

**Minutes of the Chideock Parish Council meeting held at Chideock Village Hall on Tuesday the 26th
of September 2023, at 10 am**

Present: Cllr George Dunn (Chair), Cllr Anna Dunn, Cllr Peter Hunt, Cllr Mick Downes.

In attendance: Clerk, Cllr Simon Christopher, PCO Alex Bishop, and seven (7) members of the public.

The Parish Council Meeting commenced at 10:00am.

2969. Co-option.

The Chair welcomed the meeting, and informed the Parish Council that Caroline Larkin had applied for co-option. The Chair explained that Ms Larkin would have the opportunity to speak to the meeting, and would then welcome questions from the Parish Council, followed by a vote.

Ms Parkin apologised for being unable to attend the July meeting, and invited questions. She told the meeting that she had ran a business in Bridport for the last twenty years (a bakery, which offered catering), and believed that local businesses should contribute to the local community, which in addition to personal involvement also included donations from the business to occasions such as raffles.

Ms Parkin was unanimously co-opted onto the council, and was thus duly co-opted.

2970. Apologies.

Cllr McAra sent her apologies.

2971. Grants of Dispensation.

None received.

2972. Declaration of Defined Pecuniary Interests.

None. The Chair reminded councillors of the need to review their register of interests at least once a year and inform the clerk of any changes. The Chair reminded the Parish Council to declare defined pecuniary interests either now or when they become aware of the interest, and reminded the Parish Council that it is the Parish Councillor's responsibility to review the register at least once a year.

2973. Minutes of the last meeting.

Cllr Hunt proposed that the month of the heading be amended from 'June' to 'July'. This was seconded by Cllr Anna Dunn, and unanimously accepted.

RESOLVED to accept and sign, as a true record, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of the 25th of July 2023.

Proposed by *Cllr Hunt*, seconded by *Cllr Anna Dunn*, carried unanimously.

2974. Dorset Councillor and Police Reports.

a. PCO Bishop.

PCO Bishop expressed gladness at the number of attendees. He informed the meeting that the day prior there had been a reported burglary of a dwelling in the village. He told the meeting that the full details were not yet available as the victim is not currently at

home, but they were made aware of the incident as an estate agency had made a visit and discovered a smashed window and moved items. It is unknown if items are stolen, but he told the Parish Council that more details would be forthcoming at the next meeting. He reminded the meeting of the need for vigilance, and asked residents to consider the security of their homes. He told the meeting that if individuals would like advice or had concerns, they should contact him, who would be able to conduct a survey. He made a note of options such as CCTV. In particular, he urged residents to be vigilant for properties one knows to be temporarily vacant, and if one knows they will be away for some period of time, to ask neighbours to keep an eye on the property to contact the Police or himself should there seem to be suspicious activity, noting that such activity can be reported via telephone to 101, and if one witnesses a crime in progress, they should call 999.

He invited questions from the meeting. Cllr Anna Dunn asked if the incident occurred on the main road. PCO Bishop responded that it had taken place on a side street.

The Chair thanked PCO Bishop for his report.

2975. Democratic period.

R Benjamin asked if there was a formal policy for co-option, and noted that the minutes did not include the discussion of the candidate up for co-option at the previous Parish Council meeting. The Chair responded that the Standing Orders of the Parish Council were available on the website. R Benjamin noted that at the previous meeting, the public had been asked to leave during discussion and voting, and asked why this had not been the case at this meeting. The Chair responded that this was because there was no discussion of the candidate. He added that NALC (the National Association of Local Councils) had given a briefing on policy for co-option. He noted that the Standing Orders contained no process for co-option, and that this was true of many Parish Councils in the area, and hence the procedure was ambiguous so he had sought the advice of NALC. The Chair suggested R Benjamin write to the Parish Council to express his concerns, and noted that complaints could be taken to Dorset Council – Cllr Simon Christopher noted that there was a mechanism for this, and that the matter could be considered by the Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mayer. He added that Dorset Council takes such issues seriously. Another resident expressed confusion, asking if discussion had been had in the last meeting. He told the meeting that he had read the regulations, which indicated only four legitimate reasons for discussion: if the government has security issues; if there is a court order preventing the individual from holding the office; if the candidate was accused of abuse; and if the candidate is bankrupt. He told the meeting that the regulations indicate that every other matter must be public. The Chair asked the resident to supply the Parish Council with his source. The Chair asked R Benjamin if he would like to be considered for co-option again; he declined at the present time, as he believed there was a prejudiced demonstrated towards him. The Chair disagreed with this assessment.

The six-month rule regarding co-option was clarified, as the Clerk explained that the rule changed the duty to seek to fill casual vacancies by co-option to a power if there were six months or less to the next election.

R Benjamin informed the Parish Council that a new noticeboard had been installed, which was

commented upon positively.

2976. Updates by Clerk and Councillors.

The Chair noted the BLAP (Bridport Local Area Partnership) liaison notes had been received; he noted incoming correspondence regarding increased revenue from the Flow Meter at Foss Orchard owing to RPI uprating; the Charmouth Resilience Plan was noted and it was explained that Chideock Parish Council had received this as they are mentioned in the document; a resident expressing concerns regarding water pollution was noted, and the Chair told the Parish Council would be receiving a representation from WRAG. Cllr Downes expressed the belief that Dorset Council were incorrect to suggest that they did not have responsibility on this issue, and the Environment Agency only deals with what they class as major rivers. The Chair asked Cllr Downes to draft a letter to this effect, which he agreed to do.

It was noted that there were notices at Seatown Beach regarding the prohibition of dogs as a resident had commented on the abundance of dogs at the beach. The meeting was told that at the meeting of CPC and Cllr Laura Beddow, she was made aware of this and told the Parish Council that she would bring the matter to Janet Moore, the relevant officer at Dorset Council. Cllr Downes noted that the PSPO expired at the end of the year and that there had recently been a consultation on the future of the PSPO. Cllr Hunt suggested that this was a problem on all beaches, including Lyme Regis and Charmouth, and that this caused concerns regarding the safety of children. He told the Parish Council that he had knowledge of experiences in which members of the public making the prohibition known to offenders being abused for raising the issue. Cllr George Dunn responded that he recalls this being an issue from his childhood, and that the PSPO is not enforced across the area, and that this caused the public to be abused if they intervened. He added, however, that he does believe that the dog-owning public were more responsible now than they had been in the past. Cllr Downes noted that many people are in favour of allowing dogs on beaches. Cllr Hunt responded that he believed dogs should not be allowed to roam free. Cllr Downes responded that while this is one opinion, the consultation solicited the opinions of many, and that the consultation may reflect those who are in favour of removing the prohibition.

The re-organisation of Jurassic Fibre was explained as a reason for limited progress in advancing a meeting with a representative from the company. It was therefore suggested that a meeting with a Dorset Council representative may be more fruitful. Cllr Downes expressed concern that the delays in the roll-out of broadband upgrades increased costs to residents due to the lack of options and hence competition in the market. Cllr Simon Christopher told the Parish Council that the relevant officer for connectivity in Dorset Council is Cllr Jill Haynes. He suggested inviting her to speak on the matter.

2977. A35 Matters

The meeting was told that the Parish Council had sought to arrange a Public Meeting regarding the current restrictions on the A35 that had involved strong correspondence from the Parish Council, but that Balfour Beatty had rebuffed the request. Cllr Hunt added that while Balfour Beatty and National Highways had claimed that the Parish Council had been consulted on the restrictions, this was not the case. Balfour Beatty had claimed that the restrictions were necessary for safety reasons, but would not acquiesce to a Public Meeting explaining this.

The meeting was told that the Parish Council, at the suggestion of Cllr Laura Beddow, had written to PCC Sidwick to indicate strong interest in participation in pilot schemes for noise cameras and automatic mobile community speed-watch cameras. Cllr George Dunn informed the Parish Council that the issue regarding how construction of the roundabout at Miles Cross would affect traffic was discussed at the most recent BLAP meeting at which Chris Loder MP was present. Cllr George Dunn told the Parish Council that his understanding from the BLAP meeting was that the construction plan would be made available to Bridport Town Council who would make it available to BLAP members.

Cllr Anna Dunn told the Parish Council that she had been in contact with Bristol University regarding the air pollution study in the village, but had not yet received the results.

Cllr Parkin asked whether the construction plans concerned timelines or designs – it was clarified that it related to the process of construction, and that regarding the design, the Parish Council had only seen what was in the public domain through Planning Application.

2978. River Winniford and Water Pollution issues.

RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow a representative of WRAG to present to the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr George Dunn, seconded by Cllr Hunt, unanimously approved.

WRAG expressed the belief that it was important to give the Parish Council details of the results of their investigations as they sought executable actions regarding pollution.

The Parish Council was told that in August of the previous year, the Parish Council invited the community to form an action group surrounding River Winniford issues, which had been organised by Robert and Linda Woodbury. This group initially met in November, and subsequently joined CROWD. The group took water tests in April and had a stall at the August Village Fete in order to raise interest and garner support, as is required by one grant provider. He noted that a grant had been received from Chideock Parish Council, and that Wessex Water Environment Fund had provided a grant of £2,000, which would fund them through to July 2024, after which time they would have to seek further funding, explaining that the cost of a water test was £70. WRAG told the meeting that working relationships had been established with Wessex Water through Andy Mears; CROWD through Chris Loder MP, Wessex Water, Dorset AONB, and other local river groups; Dorset Wildlife Trust and Dorset AONB regarding riverfly testing (which is a priority of the Environment Agency); and Dorset Wildlife Trust and Wessex Water through the Water Guardian Scheme.

The meeting was informed that the Winniford is 1.5 miles long and has many tributaries running through North Chideock, through the village, and ultimately to the beach. There is a lake at Manor House, and other inputs. The Parish Council was told that WRAG had walked up the river, and had seen pipes loading into the river. The river is often blocked down Seatown at a lagoon at which matter gathers, but this is not permanent and hence is not classified as inland bathing water, and hence is not the competence of the Environment Agency. Cllr George Dunn asked for clarification about Environment Agency responsibilities; he was told that the Environment Agency only has competences as mandated by DEFRA and hence not for small rivers unless there are significant issues. As an example, WRAG were concerned that there may be algal concentrations in the river, which was reported to the Environment Agency, who subsequently

investigated, and informed WRAG that this was decomposing vegetation.

There seems to be an issue regarding no body having or taking responsibility for the river. There is evidence of bacteria in Seatown, observed active storm overflows, and observed occasional milkiness at North Chideock. Residents with history in the village have said that the river used to be populated by fish and eels, which was no longer the case. It was noted that accessing the river could be difficult as it is at points approximately 10 feet below the level of the ground. It was also noted that there are no mains sewage at North Chideock.

Testing started off at four test locations: North Chideock; Chideock Village; Big Berries; and Seatown Car Park, just above the lagoon, in order to determine what was happening above and below the Water Recycling Centre. These initial tests took place on the 12th of April, and consisted of CSI testing which measured turbidity, total dissolved solids, temperature, and concentrations of phosphates. These first three metrics are helpful in determining context but are not in themselves inherently bad. Phosphate is usually present in fertiliser and detergents. The bacteria measured comprise total coliforms, E.coli, and enterococci. On the date of the measurement, there had been significant overflows from sewages, as well as on the day prior. E.coli was present at twice the safe level at Chideock Village, and eight times this level at Seatown. Enterococci was elevated in Seatown. This result on its own was not particularly informative due to the recent weather.

Another test was conducted in May, at which time there had been no overflows reported in at least the previous three weeks. Results were still negative in Seatown and Big Berries, but acceptable at the other sites. E.coli was present at thirteen times the safe level for inland water bathing, and enterococci was present. WRAG asked Wessex Water if there was an issue at the treatment plant, at which UV is used to sterilise water to kill whatever survives the previous treatments, and Wessex Water confirmed that this was working at the site as it should be, and hence these bacterial levels were not caused by the WRC.

The next test was taken on the 3rd of August, including a test at a new location at Frying Pan. The water level was higher than normal due to rainfall the previous day. At Frying Pan, the level of E.coli was higher than expected, likely due to storm outfall. A sample was taken upstream of the WRC, at which point WRAG discovered a broken sewer pipe. Big Berries downstream of the WRC recorded levels of E.coli at twelve times the safe level.

The broken pipe was rapidly repaired by Wessex Water using PVC piping, but needed a permanent fix, which was believed to be the responsibility of the holiday park that owned it. WRAG was asked if prosecution could potentially be a fruitful avenue; they responded that it was not up to them.

Further tests were taken on the 6th of September, after Wessex Water had carried out the temporary repair. Four control points were tested: Chideock Village; Pettycrate Junction (to identify if this was the source of the pollution); Frying Pan; and Big Berries (to identify whether the repair had been effective). The test results lead to the hypothesis that the pollution was coming from Pettycrate or above – perhaps the lake at Cains farm. The diminishing levels of E.Coli across the sites is likely the result of dilution as the pollution travels along the stream. The results indicate that the temporary repair had been effective. It was noted that phosphate concentration spikes at the WRC.

It was explained that riverfly testing consists of identifying species of insect larvae as this provides a history of pollution at the site, and hence was favoured by the Environment Agency. More of this type of testing would be done when the season starts next year. The group is also investigating how to test for nitrogen, which is in the form of ammonia or its nitrates, and results from either households or agriculture, causing algal growth.

WRAG summarised the successes of the group to date: identifying the broken sewer pipe; the Environment Agency agreeing to test for E.coli at Seatown Beach to both the east and west of Winniford. Questions were raised about what the ultimate fate of E.coli in the river is, and whether it is present at the beach, but it was unclear how to test for colonies of bacteria below the surface.

WRAG intends to expand membership, and investigate further sources of pollution. The group will require new funding next year. They encourage reporting of pollution events, as the Environment Agency respond to such events. Discussion regarding method of preventing storm overflows was ongoing, such as planting reed beds to act as natural filters. Wessex Water had not announced plans for Seatown, but had a list of 160 places that would fit into their 2025-2030 project. WRAG invited questions.

Cllr Anna Dunn told the meeting that she had done a tour of Wessex Water's plant, and was told that Wessex Water would undertake pollution testing, and asked whether this had happened. WRAG responded that it had not, and believed this was due to a lack of resources.

Cllr Parkin expressed her gratitude for the work that WRAG had done.

Cllr Downes asked about tributaries of the river, identifying one in particular, and agreeing to identify this to WRAG. Questions regarding treatment and disposal of sewage at the Doghouse Caravan site was raised, and it was mentioned that such concerns had been raised to Cllr Laura Beddow. It was noted that DNA tests can be conducted on E.coli to determine whether it was of human or livestock origin, but the cost for such tests was not known at the time of the meeting.

A resident suggested WRAG consider constructing a pollution source map, which would require the cooperation of land-owners, and would help make sense of test results.

Cllr Hunt thanked WRAG for their work and for presenting at the meeting. Cllr Anna Dunn asked if WRAG would like anything included in the Parish Council's magazine report. It was suggested that information regarding septic tanks may be helpful.

Cllr Simon Christopher expressed gratitude for the presentation. He noted that some Parish Councils publicise the need for people to get septic tanks emptied at least once a year. He noted that Chris Loder MP was very interested in these matters, but also noted that he had met Rebecca Powe MP, the minister of DEFRA, and responsible for driving the Environment Act through Parliament. He suggested that it may be worthwhile for the Parish Council to request a meeting with Rebecca Powe MP as she was the MP for Taunton nearby.

The Chair closed this part of the meeting, thanking Cllr Simon Christopher and WRAG for their contributions. WRAG asked for collaboration or sharing of ideas regarding publication, though

noted the independence of WRAG from the CPC. Cllr Hunt suggested increasing membership should be a priority. Cllr Downes noted the similarity between Burton Bradstock's river and the Winniford, noting that it terminates at private property as does the Winniford. He contrasted the maintenance at these sites; at the former, the landowner regularly clears the area, and – potentially as a result – the river is well populated with wildlife.

Standing orders were reinstated. The Chair asked the Parish Council if they had thoughts on disseminating information. Cllr Hunt suggested that the presentation just made would be ideal to provide to the village. Cllr Anna Dunn, noting the reluctance of WRAG to seek behavioural change from individuals, suggested that it may be prudent for the Parish Council to include such matters in their contribution to that Parish Magazine. Cllr Downes noted that WRAG had indicated that singling out particular households would be unhelpful, and agreed with this. Cllr Parkin suggested it may be better to have a meeting at which septic tanks are emphasised as an issue, which would allow people to think of their own behaviours in a broader context. Cllr Downes agreed that this would be an effective approach.

2979. Motions received with notice.

None.

2980. Planning Matters.

None.

2981. River Winniford and Water Pollution Issues.

CPC noted correspondence with Wessex Water relating to when upgrades will be made to sewage infrastructure in Chideock. It was reported that there was no new news on testing for e-coli.

2982. Report from Cllr Simon Christopher.

Cllr Simon Christopher invited questions about Dorset Council. He told the Parish Council that he would be meeting PCC Sidwick on the 26th of October. Cllr Parkin asked how many Councillors were on the Cabinet. Cllr Simon Christopher responded that it was around 10. Cllr Parkin asked if they take all major decisions. Cllr Simon Christopher that this was not entirely the case, as budget matters were decided by the council, and noted that there was a budget day upcoming at which all Dorset Councillors were invited to meet with the Finance Officer to discuss the budget for 2024/2025. He also noted that Councillors were able to regularly liaise with Cabinet members and such interactions were constant. He noted that as he was not on the Cabinet, he enjoyed the freedom to speak openly, giving the example of recent contributions to Bridport News about affordable housing resulting in a shortage of workers in Dorset. He described his reputation as being approachable, and related issues regarding residents' children having to wait six months for driving tests due to a lack of examiners. He noted similar concerns around further education. He told the Parish Council that he had met with the Principal of Yeovil College who told him that they have 300 apprenticeships for engineering and 320 for construction, and hence connectivity between this area and Yeovil would be valuable. He told the meeting that he had written about housing as there was clearly a lack of workers, and asked why there were foodbanks in Lyme Regis when hospitality wasn't operating at full capacity due to difficulties acquiring staff.

Cllr Downes asked about Dorset Planning, particularly with regards to Miles Cross. He said that

that Dorset Planning have the final decision as he understands it, in conjunction with Vearse Farm. National Highways don't have input to the extent that they can approve or deny. He expressed his concerns that so far, developers had not listened to any of what people have been saying, and that Dorset Planning was not speaking for the people. He asked how people would be expected to cross the road once the roundabout is built. Cllr Simon Christopher responded that he is a local councillor on Dorset Access Forum, and had received assurances that there will be safe crossing of the A35. Cllr Downes asked where that would be, as he was unaware of plans to put a crossing point at Miles Cross, and the first crossing point before that is at Chideock by the speed camera. Cllr Simon Christopher responded that Dorset Council were active on this issue.

2983. Finances.

The Clerk explained that his expenses were reduced as Puncknowle & Swyre Parish Council paid for half of the travel expenses relating to travel to and from BLAP meetings, and therefore his expenses were revised downwards.

2984. Finances.

a. RESOLVE to make the following payments: -

- i. Clerk's salary and Expenses for September
£358.42
- ii. Village Hall Hire – 8th August
£20
- iii. Village Hall Hire – 26th September
£20
- iv. Chideock Cemetery Maintenance
£700
- v. Changing Chairs Online training
£27
- vi. Clapps Mead playing field ditch clearing
£1980
- vii. Foss Orchard Car Park hedge trimming and grass cutting
£60
- viii. Strimming all bankings to ditches both sides of the playing fields
£60
- ix. Dig out sump hole, strim and clear bank along road and playing field sides
£450
- x. Professor Bumble
£155

Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Anna Dunn, agreed unanimously.

b. RESOLVE to pay any invoices received after the agenda was circulated.

- i. Field equipment repairs
£23.74

Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Parkings, agreed unanimously.

c. RESOLVE to make the following payment: -

- i. HugoFox Bronze plan
£9.99

The Parish Council agreed to migrate the website to e-voice, but made a one-time payment to retain HugoFox for one month while the transition is made.

- d. **RESOLVE** to make the following payment on behalf of FOCM, upon receipt of funds from FOCM: -

- i. Trampoline for the play area
£5008.75

It was explained that the plan was for Friends of Clapps Mead (FOCM) would purchase the trampoline for CPC so that it would go on the Asset Register for insurance. FOCM want to pay £4718.72 – the value of the trampoline absent of VAT, as CPC would reclaim VAT. She explained that FOCM have roughly £6000 in their bank account presently. She expressed her belief that children would be very interested in a trampoline at the playing field. The Clerk noted that this had been included as a separate item, as it may have financial implications as it brings the expenditure and income of the Parish Council close to the £25,000 limit which triggers a duty for an external audit. Cllr Anna Dunn responded that FOCM would contribute the cost of an external audit should this threshold be breached.

Proposed by Cllr Hunt, seconded by Cllr Parkin, agreed unanimously.

- e. **NOTE** the following revenue: -

- i. Annual season ticket FOCP x2
£160
- ii. FOCP temporary tickets
£6
- iii. Donations to Community Fund from Fete 12/08/2023
£43.80

Cllr Anna Dunn suggested that the Parish Council consider revisiting pricing of season tickets at Foss Orchard Car Park. The Clerk suggested this would best be addressed by a Motion Received with Notice.

2985. Clapp's Mead Playing Field.

- a. **Receive updates regarding the Playing Field and Play Area.**

Cllr Anna Dunn told CPC that the trampoline would have an installation cost, which was initially quoted at £1495, but this was reduced to £985 due to existing equipment. As this cost would leave FOCM with £1, she requested that CPC make this payment out of the Community Fund. Cllr Hunt expressed support for this. Cllr Downes expressed dissatisfaction with the proposal, arguing that a lot is spent of FOCM, despite his perception that it is empty very often, arguing that more people walk their dogs there than children play there. Cllr Anna Dunn noted that CPC has an account for maintaining Clapps Mead. Cllr George Dunn expressed that he believes many kids play there; Cllr Parkin argued that the trampoline would be very popular.

Cllr Anna Dunn told the meeting that she had discovered that one of the conditions of the bequest of the playing field was the appointment of a committee consisting of the Parish Council and Church representatives. Cllr Downes noted the involvement of the Church, and asked why the Parish Council had been asked for funds when other groups also have responsibility for the area. Cllr Anna Dunn noted that the committee as yet did not exist. Cllr Parkin suggested that once the committee is appointed, those groups can be approached for funding requests. Cllr Downes agreed that this would be appropriate. The Clerk advised that appointment should be made via a motion received with notice.

Cllr Anna Dunn told the Parish Council that the group would be losing access to a vehicle used for transporting material, and hence requested that a shed be installed to store furniture. She explained that she did not anticipate a need to insure this as it would be low-value. Cllr George Dunn suggested this request should be presented by a letter; Cllr Parkin suggested this request should wait until the appointment of a committee, to which Cllr Anna Dunn was amenable.

- b. Receive updates regarding The Friends of Clapp’s Mead.**
None.

2986. Dorset Rights of Way; Dorset Highways; Flood Management.

- a. Dorset Rights of Way.**
None.

- b. Dorset Highways.**
The Clerk was instructed to discuss with the former clerk methods of obtaining information regarding road closures.

- c. Flood Management.**
None.

- 2987. Consultations.**
None.

- 2988. Correspondence.**
No requests were made.

- 2989. Confirm the time and date of the next meeting of Chideock Parish Council.**
The next meeting will be at 10:00 am on the 31st of October 2023 at Chideock Village Hall.

The meeting closed at **12:46pm.**

Action	Responsible individual	Item	Notes
Write to Dorset Council regarding responsibility for water pollution.	Cllr Downes	2976	