

CHARFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the On-Line Ordinary Meeting of Charfield Parish Council held on Tuesday 21st April 2020 commencing at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Parish Councillors: Mr. M. Rosher, Mr. M. Cheskin, Mrs. W. Glasgow, Mrs. J. Law, Mrs. N. Newns, Mr. T. Parker, Mr. V. Sydenham and Mr. A. Threlfall

Clerk: Mrs. Paula Evans

South Gloucestershire Councillor: Cllr. John O'Neill

Public: No members of the public were present

11758/20 Welcome by the Chairman to the first On-Line Meeting

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this first On-Line Meeting of Charfield Parish Council held during the current Coronavirus quarantine restrictions. It was determined that the Microsoft Teams meeting platform was unable to allow more than four video screens at a time and therefore the Chairman would not be able to determine whether Cllrs. raised their hands to speak or vote. Therefore, the Chairman asked Cllrs. to identify when they wished to speak by stating "Mr. Chairman".

11759/20 To note Apologies for Absence & Acceptance of Reasons

The Clerk advised Cllrs. that Cllr. Ashe had emailed at the commencement of the meeting stating that she wished to participate but was unable to login to the meeting. This issue would be investigated.

11760/20 Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

11761/20 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

11762/20 To Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

Cllr. Threlfall proposed, Cllr. Cheskin seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of Charfield Parish Council, held on Tuesday 10th March 2020 as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **All Agreed.** The Chairman would sign the Minutes at the next duly convened physical meeting.

11763/20 To receive the Clerk's Report

The Clerk had circulated a copy of her report, a copy of which is appended to these Minutes.

The Clerk was asked to expand on her investigations into on-line banking facilities. The Clerk advised that the current arrangements with National Westminster Bank did not incur any fees; the current account is automatically 'topped up' by the Business Reserve (2) account – a facility that was no longer available if opening up a new account; a number of alternative banking providers would charge anything between 30p and 60p per transaction into and out of the account or a monthly fee; ultimately it was for the Responsible Finance Officer to determine the banking arrangements of the Parish Council ensuring they complied with legislation and security; it was proving difficult to actually speak to the banks on the telephone, therefore no further investigations would be undertaken until after quarantine restrictions had been lifted. Of paramount importance was the opening of an additional account with another banking provider to ensure the Parish Council funds are covered by the £85,000 FSCS Compensation Scheme.

In connection with item 16 of the Clerk's Report, Cllr. Law proposed, Cllr. Parker seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the advance purchase of the single ashes plot within Charfield Burial Ground for a Charfield resident. **All Agreed.**

Action

Clerk

11764/20 Planning Applications

P20/01324/F | Demolition of Existing Cottage and erection of 1 no. replacement attached dwelling and associated works (resubmission of P19/12341/F) | 66 Wotton Road, Charfield | To comment as follows – Charfield Parish Council concurs with the serious concerns raised by neighbouring residents concerning the structural integrity of their properties, which could potentially be severely impacted and therefore the Parish Council **OBJECT** to this application.

To retrospectively note and comment on application P20/04363/F | Erection of 1 no. agricultural building | Land off Swinhay Lane, Charfield, GL12 8EX | **NO OBJECTIONS**.

11765/20 Planning Decisions

P19/18706/F | Amendment to previously approved scheme P19/0255/F to erect an additional first floor playroom over the existing sunroom | Pembeley Lodge, Churchend Lane, Charfield | **APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**.

P19/4818/F | Replacement of existing rear external stairs with new compliant stairs and replacement external first floor rear door. Creation of outdoor children's play area, and seating area for consumption of food and drink | Railway Tavern, 56 Wotton Road, Charfield | **APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**.

P19/18087/LB | Internal and external alterations to include the replacement of windows within existing openings, the replacement of oil tank, boiler and air source heat pump and hot water cylinder. Installation of a ground floor WC and the installation of gate in a garden wall | 1 Manor Farm Cottages, Churchend Lane, Charfield | **APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**.

P19/19186/F | Installation of gate into existing garden wall and replacement of oil tank and boiler with air source heat pump and hot water cylinder | 1 Manor Farm Cottages, Churchend Lane, Charfield | **APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**.

11766/20 Financial Matters

The Clerk reported the following available balances as at 21st April 2020 with the bank statements being witnessed via video screen by the Chairman and Clerk – these would be signed at the next duly convened physical meeting:-

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------|--|
| Current Account | £ 500.00 | (Statement No. 428 dated 1 st April 2020) |
| Business Reserve (1) | £ 14,405.95 | (Statement No. 218 dated 3 rd April 2020) |
| Business Reserve (2) | £122,677.62 | (Statement No. 323 dated 1 st April 2020) |

The receipts and payments account as at 21st April 2020 was noted.

As it was the start of the new Financial Year, the Clerk has revised the Income & Expenditure Report. This now reported Earmarked and Operational Reserves together with 'Unearmarked Balance'. The Unearmarked Balance represented surplus money over and above that already earmarked or operational and would be a fluctuating, balancing amount. Everything would now balance back to the monthly bank statements.

As reported briefly in the Clerk's Report for April 2020, the Clerk had been investigating alternative banking arrangements. It was for the Responsible Finance Officer to decide and establish appropriate and secure banking facilities which adhered to regulations and audit requirements. The Clerk was in the process of investigating further options and preparing a report to all Parish Councillors which would make recommendations. The Clerk must be mindful that some options would incur additional costs to the Parish Council, whilst balancing ease of use and security. Further questions that should be addressed are "who will benefit", "what is the benefit" and "where is the benefit".

Initially, it was the Clerk's opinion that the Parish Council's best interests would be served through banking arrangements with a financial institution that had a High Street presence. Whilst the current Coronavirus quarantine restrictions are in force there was little merit in

investigating this matter further – it had been impossible to speak with any of the banking organisations by telephone due to increased demand.

Having attended an ALCA Clerk's Network virtual meeting (20th April 2020) the question of banking arrangements had been discussed. Most other small to medium sized Parish Councils are managing to get cheques signed without too much difficulty. The Clerk, as Responsible Finance Officer was therefore quite content to continue with the current arrangements.

It was acknowledged however, that it was a priority that an additional bank account must be opened in order to comply with the £85,000 FSCS Compensation Scheme.

South Gloucestershire Council advised Charfield Parish Council on 3rd April 2020 that the CIL amount collected during financial year 2019/20 and payable in financial year 2020/21 was £41,408.64. Charfield Parish Council agreed to receive these funds (rather than allowing SGC to spend). The CIL will be received into the bank account on 30th April 2020.

During the current Coronavirus quarantine restrictions Wotton Area Mutual Aid (WAMA) has been assisting residents of Charfield with food and medicine deliveries (amongst many things). The Parish Council may wish to consider making a donation to this organisation – it fully complies with S.137 of the LGA 1972 as WAMA is providing a service which 'can benefit all, or the majority of the residents of the parish'. Charfield Parish Council's current S.137 budget has £7,950, of which £7,650 has already been allocated through the Grant process. Any donation above £300 would need to be topped up from Operational Reserves. Cllr. Roshier proposed, Cllr. Threlfall seconded and it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk contact WAMA to ascertain the level of support being provided to Charfield residents and to determine the level of donation, up to a maximum of £1,000. The Clerk would advise all Parish Councillors of her findings before any donation was made. **All Agreed.**

Clerk

11767/20 Accounts for Payment

The Clerk reported the following accounts to be paid having previously verified them as accurate.

| Payee | Chq No. | Description | Net | VAT | Gross |
|----------------|---------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | | | £ | £ | £ |
| Mrs. P. Evans | SO | Clerk's Salary - March | £863.16 | £0.00 | £863.16 |
| HMRC | 2956 | Tax & NI | £142.28 | £0.00 | £142.28 |
| Memorial Hall | 2957 | Room Hire (PC & YPB) | £57.90 | £0.00 | £57.90 |
| Mr. M. Roshier | 2958 | Domain Name Renewal | £18.98 | £3.80 | £22.78 |
| Mrs. P. Evans | 2959 | SLCC Membership (Pro Rata) | £114.60 | £0.00 | £114.60 |
| Mrs. P. Evans | 2959 | Microsoft LifeCam | £127.99 | £0.00 | £127.99 |
| Mrs. P. Evans | 2959 | McAfee LiveSafe (2 Yrs) | £89.99 | £0.00 | £89.99 |
| | | | £1,414.90 | £3.80 | £1,418.70 |

Cllr. Law proposed, Cllr. Newns seconded and it was **RESOLVED** that the above accounts be paid. **All Agreed.** The Clerk would arrange for cheques to be signed whilst observing the current quarantine restrictions and physical distancing.

11768/20 Councillors Open Forum

Cllr. O'Neill provided an update to Parish Councillors regarding SGC operational activities during the current COVID-19 quarantine restrictions. Information is being disseminated by Cllr. O'Neill to Charfield residents via the village Facebook forum.

Additionally, Cllr. O'Neill reported that following the withdrawal of the JSP, South Gloucestershire Council would be relaunching development of a new Local Plan, probably around June 2020.

Cllr. Threlfall reported that OCH20 appeared to be blocked by a gate – Cllr. Threlfall would provide a photograph and the Clerk would report to SGC PROW.

Clerk

Cllr. Threlfall offered to assist any Parish Councillors with the transition to Office365 email facilities. The Clerk would continue to send information to Cllrs. old email addresses whilst the transition took place.

The Clerk would investigate the possibility of using Zoom for the next on-line Parish Council meeting.

Clerk

This concluded the business of the meeting which closed at approximately 8.55pm.

Next Meeting of Charfield Parish Council would to be the Annual Parish Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 12th May 2020 at 7:30pm On-Line.

Chairman

**Clerk's Report
Presented to the on-line Parish Council Meeting on 21st April 2020**

1. Coronavirus COVID-19 quarantine restrictions began week commencing 16th March 2020. Charfield Parish Council is not responsible for any public/community facility that was required to be closed for public use. Charfield Burial Ground can remain open for use.
2. In accordance with legislation received from Central Government at that time, all Parish Council meetings, as well as the Annual Parish Meeting were cancelled until further notice. The Coronavirus Act 2020 came into force on 4th April 2020 which now permits Local Authorities (including Parish Councils) to hold their meetings virtually/on-line. Charfield Parish Council held a practice meeting using Microsoft Teams which went well, hence the decision to hold the April monthly meeting 'on-line'. If all goes well, Charfield Parish Council will be able to hold their regular monthly meetings including the Annual Parish Council meeting in May when the new Chairman and Vice Chairman is elected.
3. Parish Councillors will be aware that all meetings of the Parish Council should be open to the press and public. The basic on-line meeting requirement is that members of the press and public should be able to simply 'hear' the proceedings. After discussions between the Clerk and the Chairman it was agreed that Charfield Parish Council would go one step further and continue to hold their regular Public Participation section and ask that members of the public wishing to address Parish Councillors contact the Clerk in advance of the meeting to make this known. Further, public on-line meeting etiquette has been discussed between the Clerk, Chairman and Cllr. Threlfall and a short paragraph at the beginning of the agenda asks that members of the public wishing to join the meeting do so on mute.
4. At the beginning of the quarantine arrangements, the Clerk produced 500 'Helping Hand' cards which were delivered to a Charfield resident who was organising help for shielding, elderly and vulnerable residents. Additionally, Charfield parish joined with Wotton Area Mutual Aid to ensure that residents were able to access help with whatever was needed. The Clerk has been in contact with a couple of older residents who did not have computer or electronic access to information to ensure they knew that help was available. The Charfield Village Facebook Forum has been a useful channel for disseminating information. The Clerk has produced a couple of simple advice posters which have been circulated via the Forum. The Clerk provides a nightly twenty-question quiz for residents which has received positive and amusing feedback.

5. VE-Day 75 Celebrations – Because of the current Coronavirus quarantine restrictions, the national celebrations have been scaled back and the Official Pageantmaster has advised the public that all community celebrations should be postponed until August 2020.
6. The community Defibrillator Training that should have taken place on 14th March 2020 was cancelled. A new date of Saturday 4th July 2020 has been tentatively agreed with SWAS and the Hall Booked. However, this may also be cancelled if the quarantine restrictions are not lifted in time.
7. The Clerk has undertaken some SLCC webinar training on holding on-line meetings. The advice is that these new style meetings should be short, succinct and only contain business that is urgent and/or essential.
8. The Clerk has contacted Barratt Homes regarding the setting up of a Liaison Group during the construction at the site. An acknowledgement email has been received but as quarantine restrictions were emerging at that time, this has been put on hold until such time as meetings can once again be held.
9. Little Bristol Lane Access Gates – The contractor has contacted the Clerk to advise that the gates had been received and were available to be installed. However, as the work would be undertaken adjacent to a public footpath and in view of the current social distancing requirement this work has been put on hold until after quarantine restrictions are lifted.
10. Public Water Fountain – All public water drinking facilities must comply with the rules and regulations of that areas Water Company – in Charfield's case it would be Bristol Water. The Clerk has received information for another Local Authority within the Bristol Water area who had already installed a Fountain. They are awaiting receipt of a report from Bristol Water to see if their Fountain (and its installation and cleaning regime) does comply with the regulations required by Bristol Water. Additionally, the Clerk understands that the Fountain has been subject to vandalism (person(s) unknown) and anti-social behaviour with somebody regularly placing dog faeces in the drinking bowl. In January 2020 the Clerk sought advice from the SLCC Clerk's forum, but unfortunately there was no response from fellow Clerks. The Clerk is awaiting a response from the Bristol Water Communities Team, and confirmation from the Memorial Hall Committee that they would be happy to accept a Water Fountain on their premises and take responsibility for the cleaning and hygiene of the unit.
11. Following a suggestion made after the Parish Council's practice on-line meeting, the Clerk has spent time preparing a report on electronic payment methods and the implications for Charfield Parish Council. Several banks are being researched, both with a High Street presence and just an on-line presence. Some banks will charge for electronic payments (Unity and Lloyds) whilst others do not (Metro and Barclays). Because of the Coronavirus quarantine restrictions, it is proving difficult to speak with the banks therefore all research done so far has been limited to that available on-line.
12. Thanks to Cllr. Threlfall, the new Parish Council laptop is up and running and all Office 365 Licences have been activated. Cllr. Rosher and Threlfall have been working to move the Parish Council web site to the .gov.uk domain. A new WordPress for Business package will be purchased shortly.
13. Nothing further has been heard from SGC regarding the Parish Council's report of damage to the tree at the entrance to the Warners Court development.
14. A list of all the Clerk's outstanding tasks was circulated to Parish Councillors. The Clerk is currently working her way through these.
15. Due to additional demand on the Clerk's time because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Clerk did not take the approved leave on 27th and 30th March 2020.

16. Additional – The Clerk has received a request from a Charfield resident to purchase a single ashes plot within the Burial Ground. The resident appears on the Electoral Register and is eligible.
17. Additional – KLH Landscaping has been managing to keep on top of the grass cutting of the burial ground whilst still observing the 2m distancing requirement.

Paula Evans
Clerk - 20th April 2020

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