

CHEARSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 19TH APRIL 2021 BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AT 7.30PM WITH LIVE STREAM ON YOUTUBE

PRESENT

Councillors: Nic Brown (**NB**), Julia Witcher (**JW**), Martin Hearmon (**MH**), Keith Turnbull (**KT**), John Howard (**JH**), Paul Bown (**PAB**), John Lewis (**JL**)

Responsible Finance Officer: Robert Parkes (**RP**)

Parish Clerk: Helen Spurgeon

Officers: Ian Houseman, Anthony Adams

PARISHIONERS QUESTION TIME

No questions.

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

3. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2021 MINUTES

Minutes were **agreed** as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- **Flooding on Chilton Road.** **JL** has the PC ownership stickers and will arrange to give them to the Moles.
- **Dog fouling.** **JW** has spoken to Environmental Health who have a dog warden who can come round and issue fines. **ACTION: JW to contact Environmental Health and add Chearsley to the dog warden rota.**
- **Village Trust account.** **JL** reported that the bank have agreed to open the new account.

5. PLANNING

No new planning applications received.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

An email was received from parishioners on the west side of the village regarding air pollution in the form of chemical and farmyard smells which are quite toxic. A communication has gone out to the village asking if anyone else has experienced the same. A few replies have been received, 2 saying the smell is coming from Grove Farm, one quoting smoke problems and another quoting ammonia smells. The PC wants to gather

information on the extent of the problem. The parishioner has been in touch with the Department for the Environment and has incident report sheets to complete.

7. FINANCE

The monthly finance report, Annual Report and Accounts, and annual Audit documents (Sections 1 & 2) have been circulated to councillors. The overall level of expenditure in the year was much lower than expected, because of the health crisis, and as a result the Council is holding a significant cash balance – just short of £66,000. The accounts go on to explain that a significant portion of these funds has been set aside for two projects, work on the Horse Chestnut junction, and other work to roads and lanes in the village. In addition, the Council is also still holding funds of £6,874, on behalf of the Village Trust.

A claim for the refund of VAT paid in 2020/21 has been submitted, for £2,020.

There was only one payment in March not previously approved by the Council, the purchase of stationery, £5.

The internal auditor has completed her report and approved the draft accounts. She added several observations:

- Last year's accounts were approved at a remote meeting due to covid which is not acceptable. All PCs will have this same problem.
- The Village Trust funds need to be excluded from the PC account.
- An alternative to the term 'reserves' needs to be used.
- There is an error of £30 in the fixed assets which **RP** will check.
- A formal payroll scheme needs to be put in place to pay the clerk. Councillors agreed to look at the use of Sage software. **ACTION: Clerk to investigate.**

The accounts and audit documents were approved subject to the minor changes required by the auditor, the approval of which was **delegated to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.**

8. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ATTENDING MEETINGS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- **JH** reported that the TfB transport focus group scheduled for tomorrow has been postponed until after the elections. The report of case studies of 'Fix My Street' has been submitted. **JH** highlighted the importance of keeping a good dialogue with our Local Area Technician. Two long term drainage problems are being dealt with. Advance notice of any works is helpful. Parishioners are encouraged to use 'Fix My Street' to report any problems. Works should start on Aylesbury Road in the next few months.
- **KT** attended the Haddenham and Waddesdon Community Board Reflection meeting. He gave good feedback. There are lots of grants available and the meetings are good for communication and cross-pollination of ideas.
- **JL** reported that the Freight Steering Group had their 4th meeting on 6th April. It was not well attended. There is a public page on the Community Board website where documents from the freight group will be published. The group is looking into how planning authorities could be involved in controlling freight traffic to construction sites. Co-ordinated traffic surveys are planned. TfB have confirmed that they carry out traffic measurements. The group are trying to identify local freight operators and would also like input from the farming community.

9. SUB-COMMITTEE DECISIONS FOR RATIFICATION

None.

10. OFFICERS' REPORTS

Progress is being made with the two kissing gates behind Chearsley Hill House. The Church Lane stile which is too high is still to be lowered.

Following the clean up around the horse chestnut tree, lures have been delivered for moth traps. They will be installed this weekend and replaced every 6 weeks. The moth count should be less than last year.

11. TREE AND VERGE MATTERS

Tom Audley will start his work on the verges at the beginning of May. PAB and Ian Houseman will meet to look at priorities.

12. UPDATE OF MEETING BETWEEN NB, GREG SMITH AND NETWORK RAIL RE FENCING

The outcome of the meeting was that the fence has been painted black. This will be Network Rail's policy going forward. The footpath is still closed as the lights are not operating as required. **ACTION: JL and NB to follow up.**

13. AGREEMENT TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION TO REGISTER THE BELL AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Councillors agreed the proposal unanimously. **ACTION: Clerk to follow up.**

14. COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

This will need to be produced ahead of the AVM.

15. ELECTIONS

The PC election was uncontested and there is one vacancy which will be filled by co-option.

ACTION: Clerk to contact BALC to confirm the process for filling the vacancy. JL will then arrange an informal meeting. Councillors will need to complete their Register of Interests and Declaration of acceptance of Office forms for the next meeting.

16. IMPACT OF HMG EMERGENCY POWERS PROVISIONS

PCs can no longer meet remotely after 7th May. Thought will need to be given to how we can meet safely in the village hall. **ACTION: Clerk to contact BALC to confirm whether the public are allowed to attend and if the meeting can still be streamed live.**

17. PARISHIONERS QUESTION TIME

A feedback email was received from the parishioner regarding air pollution. The data sheet can be scanned and distributed for others to use.

An enquiry was received asking if the Chearsley Business Directory is up and running. It is live and has been sent out via the communication channels. It is on the PC website. If anyone wishes to receive communications, please email the PC. Any feedback on the business directory would be helpful.

18. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- **KT** reported that community speedwatch can restart but there is added paperwork to complete.
- **JH** reported that the Stockwell restoration project is progressing with thanks to Ian Houseman and Derek Allen. There are 4 stages to the project:
 1. Vegetation – clearing of the brambles behind the Stockwell.
 2. Drainage to be sorted by Colin Woolford at TfB.
 3. Restoration of the Stockwell itself – quotes will be needed.
 4. Additional kerbing will be required.

A Community Board grant will be applied for shortly and additional resources will be needed.

- **JW** is exploring the idea of a community library, suggestions have been received which include a book swap at the village hall and housing a library in a red telephone box. **ACTION: Clerk** to include 'to discuss community library' on the May agenda.
- The Classic Car Show should go ahead on Sunday 12th September.

19. VOTE OF THANKS

JH and **MH** will be standing down as councillors. They were both thanked for the great work they have put in over the last few years. **JH** will continue as an officer for the PC.

20. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- Monday 17th May – first meeting of the new PC and the AGM.
- Monday 24th May – Annual Village Meeting. This may not go ahead if it cannot be done virtually. **ACTION: Clerk** to confirm with BALC if the AVM can take place virtually.