

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2019 in the Meeting Room, Williams Hall

Present , Graham Gleed (Chairman) Sara Sollis (Vice Chair) Nick Sloan, David House, Peter House, Ann Finn, John Hembrow, Sue Buller (District Councillor) David Fothergill, arrives later. (County Councillor)

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva (Clerk) and 1 member of the public

Public question time

A member of the public would like to discuss their concerns over planning applications 36/19/0009 and 36/19/0010 at Lower Huntham Farm, Huntham Lane – erection of an agricultural building for the housing of livestock.

The member of the public is concerned that the village has reached its capacity with the amount of cows and the volume of farm traffic that is needed to accommodate more livestock in the village; that is starting to feel like living in the midst of factories, not farms. Also, the height of the building at 26ft is too high on the brow of the ridge.

The member of the public asks the council to reconsider further applications for more agricultural livestock housing in the future.

GG explains that this was part of the original building application that has been applied for in stages and that the height was discussed as part of a previous application, at which time there was a recommendation of possible excavation and a screen of trees.

The applicant had expressed that with the consolidation of the herd from another farm it would in fact decrease farm traffic. AF did raise the question about an increase of traffic to facilitate the supply of extra feed, though. JH stated that there is already a pit at Lower Huntham farm and bi-product would be spread on adjoining fields on Sedgemoor.

The member of the public also expresses concern about run off from the building. JH and PH advise this should be clean water run off.

The member of the public requests that the PC give more consideration to future agricultural building applications for more livestock.

Apologies for absence – Heather Venn.

1. Declarations of Interest and dispensations – NS advised of an interest in item 15. (Reimbursement for website upgrade cost and refreshments for the APM)

Minutes of previous meeting - The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th April 2019 were agreed by all to be accurate, and were signed by the Chairman.

(DF Arrives)

2. Planning

36/19/00015 The Malt Barn, Meare Green Farm -The original application has been withdrawn. There is still an ongoing application on file with the revised road arrangements.

36/19/0004/CM 2 The Square – Change of use for the current village store has been approved.

36/19/0009 and 36/19/0010 Lower Huntham Farm, Huntham Lane

1 PC member abstains and all else agree the following previous response:

We Support this application provided that it is adequately screened by trees since the site is very visible from West Sedgemoor. We also feel that thought should be given to excavating the site in order to lower the profile of the building within the landscape.

Housing Application

There is an upcoming committee meeting on 30th May, 2019. DH suggests that once the agenda has been published PC members could attend to be additive and counterbalance the discussion. There is a new planning leader and group – there is nothing as yet to report.

SWaT Council Planning Application Packs

As of 1st June 2019 SWaT council will no longer send planning applications in their current paper format - they will now only be available online.

GG expresses that when viewing application plans, scale is important and this can be hard to gauge on a screen or A4. AF agrees. DF suggests showing them on a projector at meetings.

There are no objections but it is agreed that we need to compile our own paper packs to be supplied by the Clerk or the Chairman.

3. Insurance Renewal

The insurance, including assets and liability is up for renewal on the 31st May 2019. It was agreed that the asset register should be reviewed before renewal.

GG to review assets and KdS to contact Came and Co for actual insurance premium figure.

It was agreed by all that GG should go ahead with the best value quote.

4. Vacancy for a Parish Councillor – Co-Option Process

A notice needs to be devised and advertised for 21 days on the Village noticeboard, website, social media platforms and newsletter. This should be done week ending 19th May 2019.

GG welcomes recommendations of people who could bring interest and diversity to the group.

KdS to devise notice and adopt previous application forms for new applicants.

5. Footpaths

Stile repairs and who is responsible is an on going issue.

As an example, there are at least 4-5 stiles on the footpath near the train line alone that require attention. Trevor Williams has logged others previously and landowners are not being helpful.

GG suggests taking a specific footpath to attain a quote / estimate for the cost of repairs and /or compiling a register of broken or defective stiles. PH advises that the cost of a stile kit is approximately £100 each, but it's the labour costs that inflate the actual cost to replace. NS and DF both reiterate that it is not the responsibility of the PC but that of the landowner.

If the right of way is blocked and reported, SCC will contact the landowner. JH asks the question of the possibility of the PC being notified when the landowners have been approached by SCC and what the council will actually do to follow up? DF agrees to report back. PH suggests that the PC also write to landowners, SS added that landowners should be advised of their responsibility.

1.3 Maintenance of stiles and gates

It is the duty of the landowner to ensure that any stiles and gates are kept in a good state of repair. The county council's duty only extends to ensuring that the landowner complies with this obligation and to provide a grant of 25% towards repairing or replacing such structures. The council has a discretionary power to extend this grant.

Highways Act 1980 s 146

Source: Maintenance & Enforcement Policy, Somerset County Council

www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=41885

NS- A member of the public had brought it to his attention that a field on a footpath off to the right on the Huntham Lane had been ploughed too close to the edge. With the nettle growth, it is making the right of way inaccessible. Technically there should be a 1 metre gap for access. The member of the public questioned if the contractors needed reminding.

JH does advise that as the crops grow people automatically follow the crop line, allowing the nettles to grow over the footpath further.

NS- The solar bollard that stopped working has had the battery replaced. It has transpired that a branch is obstructing the light reaching the panel that is over hanging from a garden on Church Close.

NS to speak to the owner and ask if it could be cut back to allow the solar panel bollard light to charge.

SS – The dog waste bin was not emptied on the playing field which resulted in a pile of waste bags being left around the bin. This was reported to SWaT and emptied by a specialist. It brings us back to the point of the dog waste bin that has now been requested on several occasions.

KdS to request an update for the previous requests of another bin to be placed in the square.

6.Highways

Broken finger post – The Huntham Lane finger post that was broken will cost £60 to weld with no guarantee it would not break again, ultimately requiring £160 to recast and replace. There were no objections to replace the iron sign post and all agreed this, in the long term, would be the most cost effective option. If highways replaced the sign, it would be a generic aluminium sign not in keeping with the original.

There is a report of a road defect on the Huntham Lane that could represent a safety issue.

AF to follow this up

There is still the ongoing flood issue at the top of Slough Lane by Woodhill Terrace. This has been reported several times.

GG to talk to HV who first reported the issue

7. Allotments

SS asked why part of the hedge had been allowed to overgrow. GG responds that this is intentional to limit the undergrowth but will request the hedge be cut back. This may not be immediate due to the theft of equipment at the allotment earlier in the year

8. Playing Field – There will be the annual Football and Netball Tournament taking place on the 6th June 2019.

The dog waste bin had to be reported for overflowing as previously discussed.

9. The Heart of The Village – HDTV have applied for a grant from Calor rural community fund for £10k to replace the heating system in The Royal Oak. This is voted for by the public and voting is open until the 17th June 2019. **GG to send website link with details on how to vote.**

The HDTV business plan and share prospectus should be available by the end of the month. Sophie Cole has been of great help preparing the financial forecasts, and with enough support, the project is on schedule for completion by the end of the year. Shares should be available to buy from July/August 2019.

There is publicity lined up with Tone news and the Leveller as well as coverage from the BBC. SS would like to be kept informed of these to include in the marketing plan.

10. Village website -Nothing to report

11. Broadband – Nothing to report.

12. Flood – Nothing to report.

13. Consultations and surveys

Consultation on the vehicle operator licensing system – *It was agreed that this is not applicable to the Parish and therefore we are of no opinion.*

Consultation on the new code of audit practice – *It was agreed that there was no appetite for support.*

14. Police issues – *There is obviously a lack of police presence in the village. AF met with the PCSO and discussed locations where speeding is an issue. Nothing else to report.*

15. Financial

Authorisation of payments

G Wagen James – Strim / mow burial ground (27-03-2019)	£33.00
Somerset Association of Local Councils – Incoming Clerk Training (Part 3 – Finance)	£30.00
N. Sloan – Reimbursement for website upgrade (£19.62) and refreshments for APM (£29)	£48.62
The Cumbrian Clock Company Ltd	£198.00
Servicing of the Parish Clock	

Standing Order

1-6-2019 K de Silva – Clerk's salary for May 2019	£283.33
1-6-2019 K de Silva – Reimbursement for printer ink and paper	£24.28
Received - TDBC – First instalment of precept	£ 7031.00

Other financial items:

Bank reconciliation to the end of March 2019 and end of year accounts are currently held by Rebecca Goodchild (Previous Clerk) for completing and audit purposes.

To be checked by external auditor Liz Hembrow and forwarded to SS.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return – RG currently completing the AGAR for submission. It was agreed RG would be paid and would remain an employee of the PC until completion. PH commented that there should be a time frame in place for completion by the end of June.

Authorisation for The essential clerk intensive whole day training session for KdS to attend on 15-06-2019 was agreed unanimously at a cost of £85.00

243. Other items for discussion

Rachel Parish of The Willowset has altered her initial request for a donation to £500. As this was not submitted before the Council Summons and agenda was circulated it cannot be voted on and no indicative answer given. This will be raised on the agenda for the next meeting.

GG agreed to write the PC report in time for the newsletter deadline of 24th May, 2019.

NS will be meeting a parishioner on Wednesday 22nd May 2019, to place a memorial bench in the graveyard. GG agreed to also attend.

Correspondence April/May

HAGS Magazine

Clerks and Councils Direct Magazine

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:18pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 10th June 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 3rd June, 2019.

