

# STOKE ST GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held in the Williams Hall on Tuesday 25th April 2017

**Present** – Nick Sloan (Chairman), Glynn Banks, Bill Carpenter, Ann Finn, Graham Glead, John Hembrow, David House, Peter House, Phil Stone (District Councillor), and David Fothergill (County Councillor).

**In attendance** - Becky Goodchild (Clerk), Chief Constable Andy Marsh, 3 PCSO's and 41 members of the public.

**Apologies** – Heather Venn (Vice Chairman)

**Chairman's welcome** – NS welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Chief Constable Andy Marsh who would be giving a presentation about 'The strategic perspective on policing in Avon and Somerset from a rural viewpoint'.

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 26th April 2016** – The minutes were agreed by all and signed by the Chairman.

**Chairman's report** – NS reported on the main issues and events that have occurred throughout the year:

**Tractors** – The Parish Council has continued to communicate with local farmers about the problems facing other road users and letters have been sent to farmers in and around the parish encouraging considerate driving of tractors. Councillors met with PC Dan Cox (Road safety and compliance lead for agricultural vehicles within the UK) who had had talks with tractor drivers in the area.

**Broadband** – We are coming to the end of Phase I of the roll-out of super fast fibre broadband (by BT in this area), however those living furthest from the cabinets will not benefit as BT will not install fibre to them. The Phase II contract has been given to Gigaclear, and in the meantime wireless broadband is now available in Stoke St Gregory, particularly good news to those residents whose broadband speed had been slow.

**Housing** – A housing needs survey was undertaken by TDBC on behalf of the Parish Council. The primary aim was to determine whether there is a current affordable housing need within the parish, and if so the type of homes required. The survey was delivered to all residents in the parish. Results indicated that there is not sufficient need to provide additional affordable housing at this time. It was recommended by TDBC that another survey be undertaken in 3-5 years time.

**Allotments** – NS congratulated the Stoke St Gregory Allotments Association on its success in providing allotments for the community after many years of attempting to find land for this to happen. So far 17 plots have been allocated and the ground is currently being rotavated.

**Village website** – NS demonstrated the new village website which is hoped to 'go live' in the next couple of weeks. It is anticipated that village groups will update their own pages and a tutorial will be provided for those with this responsibility.

NS thanked the Parish Councillors for their work over the past year, Cecil Boobyer for his ongoing help with maintaining the footpaths, and the clerk who would be available to answer any questions at the end of the meeting. Copies of the end of year accounts were made

available. NS also thanked David Fothergill and Phil Stone who attend almost all of our Parish Council meetings and give ongoing support.

**Chief Constable Andy Marsh – 'The strategic perspective on policing in Avon and Somerset from a rural viewpoint'** - CC Andy Marsh gave an interesting talk on the demands on the Avon and Somerset constabulary and the effects of austerity, digitalization and the internet on their work. AM and his colleagues demonstrated some new body-worn recording kit which is now used by all Avon and Somerset officers and PCSOs and is useful in recording evidence which would otherwise be difficult to record. Andy gave a statistical break down of the types of crime that the police spend their time on, and described how the internet has enabled crime and changed how the police approach detection of crime.

Questions were then taken from the audience:

**How can we get people involved in Neighbourhood Watch Schemes?** – Liaise with PC to put information and news onto village website. Always report crimes so that the police are aware of what is happening as well as trends.

**Is it statutory for the police to have mental health training?** - Yes, training is provided and the police now find places of safety for people with mental health issues rather than put them into a cell.

**How can money be saved in this period of austerity – What can be cut?** - The number of PCs and PCSOs will not be reduced in Avon and Somerset but management costs can be reduced. More could be done centrally allowing for fewer response hubs. Investing in technology could ultimately make savings.

**Why are there fewer police stations?** - AM wants the police to use shared spaces (e.g. in fire stations) in order to reduce costs while still maintaining presence locally.

**The PC has made continual attempts to set up Speed Watch with constant hold-ups from the police preventing its go ahead.** - AM asked AF to email him and he will follow it up personally.

**What can we do to support the police?** - Report crime and suspicious activity. Engage with the police as much as possible.

**Do speed cameras generate profit?** - Money generated from cameras funds the cameras existence but do not create profit.

**Village Hall report** – GG reported on events of the past year including the 10 year anniversary celebration which was a thank you to all in the village who have participated in the use of the hall. GG thanked Alex Morrice and David House who have stepped down from many years contribution to the running of the hall in their roles as Chairman, and booking and hall co-ordinator respectively. Financially the hall is in good health and use of the hall by local groups remains strong. Installation of WiFi, a refit of the kitchen and development of a comprehensive website continues to attract bookings externally. GG thanked the many people who have contributed to the success of the hall during the past year.

**Allotments Association report** – GG thanked Phillip Broom for making an area of land available. After discussions between the Parish Council and nearby residents final approval to proceed was given by the PC. The enclosure has been fenced giving a total of 20 plots, with

space allocated for a community orchard and a planted transition zone adjacent to the nearest residents. GG thanked the other members of the committee for their efforts in bringing this venture to fruition.

**Playing field report** - Tom Duxbury reported that the field has been put to good use this past year and listed the many users. The climbing fort has been replaced after much fund raising efforts and 3 sets of goal posts are in place. The next phase aims to provide a new climbing area with swings. The PF committee are also looking into the feasibility of a hard standing area alongside the hedge for parking.

**Pavilion Project Team report** – A sub committee of 5 people has been formed to take the plan for a new pavilion forward. Planning permission expires in July so work must begin before then. (Plans were displayed in the hall.)

**Headteacher's report** – The head teacher was not present.

**Reports from village organisations** - Written reports from other village organisations were made available in the hall for people to read.

**Any other matters for discussion** – A member of the public requested that the signs at the playing field requesting no dogs be allowed in the play area be replaced as they are damaged.

NS thanked the other Parish Councillors for all their work this past year and thanked everyone for attending this meeting.

Wine and chat completed the meeting which closed at 8.55pm