

The Charltons Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Rebecca Carter, Portman House, North Barrow, Somerset, BA22 7LZ

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“Draft” Minutes of Parish Council Meeting
held as a consultative virtual meeting via Zoom software on
Tuesday 19th January 2021 at 7.00pm

Councillors Present (remotely):

Nick Blackledge (Chairman)
Alan Crawley
Rick Harrison
Dee Powell

Bob Adams
Tamzin Elliott
Darin Kay

In Attendance (remotely): C.Cllr D Ruddle, D.Cllr T Capozzoli, D.Cllr C Hull, the Clerk and four members of the public.

Public Session

Mr R Montagu gave an update on Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) Broadband. Mr R Culley, representative for ‘01458 Connected’, was awaiting costs for each area, which should be received shortly, at which point they would look into the feasibility of the scheme. Mr Montagu hoped to provide a full report for the next PC meeting.

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 business grants were still available from South Somerset District Council (SSDC) to help local businesses during the Coronavirus pandemic. To apply please call Martin Hacker on 01935 462130.

Cllr Capozzoli reported that there would be no Area meetings for at least the next couple of months as staff were seconded on administrative duties to assist during the pandemic. He also reported that SSDC had agreed to invest £23 million to make major improvements at the Octagon Theatre, Yeovil.

C.Cllr Ruddle continued to provide the Clerk with his regular Covid-19 reports for circulation. Following recent press reports, Cllr Ruddle wished to confirm that £9.5 million Covid-19 funding, held in SCC’s general reserves was not ring-fenced.

Cllr Ruddle reported that schools were struggling to provide laptops for pupils to work from home during lockdown; Somerton Town Council (STC) recently provided 23 Chromebooks to the scheme. He also reported that STC had applied for Edgar Hall, Somerton to be used as a Primary Care Network (PCN) site for vaccinations, however, they were yet to receive a response.

D.Cllr Hull advised that he had recently circulated a planning update from SSDC, which clarified certain issues such as phosphates; the Clerk confirmed that the update was sent to all councillors. Cllr Hull reported that a decision on the planning application submitted for twenty eight houses and a new village hall in Kingsdon was imminent, however, it might not be known for a few months.

He also reported that refuse collections would change on 21st June 2021 to three-weekly; this may be an issue for those households who had a higher volume of single use plastic, which was yet to be included in kerbside recycling collections.

21/01. 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 Jemma Lawson.

21/02. 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: Cllrs Crawley and Harrison declared their interests at item 21/07.c as members of the Charltons Community Centre and Memorial Playing Field Committee.

21/03. Minutes.

To approve the Minutes of the Remote Ordinary PC Meeting held on Tuesday 17th November 2020.

Cllr Powell proposed that the PC amend the minutes at item 20/89 by removing the three words "Dawn Richards agreed", which was not seconded as it was considered that this made a fundamental change to the resolution. Following a full discussion it was proposed that the words "Dawn Richards" would be replaced with "the Project Charltons Representative", which was seconded and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To amend the minutes at item 20/89 to read "Following a full discussion and at the request of the PC, the Project Charltons Representative agreed that the current plans for developing the Playing Field would be circulated for consultation by residents; no work would commence until this was completed.

21/04. Parish Council Vacancy.

To report casual vacancy on PC which the PC will proceed to fill by co-option unless a request for an election to be held is submitted in writing to the Proper Officer of SSDC by 29th January 2021 by ten electors for the Parish of The Charltons.

RESOLVED: The Chairman and Clerk thanked Richard Montagu, who was present remotely as a member of the public, for all his hard work and support during his time on the PC. The Clerk advised that one application for the vacancy had been received to date, which would be filled by co-option at the next meeting on 16th February 2021.

21/05. Project Charltons - Refurbishment of the Memorial Playing Field Play Area.

To determine the future working relationship between Project Charltons (ProjC) and the Parish Council as the Custodian Trustees of the Property.

Mrs A de Berker previously circulated the final report on behalf of ProjC (Attachment 1). The PC thanked ProjC for their report and fundraising efforts.

RESOLVED: The Charltons PC as the Custodian Trustees of the Memorial Playing Field and Community Hall Trust are reassured that the Trust has sole management responsibility for the upgrade of the Children's Play Area located on the Playing Field. Consequently, when requested by the Trust, the PC will transfer any sums of money it holds on behalf of Project Charltons to them.

21/06. Planning.

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

i. **PA 20/03300/FUL.** Demolition of a barn with prior approval consent to convert to three dwellings and replace with three detached dwellings at Thistledown Farm, Common Lane, Keinton Mandeville.

The PC considered that as the change of use of the barn to be developed into three dwellings had already been granted under Class Q permitted development, the PC felt obliged to recommend approval, although councilors disapproved of this in principle. Councilors also noted that there is no mention of electric charging points, which should be included.

RESOLVED: The PC agreed unanimously to recommend that the application be **APPROVED** although it disapproved of this in principle.

b. South Somerset District Council (SSDC) Decisions:

- i. **PA 20/02684/S73.** Application to vary condition 3 (approved plans) of planning approval 19/01843/HOU to allow change in west elevation from hipped roof to gable end with timber and Blue Lias stone and alterations to timber cladding and fenestration at Falstaff, Kingweston Road, Charlton Mackrell – **APPROVED**.
- ii. **PA 20/01567/HOU.** The erection of a single storey extension to dwelling at Welham Barn, Wellham Farm Lane, Charlton Mackrell – **APPROVED**.

21/07. 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):

Slade Parry Chartered Surveyors – Project Charltons	£1,338.60
F E Attwell & Sons – Mill pond maintenance/dredging	£612.00
K M Dike Nurseries Grass Cutting Nov & Dec 20	£339.88
SALC Training – Cllr Essentials 3 Dec 20	£25.00

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

c. **To consider Budget & Precept figures for 2021/2022.**

To agree on a figure for the Precept. Proposal to increase precept from £15,500 to £16,000.

The Clerk previously distributed the draft precept for 2021/2022, with supporting notes (Attachments 2 and 3).

RESOLVED: Following a review of the draft budget the proposed budget was adopted unanimously and the precept of £16,000 was agreed. This would give an increase in the PC's element of the council tax charge to each household of £0.97 for the year; a 2.65% increase.

d. **To consider purchasing improved signage to prevent HGV's illegally accessing the parish.**

To be positioned at the top of Kingweston Rd, Ilchester Rd near Bonfire Lane and the entrance to Broadway from the A37 at the cost of £338.22 (incl. VAT).

RESOLVED: The PC agreed unanimously to purchase and install the signs at the above locations.

e. **To consider subscribing to Parish Online at £80 + VAT and a 10% discount if you buy rather than go for the one month trial.**

Parish Online provides all planning information for the parish in one place and accessible by all Councillors.

Cllrs Crawley, Harrison and Powell recently attended an online demonstration/briefing, which they found really interesting and could see many benefits to the PC.

RESOLVED: The PC agreed unanimously to subscribe to Parish Online.

21/08. Lorry Watch.

To discuss and approve the proposal to set up a 'Lorry Watch' to prevent HGV's illegally driving through the Parish.

Cllr Harrison previously circulated his Lorry Watch proposal document. Councillors thanked Cllr Harrison for a very thorough and well-presented document.

RESOLVED: Following a full discussion it was agreed that, as there was minimal initial outlay, the PC would proceed to trial Lorry Watch with a review after six months.

21/09. Solar Streets – A Solar PV Initiative.

Update on the principle/possibilities of bulk buying solar PV to provide a lower cost PV system to residents.

C.Cllr Ruddle advised that residents from The Charltons could join the scheme with Somerton.

RESOLVED: Cllr Ruddle agreed to send a copy of Somerton Town Council's leaflet to Cllr Adams to advertise the scheme in The Charltons Village News to raise awareness and gauge interest.

21/10. Repairs to Historic Fingerposts.

To consider suggestion that the PC repair, rather than replace, the broken finger opposite Alehouse Lodge and replace the finger sign by the War Memorial, which cannot be repaired by fingerpost volunteer/s due to technical difficulties.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed unanimously to proceed as suggested and the Clerk would obtain quotes.

21/11. Government consultation on the future of transport: rural strategy-call for evidence.

To consider responding to consultation prior to closing date of 16 February 2021.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence?utm_source=fbeea974-8a4b-4dfb-b3a8-](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence?utm_source=fbeea974-8a4b-4dfb-b3a8-48e888e2d68e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)

[48e888e2d68e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence?utm_source=fbeea974-8a4b-4dfb-b3a8-48e888e2d68e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed unanimously to note the report at this stage and to keep an eye on the development of the rural strategy.

C.Cllr Ruddle reported that there was a consultation on re-opening Somerton Railway Station. The Clerk advised that the PC previously agreed [April 2017] to grant £100 towards the feasibility study to re-open the station [following a request from David Warburton, MP.]

21/12. Reports from the PC Committees, Working Groups (WG) and PC Representatives:

Councillors to provide reports.

a. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) WG. Cllr Adams reported that the request from the WG asking for proposals from residents on how they would like to see CIL spent within the parish should be included in the next publication of the Charltons Village News.

b. Community Speedwatch. Cllr Crawley wished to record his thanks on behalf of the PC and Community Speedwatch to PC Sara Stephenson, Beat Manager for her sterling support with the scheme over the years who was retiring after twenty nine years of service.

c. Charlton Adam Post Office and Stores. Cllr Crawley also wished to record the support of the PC for John & Chris Bowman at the Post Office and Stores who are at the heart of the village. The PC wished John a speedy recovery and return from hospital and would assist in any way that it could.

d. Highways and Speed Mitigation. Cllr Harrison requested that the PC consider the possibility of reducing the speed limit to 40mph along the section of A37 on the approach to Sticklebridge Farm. The Clerk agreed to include the request on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

e. Footpaths. The Chairman recently circulated a copy of the SCC interactive Rights of Way map to all councillors which showed the RoW in the parish and any recorded faults. Councillors agreed to help ascertain the respective landowners in order to write to them requesting that they carry out any outstanding faults.

Cllr Elliott reported that a section of the stone wall behind the Reading Room had fallen onto the footpath.

ACTION: The Clerk agreed to notify the Reading Room Committee.

f. Grants. Cllr Adams wished to discuss the recent request within the CVN from a resident who was refurbishing laptops for those schoolchildren who did not have their own device for home learning during the pandemic.

RESOLUTION: Due to the nature of the request, the PC agreed to grant £100 under S137 expenditure.

21/13. Items for Report and Future Business.

- a. Proposal to reduce the speed limit to 40mph on the approach to Sticklebridge Farm on the A37

Next meeting: to be held virtually on Tuesday 16th February 2021, 7.00pm via Zoom.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed:

Dated:

DRAFT

Attachment 1



Report to the Charltons Parish Council 19th January 2021

During the autumn there have been discussions and investigations about the relative roles and responsibilities of the Parish Council and the Charltons Memorial Playing Field and Community Centre Trust charity number 286038 in relation to the Memorial Playing Field and Community Centre. It is now clear and accepted by both the Parish Council and the Trust that the Trust has sole management responsibility for the Hall and Field.

Consequently, it is more sensible for Project Charltons in our work to upgrade the facilities on the field to work under the auspices of the Trust. All future funding applications will be made under their charity status. This was accepted by the Trust committee on 23rd November 2020. They have also agreed on December 8th 2020 that the work funded under Phase 1 should commence.

Since the last meeting Project Charltons has been successful in an application to South Somerset for a grant of £12226 which will enable Phase 1 to be completed. This will comprise two sets of swings, a Merrymeet climbing frame, a Congo climbing frame, a discus roundabout and an agility trail.

As requested at the last Parish Council meeting we have circulated the information about the playground (attached) as widely as possible across the village in Village News, Facebook, Instagram and the village email, on the noticeboard at the Hall and on lampposts around the village. We also raised the profile of the work by a Santa tour around the village on 21st December which was very popular and incidentally raised £300.

There has been a great deal of feedback from villagers which we are taking into consideration in our plans. We have been delighted with lots of positive feedback including a mother who is thrilled that her disabled sons will be able to swing in the basket swing for the first time in their young lives. We have also been saddened by the negativity of a minority of responses. We have answered the key queries directly and in a village email (attached), in Facebook and in an article for Village News in February.

In summary the work of the Project Charltons on the refurbishment of equipment on the Memorial Playing Fields is from November 23rd 2020 under the auspices of the Charltons Community Trust. The work to install the equipment under Phase 1 will start on March 1st and will take approximately 3 weeks weather etc permitting. This work is fully funded. Any further work will be dependent on future funding applications.

Resolutions:

That the Parish Council resolve that Project Charltons is no longer working to the Parish Council but to the Charltons Memorial Playing Field and Community Centre Trust charity number 286038.

That the Parish Council resolve that all funds held by the Parish Council for Project Charltons should be transferred to the Charltons Memorial Playing Field and Community Centre Trust account.

We would like to thank the Parish Council for their generous grant of £10,000 over three years which has been pivotal in our fundraising activities and for their help and support over the past two years.

Andrea de Berker on behalf of Project Charltons

13th January 2021

Attachment 2

THE CHARLTONS PARISH COUNCIL PROPOSED BUDGET 2021/2022									
	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Budget	2020/21 Probable	2022/22 Estimate					
Income	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget					
Precept	14,600.00	15,500.00	15,500.00	16,000.00					
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00					
Western Power (Way Leave)	260.66	270.00	270.00	270.00					
Fivehead Farms (Welham Rent)	475.00	475.00	475.00	475.00					
VAT Refund	438.25	440.00	596.53	150.00					
Bank Interest etc	68.19	60.00	18.00	18.00					
Sundry Income	6,287.50	0.00	3,672.85	0.00					
Total Income	22,129.60	16,745.00	20,532.38	16,913.00					
Expenditure									
Employment	3,945.00	3,984.45	4,134.00	4,215.00					
HMRC Tax	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00					
Clerk Travel & Expenses	159.35	150.00	50.00	100.00					
Work from Home Allowance	120.00	120.00	120.00	120.00					
Insurance	218.00	330.00	258.55	260.00					
Audit & Bank Charges	50.00	50.00	56.60	60.00					
Membership Fees	496.76	500.00	522.55	525.00					
Reading room Hire	200.00	250.00	50.00	100.00					
Postage/Stationery/Website	115.11	150.00	100.00	450.00					
M Reeves Grounds Maint	670.00	670.00	670.00	670.00					
Grass Cutting Memorial Hall	2,196.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,290.00					
Churchyard Maint.	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00					
Pond Dredging/V Car Park	0.00	0.00	0.00	300.00					
Community News	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00					
Mr Denning Way Leave	171.42	175.00	175.00	175.00					
Training/Elections	193.34	300.00	150.00	300.00					
Parish Online	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00					
Xmas Trees	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00					
Signage/Defibrillator	100.00	100.00	100.00	700.00					
Grants / Reserves				11,865.00	*				
Project Charltons	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00					* Final grant of £10,000 total
Flood Mitigation	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00					
Lorry Watch	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00					
RR & CCC Routine Maint	250.00	500.00	500.00	500.00					
Village Day Grant	0.00	300.00	0.00	300.00					
Somerton Library	200.00	200.00	200.00	200.00					
Youth Clubs	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,550.00	1,500.00					
Additional Verge Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00					
Charltons Play Day	250.00	250.00	0.00	250.00					
War Memorial/Fingerpost Restoration	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00					
Royal British Legion	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00					
S137 Grants	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00					
Contingencies	1,000.00	1,000.00	800.00	1,000.00					
Budget Total	17,934.98	18,929.45	18,536.70	19,640.00					
				3,466.00					*add 25% of expenditure IAW Practitioners Guide"
				23,106.00					Total
General Reserve (Probable)	6,182.47	** (PC Accounts to 04 Dec 20)		913.00					Less Income
Speed Calming	5,930.00			6,182.00					**Less estimated carry over 2020/21 (General Reserve)
War Memorial / Fingerposts Reserve	3,708.00			16,011.00					"= Minimum Precept required"
Flood Mitigation	5,150.00								
Additional Verge/Hedge Maint	1,050.00								
Xmas Trees	1,045.50								
ROW Expenses	400.00								
Mill Pond/Village Car Park	132.00								
Signage / Defibrillator	264.50								
Website	300.00								
Dog Bin/Noticeboards	180.76								
Total Reserves (Probable)	24,343.23								

THE CHARLTONS PARISH COUNCIL

NOTES ON PRECEPT 2021/2022

1. Clerk's Salary

Pay scales are based on the local government pay scales negotiated by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. 'Subject to satisfactory performance, you will progress automatically through the salary scale by annual increments until you reach the maximum of the scale.' However, 'the Council may withhold an increment if it is considered that performance fell below the level expected, following an annual review, or award an additional increment for exemplary performance if it chooses to do so.'

2. Clerk's Expenses

The mileage rate has been budgeted at **45p per mile** in line with SLCC and NALC Car Allowance for Local Council Clerks. In line with common practice, the Clerk will continue to receive £10 monthly Work from Home Allowance. Mileage is significantly reduced due to Covid, therefore, I have budgeted for £100 in the event face to face meetings are eventually reinstated.

4. Other Parochial Activities

Following the successful application for a Small Highway Improvement Scheme, I have maintained the Speed Calming Reserve at £5,927. I have carried forward £1,050 for any additional grass cutting of the verges and hedge maintenance, if required.

I have included £700 for signage/defibrillator (bringing the reserve up to £964.50) to include costs for the improved HGV signage and any other additional signage as requested.

I have also included £625 for 'Lorry Watch'. The PC can consider £2,000 for drainage repairs to the village car park in FY 22/23 once the final grant to Project Charltons has been paid.

As the Village Green Project has not proceeded, I have transferred £1,000 back into the General Reserve (GR), leaving £340.38 in the reserve for Dog Bins/Noticeboard repairs.

I have included £300 for dredging the Mill Pond as work was carried out in November and we need to bring the reserve back up for the bi-annual dredging. I haven't included £200 for the Charlton Adam/Mackrell Christmas Trees as we have £1,045.50 remaining in reserve after this year's expenditure.

I have included £300 for the website, bringing the total to £600 in anticipation of building a new website in the near future. I had intended to start putting funds aside for a new laptop, as the Clerk's laptop is showing signs that it will need to be replaced at some point soon, however, if we maintain a reasonable level of reserves and contingency, currently £1,000, this should cover the PC in an emergency and I will include this in next year's precept. The funds in the website reserve could also be used for such an emergency.

The War Memorial/Fingerpost Reserve Fund currently stands at £2,670 for future repairs and maintenance; I have included an additional £100 to build up the reserve to £2,770.

Due to a demand for expenditure in the next FY that will incur a considerable increase in the precept, I have left the Flood Mitigation Reserve Fund at £5,150 until costs are known, or a scheme is implemented through development. £300 is included again for clerk/councillor training due to the number of new councillors and the need for ongoing training.

I have transferred the remaining balance of £500 from the Community Plan into the GR as suggested. I have also transferred £200 for gritting materials into the GR as the PC should receive free refills for its grit bins which are registered with SSDC.

I haven't included any additional expenditure for the Rights of Way Reserve which will remain at £400 for any materials required to repair footpaths/footbridges and gates.

The annual contribution towards the PC's insert in the Charltons Village News remains at £300.

4. Memorial Playing Field Maintenance

It was recently brought to our attention that the PC can no longer reclaim the VAT for playing field maintenance on behalf of the Community Centre (CC). Therefore I propose the PC reimburses the CC for playing field maintenance expenditure in accordance with the criteria set out in the original arrangements by SSDC. Expenditure will be reimbursed upon receipt of all receipts relating to grass and hedge cutting within the confines of the playing fields. No other costs will be accepted. By the end of November each year, the CC treasurer would need provide me with the anticipated expenditure for the following FY so that I can include this figure in the precept. The grant would only be paid upon receipt of all invoices. I have budgeted for £2,290 as the anticipated costs for this FY.

5. Grants and Charitable Donations

On 16 Oct 18, the PC agreed to continue the level of grant at £1,000 for the next three years for The Charltons Youth Club, to be reviewed every three years, therefore a review of the level of grant was due for review in January 2022 for FY 22/23. However, due to Covid-19 and the recent request from the Youth Club, I propose that the PC considers increasing the grant to £1,500. If Village Day £300 and Play Day £250 do not proceed again this year the PC could consider increasing the grant to the Youth Club or any other organisation in need in the Parish. I have maintained the maximum level of grant at £1,200 for Churchyard Maintenance, which is paid upon receipt of the PCC audited annual accounts.

I have maintained the section 137 grants at £250 (expenditure which the PC believes is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants). Also included is £200 towards the running of the Somerton Town Library as previously agreed.

Following the request from the CC for a grant of £10,000 towards Project Charltons to replace/repair the play equipment, I have included the final instalment of £3,000 to add to the £4,000 budgeted in FY 19/20 and £3,000 in FY 20/21, bringing the PC total contribution to £10,000. Also included is the annual routine maintenance grant of £250 each to the Reading Room and Community Centre.

All other routine grants I have kept the same at present, however, these should be reviewed for the next FY.

6. Precept and General Reserve (GR)

The estimated GR at 31/03/21 is £6,182 which is comfortably above the minimum reserve recommended of 25% of annual expenditure i.e., c£3,466.

The PC's precept in 2010/11 was £7,200 at which level it had been maintained for a number of years. In 2011/12 the precept was finally increased to £10,000 and in 2012/13 increased to £11,000 to carry out repairs to the War Memorial. In 2015/16 it was increased to £14,000 to carry out repairs to the car park. In 2016/17 it was necessary to raise the precept further to £14,300 to take into consideration the gradual reduction in the Local Government Grant and additional expenditure and increased last year to £14,600.

To take into account the commitment by the PC to grant £10,000 over 3 years to Project Charltons and in light of the increasing demand on Parish and Town Councils to provide and budget for additional services, the PC increased the precept in FY 20/21 to £15,500.

Due to the request for the PC to operate Lorry Watch (£625) I propose the PC considers increasing the precept to £16,000. This would give an increase in the PC's element of the council tax charge to each household of £0.97 for the year; a 2.65% increase.

There are hopefully ample provisions in the 2021/22 budget (including a £1,000 contingency and more than adequate GR). It is considered unlikely that the Council will be under real financial pressure during this period.

RCarter

Becky Carter
Parish Clerk

6th January 2021

DRAFT