

# Charlton Musgrove Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held in Charlton Musgrove Memorial Hall  
on **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September at 7.30pm**

## Present:

Parish Councillors: Robin Bastable (Chairman), Annie Sutton (Vice Chairman), Barrie Izard, Sally Moore, Dibby Rochford, Ruth Kimber, Simon Turk.

## In Attendance:

Somerset County Councillor Anna Groskop  
Interim Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Office Sally Moore

## Public Question and Comment Time:

Not applicable as no members of the public were present.

The meeting commenced at 19:31

09/21-1: With all councillors present, there were no apologies

09/21-2: There were no declarations of interest of any nature

09/21-3: Adoption of Full Council Minutes of the meeting 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 – **RESOLVED**

It was proposed by Cllr Bastable and agreed unanimously to adopt the minutes of the previous full council meeting. The Chairman signed the paper copy which is now filed and Cllr Izard will upload the final version to the CMPC website at the first opportunity.

The Clerk will search for Word versions of previous 2021 meetings to remove 'draft' watermark and upload the adopted versions to our website [**Action CMPC A17**]

09/21-4: Adoption of the new Action Tracker – **RESOLVED**

The newly-introduced Action Tracker had been circulated with the agenda and feedback from councillors was positive; this document, used alongside agendas/minutes, will help focus on agreed actions and progress made. In future agendas, the tracker will appear at the end of the order of business.

Cllr Bastable proposed adoption of the tracker, seconded by Cllr Rochford, resolved unanimously.

09/21-5: Planning Applications - **RESOLVED**

09/21-5a: to consider application 21/02583/FUL, "erect dwelling (demolish existing agricultural building), form access and driveway".

Cllr Bastable opened the discussion with a statement that he would not make comment on this application in case he is required to debate it in his capacity as District Councillor. He was, however, able to offer guidance to the other councillors about relevant planning policy, to help inform their consideration.

After debate, which considered both the design specifics of the proposal and that this represents development (a single dwelling) in open countryside, it was proposed by Cllr Moore and seconded by Cllr Turk to advise SSDC Planning Dept that there is no objection to the development of the site into a dwelling, however the Parish Council do object to the proposed height of the dwelling. Resolved 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

09/21-5b: no further applications have been received.

09/21-5c: Council would like to hear updates on previous planning applications, as they become available. Proposed by Cllr Bastable, seconded by Cllr Izard, resolved unanimously.

09/21-6: Reports

09/21-6a: County Councillor Anna Groskop – C.Cllr Groskop's monthly report for September had been circulated to the Parish Council by the Clerk on 13<sup>th</sup> September. In addition to the notes in her report, C.Cllr Groskop gave more insight into the ongoing debate at County level and above in relation to the creation of a unitary authority. There are likely to be fewer County Councillors under the new structure (current proposal is 85 vs. 110). Currently, Somerset's unitary authority proposal is to be discussed at Full

Parliament around late Oct/November. In the meantime, the turnover of Clerks across the county continues to be high; their role becoming more administrative than historically, meaning greater responsibility falls to Parish Councillors if they wish to see change effected within their parish. In the future, “Community Networks” will replace “Areas”, with more clout; the role of the County Councillor will become more important and impactful as a result.

09/21-6b: District Councillor Robin Bastable – echoes the above. This is the key topic of debate and focus.

09/21-6c,i: Cllr Moore on behalf of the Staffing Committee (SC) updated on the final sums paid to the outgoing Clerk and HMRC, falling within the amount pre-agreed at the last Full Council meeting. Clerk’s costs for July and August totalled £594.95 and a refund of £4.40 will be owing from HMRC for over-paid contributions.

A new payroll provider has been appointed; Gooding Accounts Ltd. Their annual fee (£105+VAT=£126) represents better value to the Parish than the Clerk doing their own payroll.

09/21-6c,ii: the SC propose to delay recruitment of a Clerk until the New Year, allowing time both to better understand the role and the skills and experience required plus time to focus on the more pressing matter of the budget, work on which must begin imminently. In the meantime, Cllr Moore will continue as the Interim Clerk and RFO, with support as required from other councillors. This was **RESOLVED** unanimously, having been proposed by Cllr Bastable and seconded by Cllr Izard.

**[Action CMPC A18]**

09/21-6c,iii: Cllr Sutton is designing an at-a-glance calendar of key events, for use by the whole Council and Clerk. For example, it will include milestones like the budget and AGAR, along with policy review anniversaries, renewal dates for insurance policies and other contracts.

**RESOLVED** unanimously, proposed by Cllr Bastable, seconded by Cllr Izard. **[Action CMPC A19]**

09/21-6c,iv: Cllr Moore advised the VAT reclaims for 2019-20 and 2020-21 are nearing completion and the aim is submit both before the next Full Council meeting (if time allows). Cllrs Moore and Rochford will collaborate on these historic claims, as well as getting Scribe up-to-date to ensure the 2021-22 VAT reclaim will be, as far as possible, a push-button exercise.

**RESOLVED** unanimously, proposed by Cllr Bastable, seconded by Cllr Turk. **[Action CMPC A20]**

09/21-6d: there are no representatives from the Play Area Working Party at this evening’s meeting, though an invitation was extended by the Clerk. Feedback received following the invite suggested the enthusiasm/energy and time to contribute has become a barrier.

The Council recognised the significant support from a number of volunteers throughout this year, once again, to maintain the grass cutting, deal with mole damage, fill in holes etc. The discussion, which included the fact that no advice has yet been received from the Macintosh estate about adding more recreational equipment to the Play Area, also that SSDC have invited the parish to partake in a survey and consultation on youth recreation facilities, identified several actions **[Actions CMPC A21-23 inclusive]**

- Councillors should convene a site meeting in October to gain a current view of the condition
- Cllr Bastable will consider the SSDC invitation and whether we can take part, without Working Party support/involvement, the Clerk to forward their email to him
- November’s agenda will include a detailed discussion on the outcome of the above, in order to prepare for the 2022 season and what we might be able to do to elicit support from within the Parish (help with maintenance, especially mowing, is a key concern)

**09/21-7: Correspondence - RESOLVED**

09/21-7a: Cllr Bastable advised that we have an opportunity to bring our elections in-line with the timing of the new unitary elections (for councillor positions lasting a 5 year term) thereby avoiding the £600 admin cost of funding an election solely at Parish level. This is open to all Parish and Town councils. Cllr Turk proposed and Cllr Kimber seconded the motion to bring forward our election by one year to May 2022, resolved unanimously. Clerk will email Simon Pritchard to confirm our decision.

09/21-7b: Yeovil Shopmobility application for a grant will be discussed at November's meeting, in the context of the full budget. Proposed by Cllr Kimber, seconded by Cllr Sutton, unanimously supported. Clerk will email an update to the applicant.

**09/21-8: Cemetery - RESOLVED**

09/21-8a: Richard Arnold has written again recently (to follow-up his 2019 enquiry that coincided with the moratorium in effect at that time) to ask whether his ashes can be interred with his mother's, Avril Arnold. Since that moratorium, in itself a response to a nationwide review of cemetery policies by all town and council parishes, Charlton Musgrove has established a policy in line with current legislation. As a result, Mr Arnold will be entitled to purchase the EROB to an ashes plot at non-resident rates 'now', followed by his interment in due course at the rate for that service. Council are not able to determine, at this meeting, whether the EROB granted and applied when Avril Arnold was interred will allow, lawfully, for her son to join her in the same plot. There may be other considerations as well such as a change to a memorial/tablet.

Clerk to urgently investigate the legal position in relation to the EROB that granted the right to Avril Arnold's interment.

Once that information has been established, Clerk to immediately write back to Mr Arnold to advise his options under current policy, which has changed following a nationwide review.

Resolved unanimously, proposed by Cllr Moore and seconded by Cllr Bastable. **[Action CMPC A24]**

09/21-8b: Cllr Bastable advised it has been brought to the Council's attention that walker(s) have created a short-cut pathway through a boundary at the cemetery to link with the legitimate footpath network. Cllr Bastable has erected a laminated sign at the appropriate location in the cemetery, informing pedestrians they are not entitled to pass that way. In addition, the soil from the most recent grave excavation have been piled to make that route less attractive. Cllr Bastable warned councillors that if the behaviour continues, the Council may have to fund a more effective and permanent fencing solution, at cost to the Parish.

In a similar vein, mis-use of the bins provided at the cemetery solely for the disposal of cemetery-related artefacts (spent floral tributes recycled / plastic or other materials placed in waste bin) have led the parishioner who has voluntarily emptied those bins weekly for years to withdraw their services. The bins are not for the disposal of dog faeces. Despite various efforts at signage pointing cemetery users at the correct use of each of the two bins, it seems we cannot continue to support their provision. After exploration of all the options, it was resolved unanimously to remove both bins from the cemetery, placing a laminated sign where they were, asking cemetery users to remove all their waste and dispose of it at home. Proposed by Cllr Kimber, seconded by Cllr Rochford.

**[Action CMPC A25-6]**

09/21-8c: Cllr Bastable gave an update on shuttering following his discussion with the gravedigger last week. Shuttering kits range from £1500-3000 per set and take considerable time to set up, all adding to the costs involved. We do not legally have to offer double-depth graves and it is highly unlikely the gravedigger will agree to dig double at St John's in the future; on our often-wet clay soil, it is an unattractive and risky option.

The Clerk will investigate who is liable / whose insurance covers the risk of injury to the gravedigger while working at St John's and inform the Council. **[Action CMPC A27]**

Cllr Bastable proposed a review of the cemetery policy, particularly regarding double depth grave digging considering recent events and propose any revisions at the next Full Council meeting in November.

Seconded by Cllr Rochford, the resolution was carried unanimously, the review will be carried out by Cllrs Sutton and Rochford. **[Action CMPC A28]**

09/21-8d: It was agreed unanimously to carry over to November's meeting an update on getting the historical cemetery records onto Scribe, mindful that the interim Clerk has not yet had opportunity to look at this and time is limited in this evening's meeting.

09/21-9: Highways – RESOLVED

09/21-9a: Cllr Rochford raised concerns on behalf of residents of Barrow Lane that the 30mph repeater sign outside The Forge, on the blind bend, is again obscured to drivers of a range of vehicles on the lane. While Highways have cut back the hedge foliage immediately around the sign on two occasions this year, the hedge further from the sign is not being maintained by the owner and the sign is not clearly visible. Discussion ensued about whether the sign is correctly positioned, whose responsibility is it to maintain the hedge adequately, what has happened since agreement was reached last year with Gary Warren, Highways Dept, to complete a number of actions including painting the 30mph reminder on the road surface and it was decided unanimously to both write to Gary Warren again (request a meeting on site, discuss the proposal raised this evening to reposition the repeater sign to reduce the risk of it being obscured again, paint the road surface, cover the other items agreed last year) and to the owners at The Forge asking them to please cut back their hedge and maintain it ongoing. **[Action CMPC A29]**

09/21-10: Footpaths & Rights of Way

09/21-10a: Heatherwood pedestrian footway - Cllr Bastable has been writing to SCC's footway and drainage officer, Rachel Turner. The developer, via his agent, has proposed to SCC that he cannot fill in the existing ditch, instead he wishes to run the footway inside the hedge all the way round the bend, including on the ground owned by the Parish. The hedge will remain where it is, although the footway will need to come out somewhere and at that point will need to be approved by Highways (who so far haven't been involved). Rachel Turner has received no actual plan from Gary Adlem / the developer. Without a detailed plan, we are unable to determine our position or our liabilities (insurance). There are already issues with the culvert and ditch on that bend. Cllr Bastable will write to Rachel Turner again to press for a plan that will allow us to look seriously at accepting the proposal and finally resolving the footway matter, allowing Highways to adopt it in due course, subject to it meeting their criteria. **[Action CMPC A3 dated amended to reflect next update due at November's meeting]**

***At this point, the two hour meeting limit has been reached. Council agreed to a 30 minute extension proposed by Cllr Bastable and seconded by Cllr Moore.***

09/21-10b: Cllr Kimber has researched several companies supplying durable metal gates to replace stiles within the Parish, and will share these via email with fellow councillors, with price indications. Cllr Rochford reported feedback that several stiles are in need of attention / repair, such as the stile where the Canon Farm stile goes onto Kimber farmland. Cllrs Rochford and Bastable will collate the list of stiles that need work 'now'. Cllr Sutton volunteered to repair / make safe any stiles deemed dangerous right now. Cllr Iazard pointed out the legislation clearly states the landowner is responsible for the upkeep of stiles on their land. This item will be discussed and updates provided at the November meeting of Full Council. **[Actions CMPC A30-32]**

09/21-11: Parish Accounts and Financial Matters

09/21-11a: Cllr Rochford has manually completed the first bank reconciliation using minutes of meetings and hard copies of bank statements provided at the end of August. Moving forwards, Council unanimously agreed this will be completed in Scribe, negating the need to share bank statements at all. Proposed by Cllr Bastable, seconded by Cllr Moore who, together with Cllr Iazard will grant Cllr Rochford access in Scribe and cover how to operate within the system. **[Action CMPC A33]**

09/21-11b: Council reviewed all payments made under delegated authority since previous Full Council meeting, noting that the final payment quoted in relation to the outgoing Clerk's August salary should read £252.58. The Clerk was able to confirm there is no VAT element to the annual ICO fee.

09/21-11c: There are four payments for consideration, listed below. Discussion was held in relation to the number of cuts occurring at the cemetery. Given the current personal pressure upon the supplier, it was unanimously agreed to settle August's invoice for three cuts but monitor and update again at November's meeting. From the New Year, we may decide to adopt a Purchase Order approach to mowing. Proposed by Cllr Bastable, seconded by Cllr Kimber. **[Action CMPC A34]** The other three payments are approved unanimously.

Payee	Amount	VAT reg?	Notes
Three Counties	£234	Y £39	Cemetery maintenance Aug 6 <sup>th</sup> , 20 <sup>th</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup> . Invoice 4126. Have queried '3 cuts in the month' and the cut due first week of September had to be pulled forward to last week of August owing to BH weekend and staffing / commitments.
Jimmy Flynn	£100	N	Annual web support charge. No increase over 2020. Invoice 72 due 5/10/21
Gooding Accounts	£126	Y £21	Annual payroll fee. Likely this will fall due April 2022. Invoice 17671
Mrs Sally Moore	£3.49	Y £0.58	Reimbursement of monthly subscription to HP Ink. Invoice 27/8/21

09/21-11d: Cllr Bastable has passed on fuel receipts totalling approx. £120 for grass cutting in the play area. Unanimous agreement to reimburse these costs.

09/21-11e&f: Cllr Izard gave an overview of the capability within Scribe to grant various degrees of action and functionality to council members / Clerk as required. There are a full range of reports within Scribe to inform our position from cash at the bank to VAT reclaims and budgets. There are some missing entries which will be input as soon as possible to ensure the system is complete and to generate reports. **[Action CMPC A35]**

The Asset Register needs to be brought into Scribe by Cllr Izard **[Action CMPC A4 – date updated]**

Cllr Moore proposed an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council on 26/10/21 to discuss the draft budget & Scribe, details of which will be shared with councillors ahead of that meeting. Unanimous agreement following a proposal and second by Cllrs Bastable and Sutton respectively.

09/21-12: Non-standard items for next Agenda:

Items for next Ordinary Agenda 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021: Parish / Council appetite for environmental group in response to emails from SCC, DEFRA, SDC

09/21-13: Dates of next meetings – Extraordinary Full Council on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October and Ordinary Full Council on Tuesday 16 November 2021

Meeting closed at 22.02

Signed as a true record by ..... Robin Bastable Chairman on .....(date)