

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th November 2017 in the Meeting Room, Williams Hall

Present Nick Sloan (Chairman), Graham Glead (Vice Chairman), Glynn Banks (arrives later), Ann Finn, David House, Peter House, Sara Sollis, Heather Venn, David Fothergill (County Councillor) and Phil Stone (District Councillor)

In Attendance Becky Goodchild, Cecil Boobyer and 2 members of the public.

Public Question Time -

Community Assets: NS summarised the current situation regarding the registering of the 2 village pubs and the Village Stores following advice from the Community Council for Somerset. Nicola Berridge and Ian Upshall, representing the Royal Oak and the Village Stores respectively, raised their concerns and questions.

(GB arrives)

Summary of points made:

1. Can the size of the village support two pubs? One could be granted permission for 'change of use' and allow the other to thrive.
2. A lack of knowledge of how the Community Asset process works. The PC was unsure of when the process is triggered but is aware that at that point the PC would have 6 weeks to make a decision as to whether to submit a bid followed by 6 months in which to make the submission (which may or may not be accepted by the business owner).
3. Lack of inclusion of business owners in the process of registering of businesses. Possible negative consequences for businesses e.g. entry on the land register.

DF advised that all of his parishes have registered their pubs as community assets and that this appears to be becoming the norm. As was previous agreed by the Parish Council their desire is for all businesses in the village to thrive and the PC would not obstruct a sale of a 'going concern'. The only time the PC would intervene would be if the sale of a business involved a change of use, resulting in the loss of that business to the village.

(Meeting opens)

Apologies for Absence - John Hembrow

1407. Declarations of Interest and dispensations - DH and GG regarding the Williams Hall planning application (both being on the Village Hall Management Committee.

1408. Minutes of previous meeting - The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 9th October were agreed by all to be accurate, and signed by the Chairman.

(PH enters)

1409. Community Assets (I) - Following discussion it was agreed that the PC would not halt the registering of the 3 businesses as Community Assets and that clarification would be sought from TDBC regarding at what point the process begins.

(2 members of public leave)

1410. Planning

36/17/0015 17 Woodhill Terrace, Dark Lane – TDBC: Conditional approval 20-10-2017

36/17/0021 Barn C and Lower Huntham Farmhouse – TDBC: Conditional approval 11-10-2017

36/17/0023 Walnut Arbour, Curload – TDBC: Approval 12-10-2017

36/17/0025/CQ The Wagon House, Meare Green – TDBC: Prior approval approved (Conditional) 30-10-2017

36/17/0026AGN Wilows and Wetland Centre – TDBC: No objection 20-10-2017

36/17/0024 Williams Hall – Erection of a flagpole in the grounds.

GG advised that information about this plan was put onto the village website but no objections were received.

The PC agreed to make the following response: We support this application because it will have no deleterious effect on the surroundings.

36/17/0027 Crossway Farm, Griggs Hill – Conversion of barn to 1 residential dwelling.

The PC agreed to make the following response: We support this application because it seems the best way of repurposing an old building in need of rescue.

36/17/0029 Beechcroft, Willey Road – Alterations to planning approval 36/14/0018 including revised external finishes of all elevations, alteration to roofline of side extension and various internal alterations (retention of works already undertaken).

The PC agreed to make the following response: We support this application because the minor changes to the original plan are of no significance to the view from outside the property.

New wall in Curload – Following concerns that the new wall (which breaches height restrictions) reduces visibility for drivers pulling out onto the road from neighbouring properties as well as from the property itself, it has not been possible to reach a resolution with the property owners. It was proposed that the issue be referred to Planning Enforcement. NS abstained from taking part in the vote. Councillors agreed by a majority.

Clerk to write to Planning Enforcement.

1411. Assessment of farming practices - PS advised that he will be arranging a meeting with land owners to identify any problems with it before it goes to public consultation.

1412. Walnut Arbour – NS advised that there have been some complaints of noise again recently.

1413. Maintenance of finger posts - NS advised that quotes have been received from Highways and it appears that painting the posts in-situ will cost less than merely removing them. We hope to have all relevant information shortly to enable a decision.

1414. First Aid training: Payment for the training session - The session will take place on 16th January 6 - 9.30pm. Currently 12 people want to attend and 4 village groups will be represented. Hire of the Village Hall will be free. It was agreed that the Parish Council will pay for the training, but that donations from organisations sending representatives will be gratefully accepted.

1415. Village plan – Future sustainability - GG advised that the housing group met recently and a report of the meeting has been circulated. The group will have a new name – 'Forward Strategy Group'. HV requested that there be clarity on the brief of the group. SS agreed to join the group. SS suggested that another representative of the playing field should be in the group but others felt this is too early a stage to involve a wider attendance.

GG to write a charter defining the group's role.

SS to attend a Forward Strategy Group meeting to enable further discussion regarding the potential need for another playing field trustee to be included in the group.

1416. Community assets (II) - Councillors discussed the available options including the PC purchasing a business and running a pub/shop, extension of the village hall in order to house a community shop, and obtaining loans for a community business. It was acknowledged that registering of the pubs and shop as community assets has caused unrest to the proprietors. PS suggested the PC put in writing to local businesses that they would not object to a sale as long as the buyer intends to continue the business. It was agreed by a majority that GG should continue to look into producing a business plan.

NS to draft a letter to the proprietors of the village shop and the pubs (to be circulated to the PC).

GG to continue producing a business plan for potential set up of a community shop or pub, and to gather information on loans available to Parish Councils.

It was acknowledged that more people living in the village would help to maintain the viability of local businesses. A vote was taken on a limited amount of housing development being potentially 'good' for the village and its businesses. There was a majority agreement.

1417. Reeves Feast – Trustee required - A replacement trustee for Reeves Feast is required and would need to be someone with an awareness of the needs of local individuals. HV has not received any suggestions and intends on speaking to Barbara Carpenter about who would be suitable.

1418. Annual Parish Meeting date for next year - It was agreed that the meeting will be held on Tuesday 24th April.

1419. Footpaths - CB advised that the new gate to the allotments (from the Church Close footpath) will be put up shortly. This will enable pram users to gain access more easily. CB also advised of a stile that has been repaired (T25/22), and of one behind the school which is not stock proof.

1420. Blue Light Innovation Conference (6-12-2017) - No councillors wished to attend.

1421. Christmas tree outside the Baptist Church - Members of the Baptist Church asked if the PC had any objection to them erecting a tree outside and attaching it to the fencing where they hang notice boards. There was no objection and it was felt a tree here would be a good idea.

1422. Protocol for complaints received from people who wish to remain anonymous - PH advised that a pile of waste at Crossways was burnt resulting in attendance by the fire brigade as it had not been informed that a fire would be taking place. There was previous concern, when the growing pile had been observed, as to whether the waste was hazardous and who should be responsible for reporting this where a member of public raising the concern wishes to remain anonymous. While Environmental Health would require a log of events (more easily done by an individual) the PC agreed to report the incident in this case. DF advised there are two issues – environmental health and waste disposal.

NS to inform Environmental Health and Somerset Waste Partnership of the burning of possibly hazardous waste.

1423. Highways:

Community Speed watch - To be removed from agenda.

Salt bag collection for Parish Councils (25-11-2017) -

NS or JH to collect.

Give way sign and painting of road markings by the Royal Oak - DF advised that this junction is on the list for repainting when the markers are in the area.

North Curry road closure - NS advised that Stoke Road (North Curry centre to White Street) will be closed for 3 weeks from 8th January in order to replace drains. The road will remain open between 15:00 hrs and 09:00 hrs. DF advised that there will be other roadworks in North Curry at the same time which will have traffic lights.

1424. Village gateway - NS advised that the gateway is still planned to be made by Coates.

1425. Allotments - GG advised that Wessex Water have given £500 towards the water supply. A community orchard is to be planted soon. The AGM will be held on 30th November at the Village Hall. (Since changed to 7th December at 7.30pm.)

1426. Playing Field - The bonfire event took place on the field on bonfire night and was enjoyed by all.

1427. Pavilion - No issues raised. Remove from agenda.

1428. Village website - NS advised that the website is being used more now. It was agreed that PC approval would not be necessary for local business adverts to be put onto the website, and that NS would go ahead and do this. NS advised that history pages are in the process of being set up.

(PS leaves)

1429. Broadband - No issues raised. Remove from agenda.

1430. Flood issues - It was noted that a section of Willey Road by the playing field entrance flooded after heavy rainfall recently. A flood group meeting is to be arranged shortly. A new flood warden is needed as the group is one short.

A member of the public had requested that following the clearance of drains in by Highways Woodhill, the drainage ditches either side of the drains be cleared by the land-owners.

HV to contact the land-owners.

1431. Police issues - DF advised that 3 Land Rovers have been stolen from Gillards in Burrowbridge recently.

(CB and DF leave)

1432. Financial Matters

Authorisation of cheques:

965 G Wagon James – Mow/strim burial ground	£62.40
966 The Cumbria Clock Company Ltd – Repair to parish clock	£650.40
968 Grant Thornton UK LLP – Fee for 2017 annual return audit	£120.00
969 Williams Hall Stoke St Gregory – Meeting Room hire for NHS Health Checks event	£26.00

Standing order

1-12-2017 R. Goodchild - Clerk's salary for November 2017	£311.43
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It was agreed that the above cheques be signed and payments be made. The clerk advised that cheque number 967 would be destroyed due to a mistake made in writing the cheque.

Received - None

Other financial items:

Bank reconciliation and quarterly accounts to end of September 2017 - Checked by AF.

Precept planning and plans for future projects - To be discussed at the next meeting.

Donation request from St Margaret's Hospice Care - For next agenda.

Payment to be agreed for SALC new councillor training £25.00 - It was agreed that this would be paid by the PC.

1433. Pending / Feedback from meetings:

Letter from The Pensions Regulator - for next agenda.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10pm.

The next meeting will be held on December 11th at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room at the Williams Hall. Please email any items for the agenda to the clerk and the Chairman by 28th November if possible.