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EAST CHINNOCK PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the East Chinnock Parish Council meeting held on Monday 2nd February, 2015
starting at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.**

Present:

Chairman	Cllr Mrs M Merchant
Councillors	Mrs R Carter, I D Stephen, N Weber.
Officer	Mrs M Randell
District Councillor	Mr R Pallister
Also present	A Gunn Planning Team Leader

Public Question Time:

1) Mr. Gunn from the planning department had agreed to come to the meeting to answer any questions about the consequences of a change of use application for The Portman Arms. 19 residents were in attendance.

Mr Gunn said that no application had been received yet regarding The Portman Arms. If the owner wants to apply for change of use they have to prove that the current business is not viable and/or that the property has been marketed for a reasonable length of time with no interest.

The Economic Development Department and the Planning Team will want to examine the books to ensure that it has been genuinely managed to succeed and the marketing details, including where and when advertised. They will ask for the sales particulars to check that the pricing etc. is reasonable and will want a list of any enquiries and why they didn't lead to a sale.

New legislation going through will mean that no planning permission will be needed for change of use to a restaurant, café or shop. The National Planning Policy Guidance seeks the retention of village pubs.

Mr Gunn advised that the pub could be registered as a Community Asset. This would give the village 6 months to put together a business plan and raise the funds to purchase the pub. However, it does not give preferential status and the owner can still sell elsewhere. District Councillor Pallister said that SSDC may support some development on the site and the proceeds from this could help with the purchase and running costs of the pub.

A member of the public said that she had been told that the pub would be closed in 3 weeks and boarded up. Mr Gunn said that the council had no powers to make a pub open, however, the business rates would still have to be paid and it could only be marketed as a pub.

Another resident said that he had evidence that somebody had tried to buy the property to continue as a pub and had had his offer turned down. In addition the previous tenant had tried to buy the pub but had been turned down and that in his opinion it had been deliberately run down. Cllr Pallister advised that any documentary evidence should be collated and also witness statements regarding mismanagement etc. prepared where documents were not available as all this would be taken into account when any planning application was considered.

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A resident said that he had been informed by the selling agent that day that they had sold the pub and that contracts would be exchanged shortly. Cllr Pallister and Mr Gunn were of the opinion that this would 'start the clock again' and mean that a new owner would have to run the property as a pub for a reasonable time before they could apply for a change of use. It was agreed that they would check this out with their legal department. In view of this it was decided to ask the clerk to complete the Nomination Form for the property to be registered as a Community Asset to give the village time see if they could put together a bid. A member of the public asked about the licencing of a new owner and Cllr Pallister said that a new owner could not open the pub until they had been granted a licence from the district council. He said he would ask the licencing department to contact him if they received an application.

2) A resident then asked about trees on a public right of way overhanging her garden. Cllr Weber said he would speak to the owner or it may be possible for the ranger to cut some of the growth back.

As there was so much interest the Chairman had extended the public forum time and the council meeting commenced at 8.23pm

180/15 Apologies for absence: Cllr B Murdoch and County Councillor Fysh.

**181/15 Declarations of Interest and to receive any written requests for DPI
dispensation:** none

182/15 Minutes of the last meeting:

Cllr Merchant proposed and Cllr Carter seconded that the minutes, having previously been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a true record of the January meeting.

183/15 Matters arising:

it was proposed by Cllr Merchant and seconded by Cllr Stephen that the clerk complete the Nomination Form to register The Portman Arms as a Community Asset.

184/15 District Councillor's Report:

Cllr Pallister said that a community event was being organised for early April for all interested parties about the water run-off in the upper catchment areas of Somerset. Details would be sent out shortly.

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185/15 County Councillor's Report:

This was received too late to be read to the meeting.

- i) SCC have frozen council tax for the sixth year in a row despite government funding had decreased by £20 million.
- ii) Connecting Devon & Somerset are on track to reach their ambition of 100% superfast broadband coverage in the area by 2020.
- iii) Julian Wooster from Portsmouth City Council has been appointed as the new permanent Director of Children's Services .
- iv) The new Somerset Rivers Authority has been launched. The aim is to help identify what is needed and fund and deliver a higher standard of flood protection in Somerset and ensure that all flood risk management authorities in the county work together through a combined programme. Full details can be found on their website – www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk

186/15 Planning: Application(s):

The councillors noted that planning permission has been granted for application no. 14/05200/FUL for additional parking spaces and relocation of ham stone wall at Ramsdale, College.

187/15 Clerk's report and correspondence:

- i) Casual Vacancy: two people applied for the casual vacancy advertised following the retirement of Mr. M Slater. As there are two vacancies on the council the councillors decided to co-opt both applicants. This was proposed by Cllr Merchant and seconded by Cllr Stephen. Cllr Merchant welcomed Mr Bussell and Dr Cox to the council and asked them to complete their acceptance of office declarations after the meeting. The clerk will send them copies of the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and they will take up their seats at the next meeting.
- ii) Transparency Code: the clerk has circulated copies of this together with a briefing note. The Code states that the council will have to publish more information on line instead of undergoing an external audit. This is expected to become law next month and the Code will then be operative from the new financial year in April.

188/15 Finance:

- i) The council noted that the Precept paperwork had been submitted to the SSDC.
- ii) Cllr Merchant proposed and Cllr Weber seconded the proposal that financial regulation 6.20 be changed to read – “Where possible estimates or pro-forma invoiced should be obtained for goods so that the costs can be approved by the council and a council cheque issued direct to the supplier. Where this is not possible and items are bought on behalf of the council, the purchaser shall obtain prior approval from the council, where necessary, for the expenditure and present the appropriate paperwork to the council meeting as soon as possible for re-imburement by council cheque.”

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189/15 Payments:

The following payments were presented and approved with Cllr Stephen proposing and Cllr Carter seconding the motion to approve:

- i) The Croquet Association for new mallets and balls - £490.00
- ii) John Lewis for a table tennis table - £279.00
- iii) Glasdon UK Ltd. for a seat and anchorage kit - £546.72
- iv) SSDC for printing of Chinnock Chimes - £58.18

The first three items are funded by Health & Wellbeing Grants from SCC for last year and this year.

190/15 Parish Plan:

Cllr Weber attended the last meeting and reported that a survey regarding the play area had been completed. The respondents felt that whilst the play equipment was old it was functional but would be nice to extend it if possible. A wish for some sort of shelter and seating was expressed together with a request for some sort of trim track equipment. Cllr Weber had reminded them that they need to be looking at the whole village and it's needs and wants for now and the future. The next meeting is on 24th February and Cllr Carter said she would try to attend along with Mr. Bussell, one of the new councillors.

191/15 Entertainments Committee:

The proposal for the additional tentage had been circulated and the councillors were in favour so long as it was advertised as being available to hire. Cllr Stephen proposed and Cllr Carter seconded that the expenditure be approved. It was agreed that because of s137 constraints the purchase be split in two with the first tent invoice being presented to the council in March and the second one at the April meeting to fall in the new financial year.

192/15 Community Speed Watch Report:

Mr Sinclair, the speed watch co-ordinator had sent an annual report. This month is the fifth anniversary and Margaret & Neville Coe and Michael & Mary Slater have stepped down having being involved from the beginning. There are now 7 active volunteers. The figures for the last 12 months show a lower percentage of speeders. He felt that this was because less sessions had been run and there had been problems with the equipment which had reduced the detection rate, rather than there being less speeders.

193/15 Parish Ranger Report:

Cllr Stephen reported that the ranger would be in the parish on 19th February. Cllr Merchant said that the ditch by the drain that runs under the A30 by Broad Lane needs clearing. Also the grills on the A30 and The Hollow need clearing. It was hoped that some work with the digger could be undertaken by Eastfield in addition to the usual litter picking etc.

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194/15 Potholes & General Maintenance Report:

- i) Cllr Carter has spoken to SCC about the verges and hedges in Westways and they say that there is no budget for the work. Cllr Stephen will see if the ranger can do it.
- ii) With regard to Forge Lane drain Cllr Carter stated that she is trying to contact the family of the resident to advise them of the situation.
- iii) The hedge in College has still not been cut and Cllr Merchant has obtained the phone number of the owner. Cllr Carter agreed to phone them.
- iv) Weather and digger availability permitting some more work should be done on flood mitigation on the ranger's next visit. Cllr Carter reminded the council that under the Flood Mitigation Grant Terms and Conditions the work had to be completed, invoiced and paid for by 31st March to receive re-imburement.
- v) The potholes on Chinnock Road will be reported to highways and also the clanking grid in The Hollow.

195/15 Rights of Way Report:

In Cllr Murdoch's absence Cllr Merchant reported that she had used the gate by the electric substation at the weekend and the gate post was loose making it difficult to open. Cllr Stephen said that he would see if the ranger could repair it when he next visits.

195/15 Play Area Report:

Cllr Weber said that it was too frosty to cut the grass at the moment.

197/15 Items of Report:

Cllr Merchant asked if it is possible to alter the gate into the airfield as it is not wide enough for new style buggies. Cllr Stephen will ask SSDC if they can supply another type of gate.

198/15 Next Meeting: will be on Monday 2nd March, 2015. Meeting closed 9.17pm.