

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 11th November 2019 in the Williams Hall

Present – Graham Glead (Chairman), Sara Sollis (Vice-Chair), Nick Sloan, Ann Finn, Heather Venn, Janice Pearce, David House, Peter House, David Fothergill (County Councillor), Phil Stone (District Councillor)

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva

Apologies for absence – No Apologies received

Public question time – No members of the public were present

124. Declarations of Interest and dispensations

GG, NS, HV, SS and DH all declared an interest in Item 137 HOTV as members of the committee

125. Minutes of previous meeting - The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 14th October 2019 were agreed by all to be accurate, and were signed by the Chairman.

126. Planning

36/19/0026/CQ Huntham Farm, Stoke St Gregory – Prior approval for a proposed change of use of agricultural buildings to a dwelling house (Class C3), and associated building operations

Decision: Prior approval refusal 25-10-19

36/19/0015 Laburnham House. Woodhill Road, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of replacement tool shed (retention of works already undertaken)

Decision: Conditional approval 10-10-19

36/19/0024 Harvest Cottage. Huntham Lane, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of replacement single storey side and rear extension

Decision: Conditional approval 14-10-19

36/18/0042 The Cottage. Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory – Reported to the PC by a parishioner at the PC meeting 14-10-19 that a vehicle entrance - which did not feature on the approved planning application - has been created at the site.

GG has reported this to the enforcement officer. It would appear there are now 3 vehicle entrances onto the Meare Green Road, as opposed to the single entrance as per the original application with the sole entrance sited near the mobile home.

DH queries as to whether the inhabitants of the mobile home would pay council tax or if there will be another structure built on the site

GG to query the application with SWTC

36/19/0029 Crossways Farm, Slough Lane, Stoke St Gregory – Replacement of agricultural building with the erection of No2. Dwellings and associated works on land (resubmission of 36/18/0043)

The PC agreed the following response;

“The PC agreed to support this application.”

126. School Improvements

GG reports that there have been communications between SB and LM with regards to funding for the school. GG informs that SB has been working hard on the case with SCC and SWTC, but there has been a lack of liaison to effectively address potential additional school funding required resulting from the Willey Road development. GG states that the school needs money spending on it for improvement as well as capacity.

DF reports that SCC knew nothing about the possible increase in the intake of children as SSG was never a development village. He explained that there were two aspects to consider; 1) clearly there is a need for the school to receive funding but, 2) within SCC there is no perceived requirement for this

DF continues that it is probably expected the SSG school admissions will actually decrease in numbers in the coming years, DF explains that the school admission policy was devised by the School Forum and published by the SCC in July. There is a recognition that the school requires funding, but a considerable amount of money has already been spent on the previous extensions at the school. DF adds that it is not the buildings that make a good school, but it is the teachers. GG interjects that the buildings help to make better schools.

SS notes that it would be extremely unlikely that all 34 dwellings on the proposed development would have primary school-aged children, and that the parish is extremely lucky to have a school. GG agrees that the school is a cherished asset for the village.

DH asks what responsibility actually comes down to the PC? DF states that the PC has little influence.

PS states that it is a complicated issue and the way it is being raised now with the possible Burrowbridge development is premature since the proposed development does not yet have planning permission. It was agreed that it is an issue within the community and would be kept on the agenda for the foreseeable future.

Clerk to add the item to future agendas under the blue section.

127. Winter Warden

GG reports that as part of the Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Scheme SCC has developed a community snow warden scheme. A nominated snow warden would receive suitable training and advice from SCC and Skanska to respond to prolonged periods of low temperatures and snow events.

NS states that in practice it is more than just a job for one person and could possibly be added to the remit of the Flood Group.

HV adds that in historic situations of adverse weather conditions the community has all worked together. SS adds that during the last period of severe snow the PC was criticised for not doing enough and the Parishioners looked towards the PC for more assistance. GG questions is there a likelihood of finding a Parishioner who would take on the role and responsibilities? NS adds that there should be a contingency plan in place.

GG to approach the flood group with the proposal of taking on the role.

128. Budget & Precept planning

The members of the PC discussed the proposed draft budget devised by the Clerk/RFO. All forecast payment calculations for the coming 2020-21 financial year were discussed and budget amounts agreed unanimously.

Clerk to finalise the proposed budget and total payments to set the precept and circulate to the PC. Item to be added to the next meeting agenda

129. Electric vehicle community charge point fund application

GG reports that the Village Hall Committee had agreed in principle to install two charge points at the village hall through recommended company Podpoint. Subject to survey, the estimated cost of installation would be approximately £3,000.

GG asks the PC if there would be a desire to contribute match funding towards the installation

with £1,500 coming from a SWTC Grant for the scheme and the Village hall and PC contributing £875 each.

The PC agreed unanimously that from a moral perspective the PC supports the application and installation of the electric vehicle charge points, but the PC will not support the proposal financially.

130. Allocation of social housing for local people on the Willey Road development

GG reports that there are a very specific number of houses allocated for social housing, shared ownership and discounted market schemes. The SWTC policy was for the houses to be made available for local people, as it was demonstrated in the survey prior to the approval that there was a local need. GG also reports that there are some 14 names already on the list with South West housing and SWTC for the available plots.

SS states that even if there is a strong local connection, priority will be given to those who require re homing as a matter of urgency. HV adds that there is no clarity on the allocation.

GG to write to SWTC for clarification on the allocation. Clerk to add the item to the next agenda.

131. Review of the PC policy on awarding grants for local groups and charities

GG circulated a proposed grants and donations policy (07-11-19) for the consideration of the PC members. It was agreed that formalising the process on the distribution and communication of grants and donations was required, and agreed to the policy in principle but the proposed policy would need to be amended and made more concise.

Members of the PC to circulate any amendments and recommendations to the rest of the PC for GG to collate. Clerk to add the item to the next meeting agenda.

132. Willey Road housing development

GG reports that the ground work is well under way at the site of the Willey Road housing development. There has been no adverse or negative comments received about works undertaken so far. SS shares her personal observation as a resident within the close vicinity of the development that there has been little noise and disruption that she personally had experienced to date.

133. Footpaths

GG suggests contacting the footpath officer CB with regards to a budgeted spend and moving the item into the red section of the agenda for future meetings.

GG to contact CB, Clerk to move item into the red section for the next meeting.

134. Highways

NS reports that the damaged Huntham finger post has now been collected and repainted. NS anticipates the sign being replaced by the time the PC will meet in December.

SS reports that the road defects that had been highlighted by Highways were not pursued and the spray paint markings have now been washed away. DF states that he will chase this up.

135. Allotments

Nothing to report.

136. Playing Field

SS reports that the village bonfire had proven to be a pleasant and well received event, although it was not as busy as the event was the previous year. There is a possibility that the Playing Field Committee may hold another bonfire for the VE day celebrations in May.

GG reports to the PC that an interim invoice for the resurfacing of the tennis courts had been received by the clerk on 08-11-19 from SM.

The Clerk advises that this item could not be added to the agenda as there were not 3 clear working days between receiving the invoice and the day of the meeting. GG agrees that the

invoice was received too late to be discussed. Item will be deferred until the next meeting.

Clerk to add item to the next meeting agenda

137. Heart of the village

SS reports that the total raised to date is £127,000, and there still appears to be a lot of interest from people yet to buy shares. It has been confirmed that the village stores will cease to trade from 31-12-19. There has been recent discussions that are in the early stages, for the possibility of a “shop in a box” by renting a converted shipping container that is available and has already been used for the purpose of a shop, to allow continuity of a village shop. SS confirms that there is still a considerable amount of fund raising in progress in addition to grant applications in order to reach the target amount.

GG proposes that the PC make a contribution towards the HOTV project.

NS adds that supporting the project is central to the PC's role in the village as it is an essential asset for the health of the village. The HOTV project would come under the PC remit and making a contribution would ensure that something of importance to the village could happen. NS proposed a PC contribution to the HOTV project of £10,000 that would be an investment. Procedurally, advice was sought on how to proceed, given that 5 members of the PC had declared an interest. DF informed the meeting that the clerk should allow dispensations for all PC members to vote on the matter. HV states that the item should be added to the next agenda clearly stating the proposal amount so the parishioners are informed of a potential contribution.

Clerk to circulate dispensation forms for PC members to sign allowing for all members to vote. Clerk to add the item to the next meeting agenda.

138. Village website

Nothing to report.

139. Broadband

NS reported that CDS (Connecting Devon & Somerset) are currently conducting a survey to gather a clear picture of who currently gets access and to what speeds so that the next contractor has an accurate baseline from which to work. The link to the map and contact details have all been uploaded onto the village website under news items.

<https://stokestgregory.org/broadband-consultation/>

If anyone requires any assistance with this please contact Nick Sloan.

140. Flood

Nothing to report.

141. Police

AF report that she is in receipt of the speed watch equipment and is awaiting the PCSO to be able to run with the scheme. There has been added interest in Curload with a possible 5 residents wishing to participate in the scheme.

142. Consultations & Surveys

Neighbourhood policing pilot survey – The survey was completed online at the meeting with participation from all PC members.

143. Financial Matters

Authorisation of payments

SALC Essential Clerk Course Part 1 04-09-19	£30.00
SALC Essential Clerk Course Part 2 02-10-19	£30.00
SALC Successful Chairman Course 12-09-19	£30.00
Williams Hall Hire Invoice 080 10-06-19 – 14-10-19	£65.00

Standing Orders

01-10-19 K de Silva Clerk Salary for October £283.33

Received

Interment at the burial ground £300.00

It was agreed unanimously that all payments be made.

Other financial items

The bank reconciliation to the end of September & October 2019 were checked by GG.
The Quarterly accounts and reconciliation from 01-07-19 – 30-09-19 were circulated to all members and checked by GG.

Lloyd's Online banking access

The Clerk reports that after several unsuccessful attempts made by KdS & NS since May, to change the Lloyds online banking mandate to allow the clerk access to set up payments but not be a signatory, Lloyds cannot get the access requirement right. The Clerk proposes to change the mandate to 3 signatories allowing the clerk to set up the payment and 2 PC members to authorise the payment going forward.

All PC members agreed.

Clerk to change the Lloyd's mandate from 2 signatories to 3. The clerk will not set up the authorised payments until confirmation that the mandate has been updated.

144. Other Items for discussion

SS reports that there has been an increase in the amount of dogs not on leads in the village, resulting in a dog (on a lead) being attacked by another. SS requests that the issue be raised in the PC report and on the village website reminding dog owners of their responsibility required by law.

GG requests that the PC members pay thought to who could be a possible candidate for the guest speaker at the AGM to be held on May 4th 2020.

GG asks the opinion of the PC on what are the goals of the PC and how the PC can approach the community and engage with parishioners and their expectations. PH comments that goals are singular events and not continuing. JH notes that the PC is more of an 'enabling' body rather than a 'doing' body. It was agreed the item would be added to the January meeting agenda for discussion.

Clerk to add the item to the January meeting agenda

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.45pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 9th December at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room at the Williams Hall. Please email any items for the agenda to the clerk (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) and the chairman (grahiamgleed@gmail.com) by 29th November if possible.