



CHILHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Notes of the Advisory Meeting of the Council held via Zoom Remote Meeting
on 1st July 2021 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Councillors: Cllrs D Marriott, J Marriott, McKay, Martin (Chair), Meaden, Taylor, Schofield and Uncle.

Also, present Caroline Vincent (Locum Clerk to Council), 10 members of the public.

1/7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies

2/7. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Cllr Martin welcomed everyone to the Advisory meeting and addressed everyone with the following:

The legislation to permit Councils to meet virtually expired on May 6th. Since then, Councils have been very limited in their options when it comes to holding meetings.

The requirements for Face-to-Face meetings were long and extensive and Councils have been left largely without support in how to tackle the issue. These are exceptional times, and many Council Members are also wary of meeting face to face, given that the Country is still in lockdown, and restrictions are not fully lifted.

An Advisory meeting is an option, where Council can continue to function, by using the clerk to officially take decisions recommended by the Council, instead of the Council taking a vote. As no formal decisions are being taken by Council, these meetings can be held virtually.

The Clerk needs to be issued with what is known as Section 101 powers- the Power to take decisions, this was done earlier in the year.

This kind of meeting is purely to discuss items of an urgent matters that need resolving- allowing the Clerk to make use of the S101 powers to have recommendations given via this meeting. Anything that has been actioned by the S101 is documented so that there is transparency, this can be added to the website, circulated to all members and at the next face to face meeting in September or October. These decisions are documented in the minutes with appendices, to ensure total transparency. Items such as Correspondence will be actioned daily by the Clerk, as only correspondence that requires discussion comes before the Council. A list of correspondence received and responded to will also be kept and circulated. Planning applications are dealt with by members making their comments to the Clerk via email, declaring any interest by email, so that the Clerk has a record, and then by the Clerk putting the majority view as a comment on behalf of the Council. These therefore do not get tabled at an Advisory meeting.

This is not intended to be a regular occurrence but has been actioned to ensure the Council can function normally. We hope to return to regular meetings as soon as possible, and as soon as we can do so safely. The Parish Council is required to have 4 meetings a year- an Annual Parish Meeting in May and 3 Full Council meetings. As such, it is not a requirement to hold a meeting every month, and although Chilham has grown accustomed to holding 12 meetings a year, the Council considered that Covid, the pace of delivery on current projects and the granting of section 101 powers to the Clerk, meant that a meeting in the usually very quiet holiday period could be cancelled. Working Groups that have been formed instead of Committees can however continue their work virtually and report their proposals back to the Full Council when they are ready. In this way, the Council considers we are utilising your funds in the most cost-effective way and allowing the Council to function safely.

The past year has been a tough one for members and staff of this Council. The Council and its members have had to endure a deluge of very unpleasant communication with one resident in particular, whose behaviour is

1 Signed by the Chair: Date:.....

being investigated by the Police and is being considered as harassment and bullying. Hundreds of emails, libellous statements, ridicule, and blatant lies, with a constant disregard for personal privacy and an attempt to paint the Council and its members and employees in poor light, has been the cause of great concern, wasted considerable Council resource, and had a profound effect on the well-being of Council Employees.

This individual I hope is ashamed of how they are treating members and staff of the Council committing their time and energy for the good of the Parish. I cannot recall a time when other Councils were subject to such disgraceful behaviour. I call publicly for this individual to STOP such behaviour immediately as it is divisive, sowing division in the Parish, laced with untruth and innuendo, potentially libellous and slanderous and wholly inappropriate. This is not the normal accepted behaviour one expects from a person wishing to have the respect of others and to be considered a key part of the community. No member of this Council deserves such treatment, and as we have sought every means to get this person to STOP, we will now sadly need to look at using the public purse to pursue a legal avenue. This individual claims with glee to be blind copying in members of the Parish in an attempt to disenfranchise this Council. I urge any of you who are indeed being copied in, to ensure that breaches of GDPR are not taking place and to take this person to task- for it will be your precept that will need to bear the brunt of any legal challenge.

On a more positive note, I would like to welcome our new Councillors Cllrs Marriott, Taylor, Uncle and McKay to their first formal meeting, albeit an advisory one with members of the public in attendance. Five Councillors were elected on May 7th. Currently 4 have signed their declaration of acceptance of office and declarations of interest and are therefore able to serve. We wish them well in their term of office and have already been enjoying working collaboratively with them all.

3/7. THE BOROUGH COUNCILLOR

Cllr Martin announced the resignation of our Borough Councillor Charles Dehnel, and an election will take place to find a replacement. Cllr Dehnel had circulated a summary of all outstanding items for members, it was expressed not to share this due to some sensitive information. Members thanked Charles for all of his hard worked and wished him well.

Resolved: It was recommended to the Clerk that a letter be written to Charles to thank him.

4/7. COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUPS

Members had previously discussed setting up a number of working groups to share the workload amongst all members to move forward with projects, it was made clear all working groups must report to Full Council for decision making.

Resolved: It was recommended to the Clerk to set up the following working groups with the following members:

Finance and General Purposes

Cllr Doug Marriott
Cllr Jane Martin
Cllr Gill Schofield
Cllr Greg Taylor

Planning:

Cllr Jane Marriott
Cllr Les McKay
Cllr Geoff Meaden

Environment and Open Spaces:

Cllr Doug Marriott
Cllr Geoff Meaden
Cllr Keith Uncle

Events and Communications:

Cllr Jane Martin
Cllr Les McKay
Cllr Gill Schofield
Cllr Greg Taylor
Cllr Keith Uncle

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A Youth working group was also put forward by Cllr McKay, it was recommended that this be included with Events and Communications until a group could be established which would include members of the public and Councillors.

5/7. CHRISTMAS 2021

Cllr Martin explained that the Christmas tree is organised each year by a very capable and effective working group of volunteers of residents, which is a working group of the Parish Council. It is hoped to work alongside the group if they wish to continue. Last year was the first time a Christmas Tree and carol service took place in Shottenden. Cllr Taylor suggested to have carols and a Christmas tree in all three villages for residents this year.

Resolved: It was recommended that the Events and Communications group start to engage with the existing group in preparation for this year's events.

6/7. DEFIBRILLATORS

The Clerk had received correspondence from residents regarding defibrillators and to have one in each village. There had been a kind donation of a defibrillator at the OWL village hall which will be placed outside the main doors to always enable access.

The local Football Club had asked CPC if one could be available to them, members discussed that there are currently 2 in Chilham but was it was not clear if access was always available.

It was felt that one should be made available in Shottenden, but a location needs to be arranged and it was suggested if another could be donated.

Resolved: It was recommended the Clerk investigate the possibilities of a defibrillator in Shottenden and contact details be provided for the person who donated the OWL defibrillator. The Clerk to find out the accessibility of the ones in Chilham before looking at another defibrillator here.

7/7. SEW

A public meeting was held recently with South East Water to discuss the ongoing water issues, they had said minutes of the meeting would be provided but so far these have not been received. Cllr J Marriott said a letter had been received recently by residents with a programme of works to be carried out by South East Water.

Resolved: Recommended to the Clerk to contact SEW for a copy of the minutes and to find out if the programme of works is going ahead as planned, also to contact KCC to confirm.

8/7. HOUSING SURVEY NEEDS

A survey had been received from The Rural Community Housing Enabler via Ashford Borough Council, members felt the questions were quite intrusive and didn't appear to be there to help those who require housing.

Resolved: Recommended to contact The Rural Community Housing Enabler to say CPC are happy to have a Housing Needs survey but the current format is not appropriate, Cllr Jane Marriott to provide comments for the Clerk to forward.

9/7. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

A Scheme of Delegation document was circulated to members as amendments were required, there was a long discussion over the amounts on the document. This document is temporary until CPC resume face to face meetings in September. Cllr D Marriott considered £5k to be too high a figure and suggested £2k for emergency works during the delegation of S101, the majority of members were happy to recommend the £5k.

Resolved: Recommended to leave the amounts as £500 and emergencies with a maximum of £5,000 should this ever be required.

10/7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 2nd September

The meeting ended at 9pm.

3 Signed by the Chair: Date:.....