**Chittlehampton Parish Council**

**Minutes of Meeting 06/09/2023**

**Wednesday at 19:30**

**Chittlehampton Methodist Schoolrooms**

**Those Present:** Cllr M Jones (chairman), Cllr N Murch (vice chair), Cllr F Pawley MBE, Cllr A Beauregard, Cllr P Shallcross, Cllr M Wheaton, Cllr L Seatherton, Cllr C Blyther, Cllr Z Nicklin, Faye Davies (parish clerk) and Jackie Russell (previous clerk).

**Also present:** District Cllr Sue Whitehead

**1. Apologies and Declaration of Interest**

Apologies were received from Cllr Craze and Cllr Henderson. Declarations of Interest – none.

**2. Approval and signing of minutes from the last parish council meeting**

Parish council meetings of 27/07/2023 and extraordinary meeting of 26/08/2023 signed as a true account.

**3. Welcome of new clerk and arrangements for contract of employment signing**

 Faye Davies welcomed as the new parish clerk and contract of employment given, with a date of 11/09/2023 for the contract to be read, signed, and handed in.

**4. Co-option of parish councillor**

Details of applicant Gemma Mullinger was circulated around the parish councillors and Gemma was co-opted in as new parish councillor. Contract signed at the meeting with The Chairman and clerk as witnesses.

**5. Statement of accounts and approval of payments; green waste bin for churchyard (£55), and transfer of VAT of play area account (£1,240)**

Approval given for these payments – no disagreements voiced.

**6. Internal audit report and external audit update**

Jackie has obtained templates to create internal policies but awaiting clerk to take over and take on the task once. Jackie had received correspondence from the external auditor asking some questions on the figures that had gone in which Jackie had answered on 06/09/2023 and is now awaiting a response.

Cllr Wheaton is the internal auditor for the parish council finances and stated nothing so far has stood out to him, but he has not yet had chance to thoroughly read through everything given to him so far.

**7. County Councillors report and highways maintenance**

Work has been confirmed for repair of potholes from East Street up to the Memorial to be done by Dragon Patcher, but no start date given as of yet, that road is also under consideration for having a new top dressing laid down. Cllr Henderson had informed The Chairman that he would be discussing the road outside the village shop with the highways officer on 06/09/2023 and feedback on this will be discussed at the next parish council meeting. The sign that was knocked down by the car crash is also on the list to be replaced at the earliest convenience, but no date has been given yet.

**8. District Councillors report**

Cllr Whitehead informed she is in correspondence with NDDC planning, and any responses she does receive are passed onto the parish clerk.

Cllr Pawley followed up on this and informed that he is now in correspondence with the new enforcement officer who has received the file regarding Winson Cross and is on the case. Cllr Pawley has prepared further information that he will be sending to the enforcement officer. It was discussed that a new gate has been put in at the site and this needs to be measured to ensure that it meets highways specifications, the new gateway is believed to be under this distance specified by highways maintenance and so this will be sent onto the enforcement officer to review.

**9. Chittlehampton Church**

Cllr Beauregard had previously asked church members Avril and Carole if they would like to attend the meeting to give an update on the situation regarding the church and they had said that they would attend.

Carole informed that before the millennium that parish council had been giving the church a donation towards the maintenance of the churchyard, Carole also informed that when the wall was built within the church grounds the parish council was asked to assist with payment of that but had stated that was all they would be paying for. She informed that it costs the church £3,000 the previous year for the mowing, strimming, and general maintenance of the churchyard, and that so far within this current year it had cost the church £2,500. The church is charged for this service six weekly. Carole stated that she is of the understanding that the parish council is actually responsible for the upkeep of the community churchyard and as such would appreciate a contribution from the parish council towards the maintenance of the churchyard. The Chairman stated that he was keen for the parish council to support the church financially for the benefit of the upkeep of the church grounds and this would be discussed further within the next meeting. He also stated about looking further into the parish council working more proactively with the church so long as there is a clear indication provided by the church of what work actually needs doing.

Cllr Whitehead asked how members of the church there was, to which she was informed that it is a small church with few members, and asked if they were part of a bigger benefit to which she was informed that they are part of a mission community consisting of five churches within their segment and three within the other. Cllr Whitehead informed that she was of the opinion that they were in a good position to ask the dioceses for funds and asked if their Arch Deacon was aware of the financial issue the church is facing, to which the response was that the church is not currently in financial difficulty but they do not want to dip into reserve funds and so would like the parish council to assist. Cllr Whitehead then informed The Chairman that she is aware of other parish councils that do contribute towards their church grounds maintenance, Carole then added that she has looked it up and the information she has found does state that the parish council is responsible for the maintenance of the church grounds, The Chairman requested that information be sent over. The information is in general and does not directly specify Chittlehampton parish council.

It was discussed that once a finance committee is in place and grant policies and procedures are in place then it could be considered adding a budget for church ground maintenance once it has been established what the parish council could afford, an outcome could not be decided right away as the council has not had time to look at money figures and work out funds and there are currently no grant policies and procedures in place.

The primary school building was discussed, with the parish council being informed that it was still being dealt with by solicitors and dioceses and no outcome had been reached as of yet. One of the current issues regarding the building is that the carpark in front of it has no known owner.

**10. Play area committee update**

Play area equipment has been ordered for phase one to be delivered on 26/09/2023. The parish council is still awaiting response regarding CCTV at the village hall due to the insurance company wanting the equipment to be stored in a locked building, which would make it more difficult and time consuming to erect the equipment with it being stored elsewhere. The insurance company have been asked if having CCTV at the village hall and locked heras fencing around the equipment would suffice. The parish clerk and Cllr Pawley will be corresponding with the insurance company regarding this matter.

14/09/2023 is the next meeting date for the play area committee.

The parish council is tentatively hoping for the playground to be open 22nd – 23rd October 2023.

Halloween party at the village hall Saturday 28th October, £10 per ticket. Contact The Vice Chairman or Rachael Williams to purchase a ticket.

**11. Playing field report given by Cllr Craze**

The CCTV camera in the hall is currently not working but also needs to be added to the asset register.

The date for the upgrade of the village hall is currently unknown.

Removal of asbestos will likely affect the village hall and the play area as the area will need to be shut down during the removal.

It was decided that Cllr Craze and the Clerk would have a key each for the CCTV padlock as it has to be viewed by two people. The policy states nighttime use.

Cllr’s Craze and Pawley to discuss the cutting of the grass.

NDDC will be collecting the green bins and no payment or contract is required for this.

It was discussed that the air ambulance access stairs need repair but must still remain within the correct measurements set by the air ambulance. The quote for this was £495 for timber repairs. Cllr Pawley suggested that the play area cold take on the refurbishment of the steps It was agreed the lay area would consider this at their next meeting on 14/09/2023.

A tree planting scheme through Devon County Council was discussed for the planting of trees on the sloping land by the playing field, the parish clerk would arrange this as there is deadline of 27/09/2023 for the online form to be submitted.

Exeter City Football Club potentially wish to use the village hall and football pitch and have proposed frequent use of this. This could be an asset to the village as it will bring money into the village.

The current machine used to cut the grass is struggling with the task, The Chairman and Cllr Pawley to discuss further.

**12. Vehicles and structures of land near Winson cross**

Discussed in 8.

**13. Community probation project**

There is a contract until the job is completed.

**14. Neighbourhood plan**

Cllr’s Pawley and Nicklin to meet with the senior planning officer.

No planning application has been seen as of yet for the development of houses at Cobbaton Road. Community Land Trust and neighbourhood plan discussed but neither option appears that viable to block potential housing development. Discussion of questionnaire being given out to the community to find out exactly what the community wants.

**15. Proposed public meeting to improve bus services**

Thursday 19th October at 19:00 meeting to be held at the church to discuss what the community wants in regard to bus services. Grants from Unite the Union will be discussed. A collection will be held at the meeting and half of the proceeds will go the church.

**16. Members of the public**

Longer term plan for Winson Cross is a potential neighbourhood plan issue and working closely with a planning officer.

Discussion of finding out how many of those plots have been sold which would incur a cost to the parish council through the land registry.

The Parish council website needs to be updated, which the parish clerk will be doing.

An objection was made to the use of weed killers, an environmentally friendly weed killer was suggested.

**17. Items for consideration**

The formation of a finance committee and another member needed for the planning committee, to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Laptop and printer discussed for the use of the clerk which was agreed upon.

Mobile library service petition can be found at change.org and needs to be signed in order to keep the services running. DCC are intending to close all mobile library services. Discussed to be shared on the parish council Facebook page.

Old vicarage road surface to be discussed at the next meeting.

**18. Date of the next meeting**

18/10/2023

**These minutes are a draft copy until they are agreed and signed as a true account.**