

## CHEDDON FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022

In the Committee Room of the Memorial Hall at Cheddon Fitzpaine TA2 8JY

[www.cfpc.co.uk](http://www.cfpc.co.uk)

**Present:** Parish Cllrs Woollacott, Isaacs, Batsch, West, Wilson, Deakin, Fothergill, Tully & Pritchard.

**In attendance:** Mrs S Millard-Jones, Clerk, Mrs K Welsh, WM Assistant Clerk & 3 members of the public.

Cllr Woollacott chaired the meeting.

**09/01 To receive apologies for absence:** Cllrs Bakers and Cavill were absent due to attending the SWT Audit and Governance Committee meeting.

**09/02 To receive declarations of personal/prejudicial/disclosable pecuniary interests:** None

**09/03 To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting.** The minutes from the Meeting of the Parish Council on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022 having been previously circulated, were taken as read. It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:** None

#### **09/04 Reports:**

SCC Cllr Deakin:

##### Local Community Networks

A consultation regarding the development of the much-anticipated Local Community Networks (LCNs) is soon set to launch. Somerset Council will cover a very large geographical area and so needs local committees of the council where voices can be heard, partners brought together, and decisions taken with the benefit of local knowledge and experience.

Throughout the summer officers of County and District Councils have been working on options for the following aspects of LCNs:

**Function** – the roles and responsibilities of LCNs in the first and subsequent years of Somerset Council.

**Form** – options for the boundaries of the LCNs, using existing democratic boundaries and community infrastructure.

**Name** – does Local Community Network describe the form and function of the committees?

##### **Finance**

– as inflation impacts on all council budgets, LCNs must be affordable in the first year yet able to develop in future years as savings are realised from the move to one council. Governance – as Committees of Somerset Council, the LCNs will have a formal role and be supported by Democratic Services at the Council.

The consultation will be launched on 1<sup>st</sup> September and run to mid-October, and will seek the views of parish, town & city councils, partner organisations and individuals on the function, form and name for LCNs. A comprehensive communications strategy is currently being drawn up ready for the launch of the online consultation. The responses will form an important part of the recommendations for the Somerset County Council Executive and Full Council.

The LCN Conference will take place at Westlands in Yeovil on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October.

##### Finance Update

Somerset County Council, like many councils, is experiencing significant financial challenges in the current year. Inflationary factors, as we are all experiencing in our home lives, affect a large Council on a large scale. Energy costs, travel costs, increases in construction materials have all added to our costs and in turn that has

affected the pay award for this year. SCC is part of a national negotiation and the latest employers' offer, equivalent to 5.5% increase, has not been accepted.

Other factors are having an adverse effect on Adults and Children's services, with increases in external placements post-Covid and the same inflationary factors impacting on the companies and organisations that provide residential placements. They are also seeing greater challenges in providing the right level of staffing, with a very competitive labour market throughout the country.

The Council's Senior Leadership Team is already working on plans to reduce the projected overspend, and some areas of the Council are now projecting underspends.

Of course, this financial year's projections have an impact on the first-year budget of the new Somerset Council. Savings will be made when the five councils come together as one Unitary Council but those savings won't be in place on day one, so it is essential that different ways of working and other plans are put in place early in the autumn. The Executive will continue to receive monthly budget monitoring reports as well as the ongoing reporting on Local Government Reorganisation.

#### Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation

A consultation on council tax support for the new unitary Somerset Council has launched. This is the first major consultation for the new Somerset Council and it proposes that the lowest income households across Somerset get 100% council tax relief.

Somerset's four district councils currently offer varying levels of council tax support. The proposed changes would harmonise support for working-age people on low incomes across the county and come into effect on 1 April 2023, with the creation of the new Council.

For more information: <https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/07/25/consultation-on-council-taxsupport-scheme-launched/>

#### Help shape the future of council services in Somerset

People in Somerset are encouraged to join a new Customer Panel and help shape the future of council services.

From April 2023, the new unitary Somerset Council will deliver all council services to all communities – from waste collection and adult social care to housing, benefits and parks.

The Customer Panel is being established to ensure residents are at the heart of those services. No special skills are required, all you need is a willingness to take part in three research topics each year and provide honest and constructive feedback. Panel members will have the chance to take part in online surveys, one-to-one interviews, usability tests and discussion groups.

For more information: <https://playbook.somerset.gov.uk/our-customer-panel/>

#### Somerset County Council backs new Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal

Somerset County Council has welcomed the launch of Somerset Community Foundation's Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal.

The Council has contributed an initial £50,000 donation to support the launch of the appeal. The Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal is an urgent call for donations which will be used to help fund local charities supporting local people living in poverty through the cost-of-living crisis.

Donations will fund crucial local work such as debt advice organisations, food banks, mental health support, help for people with disabilities or older people, and homelessness organisations.

To donate to the Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal today visit: [www.somersetcf.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/costofliving) or call 01749 344949.

When the fund is open, any community group or charitable organisation wishing to apply for a grant should visit the SCF website where they can find guidance on how to make an application:

[www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply).

For more details about the fund, visit: <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/somerset-cost-of-living-crisisappeal-launched>.

#### Bus it – you know it makes sense

As fuel prices spiral during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis Somerset County Council and Somerset Bus Partnership are joining forces to encourage people to 'BUS IT'.

The campaign aims to highlight that with households under financial pressure buses have never been more relevant, offering a cheaper travel alternative and the chance to save on fuel and vehicle maintenance costs,

while at the same time protecting the environment by helping to cut congestion and reducing your carbon footprint.

Following the withdrawal of the government's Bus Recovery Grant, bus operators are currently weighing up the viability of routes in Somerset, and one of the key factors operators will use in assessing viability is the number of passengers on each route.

Bus use in Somerset is slowly climbing again, but is currently at about 70 per cent of levels compared to pre-Covid.

For more information: [Bus it – You know it makes sense – Travel Somerset](#)

#### Climate Summit to help Somerset businesses increase sustainability

Somerset businesses are being urged to play their part in combating the climate emergency – with a conference offering insight into practical steps they can take to become more sustainable.

The Somerset Business Climate Summit 2022 will take place at Queens College in Taunton on Wednesday 21st September between 10am and 1pm.

The Summit will highlight best practice and raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges for businesses as we shift toward a low carbon economy.

Guest speakers from businesses of different sizes and industries, including My Carbon Coach, The Field Works, and recently certified B Corp New Leaf Design will discuss topics including the easiest ways for businesses to cut carbon, what Net Zero means, the journey to B Corp, and sustainable agriculture and manufacturing. Businesses will be encouraged to examine their current business models and make pledges to reduce their carbon footprints.

For more information: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency/climate-emergencybusinesses/climate-summit/>

#### Successful joint funding bid to tackle violence against women and girls

Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council have jointly secured an additional £317,694 from the Home Office Safer Streets Fund to continue to make public spaces and streets safer for women and girls.

This follows the success of the neighbouring councils' 2021 campaign 'It can stop if we change together'.

This raised awareness, tackled sexual harassment and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) to make public places and streets safer.

For more information: <https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/07/25/successful-joint-funding-bid-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls/>

#### Specialists appointed to take Somerset arts and culture strategy forward

Specialist partners have been appointed to help develop a five-year cultural strategy for the new Somerset Council that comes into being in April 2023.

Arts Council England, in partnership with Somerset's five councils – Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset district councils, plus Somerset County Council – have committed to invest in developing the strategy and have procured the services of cultural consultants, The Fifth Sector.

Key aims and objectives of the strategy include:

- To raise awareness and promote the role that culture and creativity can play in enriching communities and improving the quality of life, health, wellbeing and the local economy for Somerset residents, local businesses and visitors.
- To make sure that a cultural identity for arts and culture in Somerset is at the heart of the new authority's strategic plans.
- To identify new job opportunities in culture and the creative industries and raise the profile of the county's vibrant creative sector.

#### New electric minibuses hit the roads in Somerset

Somerset County Council now has two fully electric, specially adapted wheelchair accessible minibuses available for use.

These vehicles are Maxus EV80 minibuses and are the first of their kind in the county. They have a capacity of ten passengers, and the seats within can be adapted so that three wheelchairs can be safely included.

On one charge, the buses can travel approximately 114 miles currently. They are currently being used in the Bridgwater area, but their use may well be expanded across the county in the future.

### £1,500 of vouchers awarded to creative writing winners and Somerset Schools

Three winners of the Fostering In Somerset Creative Writing Competition each scooped £250 in vouchers, as well as £250 in vouchers for their chosen school.

Somerset residents of all ages were encouraged to write a short story of up to 1,000 words for Foster Care Fortnight in May for the chance to win a share of £1,500 of vouchers.

Somerset County Council's fostering and library services received over 100 entries and judges whittled these down to three winners.

All three winning stories can be read at

<https://www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk/resources/storycomp.htm>

SWT: No report

### **09/05 Joint Projects with West Monkton:**

a. **Maidenbrook Country Park & Somerset Wood: (R)** Plans for the Remembrance Service on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November are underway.

The Country Park Working Group had been unable to meet ahead of the Parish Council meeting. There is a cost breakdown to be discussed and will be taken to the October meetings.

b. **Neighbourhood Plan Review:** The NP Referendum was held on 22nd September and 80% voted to support the plan. The Plan is scheduled to go before Full Council on 25th October. Kelvin Tutill has registered to speak during the public question time.

c. **Community Fridge:** The CF continues to be hugely successful, however, the opening hours are to be shortened due to some school children being mischievous, Monkton Elm, Monkton, Priorswood & Cheddon coops continue to make generous donations.

### **09/06 Community Governance Review**

Cllr Woollacott explained the need for the agenda item to be held in two parts. The CGR Working Group recommendations report has been released from SWT and the current proposal remains the same as the original proposal before consultation stage 1. This will leave Cheddon Parish at around 300 residents. CFPC have expressed their views that this is undesirable, and advice has been sought from a solicitor following on from the previous meeting. SWT are meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September which will be a platform to decide whether it progresses to the next stage. Once a decision is made by SWT then SCC will need to ratify the decision as the shadow authority on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. Residents were urged to stand forward and speak on behalf of CFPC and were reminded to register if they wished to do so.

It was **resolved** to move the second half of this agenda item into a confidential session later in the meeting.

### **09/07 Cheddon Ward:**

A site visit regarding speed matters around the Academy and Cheddon primary has now been rescheduled to 20<sup>th</sup> October at 8am. The consultation period for the adoption of the telephone box has come to an end and the Clerk has been sent a contract to approve the Parish Council taking ownership. The Clerk recommended that the telephone box should be looked at to ensure that there are no major concerns with it's condition. The Clerk will do this ahead of the October meeting.

### **09/08 Maidenbrook:**

#### **Maidenbrook Ward:**

Maidenbrook Adoption: The Clerk has now received a response from Kate Hicks informing the PC that currently SWT are unable to proceed with the adoption until the site is free from an encroachment. Bovis are aware of the encroachment but are prioritising other matters on site – e.g. drainage. Therefore, the adoption is 'on hold' for the moment, although it is hoped that this will be re-visited later in the year.

Northwalls: On chasing Robyn Liddiard at Pinnacle, her answer is that there is no update on the tree that requires felling on Bruford Drive – this remains with the developers. The dead trees on the footpath will be replaced by the developers but not until around November/December time. The weeding to the managed areas has commenced however, the weeds on the roads, paths and verges are the responsibility of the

developers. There is a tree in the play area that appears as though it may have been chopped down (only approximately 30cms of the tree remains in the ground) – this has been reported to Pinnacle.

**09/09 Cheddon Fitzpaine Community Review (R)** To establish a steering group and to adopt the TOR  
This matter will be deferred until the CGR result has been determined.

**09/10 Highways:**

A resident has been in contact with Highways to draw their attention to the weight limit sign approaching the junction at the bottom of Yallands Hill with the A3259 (WRR) as he believes that it seems significantly out of place. The sign says weight limit 300 yds ahead but the junction is clearly only 30 yds ahead. Awaiting a response from Highways.

At the August meeting, the Clerk had been asked to contact Highways regarding altering the lines on Summerleaze. Kate Brown had spoken with Cllr Deakin on this matter before the Clerk had made contact and reconfirmed that the change would not be permissible but can refresh and will look at putting a cycle warning sign on either side of the junction.

**09/11 Planning Applications:**

**08/22/0007/LB** Replacement of windows within bay and formation of patio door opening at Maidenbrook Farmhouse, Tudor Park, Priorswood. Taunton. There has been an amendment to the initial application.

**09/12 Planning Decisions:**

**08/22/0008/T** Application to fell one multi-stemmed Ash tree included in Taunton Deane Borough (Cheddon Fitzpaine No.1) Tree Preservation Order 1997 at The Old Rectory, Cheddon Fitzpaine (TD707) - Conditional approval

**09/13 Reports:**

**Cheddon School:** The school is noticing challenges with the children. Reception children don't seem used to social gatherings and many mental health challenges potentially. Good attendance, fairly full primary intake with 20 children starting in September. The school is preparing for the likelihood of flooding.

**Nerrols School:** Teachers and assistants have been welcoming all of the new children into reception class. Now have children up to Year 4, and still only one class of approximately 30 children per year. Flu vaccinations have been taking place this week. Marking World Mental Health Day on Monday October 10<sup>th</sup> by asking all children and staff to wear yellow.

**Memorial Hall:** Fundraising remains a priority, trying to build back it's financial reserves following covid. Revenue is virtually where it was before Covid. Two more volunteers joining the MH as trustees.

**09/14 Bus Stops (R)** To review the quote received

The Parish Council was allocated S106 funds of £80,000 to spend on bus stops and the refurbishment of. The Clerk had sought three quotes but had only secured two due to the third company being unable to quote until September/October. The money must be allocated before the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022. The Clerk recommended that quote B was approved as this company were able to attend site and liaise with SCC on the PC's behalf regarding required permissions.

It was **resolved** to approve the quote of £6,032 and that the chosen colour would be black.

Councillors requested the Clerk to consider two further sites – one opposite Stubby Lane entrance and one on Leigh Road. It was also suggested that further quotes could be obtained to include ducting for underneath the bus stops to enable lights or electronic timetable to be put in at a future date and to look at putting a bin in place at the same time.

The Clerk agreed to bring these quotes for approval to the October PC meeting.

**09/15 LCN Consultation (R)** To consider options available

The Clerk had circulated the proposals and Councillors considered these in further detail.

It was agreed that the proposal would be given further consideration following the Clerk attending the LCN Conference on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October. The deadline for the consultation is 17<sup>th</sup> October.

**09/16 SWT Free trees (R)** To consider a community initiative

The Clerk had emailed Cheddon and Nerrols Primary schools to ask if they wished to have receive some of the trees. Cheddon gratefully declined the offer whilst Nerrols said that they would like crab apple and silver birch and would be more than happy to have all 18 on offer.

It was **resolved** to approve that the Clerk would request 18 of the SWT trees and that they would then be donated to Nerrols Primary School.

**09/17 Chairs Awards for Service to the community (R)** To consider nominations

The Clerk had circulated amongst members and nominations were considered.

**09/18 Somerset's Community Resilience Award (R)** To consider nominations

The Clerk had circulated amongst members and nominations were considered.

**09/19 External Audit (R)** To consider opting out from the current auditor and to note Conclusion of Audit

The Clerk explained that under the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in smaller authorities, for setting the terms of appointment for limited assurance reviews and for managing the contracts with the appointed audit firms. Smaller authorities are those whose gross annual income or expenditure is less than £6.5 million.

The next 5-year appointing period runs from 2022-23 until 2026-27 and SAAA has undertaken a procurement exercise to appoint auditors to each County area from 1 April 2022. Now that the submission deadline for the 2021-22 Annual Governance and Accountability Returns has passed, this is to advise you of the option to opt-out of the next round of 5-year audit appointments.

Should the PC wish to appoint their own external auditor, this would mean that a new process would need to be set up and would resultantly be more costly than the current PKF Littlejohn.

Following some discussion members **resolved** that the PC would not opt out from the current external auditor.

PKF Littlejohn had served the Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the financial year 2021/22 and it was recorded that; ***On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.***

All required information following the Notice of Conclusion of Audit is available on the Parish notice boards and the CFPC website.

**09/20 Finance:**

**a) Approval of Payments & Receipts (R)**

**Payments**

To whom	Description	Net	VAT	Total	Pay Date	Confirmed on bank Statement
S Millard-Jones	September Salary, Homeworking & Mileage, PAYE & NI (-NEST)	£1,062.71	£3.15	£1,065.86	30/09/22	
Character Graphics	August newsletter	£90.00	£	£90.00	29/09/22	
SALC	Affiliation Fee	£627.34	£	£627.34	29/09/22	
Khift Ltd	Legal proceedings	£2,400	£	£2,400	29/09/22	
PKF LittleJohn	External Audit	£400.00	£80.00	£480.00	29/09/22	

**Debit Card/Direct Debit: To note:**

To whom	Description	Net	VAT	Total	Pay Date	Confirmed on bank Statement
SWS	Email addresses	£36.80	£7.36	£44.16	02/09/22	
NEST	Pension	£35.72	£	£35.72	30/09/22	
Microsoft	Monthly Subscription	£9.40	£1.88	£11.28	18/09/22	
SWS	Hosting Inv	£24.00	£4.80	£28.80	20/09/22	
SWS	Operation London Bridge	£150.00	£30.00	£180.00	23/09/22	

**Receipts: To note:**


**Country Park**

To whom	Description	Net	VAT	Total	Pay Date	Confirmed on bank Statement

It was **resolved to pay** the above by cheque/internet banking.

**b) Approval of the bank reconciliation (R)**

Main Account	£44,669.59
CIL Account	£21.44
NSI Account	£3,123.62
CP Account	£304.11
Total	£48,118.76

It was **resolved** to approve the bank reconciliation

**c) Approval of transfer of funds from CP to CFPC account (R)**

CFPC had placed temporary funds into the CP account as a buffer for the VAT reclaim on two occasions: £166.68 (Feb) and £21.88 (May). Once this is returned to the CFPC bank account, then £115.55 remains which was the underspend on the DDS spring invoice. This will need to be split 50/50 with WM £57.77 & £57.78.

It was **resolved** to transfer the remaining funds from the CP account.

**d) To consider moving allocated CP budget into the CP account (R)**

Deferred to the October CFPC meeting.

**09/06** Councillors reverted to item 09/06 to discuss the CGR within a confidential session.

It was **resolved** to close the meeting to the press and members of the public in line with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to discuss legal proceedings surrounding the process of the CGR.

It was **resolved** to instruct the barrister to submit a further legal letter on behalf of CFPC to legally challenge the approval of SWT recommendations for SCC's consideration on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at the Full County Council meeting.

**09/21 Matters raised by Councillors:**

- Cllr Wilson had been unable to attend the bat survey and passed on her sincere apologies
- Cllr Wilson had attended a Stewardship meeting where SWT had instructed ARUP to formulate a good practice plan for Garden Town status. It was very difficult to contribute based on the fact of so many unknowns such as LCN's, and CGR.
- Newsletter being held back until mid-October in order to report on CGR progress

**09/22 Correspondence:** All circulated

**09/23 Items for next agenda:**

- Telephone box adoption
- Country Park bank account
- Community Governance Review
- Local Community Network Consultation
- Budget versus expenditure
- Bus stops

**2022 Dates:** 14th November. 5th December.

Meeting closed at 9.23pm

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Chair