**There was a remote meeting of Chawleigh Parish Council on Thursday 14th January 2021 at 7.30pm held on ZOOM**

**Members Present:** Parish Councillors Steve Godley (Chairman); Daphne Cockram; Jan Flavin; Henry Martin; Stuart Swift; Andrew Huxley

**Also Present:** District Councillor Clive Eginton; County Councillor Margaret Squires and potential Parish Councillor Chris Lynden.

**In attendance:** Rob Martin, Locum Clerk

**No members of the general public**:

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**MINUTES:**

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| **1** | **APOLOGIES**  There were no councillor apologies. Potential parish councillor Bert Batty had recently injured himself, so was unable to attend. |
| **2** | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)**  Non-pecuniary interests were declared by:   * The Chairman in relation to anything on the playing field * Cllr. Flavin whose husband was involved with the EOPSS |
| **3** | **ELECTRONIC PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**  Due to the Corona virus pandemic and current Government guidelines the meeting was held remotely on the Zoom platform. |
| **4** | **APPOINTMENT OF LOCUM CLERK**  On a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Cockram, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Rob Martin be appointed Locum Parish Clerk for the time being.  Rob would be a contractor whilst in this role, with invoices supported by time sheets and this position is to be reviewed again at the end of March 2021.  He would be paid at the hourly rate of £15, with travel allowance at 45p per mile. The employed post is for a total of 20 hours per month, but given the problems caused by the absence of a Clerk for nearly a year, Rob would be paid for the hours actually worked in order to get the parish council back on track. |
| **5** | **CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS**  Chris Lynden presented a short resume of his life and experience, outlining why he wanted to be a parish councillor and what he believed he could bring to the table. On a proposal by the chairman, seconded by Cllr. Flavin it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to co-opt **Chris Lynden** onto the council.  Although not able to attend the meeting, Bert Batty had expressed a wish to be considered for co-option. After considering his qualities as a well-known member of the community and on a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Martin, it was **RESOLVED** to co-opt **Bert Batty** onto the council.  The Clerk would send each new appointee a Declaration and Register of Interests form for completion and return to him. Once the completed forms are received the two new members would take a full part in council activities. |
| **6** | **MID DEVON & DEVON COUNTY UPDATE**  District Cllr. Eginton reported on three things:   * Lapford school had been using temporary RSLA building since the 1960s and not unsurprisingly these were now falling to bits. A bid had been made for replacement classrooms * The new COVID Business Support Grants were now available, but businesses that had accessed these during the first lockdown did not have to reapply this time, they would be contacted automatically. * The Local Government Boundary Commission had agreed to include the local parishes in the ward containing Chawleigh and all that was needed now was the necessary Act of Parliament.   County Cllr. Squires reported that:   * During the lockdown, the issue of Free School Meals in Devon was not as much of a problem as the current arrangements had been with local suppliers. She was not aware of any problems. * The County Council budget was still being prepared with the expectation that there would be no need to go for a referendum to justify increases greater than the limits set down by Government. |
| **7** | **MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS**  On a proposal by Cllr. Flavin, seconded by Cllr. Swift it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Council meetings on 12th November and 30th November 2021 were correct records of the meetings and were both signed by the Chairman. |
| **8** | **CHAWLEIGH COMMUNITY TRUST (CCT)**  The CCT had received a request from Aster for support to access Section 106 finance from Mid Devon District Council in order to subsidise the rents for the proposed 10 units from ‘Affordable’ to ‘Social’ levels.  It was unanimously **AGREED** that such support should be given and the Clerk was tasked with sending an urgent email to this effect. |
| **9** | **PLANNING MATTERS**  There were no planning matters to be considered. |
| **10** | **FINANCIAL MATTERS INCLUDING INVOICES**  **BANK ACCOUNTS**  The Chairman quoted the following account balances   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Account** | **As At** | **Balance**  **£** | | Current Account | 31/12/20 | 21,862.78 | | Shop Account | 31/12/20 | 9,392.65 | | Savings Account | 30/11/20 | 4,027.39 | | **Total** |  | **35,282.82** |   **PAYMENTS** |
|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Payee** | **Services** | **Amount**  **£** | **Payment No.** | | **2020/2021** |  |  |  | | John Cockram | Weed Spraying | 60.00 |  | | Zoom | Monthly Charge (2 months) | 28.78 |  | | Archer Signs | 20’s Plenty Signs | 159.06 |  | | Royal British Legion | Poppy Donation (section 137) | 25.00 |  | | The Dart | Annual Subscription | 7.50 |  |   **RECEIPTS**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Payee** | **Services** | **Amount**  **£** | **Payment No.** | | **2020/2021** |  |  |  | | None |  |  |  |   Items in **bold** were made following the meeting. |
| 11 | **LATEST CORONA VIRUS SITUATION**  It was **Agreed** that the focus for all matters to do with the virus should be the Chawleigh Hub. |
| **12** | **CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTICES RECEIVED**  None |
| **13** | **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**  It was **AGREED** the meetings schedule for the coming year should be:  25th February 2021  8th April 2021  20th May 2021 AGM  1st July 2021  12th August 2021  23rd September 2021  4th November 2021  16th December 2021  These dates were in line with the normal policy of having meetings every six weeks. |
| **14** | **PRECEPT & BUDGET**  It was **AGREED** that this would be too much for this meeting and would be considered at an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on Thursday 21st January 2021. |
| **15** | **EOPSS LOAN REQUEST**  The CCT had requested that the Parish Council take out a loan with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) for a sum of up to £140,000 to enable EoPPS to purchase and refurbish the Earl of Portsmouth pub for the community. The loan would then be lent-on to the CCT to add to the Community Share income for the project. A community referendum was being organised to judge whether there was support for the arrangement.  The first stage would be to apply for Borrowing Approval for the sum, which goes initially to the Devon Association for Local Councils (DALC) for a quality check, before being sent to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for approval by the Government Minister. Once that approval is gained, the Parish Council is free to borrow from any source, but in practice the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is the go-to source. The current rate of interest for an annuity repayment is 1.5% and, on a loan of £140,000 over 25 years, this amounts to around £6,800 per annum in payments. The interest rate is very low, and is fixed for the full term which is an excellent deal.  Once the result of the share issue is known then the amount to be borrowed is limited by the approval, but only the amount needed can be drawn down. The arrangement is solely a parish council one.  The situation of the parish council lending the drawn down amount to the CCT has to be addressed, with the repayments required matching those paid by the parish council to PWLB. A formal agreement would need to be in place between the Parish Council and CCT, with the loan being the first charge on the property as it would with a mortgage on a house.  In order to obtain the Loan Approval, there first of all has to be a ‘referendum’ of the council taxpayers of Chawleigh to enable the parish council to demonstrate that the community are fully behind the project, to the extent that if everything fails they are prepared to bear the full loan charges. This is a requirement before approval can be obtained and the Parish Council is determined to do that immediately. Once that is complete, assuming the referendum answer is yes, the process can be conducted at speed. Obviously, in the current circumstances, the referendum will not be done as a poll, but will have to be conducted using a paper ballot, controlled against the Register of Electors.  It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council should consider making such an application for borrowing approval and that steps be taken to get the referendum mechanism in place. When the result of that is known, a decision will need to be taken on whether the parish council should make the loan available. |
| **16** | **NOTICEBOARDS/SIGNS**  The Chairman presented a number of options for the replacement of three dilapidated road directions signs. It was unanimously **AGREED** that the preferred option was traditional black letting on white background finger-posts and he would obtain a quotation for this option. |
| **17** | **MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR INCLUDING UPDATES ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**  The Chairman outlined the steps he had taken to obtain the parish council property back from the previous clerk. He had been successful in securing the return of the laptop and printer which, along with bank statements and cheque books, he would give the Locum Clerk. There were, however many things that were not immediately available because the passwords given were not working properly  One matter that was of concern was that the website could still not be accessed. The discussion then revolved around what was to be done, on the understanding that BT, the host of the site, was not going to continue doing so very soon. It was generally agreed that linked email addresses should be introduced for councillors and a new website constructed. The Locum Clerk and Cllr. Swift would come up with options for this. |
| **18** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**  None |
| **19** | **MEETING CLOSURE**  The meeting close at 9.37pm |

Signed:………………………

Print:…………………………

Date:…………………………

**ALL DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT BY REQUEST**