field, which is a site of Remembrance to those residents who served in WW2. The gates had not been maintained for a considerable time and were considered disrespectful as a site of remembrance. As 2022 would mark the 70th anniversary of the 1952 dedication she asked for the PC's support to request that the gates are professionally restored with a commitment from the Charltons Community Centre and Memorial Playing Field Committee to re-instate regular maintenance.

ACTION: The Clerk agreed to write to the Memorial Playing Field Committee.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm and was followed by the Annual Parish Council and Ordinary Parish Council Meetings.

SIGNED.....

DATED.....

