

# Chapel Allerton Parish Council

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 at 7.30pm in the Old School Room, Stone Allerton. BS26 2NL.

Present: Cllrs Blakemore, Wallach, Wathen, Williams & Torrens-Spence.

In attendance: S Millard-Jones – Clerk. Cllrs Grimes & Filmer and approximately 8 members of the public.

The meeting was opened at 7.30pm.

1. Welcome by the Chairman of Chapel Allerton Parish Council  
Cllr Blakemore welcomed all in attendance.
2. To note the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.  
Minutes from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Mat 2023 Annual Parish Meeting were noted.
3. Village updates:

### **Ad Astra Cider Barn**

Paul Rolfe – owner – gave the following report.

Cider barn has been going very well. We stated in our licencing and planning that we wanted to be a positive addition to the community. As part of our application, we committed to keeping close ties with the parish council, which we have done.

### **In Numbers**

Quiz Nights – 20

Money Raised for Charity and Local Good Causes – Nearly £10,000

This includes:

Nearly £1000 for the Allerton Youth Club

Over £1000 for the Allerton Men's Cricket Club

£500 for the Allerton Woman's Cricket Club

£1000 for the Reach Opportunity Centre

£800 for Bristol Childrens Charities

Over £2000 for the firefighters Charity

£500 for the Burnam Lifeboats

Over £400 for Love Musgrove Hospital

Over £400 for the veterans Charity

£400 for Rhea wellbeing

£50 for the RSPCA Brent Knoll

And thousands more for Help for Heroes

### **Events**

Wedding Receptions

Birthday Parties

Many Cider Tours including the Chief Executive Officer and other Directors of Jet2 and Bristol Airport.

Military dining in nights – Royal Engineers and Royal Marines later this year.

Started the Wassail

A few band nights – Not too popular

Halloween Events for the kids

Christmas Events like the Cheddar Male Choir and brass bands, as well as opening up after the carols at the cross and Christmas day.

Tried News Years Eve parties but very little interest.

Hosted two South West England Cidermakers Association (SWECA) Annual Meetings

Supported Allerton in Pictures

CHAPEL ALLERTON PARISH COUNCIL CLERK & RFO

*S Millard-Jones*

A first communion

### **Awards**

We have won 22 Awards so far for our cider, including Reserve Champion Farmhouse Cider at the British Cider Championships. We won the best Dry cider in the South West just last week.

Other Support to Local Community

Sponsor the Photos of Allerton Awards at the Harvest Home

We provide the cider, free of charge for the harvest home meal

We have also provided some part time work for many young adults in our community both within the cider barn and out in the orchard.

Believe it or not, next week we have been open for 2 years. We have achieved all of this in just 24 months.

Things we would like to do in the coming year

Working with Les Davies (The West Countryman), we would like to start orcharding training courses three times a year.

1. Winter pruning and Orchard maintenance
2. Summer Pruning and Orchard maintenance
3. Cider Making

We would like to increase our biodiversity and sustainability within the Orchard. Lyndsay Andrews from Chapel Allerton has been running some Wellness courses in the Orchard, and we would love to provide these for some of our military veterans if possible.

We would like to start an annual one-day cider festival at Orchardleigh Farm in the Summer. No plans so far. We did contact the Parish Council for comment last year and had no response.

In addition to keeping in touch with the Parish Council, we also keep in contact with the Somerset licensing authority to ensure we don't have any complaints regarding activities at Orchardleigh Farm, either upheld or even dismissed, to ensure we keep our working practices up to date. We have had no complaints of any kind since April 2022 (our opening date).

### **Footpaths**

John Crosby – Footpaths Liaison Officer- gave the following report.

I will start my report with some facts. Chapel Allerton Parish has a rich network of designated public footpaths & bridleways; a total of 25 footpaths and 5 bridleways covering many miles as they crisscross our parish in all directions, with a total of 33 stiles and 48 gates giving access along the public rights of way.

Of the public footpaths recognised by Somerset County Council, there is just one which is not currently in practical existence (Path AX 12/1), which should run north-south, parallel between Copsewood Lane and Allerton Moor Drove. I am told the Parish Council decided, some years ago, to let it lapse largely due to the costs of putting stiles/gates through the many hedges. Plus, there are other parallel rights of way which can be easily used.

Of the remaining public footpaths & bridleways available, most are widely used, adequately signed, and access along them largely unencumbered. There are, however, some paths & bridleways where access is restricted to some extent. Some issues date back to 2006, others to last year. Many of the issues reported relate to overgrown hedges, blocked gates, deep ruts caused by tractors or off-roaders, and/or lack of signs. Some of those issues can be addressed, and I'm slowly working through them when I can. But others can't, certainly not in the near-term. Broadness Bow Bridge certainly falls in the latter category. Alas, it remains in disrepair, unsafe to cross according to SCC, and they have no funds to repair it.

But looking on the bright side – as I've said, most of our paths and bridleways are accessible and passable ... albeit a bit wet underfoot at this time of year! Allow me to end with encouraging you to go out and use our paths and bridleways as often as possible. Better still, take some secateurs along with you to cut back vegetation from signs, stiles and gates. Many hands make light work of keeping our lovely paths in good order!

Before closing my report, I would like to acknowledge the efforts and goodwill of the landowners over whose land the public rights of way cross. Without their support and co-operation, the Parish's public footpaths and bridleways wouldn't be the delightful tapestry they are!

For those interested, this link might be useful <https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/Map>

CHAPEL ALLERTON PARISH COUNCIL CLERK & RFO

*S Millard-Jones*

**Somerset Council**

Cllr Filmer provided the following report:

The main constraints are budgetary. Many savings have been introduced. On average town and parish precepts have increased by 50%. Savings of £35million is not enough. Reserves are being used. To fill the remainder of the gap circa £36 million. SC asked to increase precepts by more than the current cap. That request was declined by the government. The alternative option is capitalisation. SC is one of twenty councils that have been allowed to do this. Resultantly, now looking to sell a lot of assets. £104 million hole is next year's budget as a result.

Voluntary redundancies are being considered £40 million of redundancy costs but will save £40 million next year.

Looking to reduce a number of services.

Waste collection days have changed to improve efficiency and routes have been amended to cross previous boundaries to save £90,000 litres of fuel per year. Rural areas still suffering with bus services. £2 a ticket bus fares have been maintained to drive demand.

New Highways contractor making repairing of potholes cheaper.

**Cricket Club**

Club Secretary provided the following update:

Apologies that she was unable to attend due to prior commitments.

The planning application for the pavilion development has now been submitted and it is hoped that work will commence at the end of the cricket season (September).

The Spring Social event is to be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May and details of which will be confirmed and shared shortly.

4. Open Discussion of areas affecting the village.

A resident asked about the financial sustainability of the windmill.

Cllr Wathan explained that options were being looked into, but currently with little success.

Cllr Filmer agreed to speak with Leader Cllr Bill Revans regarding the windmill.

Concerns were raised regarding the drain blockage on Stone Allerton drove. This matter has already been raised by the Clerk with Highways, with little result. Cllr Filmer agreed to speak with Highways on the Parish Council's behalf.

Cllr Torrens-Spence appealed for volunteers/workers to help clear the Memorial Cross.

The meeting closed at 20.34.

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