

The Charltons Parish Council

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“Draft” Minutes of Parish Council Meeting
Held as a consultative virtual meeting via Zoom software on
Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 7.00pm

Councillors Present (remotely):

Nick Blackledge (Chairman)

Alan Crawley

Tamzin Elliott

Jemma Lawson

Bob Adams

Dennis Elliott

Rick Harrison

Dee Powell

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

Public Session

A member of the public expressed her concerns regarding planning application (PA) 19/02745/OUT, which was on the agenda for consideration at item 21/28.a.i.

Reports from County and District Councillors

District and County Councillors may give short verbal reports on matters affecting the Parish.

D.Cllr Capozzoli reported that South Somerset District Council's (SSDC) Area East Committee had just held its first meeting since December 2019, at which there was only one planning application on the agenda due to the ongoing issue with phosphates. He wished to remind residents that members of the public are invited to attend.

D.Cllr Hull reported that the Stronger Somerset unitary proposal received the support of the Northstone, Ivelchester and St Michael's (NIST) district councillors, in particular due to the alternative delivery model (ADM) for children's services, which would be jointly owned by East and West Somerset and provide increased continuity of care for our residents. As all resident submissions were read and held more weight than generic organisations, he strongly encouraged residents to respond to the consultation by writing to unitaryconsultation@communities.gov.uk or via the link: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/> prior to the closing date of 19th April 2021.

D.Cllr Hull advised that he was encouraging people to take advantage of free council-backed training for retrofit skills through the 'Retrofit Academy' by upskilling tradespeople or those wishing to start work in making homes more energy efficient.

D.Cllr Hull reported that he was keen to conduct a local audit of sports teams, such as football and cricket, who might like to use local playing fields and facilities, to promote health and well-being and had contacted other local councillors about this. D.Cllr Capozzoli proposed that residents could contact him if they were in need of cricket equipment as he held equipment that was no longer required.

D.Cllr Hull reported that SSDC was conducting a consultation on community owned electric vehicles and asked for members of the public to make their views known.

21/25. 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: Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Darin Kay. C.Cllr Ruddle also tendered his apologies.

21/26. 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 2012) adopted July 2012. (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

RESOLVED: No interests declared.

21/27. Minutes.

To approve the Minutes of the Remote Ordinary PC Meeting held on Tuesday 16th February 2021.

RESOLVED: The minutes were confirmed as a true record and would be duly signed.

21/28. Planning.

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

i. **PA 19/02745/OUT.** Amended outline plans with all matters reserved for the erection of 9 dwellings (reduced from 14) with associated infrastructure, footways, drainage basin and landscaping on land OS 6323 (part) Kingweston Road, Charlton Mackrell.

Councilors commented that to date 55 members of the public had recorded their objections on the SSDC website with no comments in support. Following a full discussion councilors agreed to submit their observation as follows:

Capacity of Physical Infrastructure - Sewage and Flooding

One of the major concerns relates to flooding and pressures on the sewers. These are essential planning issues and there are current problems with both that need to be taken into account.

Certain properties within Charlton Mackrell have experienced flooding that has occurred since detailed records of such events commenced in 2000. During 2000 internal property flooding was reported in both September and November. Further widespread flooding was experienced during 2008 and again during the winter of 2012.

The threat of flooding continues every time there is prolonged and/or heavy rainfall. Such events lead to out of bank flows in Charlton Mackrell and cause localised ponding, road flooding and the risk of internal flooding to neighbouring properties.

In total of 20 events have been recorded since 2000 and these include incidents of both property flooding and sufficient road flooding to result in closure.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) stated that they would object to the drainage scheme proposed due to its lack of adherence to the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) manual where possible for new developments and the sustainable approach to surface water disposal. There is also no formal 'pre-application' correspondence between the developer and the LLFA on record.

They correctly say that a 'below ground storage' approach would not meet the SuDS requirements and open storage features, such as ponds and swales, should be incorporated within the scheme. The proposed scheme shown in the new Floor Risk Assessment (FRA) only shows a below ground tank. The main use of ponds and swales on a development is to slow water down to allow de-silting of the water from the proposed impermeable surfaces. There is also the requirement to 'cleanse' the water prior to entry into a watercourse, 'Bull Brook'. Ponds, swales and the utilisation of porous paving for all vehicular hard surfacing on the site would reduce the chance of petrochemicals and silt

from entering the watercourse. Porous paving is deemed to meet 2 of the 3 parts of the cleansing/SuDS train required. A third would be to outfall the water from the tank into a swale along the southern boundary prior to entering the watercourse. A positive piped solution to the proposed below ground storage tank, via road gullies, does not meet the criteria.

On inspection of the outfall location, the 2 no. 225mm diameter pipes discussed outfall almost into the invert of the watercourse. In a high rainfall scenario, these pipes would be submerged, at the outfall, preventing water from entering the watercourse from the site. The likelihood is that the water from the watercourse would move up the pipes towards the site. If a vortex flow restrictor is installed this would act as a non-return valve preventing water from leaving the development. The vortex control requires head and flow to work. Within the Microdrainage calculations, there does not seem to be an allowance for additional storage brought about by the outfall pipes being in a submerged state. If there is no additional storage allowed on site for this occurrence it is likely to cause flooding within the site and as a result overland flows causing flooding to the south of the site, onto the existing properties and onto Kingweston Road.

The current greenfield drains to the south within its catchment and appears to outfall into the 2 no. pipes previously mentioned. The flows from the proposed development are indicated to be restricted to 1.9 l/s for the 1:100 year storm event. This is greatly in excess of the QBar 0.8 l/s figure for the site. The original FRA carried out by the same company shows a figure of 0.9 l/s which is closer to the QBar mentioned and indicated in the updated FRA. There is no correspondence from the LLFA stating that they would accept the higher figure. This will need to be clarified and proof given.

Topographical levels on the plans are extremely limited. The level of the site road in the south west corner would be approximately 39.2m AOD. The cover to the top of crates based on Wavin Aquacell Plus-R for fully laden refuse trucks up to 32 tonnes would require 1.3m of cover. So, based on the ground level of 39.2 – 1.3m (cover) – 0.5m (crate depth) = 37.4m to invert of crates. With a further 30m to the proposed outfall pipes the invert of the outfall pipes would need to be in the region of 37.025m AOD. If the levels shown on the survey in the original FRA are correct, then it will not be possible to make this outfall invert level into the existing pipes. At the pipe outfall point into the watercourse, the invert of the watercourse is only around a metre below ground level. This would give a level of 37.70m AOD. A difference of 700m lower. It would appear a pumped solution would be required. The pumped outfall approach has already been commented on by the LLFA as not preferred due to high maintenance issues.

Will the maintenance of the surface water drainage on the development under the control of a management company or the plot owners themselves?

The crates are effectively a large, sealed tank. When empty it acts like a balloon. The crates will be laid at a very slight fall from north to south, good practise, to aid with draining. If this is the case the crates, shown above, will be approximately 1.8m below ground level to the south and around 2.55m to the north. The ground water was seen to be 0.87m in the wet periods and 1.91m in the dry periods below ground level. In the dry periods the tank will be buried nearly 700mm into the groundwater. What provision is there for preventing the crates from floating?

How are the proposed overland flood routes from the catchment to the north of the development going to be controlled? If they are not, then the likelihood is that the water will overflow onto the development and overwhelm the storage system which is designed

to only accommodate the flows from the development. This will not only flood the site but will flood the downhill properties and Kingweston Road. If the flows are to be collected via porous pipes at the site boundaries and transported to the outfall pipes under Kingweston Road this will not allow for percolation into the ground, and the flows will be intensified causing higher flows into the pipes under the road.

The overland flood routing brought about by the development is indicated as flowing through gardens. How is it proposed to prevent occupiers building walls along boundaries, effectively cutting off these routes? There is also no information detailing the possible implications of the surface water system failure on the surrounding area of Kingweston Road by the change from greenfield to predominantly impermeable area.

Traffic Generation - Highway Safety

There are no opportunities for sustainable travel, public transport is very limited and owning a car is considered almost essential in the parish. The dwellings would generate on average between 54 –72 travel movements each day onto Kingweston Road, which the Community Speed Watch Team regularly monitors due to the number of vehicles who speed along this section of road.

The vehicle speeds registered on Kingweston Road in the traffic survey carried out by the Applicant is in complete contradiction with that carried out by Avon and Somerset Police, as previously submitted by the council. An independent traffic survey should be requested by the local planning authority to give an impartial view of the speeds. The survey should be carried out before 7am and completed after 7pm to give a full cross-section of data. This should also be carried out during a non-holiday period and during weekdays and not at weekends.

Forward visibility calculations have been carried out based on development biased speed figures and as such should be recalculated once the new traffic survey data is available.

The proposal to include a footpath to the eastern side of Kingweston Road seems, in itself, to be non-serving. At present no buses stop at the existing bus stop location. There is also no space to construct the footway. The footway would need to be a minimum 1.8m in width, to meet Somerset County Highways requirements, pushing it into the carriageway. The footway would be constructed adjacent to the aforementioned watercourse causing a safety hazard for pedestrians walking along it.

The right hand turn, travelling north, at the corner of Kingweston Road into Peddles Lane is already very dangerous. To increase the traffic flow around the corner will further exacerbate this situation.

Destruction of Character and Landscape

The site lies on the outside of the village boundary on open countryside.

The proposal for three sets of semi-detached and three detached properties fronting the road is quite inappropriate for the location. All the properties on the eastern side of Kingweston Road are detached and set back from the road. Nowhere else in the parish is there a new development with a rear parking court. This as a design ethos does not fit into the existing landscape at all.

The proposed style of dwellings are all two storey and almost identical, which neither reinforces local distinctiveness nor respects local context. The existing properties

opposite the development site are all varied in size and appearance, which is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement.

The development site borders the Charltons Conservation Area and is in close proximity to Grade II* listed Charlton House and other designated heritage assets such as Georgian Cottage and The Woods. By its nature the development does nothing to enhance either the area or the House.

As such the proposal would result in significant harm to the existing character and appearance of the area, contrary to the local distinctiveness and landscape character protection aims of LP Policy EQ2, EQ3 and SS2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

Pedestrian Safety

The proposed footpath to Somerton Lane will be a self-binding gravel footpath with at least two walls with stiles, which would be impossible to negotiate by pedestrians with pushchairs and prams or with children on scooters etc. The only other option would be for pedestrians to walk along Kingweston Road, which has no pavement and is notorious for speeding traffic.

As a result the pedestrian route does not provide easily accessible, convenient, safe and inclusive routes to the school, Charlton Adam Post Office and Stores or The Fox and Hounds Public House or, indeed, the rest of the amenities within the parish as defined in Policy TA5 of the Local Plan.

Privacy and Security

The proposed dwellings are set close to Kingweston road are all two storey and would dominate and overlook the bungalows opposite on the eastern side of the road, thus losing considerable privacy and residential amenity.

The proposed footpath to Somerton Lane goes close to the rear of some of the existing properties on north of Somerton Lane and is across open land. Concerns were expressed that this could become a Crime Generator. Any proposal for lighting would only create light pollution over ground designated as a wildlife area and would be to the detriment of bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

Lack of Support and Need

The Charltons Community Plan 2017 Guideline regarding housing development called for the housing stock in the Charltons to be increased by 5% over the 10 year period of the Plan. This equates to an increase of approximately 25 dwellings. At this time there are approvals for the construction of 44 dwellings in the Parish which would increase its size by some 9%.

Policy SS2 clearly states that proposals for housing development should be consistent with the relevant community led plans and should generally have the support of the local community. With over 50 objections to the application and none in support it is clear that this application does not have either the support of the community or be consistent with the community led plans.

RESOLVED: The concerns of the PC, Somerset County Highways and the LLFA have, in most cases been ignored and not considered in any way. The drainage proposal does not address the possible flooding issues or meet the SuDS manual requirements. The highways issues need further attention as they are very site biased and do not consider

the potential issues caused by the excessive speeds recorded on Kingweston Road on behalf of the PC.

Therefore, the PC unanimously agreed that the adverse impact of the proposed development would significantly harm the character and landscape of the parish, the safety of its residents and exacerbate flooding, all of which go against the aforementioned policies in the NPPF and South Somerset Local Plan, therefore, the PC agreed unanimously to recommend that the application be **REFUSED**.

ii. **PA 20/03613/FUL.** The erection of 30 No. dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated access, parking and landscaping together with the erection of a purpose-built Preschool Building (Use Class E) on land OS 8325 And OS 8333 off Church Street and land adjoining Primary School At Chistles Lane, Keinton Mandeville.

Although The Charltons PC is not a statutory consultee for the above application, councillors discussed the proposed development as the application would have a severe impact on the parish. Councillors agreed to submit the following observations:

The Sewage Pumping Station in Broadway Road, Charlton Adam processes most of the effluent from the dwellings and businesses in Keinton Mandeville, in addition to that of Charlton Adam. During periods of heavy rainfall it becomes overwhelmed, which has caused sewage to back up and leak from drains and, in some cases, infiltrate houses.

To alleviate the problem Wessex Water has an easement from the Environment Agency to discharge effluent into the brook, which runs alongside the Pumping Station when it becomes overwhelmed. Wessex Water have previously indicated that the overflow could be activated up to 30 times per annum. The effluent from any discharge into the brook will eventually find its way into the river system of the Somerset Levels which can only be detrimental to the phosphate levels in the system.

Any additional development in Keinton Mandeville on the scale proposed in this application will only serve to amplify the inadequacies of the Charlton Adam Sewage Pumping Station and will affect not only the residents of Charlton Adam, but could have wider environmental implications. Therefore the Charltons PC strongly objects to this application and would like to support Keinton Mandeville PC's reasons to recommend refusal.

RESOLUTION: The PC agreed unanimously to recommend that the application is **REFUSED**.

b. South Somerset District Council (SSDC) Decisions:

i. **PA 21/00331/HOU.** Two storey side extension at Ferlochan, Chessels Lane, Charlton Adam – **APPROVED**.

21/29. **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 presented and subsequently approved. The bank reconciliation to be duly signed.

b. **Accounts for payment.**

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

M Reeves Grass & hedge cutting Village Car Park, Village Green & War Memorial	£700.00
PCC of The Charltons Churchyard Maintenance Grant to 31 Dec 19	£691.14

Replacement of defibrillator Pads for Reading Room & PO	£340.30
Wix.com – Parish website Mar 21 to Mar 22	£122.40
Replacement of defibrillator batteries for Reading Room & PO	£102.00
Routine Maintenance Grant Reading Room incl. defib & Xmas tree hosting	£270.00
Routing Maintenance Grant The Charltons Community Centre	£250.00
Grant – Somerton Library	£200.00
K M Dike Nurseries grass cutting Feb 21	£169.94
Clerks' Expenses Jan to Mar 21	£67.16
SALC Training – Code of Conduct 28 Jan 21	£50.00
Charlton Adam Post Office defib & Xmas tree hosting	£20.00
SLCC Virtual Regional Training Seminar 24 Mar 21 (shared 1/3 total cost)	£18.00

RESOLVED: Items of expenditure **APPROVED** unanimously.

c. To confirm revised procedure for the reimbursement of playing field expenditure to the Memorial Playing Field and Community Centre Committee (CCC).

Following confirmation that the PC could no longer legitimately claim back VAT on playing field expenditure, the Clerk reported that she had advised the Chairman and Treasurer of the CCC of the revised procedure, which would be as follows:

The PC agreed to revert to the criteria to reimburse playing field maintenance as set out in the original arrangements by SSDC. Expenditure would be reimbursed upon receipt of all receipts relating to grass and hedge cutting within the confines of the playing fields. No other costs would be accepted.

By the end of October, the playing field treasurer must submit an estimate of their claim for that financial year so that a reasonable figure could be included in the precept. Final claims, supported by receipts from the end of year accounts, are to be submitted within two months of the end of the financial year. Claims more than five percent above any estimates submitted would be referred to the PC for a decision regarding payment.

There should be no presumption that reimbursement of playing field costs would continue year on year. Each year, when setting the precept, the PC would decide whether it wished to continue with the arrangements set out above for the next financial year.

RESOLVED: The Clerk would formalise the process with the CCC.

d. To consider proposal to increase Clerk's contracted hours from 25 to 26 hours month.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed unanimously to increase the Clerk's hours to 26 hours month. The Clerk agreed to continue to monitor her hours.

21/30. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Consultation – closing date 19th April 2021

To consider PC response to the LGR consultation on two options; 'One Somerset' – Somerset County Council's (SCC) proposal for a single unitary authority and 'Stronger Somerset' – SSDC's proposal to split the county in two, east and west, with two unitary authorities.

D.Cllr Hull reported that the County Council elections were deferred until May 2022. The only election this year would be for the Police Crime Commissioner Election for the Avon and Somerset Police area.

RESOLVED: Following a brief discussion it was agreed that Cllr Adams and the Clerk would draft and circulate a response to the LGR consultation on behalf of the PC for comment and approval by prior to submission.

21/31. Replacement of Parish Council Website

To discuss researching the options available to replace the Parish Council website.

The Clerk was no longer able to edit the website due to changes in the WIX website editor and could not rely on the goodwill of residents to edit the website to meet the PC's requirements.

RESOLVED: The Clerk would provide an overview of the PC Accounts at the start of the FY and include quotes received for renewal of the website on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

21/32. Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) Broadband - Update.

To provide an update from the Openreach Community Fibre Partnership on the FTTP build costs. The Clerk recently circulated information from Wessex Internet who were awarded a contract by Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) to deliver ultrafast full fibre broadband to selected properties and businesses in parts of rural South Somerset.

RESOLVED: If the scheme with Openreach Community Fibre Partnership was no longer viable, or if both schemes were available, the Clerk would invite Wessex Internet to present at the next meeting and answer any questions.

21/33. Reports from the PC Committees, Working Groups (WG) and PC Representatives:

Councillors to provide reports.

a. Parish Online. Cllr Harrison reported that 'Parish Online' held two sessions a week, Monday and Thursdays and offered to hold a session for the PC if necessary. He continued to add data for the parish, including the defibrillator codes, which he would also forward to the Clerk for the PCs records.

b. Lorry Watch. Following recent correspondence from SCC, Cllr Harrison agreed to discuss the re-positioning of the Lorry Watch boards on the existing highways furniture with Gary Warren, Senior Traffic Engineer and clarify the requirement to include 'except access'.

c. Youth Services. Cllr Powell reported that The Charltons Community Plan 2017 asks for the children's play area in the Memorial Fields to be developed in line with the changing and growing needs of today's children. Work commenced on 1st March 2021 to achieve this under the first phase of the planned improvement to create an Outdoor Activity Area that meets the needs of everyone in the community from 0 – 100yrs+. The installation of play equipment and picnic tables was completed on 11 March, which were officially and successfully inspected for safety on Friday 12th March. The first Phase cost £64,000. Project Charltons wished to thank the PC for their generous donation of £10,000 over three years. They also wished to extend their gratitude to the Community Hall Trust who have now taken ownership and responsibility for the development.

d. Community Speedwatch. Cllr Crawley reported that he had been liaising with parish councils in the locality to discuss the possibility of linking up and sharing Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). Training would be provided online for the SIDs Scheme and the prerequisite Chapter 8 Highways Training. D.Cllr Capozzoli advised that SSDC may be able to provide a grant of up to £1,000 towards the purchase of SIDs. Cllr Crawley had been informed that the police could also contribute. Cllr Crawley advised that he was looking into installing black boxes along Kingweston Road to monitor speed. It was suggested that a section of Ilchester Road to Bonfire Lane would also benefit from black box monitoring.

21/34. Items for Report and Future Business.

a. Return to Face-to-Face meetings. Cllr Adams reported that the Reading Room would not be carrying out a risk assessment until May 2021. The PC were informed that the Community Centre had a risk assessment in place, which the PC could review in preparation for when the Coronavirus restrictions had reached the appropriate stage at which it was safe to hold public face-to-face public meetings, which did not look likely until July 2021.

b. Co-option of Councillors. Cllr Powell wished to discuss the co-option process to ensure applicants were aware of the voting process. Thereby followed a full and frank discussion during which it was considered that the PC emails provided councillors with the number of candidates for the number of vacancies available, which was adjusted accordingly each time an application was received and circulated for consideration. It was considered that when applying for any position, an applicant is not informed of the number of applicants, however, councillors who invite and encourage residents to apply usually provide such information. Cllr Powell explained that she was not aware that there was a limit to the number of councillors on a PC, which was ordinarily covered in SALC 'Councillor Essentials Training'.

ACTION: Cllr Lawson to attend Cllr Essentials Training when available.

c. Wall and Fingerpost Repairs. Cllr Powell asked for an update on repairs to the wall at the Village Green. The Chairman advised that the bag of sand to repair the wall at Hillway had been stolen, however, he had received another bag from the quarry and would carry out the repairs over the next few days and look out for the missing 'Hillway sign'. Cllr Crawley asked for an update on the repairs to the broken fingerpost. The Clerk reported that the order had been placed to replace the broken Street/Bridgewater fingerpost sign opposite Alehouse Lodge.

d. Reading Room Noticeboard. Cllr Powell asked for an update on the locked noticeboard at the Reading Room. Councillors confirmed that all agendas and minutes were posted on the opposite side, which was unlocked and on the notice boards at the PO and Village Car Park. The Clerk agreed to deliver the noticeboard key/s to Cllr Adams.

ACTION: Clerk to deliver noticeboard keys to Cllr Adams.

e. Roles and Responsibilities. Cllr Powell queried her role on the Personnel Committee. The Clerk advised that now that there was a full complement of councillors, all roles, responsibilities and PC representatives would be reviewed, as previously circulated, for approval at the next meeting.

ACTION: Roles, Responsibilities and Representatives as an agenda item for next meeting.

f. Highways. Cllr Adams wished to thank Cllr Crawley on behalf of the PC for installing the blue signage with HGV crossed out on existing highways furniture.

g. Annual Meetings. Following a brief discussion it was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on 20th April 2021, followed by the ordinary PC meeting. The Annual Parish Council meeting would be held on 18th May 2021, followed by the ordinary PC meeting. Representatives from parish organisations would be invited and encouraged to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 20th April 2021.

ACTION: Cllrs to provide Clerk with contact details for parish organisations to be invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 20th April 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Signed

Dated