**There was a remote meeting of Chawleigh Parish Council on Thursday 25th February 2021 at 7.30pm held on ZOOM**

**Members Present:** Parish Councillors Steve Godley (Chairman); Daphne Cockram; Jan Flavin; Henry Martin; Stuart Swift; Andrea Huxley; Bert Batty; Chris Lynden.

**Also Present:** District Councillor Clive Eginton; David Flavin and Mark Joslin (CCT)

**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 |
| **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. Cockram 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** | **MINUTES**  The minutes from the meeting on 21st January 2021 , Item 15 had the following replacement paragraphs changed:  1st Paragraph to read:  *‘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.’*  Last paragraph to read:  *‘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.’*  On a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Cockram, it was **Resolved** that the minutes for the meetings on 14th January 2021 and 21st January 2021 (adjusted as above) be approved. The Chairman would sign the adjusted minutes when the situation allowed. |
| **5** | **COUNCIL REPORTS**   1. **The Clerk’s Report**   The Clerk outlined the work that he had done since the last meeting, stating that he had:   * Drawn up accounts for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 from the limited records available. * Completed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/2020. Both the accounts and AGAR were on this agenda for approval. * Analysed the VAT due from HMRC and discovered that the last claim made by the Parish Council was during 2016/2017 with nothing since then. His current analysis was that HMRC owed more than £6,000 to Chawleigh Parish Council over the missing period. He expressed a need for past invoices to be recovered from the previous Clerk. * The Chairman had again attempted to contact the former Clerk, but understood that she was not at home currently. The Clerk explained that he needed the original documentation before he could make the VAT claims, as he needed to identify the VAT number of all contractors to include on the form. * The Clerk then listed the tasks he had identified as needing to be tackled over the next month or two. These included:   *Internal Audit*  *Asset Register*  *Insurance Cover*  *Final Ex Gratia payment to former Clerk*  *Policy Review*  *Website Content*   1. **The Chairman’s Report**   The Chairman reported that he had reported the highway matters from the last meeting, and would further report the speeding through Chenson after having an item on the agenda at the next meeting.   1. **Other Councillor Reports**   There were no reports from other councillors. |
| **6** | **CHAWLEIGH COMMUNITY TRUST (CCT)**  District Councillor Eginton was pleased to be able to announce that the District Section 106 Board had decide to award £20,000 per property, or £200,000 in total to the CCT for the affordable housing project it was undertaking.  Mark Joslin and David Flavin explained the current position whereby the CCT was ostensibly set up to build 10 affordable properties and the EoPPS with the latter just being a sub-committee of the former. The reason why the pub project was incorporated into the CCT was that only a formal Community Benefit Society, which the CCT is, can issue a Community Share Offer. Although combined as one in the forward projections, they were treated completely separately by the CCT.  It was clarified that the request for a loan would only be confirmed as necessary if the share offer was fully subscribed at £225,000 first. The Parish Council would prepare the ground for a potential loan by requesting a loan sanction from the Secretary of State for MCLG. |
|  | *The Chairman to declare the meeting closed* |
| **7** | **PUBLIC AND OTHER BODIES’ SESSION**  To hear reports from and allow questions to be asked to District and County Councillors and to take any questions from members of the public.   1. **County Councillor**   County Councillor Squires was not available for this meeting and no report had been received.   1. **District Councillor**   District Councillor Eginton explained how the District Council meeting the previous night was nearly four and a half hours long and was about setting its council tax for 2021/2022.  The conclusion was that the Mid Devon Council Tax would increase for a Band D property by £5 per annum from £208.84 to £213.84, or 2.39%  Parish and Town Council increases averaged 9.66%, at £69.38. In comparison, The Chawleigh increase would be 3.4%, half of which was due to a technical change in the calculation.  The Devon County Council increase was 4.99% to a new level of £1,511.28; the Police and Crime Commissioner 6.73% to £236.56; Devon Fire and Rescue 1.99% to £90.00.  Overall, the average Band D increase would be £99.61 from £2,021.45 to 2,121.06 or 4.93%.   1. **Members of the public**   There were no members of the public present, except those representing the Chawleigh Community Trust (CCT). |
|  | *The Chairman to declare the meeting open* |
| **8** | **DOG FOULING**  Cllr. Batty stated that he had produced some A5 signs for the affected footpaths, to be put up once he had spoken to the relevant landowners. It was suggested that this could be an article for the Dart Magazine. |
| **9** | **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)**  Cllr. Batty said that in March 2019 a £600 grant was received from the DCC P3 scheme, of which £200 was spent in earlier in this financial year for log removal on FP19, by Nick Downie, leaving £400 for further PROW work in the coming year. In addition, a £600 grant application was to be made from the current P3 fund.  On a proposal by Cllr. Martin, seconded by Cllr. Swift, it was **Resolved** that Approval was given for Cllr. Batty to make the grant application. |
| **10** | **LAMINATOR**  On a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Martin, it was **Resolved** purchase an A3 Laminator to assist Cllr. Batty with the Dog Fouling signs together with some strong laminating pouches, with a budget of up to £60. |
| **11** | **WEBSITE**  Cllr. Swift reported on research carried out with Cllr. Huxley on the possibilities for replacing the current website, due to become obsolete by May 2021.  He reported that having looked at the detail the current website held it was a mess, out of date and illegal.  The illegality was due to the fact that it did not comply with the Accessibilty Standards that had been introduced with effect from 23rd September 2018. The files accessible from the website were not in a format suitable for all possible users, as required by the regulations, and there was no Accessibility Statement on it another requirement, following and audit of its contents.  The Clerk had forwarded a listing of those items that were considered as either required, or were deemed to be best practice to include. A lot of the Chawleigh Parish Council versions of these documents, where they existed, were in an inaccessible pdf format that would need to be changed.  Following a lengthy discussion on the options available, on a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr. Batty, it was **Resolved** that the following conclusions determine the work on forming a new website:   * Yes, the parish council needed a website going into the future. * The website should in the first instance be hosted by MDDC, and be set up using their standards. This option would be free of charge. * If for any reason, the MDDC option is not satisfactory, as judged by Cllrs. Swift and Huxley, the hosting arrangement would revert back to an IONOS with an annual cost of around £58. * The aim should be to have a working website as soon as possible, initially with information and files just for the current year in an accessible format. * Earlier years would be updated as and when possible using the Word versions of existing files. * Older files in pdf format, not deemed accessible, would be altered using Foxit Phantom Professional licence currently costing £121.41 per seat, per annum. The purchase of this would be made at a later date when it was definitely going to be needed. * All new files would be put on to the website in an accessible format only. * The MDDC website infrastructure would need to be configured to accept the Word format. * The updating process would require more hours for the Locum Clerk, and those involved in the work would need training from MDDC |
| **12** | **EARL OF PORTSMOUTH PRESERVATION SOCIETY (EoPPS)**  The Chairman had drafted a letter to residents on the possibility of the Parish Council considering obtaining a loan from the PWLB in order to bridge the gap between the amount needed and the target for the Community Share offer which would potentially raise £225,000. His draft had been circulated to councillors and he wanted approval from Council for the final wording.  Cllr. Swift asked the CCT representatives present whether his understanding that the funds available would cover two years repayments of the loan and was informed that this was not necessarily the case. This he believed meant that the wording of the letter would have to be changed.  A further question regarding the provision for covering the Parish Council legal fees was asked and it was confirmed that there was a provision of around £1,700 for the setting up of a borrowing facility, whether or not the PWLB was involved.  The Community Share Offer had been running for about 10 days and had raised just over £60,000 so far. The CCT was not assuming that the PWLB would be the loan facility, it was originally just a loan facility.  The letter should be revised to take out any assumptions and just deal with facts, as it was important that it should not ‘lead’ residents to an answer, just ask the question.  The Chairman would revise the letter and circulate it to councillors at the weekend. The letters would be put into an envelope, together with a return envelope for the completed responses and he, the Clerk and possibly County Councillor Squires would be available to open the envelopes and verify the result.  The Chairman asked whether it was advisable or even possible that the parish council should buy a share in the CCT in order to have some influence, but it was concluded that the Parish Council representative on the CCT Board should report both ways as an effective voice on the matter. There was no need to acquire a share. |
| **13** | **GRAFFITI**  It was questioned whether it was a good idea to have the graffiti on the bridge at Two Bridges, as this would affect the moss and other natural growth on the wall. It was **Agreed** that Cllr. Cockram would report the graffiti using the County Council website even though it was not anticipated that it would be removed. |
| **14** | **VILLAGE SPRING CLEAN**  Following advice from County Councillor Eginton, it was **Agreed** that this should be postponed until the majority of people had the chance to be COVID vaccinated, say July/August/September 2021. This would be put on a future agenda for consideration nearer that time. |
| **15** | **DRAINAGE OUTSIDE BUTTS COTTAGE**  Recent heavy rain had resulted in floods appearing not just at Butts Cottage but also Hollow Tree, Darts Farm and Jenson. The Chairman undertook to report on the DCC website these incidences alongside the need to reduce the hedge at Gables. |
| **16** | **FINAL ACCOUNTS 2018/2019 & 2019/2020**  To adopt the final accounts attached for two financial years, in order to be able to complete the 2019/2020 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), see below.  On a proposal by Cllr. Flavin, seconded by Cllr. Huxley, it was **Resolved** to adopt the accounts as presented by the Locum Clerk for both the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 financial years. |
| **17** | **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2019/2020**  On a proposal by Cllr. Cockram, seconded by Cllr. Lynden it was Resolved that the following parts of the 2019/2020 AGAR be adopted and submitted to PKF Littlejohn, External Auditors.   1. The Certificate of Exemption 2. The Annual Governance Statement 3. The Accounting Statements   The Locum Clerk explained that he had contacted a potential Internal Auditor who was willing to undertake the required submission before the forms could be submitted. It was expected that this would be undertaken before the next meeting when final approval would be sought. |
| **18** | **BUDGET 2021/2022**  On a proposal by Cllr. Swift, seconded by Cllr. Flavin, it was **Resolved** that the budget analysis presented by the Locum Clerk should be used for the coming year. |
| **19** | **BANK RECONCILIATION**  On a proposal by Cllr. Swift, seconded by Cllr. Batty, it was **Resolved t**o approve the 31st January 2021 Bank Reconciliation statement, as presented by the Locum Clerk. |
| **20** | **RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS TO DATE COMPARED TO BUDGET**  On a proposal by Cllr. Swift, seconded by Cllr. Batty, it was Resolved to receive the attached statement of Receipts and Payments compared to Budgets for the period from 1st April to 31st January 2021. |
| **21** | **RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE**  On a proposal by Cllr. Flavin, seconded by Cllr. Swift, it was **Resolved** to approve the payment of the invoices on the schedule below for the period since the last meeting: |
|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **PAYMENTS** |  |  |  | | **Payment to** | **Services** | **Amount**  **£** | **Payment No.** | | **2020/2021** |  |  |  | | RJ Martin | Locum Clerk - January 2021 | 862.50 |  | | RJ Martin | Expenses | 1.83 |  | | Zoom | Meeting Access | 14.39 |  | | D. Smith | Shop Repairs | 193.00 |  | | TK Play | Swing Repairs | 624.00 |  |   **Jan/Stuart**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **RECEIPTS** |  |  |  | | **Receipt from** | **Services** | **Amount**  **£** | **Method** | | **2020/2021** |  |  |  | | None |  |  |  | |
| **22** | **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**  To consider the following Planning Applications and to agree comments: |
|  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Reference** | **Location** | **Proposal** | | 21/00168/PNAG | Burnell Mechanical Services Chawleigh Devon | Prior Notification for the erection of an extension to an agricultural storage building.  **Decision:** To support the application | | 21/00240/HOUSE | The Stables Chawleigh Chulmleigh Devon EX18 7HJ | Insertion of new door opening in rear elevation  **Decision:** To support the application | |
| **23** | **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**  The next scheduled remote meeting of Chawleigh Parish Council is on Thursday 8th April 2021, at 7.30pm.  The Annual Parish and Annual General Meetings will be remote on Zoom on 5th May 2021, starting at 7pm |
| **24** | **CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS – PART 2**  Section 1 paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 stipulates that a council may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.  It was **Resolved** that the Chairman close the meeting in order to consider matters that were confidential because they involved personal information. |
| **25** | **OPEN MEETING CLOSURE**  The meeting closed at 21.25 |

Signed:………………………

Print:…………………………

Date:…………………………

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

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|  | **CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS – PART 2** |
| **26** | **FORMER CLERK**  The Locum Clerk wished to clarify whether the former Clerk had resigned formally, or whether, when she was not well, certificates from doctors confirming this had been received.  He also stated that, whilst preparing the final accounts for the last two years, it was apparent that many of her salary & expenses cheques had not been cleared, indeed many were still attached to the old cheque books.  It was agreed that no health certificates had been received.  Councillors confirmed that they were aware that some money was owed to her, but were unsure what to agree to, and whether HMRC had been notified of the difficulties. The Locum Clerk suggested that the parish council had no obligation to make any payments to her, given the lack of documentary evidence available, but might instead make an ex-gratia payment based on the evidence that was available. It would be in full and final settlement of any amounts due, and the responsibility for informing HMRC of the income would lie with her.  The Locum Clerk would draw up a report on the amounts paid, cheques drawn, but not cleared and time not claimed at all since her employment started in January 2017. From this, councillors could make an informed decision on what, if any, money should be paid. |

Signed:………………………

Print:…………………………

Date:…………………………