**Chittlehampton Parish Council Minutes for 31/07/24 Meeting held at Umberleigh Village Hall.**

Meeting commenced at 19:39

**Apologies**: Cllr Hoare sends her apologies as she is on holiday – approved by councillors.

**Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Nicklin declared an interest for an additional payment brought to the council for payment for plants for Chittlehampton village square, however this was contested by the Chair as the total spend agreement was conflicted, with the understanding that this would be reviewed ready for the next meeting. Cllrs agreed with this.

**Minutes**: Minutes for meetings; 19/06/24, 17/07/24, and 26/07/24 – Cllr Nicklin expressed a wish to adjust the 19/06/24 minutes and explain that she was not contesting the six month rule, but rather trying to explain that when an absence has been approved by full council, the six month rule starts over, she requested a motion and this was seconded by Cllr Beauregard, that this be reflected within these minutes. 17/07/24 minutes approved. 26/07/24 minutes the Chair Cllr Wheaton requested to be adjusted to include mention of the weeds within the square and the proposal of purchasing flowers to put in the plant pots within the square, to the value of £50. All Cllrs agreed to this amendment.

**Election of Vice-chair:** The previous Vice-chairCllr Murch was thanked for her service to the parish council and the fantastic work she has done with the play area. Cllr Beauregard requested to be vice-chair, this was not contested by anyone and was agreed by all councillors present.

**Co-option of a new Councillor:** Matthew Jones sends his apologies as he cannot attend this meeting. Majority vote meant that Matthew Jones was co-opted onto the parish council. Cllr Nicklin abstained from the vote.

**Clerks report:**

* + PC Stephen Theobald was contacted for a Vision Zero speed watch request – no response yet. In addition to this, the Umberleigh speed watch group have been given the go ahead for certain areas where they can set up.
  + The owner of the field at the top of Deptford Hill was contacted regarding the damage to the bank, they are currently very busy but will get around to sorting the damage.
  + Weed control update – the clerk has contacted five different companies/individuals to address the issue of weeds, however, there has been no response.
  + Journalist Ella Sampson was thanked about her interest in the Cobbaton Road development but was informed that the Parish Council does not wish to pass comment on the issue.
  + Flood warden update – Michael Adey from Umberleigh has adopted the role of flood warden and was happy to be mentioned by name in the minutes.
  + Changing Chittlehampton to 20mph – the clerk has attempted to complete the application forms, however when trying to access the forms Devon County Council website states that they are no longer available, Devon County Council has been contacted regarding this issue and the clerk is awaiting a response.
  + Opening a separate savings account for Umberleigh defib – the clerk requested to open an additional savings account specifically for the Umberleigh defib funds, that way it is completely separate from the parish councils’ general reserves funds, and it can incur its own interest over the four-year period between defib renewals. The Chair did suggest there could potentially be an issue with this regarding reclaiming VAT, the Clerk would review this. All Cllrs voted in agreement should there be no issues regarding VAT reclaims.
  + Scribe refund update – unfortunately, no refund and re-issued invoice has been possible, therefore the parish council are unable to reclaim the VAT. A donation of £95 was made back in June to cover this VAT loss, with the request by the donator that it be used for the play area.
  + PKF Littlejohn AGAR update – the external audit/AGAR forms have been sent to PKF Littlejohn’s, additionally the internal audit has been posted within the noticeboards for members of the public to read.

**Payments for approval:**

* + £60 hire charge for Chittlehampton Methodist Rooms 19/06/24, 15/07/24, 17/07/24, and 26/07/24 – all Cllrs agreed to the payment.
  + Clerk overtime wages of £244.23 – Chair Cllr Wheaton argued that the clerks contract does not allow for overtime without prior warning and agreement by council and so cannot be paid, and requested for the item to be adjourned for another meeting, the clerk informed that she currently does not have a copy of the contract and so was unaware of this, other Cllrs also argued that the circumstances surrounding the overtime were extraordinary and provided no option to wait for a meeting to agree the overtime before it could happen. All Cllrs voted in agreement of the payment with the exception of Chair Cllr Wheaton who abstained from the vote.
  + Printer ink from Tesco £30 – All Cllrs voted in favour.
  + £249.60 for dog bin waste collection to NDDC – another invoice was issued with the amount changed to £262.08, this adjustment was motioned by Cllr Blyther and seconded by Cllr Alford. All Cllrs agreed to the adjustment.
  + Umberleigh defib payment to Southwest Ambulance Service of £1,680 including VAT – this was prior agreed in another meeting and was paid before this meeting, this invoice was sent after the fact so Umberleigh was not left without a defib. All Cllrs agreed.
  + Julie Snooks audit invoice of £250 – All Cllrs agreed.
  + Public Works Loan due August, direct debit payment of £283.74 – All Cllrs agreed.
  + Sainsburys payment of £2.25 for paper clips and drawing pins – All Cllrs agreed.
  + Tesco payment of £25.40 for printer ink, ring binders, dividers, and A4 pocket pouches - All Cllrs agreed.
  + Umberleigh Village Hall payment of £50 for 31/07/24 PC meeting, and 05/10/24 play area dance event – two separate invoices of £20 and £30. All Cllrs agreed.

**Financial report:** Attached at the bottom of this document.

**Committee and sub-committee updates:** The planning committee is the only one still quorate, however, Cllrs voted to temporarily disband the committees and sub-committees and bring them back to full council for the time being until the three councillor vacancies are filled.

**Civility and Respect Pledge:** All Cllrs voted in favour with the exception of Chair Cllr Wheaton.

**Adoption of new Standing Orders:** The Chair Cllr Wheaton put forward a motion to postpone this until the next meeting due to not having had time to read the Standing Orders yet, Cllr Alford seconded this. All Cllrs agreed with the exception of Cllr Nicklin, who abstained.

**Adoption of new General Data Protection Regulations Policy:** All Cllrs voted in agreement.

**Planning applications:**

* + Repair and replacement of farmhouse roof at Lower Biddacott Farm, Chittlehampton. Reference number: 78530 – Cllrs have no issues with this.
  + Demolition of agricultural building and erection of one dwelling house and one detached garage class C3, at Hillhead Barn, Chittlehampton. Reference number: 78569 – Cllrs raised concerns that the building is not just a garage, it also has an office above and a bathroom, Cllrs expressed concerns and have put a comment forward requesting how the garage is going to be restricted with its use. District Cllr Whitehead informed she will also investigate it. Clerk to forward the information onto to District Cllr Whitehead.
  + Winson Cross update – Three enforcement notices have been issued; plot 8 structure on the land (requirements of the Notice are to remove the structure by 28 September 2024) , plot 44 material change of use to storage use and structures and fencing on the land (requirements of the Notice are to remove all structures and fencing from the Land and cease the storage use and remove all stored items from the site by 28 November 2024), plot 19 material change of use to storage use and construction of fencing and gates on the land (requirements of the Notice are to remove all fencing and gates from the land and cease storage use and remove all items stored on the land including but not only timber pallets and domestic table by 28 November 2024). Plot 14 has been issued a notice to the owner of this plot requesting removal of the fencing and domestic items from the land. A compliance visit will occur after 17 August 2024 and if there is no compliance it will proceed to a formal Notice. Plots 43 and 56 have submitted applications seeking to regularise the items on the land, it is currently invalid and a final date has been given for compliance by 31 July 2024. If no valid application is received by this date, then those two plots will be served a formal Notice. Clerk to circulate the email to Cllrs and to add it to the Facebook page.

**Play area inspection quotes:** Cllrs voted in favour of company B, with the quote provided being £399 + VAT for two inspections per year for the next five years. They felt in the long run this would be more cost effective.

**New website for the Parish Council:** Chair Cllr Wheaton proposed the decision be adjourned and a separate meeting be held to just discuss this item in further detail; Cllr Nicklin proposed the decision be made at this meeting. The majority vote went in favour of Cllr Nicklin’s proposal, with item 15/F on the agenda being agreed upon by the majority of Cllrs which was the website the clerk created, and would like to create an appropriate budget for the following financial year to reflect the purchase or update of a WCAG 2.2 compliant website, the current financial years budget gives £100 towards a website, of which £24.22 has already been spent. Chair Cllr Wheaton abstained from the vote.

A motion was put in by Cllr Blyther to look at the website the clerk created at this meeting, this motion was seconded by Cllr Nicklin and the website was viewed at the end of the meeting.

**County Councillors update and highways report:** Attached at the bottom of this document.

**District Councillors report:** District Cllr Whitehead attended a meeting regarding the issue of only providing plant-based food to schools, food banks etc. She did not support this motion and updated that the motion did not go through.

**Members of the public open session:** A member of the public updated on the Wi-Fi issue currently ongoing within Umberleigh, they informed that the validated broadband vouchers are now not valid and they now need five more households in order to receive the broadband vouchers.

**Date of next meeting**: Wednesday 11th September at Chittlehampton Methodist School Rooms. District Cllr Whitehead informed she would be away and so sends apologies in advance.

Meeting closed at 21:16.

**These minutes are a draft copy until confirmed and signed as a true account.**

**Quarterly budget comparison to spending 01/04/24 - 31/07/24.**

Clerks’ salary budget is £4,300 – current spending is £1,058.31.

SLCC membership cost budget is £100 – current spending is £112, a £12 overspend.

ICO has no budget against it – current spend is £35.

Website charges have a budget of £100 – current spend is £24.22. With building a new website the cost will a lot over budget.

DALC membership budget is £250 – current spend is £377.48. An overspend of £127.48.

NDDC dog bin emptying budget is £850 – current spend is £249.60.

Insurance budget is £800 – current spend is £1,037.04. An overspend of £237.04.

Umberleigh defib had no budget set due to being funded by donations – current spend is £1,680.

Annual donations had no budget set – current spend is £207 to Umberleigh defib and £600 from play area account from money raised towards Devon Air Ambulance.

Clerks’ expenses budget of £550 – current spend is £117.04.

Training budget is £250 – current spend is £36 although a donation towards this of £30 was made.

Hall hire charges budget is £750 – current spend is £130.

There is £3,752.84 in the general reserves account, of which £259 is Umberleigh defib money (£539 once VAT is reclaimed). That leaves £3,493.84 in the general reserves account. Being a small council, the recommended amount of 50% of our annual precept should be held in general reserves, which would be £7,350 (not including money already there from the previous financial year). The next precept money payment goes into the parish council bank account in September, and there is currently £8,652.40 in the current account. With current budget overspends and the need for a new website, there is still enough money in the account to afford a new website should councillors vote on a WCAG 2.1 (and 2.2) compliant website.



**County Councillor Report**

**HEALTH IN AN AGEING DEVON**

We’ve published our latest Annual Public Health Report and this year the theme is Health in an Ageing Devon.

The report, which you can view here, highlights the challenges that an ageing population in Devon presents, the underlying factors that can contribute to poor health and what we can all do to help ensure that we live healthier for longer.

Devon has an older population and faster older population growth than the UK average.

Over the next 20 years the predicted proportion of those aged 75 and over living in Devon will increase from 13.7 per cent this year to 18.4 per cent by 2043.

This population change, says the report, and that people are spending more years in ill-health, poses challenges in relation to the health, wellbeing, and quality of life for all of us. Coupled with a reduction in the birth rate in the future, this means that the ratio of younger people to older people will also reduce.

This will inevitably affect our frontline workforce and carers, both paid and unpaid.

Currently across Devon there are just over two working-age people to one older person. By 2043, we expect this to reduce to 1.7 working aged people to one older person.

The report also illustrates how, over the past decade, life expectancy has stalled and remained similar both locally and nationally.

The average life expectancy across Devon is 85 and 87 years (male and female respectively) with average healthy life expectancy being approximately 77 and 79 years.

This shows that people in Devon are on average living around a decade in poorer health and, as with life expectancy, no significant improvement in healthy life expectancy has been seen over the last decade.

It also looks at other areas including risk factors for older people, the predicted growth in long-term conditions and disabilities such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity and the importance of physical activity, vaccinations, screening, and oral health.

**SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE STRUGGLING**

As schools close their doors for the summer holidays, we are aware that the financial challenges facing some households in Devon will be intensified over the next few weeks.

Increased costs such as food and activities, particularly with the current cost of living, and reduced incomes due to childcare, mean that this year’s break could be especially difficult.

That’s why we are reminding people of the support available through the Government’s Household Support Fund, which is planned to run until Monday 30 September.

Earlier this year we were allocated a little over £5 million from the Government to help households struggling to pay higher bills for energy, food, water, and other essential items.

We’ve used just over £2.2m of the fund to send children who receive benefits-related free school meals supermarket vouchers worth £105 to spend on replacing the meals they would have had at school during the day. It’s the equivalent of £15 per week of the one week May half term and six-week summer holiday and has been distributed in one lump sum now to allow families some flexibility on how they spend the vouchers and try to help with the additional pressure the summer period puts on household budgets.

We’ve already sent these supermarket vouchers to families whose children currently receive free school meals, so please check your inbox, and redeem them. If you were expecting to receive the vouchers, but didn’t, get in touch with our team as soon as possible by emailing freeschoolmeals@devon.gov.uk or calling 0345 155 1019.

People’s circumstances change all the time, so if you didn’t previously qualify for free school meals but your income has recently reduced or stopped, please apply via our website. It’s the quickest and easiest way for your eligibility to be assessed and you will get an instant decision. You can find out more about the free school meal holiday voucher scheme on our website.

**CARBON EMMISSIONS CONTINUE TO FALL**

Our long-term efforts to reduce carbon emissions are continuing to pay off after the latest figures show that we are ahead of schedule in our goal to reduce our emissions by 70 per cent by 2030.

The latest report on our carbon footprint shows that emissions continue to decline.

The total level of emissions we produced in 2022/23 was 19,400 tonnes (of carbon dioxide equivalent), a 56 per cent fall when compared to the 43,826 tonnes in our baseline year of 2012/13.

The figures take into account emissions created in areas such as our vehicle fleet, school transport and buildings.

Street lighting is one of our main sources of emissions and the latest figures show that these emissions fell by almost a quarter in 2022/23 when compared with 2021/22 (4,576 tonnes falling to 3,465 tonnes).

This is largely due to the project to convert all of Devon’s 79,000 streetlights and highways signals to LED lightbulbs and to put in better controls so that lights can be dimmed. This project is in its final stages and 90 per cent complete.

We have also completed retrofitting nine council buildings, increased the number of electric vehicles in our fleet while staff are travelling less when compared to pre-Covid and moved to agile working and video conferencing.

Other contributory factors that have reduced our carbon footprint include the reduced carbon intensity of the grid electricity we use.

More than half of the grid electricity we use in the UK now comes from non-fossil fuel sources.