

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th January 2020 in the Williams Hall

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

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva and 4 members of the public

168. Apologies for absence – Sue Buller (District Councillor)

Minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 9th December 2019 and the minutes from the extraordinary meeting held on Monday 25th November 2019 were agreed by all to be accurate, and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of interests - None

Dispensations – The Clerk grants a dispensation for the written request form received from Ann Finn under section 31 (4) of the Localism Act 2011 to;

- a) Participate or participate further in any discussions on the matter of the HOTV project at meetings
- b) to participate in any vote or further vote on the matter of the HOTV project at meetings.

Without the dispensation, the number of councillors unable to participate in the transaction of business would be so great to impede the transaction of business.

Public question time – 3 members of the public were attending to listen to minute 170 – Community Infrastructure Levy money and allocation. Also present was a Governor for Stoke St Gregory Primary School.

169. Planning

36/19/0029 Crossways Farm. Slough Lane, Stoke St Gregory

DECISION – Refusal 16-12-19

36/19/0030 Ravensbourne. 3 Huntham Close, Stoke St Gregory

DECISION – Conditional approval 02-01-2020

36/19/0031 Lower Huntham Farm. Huntham Lane, Stoke St Gregory – Sub diversion of dwelling into No2 dwellings (retention of works already undertaken)

The PC agreed the following response;

“The Parish Council supports this application as it diversifies the housing stock in the village”

36/19/0036 The Cottage. Stoke Road, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of a garage / car port

The PC agreed the following response;

“The Parish Council supports this application as it enhances the access to the recently renovated property.”

DH adds that the pedestrian access close to the house is large enough to accommodate a vehicle and is likely to be misused.

HV agrees and states that she feels strongly about the new access. JH proposes that 2 responses are sent to SWTC.

Clerk to send response supporting the application; GG to notify SWTC planning that it should be noted that there is a concern relating to the possible misuse and/or non conformity of the pedestrian entrance which has sufficient space as to facilitate vehicular access – if used as such it could present a safety risk should a vehicle enter onto the Stoke Road.

170. Community Infrastructure Levy money and allocation

GG reports that within the original planning application for the housing development on the Willey Road, the planning committee report dated 30/05/19 states that “based on current rates, the CIL receipt for this development would be approximately £456,250. With index linking this amount rises to £607,000” This was the amount the developer was anticipated to pay and provided the basis for discussions on funding options.

GG continues, this figure was taken in good faith by all parties as a realistic assessment of payments due to the accuracy and precision of the data in the application. It was comprehensive in term of housing number, area and mix. GG states that without consultation or any notification given to the PC, this figure changed around the beginning of December to £429,000. Enquiries made on the behalf of the PC by SB yielded the response that the number presented in the committee meeting was only an estimate.

GG questions why since nothing has changed, the same calculation results in a major adjustment of -35%.

HV asks whether the developer appealed against the original calculation, and states that the developer was aware the PC were having conversations about the CIL allocation, yet he did not communicate the considerable discount given to them by SWTC - even though they were aware of the PC's intention to make commitments in the near future.

GG states that neither the developer or SWTC communicated the considerable discount.

GG proposes the motion that the PC request SWTC to provide details of the calculations used to estimate the CIL both in the original planning application and the most recent estimate in order to be able to respond to the residents of SSG. NS seconds the motion and all PC members were in favour.

GG to request both CIL calculations and information from SWTC

GG continues that the PC is now faced with the situation that the funds anticipated will not be realised. On this basis, GG proposes minute 106 (08/10/19) - Proposed funding for the pavilion, be withdrawn.

HV queries whether the PC is able to rescind the original decision. GG responds that he has shared this approach with Justin Robinson at SALC, who did not raise an objection.

SS states that the pavilion build should be covered by openspaces, a donation from the developer and the landowner, but the safe access to the pavilion and store would still be required. HV asks whether the £70k is actually required; SS states the need for negotiations with the playing fields committee and village around the supply of a safe access route and parking for all users.

JH adds that the PC have little choice other than to wait a few months and to initiate further discussions between the PC, PFC and the village.

HV enquires that if the developer is now saving thousands of pounds - maybe discussions should be reopened with them for a further contribution towards the funding of the pavilion and access routes. HV states that all future decisions need to be made in council and not before; the PC needs to step back, learn and seek solutions moving forward.

SS suggests that some of the CIL funding should be used for the pavilion and infrastructure.

GG proposes the motion that resulting from the major reduction in the estimate of CIL from the original planning approval, Minute 106 (Oct 19) is no longer valid as it was based upon erroneous information provided by SWTC and the distribution of the assumed CIL allocation is withdrawn. Further motions on the allocation of funds - as received - will be proposed at future meetings. HV seconded the motion. All PC members were in favour.

171. School / The Willowset improvements

GG reports that there has been a frustrating lack of progress with accessing any funding for the school, and asks who is responsible and who has access to the funds.

DF responds that SCC has no CIL allocation from SWTC. In the district plan there was no visibility of the possible increase in numbers and no CIL provision made. SWTC stepped outside of the village plan with the housing development. DF goes on to mention that there is a specific educational funding issue within Taunton Deane.

NS questions that SCC have known about the Willey Road development for a considerable amount of time and the reality on the ground is that the development should come with the resources.

HV states that educational funding is arranged 2 years in advance.

DF explains that only today the school plans have been completed for the next 2 years, it's well defined and quite a complex process, SCC have an obligation to supply a school place for all children, but it does not necessarily mean that place will be their first choice of school, but approximately 94% of children will be offered a place within their parish.

The Governor of SSG Primary school adds that there will be places for possible new children moving into the housing development, but that will impact the availability of places for children from further afield, such as Burrowbridge.

The issue is the fabric of the building, the lack of the number of facilities at the school – that statutory needs are not being met. If you take out the 15% of the CIL money allocated to the PC, there is still a considerable amount of spare money; the parents want answers.

RP adds that she had obtained information from SWTC that this money was going into a strategic pot to be used for flooding, roads and other schools.

SS states that there are children within the village that go to schools that are outside of the village such as Heathfield and Sellbrook, and we can't forget that.

DF reads from an internal officers briefing document:

“The CIL is set by the planning authority (SWTC) and not the County Council. SWTC also administer it and we (SCC) make application although we have not been advised of the mechanism and continue to make of concerns. SCC objected to the proposed CIL as we were concerned that sufficient education contributions would not be realised and to date we have been proven correct”

GG states that the PC is the representative of the community and asks PS for his opinion.

PS responded that this information was new to him, that this is not a political game and there is a misinterpretation of the rules, adding that he reserves judgement at this time.

GG proposes the motion that Stoke St Gregory Parish Council is disappointed that a resolution has not been found to better support primary and pre-school education in the village. While the competing needs for resources are recognised it is felt that a failure to address both current and future deficiencies will be to the long term detriment of the whole community.

AF seconds the motion and all agreed.

SS notes that it should be considered that the PC welcome the school and pre-school applying for grants from the PC, but both should also be applying to the Parish Councils of the attendees of the school from other parishes such as Burrowbridge.

JH adds with the example of that if 10% of attendees come from Burrowbridge, then Burrowbridge PC should contribute 10% of grants applied for. The money for the grants comes from the precept that is paid by the inhabitants of the village and therefore contributions should possibly be made from Parish Councils that also fall within the catchment area of the school.

(3 members of the public leave)

172. Shop in a box (SIAB)

GG reports that as of the close of business on 31st March 2020 the HOTV will take responsibility of the SIAB, until that point KU and IU will be running the shop as their business and offering training for volunteers until that date.

The Clerk presents the contract of PhilSpace for the hire of the container that requires to be signed and returned.

NS questions if whether or not the PC can sign for it yet someone else pay the rent.

SS notes that there is only 2 months left until the SIAB will be handed over to the HOTV project.

PH agrees that it should be the PC who sign the contract.

GG proposes that the PC sign the contract. DH seconds the proposal and all agree.

Clerk to sign the contract of hire on behalf of the PC and return the contract to PhilSpace.

173. PC Objectives

GG presented a draft document of the roles of the PC.

JH states that there is a lot of misconceptions about what a PC is able to do. The PC is an enabling body, rather than a doing body.

It was agreed that the document needed work, but should be done.

GG requests that PC members review the document and add their input. The item will be deferred until the next meeting.

PC members to send input for the document to GG, Clerk to add the item to the next agenda.

174. Speaker for the AGM

GG asks if there were any recommendations as to who could speak at the AGM on the 4th May 2020.

GG recommends Claire Thackery to talk about zero carbon and climate issues.

SS recommends that the issue of County Lines is high on the agenda and that a PCSO could be asked to raise awareness about the issue.

HV recommends Steve Mewes of the Wildlife trust to talk about climate change and the PC.

HV to contact Steve Mewes for availability, GG to pursue the PCSO and county lines.

175. Willey Road Housing Development

HV informed the PC that there had been a significant reduction in the hedge for the footpath access.

Nothing else to report.

176. VE Day

SS reports that there are events being organised; there will be a village breakfast at the village hall, the inaugural opening of the Dennis Silk pavilion with a cricket game between the Dennis Silk 11 and the Village 11, amongst other activities.

SS requests that a representative of the village hall could join the VE day organising committee

GG to ask at the Village hall committee meeting if a representative would be available to volunteer.

177. Footpaths

GG asks the PC if there are any recommendations of who might possibly fill the vacant post of Footpath Officer for the parish.

HV states that in her experience it is a lot of work for one person to undertake, and would it be possible for a footpath officer to co ordinate a number of people?

SS makes a recommendation of a parishioner who is very passionate within this area and would be an ideal fit.

NS recommends including the vacancy within the PC report to see if anyone would like to volunteer for the Footpath Officer vacancy.

GG to contact the recommendation from SS and to include the vacancy within the PC report.

178. Highways

GG reports that there are a considerable amount of road closures planned in the coming weeks, with Curload currently closed and the Stoke Road being closed from 9.30am – 3.30pm for 15 days.

HV states that the flooded Moor Lane and Cuts Road are now open to accommodate the diversion routes.

DF reports that the contractors will work with the local residents for access, but the planned work is for essential patching before resurfacing of the road in the coming months.

179. Allotments

Nothing to report.

180. Playing field

SS reports that the Stoke Stampede was a very successful event that the village should be proud of.

There was a considerable amount of running clubs participating so work was to be done to nurture interest from local residents. It was felt this had an impact on local businesses - such as the pubs - after 2020's event, as there were less people in the square than in previous years. GG states that the coverage for the event was very good and credit is to be given to all those involved.

HV adds that the event is a great credit to the village and it is extremely well organised. HV proposes that the PC send a letter to congratulate the organisers on their hard work. This was agreed by all.

GG to draft a letter and circulate.

181. Heart of the Village

NS reports that the target for the HOTV is getting ever closer with just over £400,000 possible of the £471,000 target, it is really at the tipping point.

SS adds that to achieve these figures, it is imperative on raising the initial £200,000.

GG reports that the target currently stands at around the £153,000 mark and urges anyone that can to buy shares to support this project.

SS informs that the share certificates are now available from the shop in a box for those that have brought their shares.

182. Village website

NS reports that he is aware of the accessibility and mobile regulations changes that are required by 23/09/2020

Clerk to add this item to the next agenda

183. Broadband

Nothing to report

184. Flood / Winter warden

GG reports that the flood group chair was reluctant to take on the role of the winter warden. It was decided to revisit this item in the future should it be deemed necessary.

GG also reports that the previously flooded roads on Moor Lane and Cuts Road are now open.

185. Police

AF reports that she had received a correspondence from the PCSO with regards to organising the speedwatch training as soon as possible. Unfortunately, this will now have to be postponed whilst the Stoke Road is closed. It is hoped that this will happen once the planned road works have finished.

186. Consultations and Surveys

Consultation on strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments

NS expresses his concern that this is a huge power for the police and is very biased towards the landowner.

The survey questions were discussed and answers agreed by all.

Clerk to complete the online survey and submit.

Consultation on school admissions arrangements for children who are due to start, transfer or move school during the 2020-21 school year.

It was agreed not to respond to this survey.
(DF, PS and 1 member of the public leave)

187. Financial matters

Authorisation of payment

HOTV share purchase (agreed minute 160) Clerk has completed the form	£5000.00
Rockwell Printers – Winter newsletter 2019	£63.00
Phil Space – Transport of goods for the SIAB	£144.00
The Mutual Retail – Insurance policy for the SIAB	£500.00

Standing Orders

02-01-2020 K de Silva – Clerk salary for December 2019	£283.33
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Received

None

HV questions the coverage of the policy for the SIAB and requests the policy be circulated prior to authorisation to make sure that the policy covers all aspects.

Clerk to circulate the policy agreement

GG Proposes that all payments be authorised, JH seconded and all agreed.

Other financial items

Bank reconciliation to the end of December was circulated by the Clerk and checked by GG

The quarterly accounts from Sept 2019- Dec 2019 were circulated by the Clerk and checked by GG

The following cheques were signed by HV and AF for the payments authorised on 11-12-19 minute 166:

Cheque 1035 – John Musgrove – Strim and cut grass around signs	£275.75
Cheque 1036 – A.A McKenzie – Producing the minutes 25/11/19	£25.00

The Clerk will be submitting the VAT claim for 2018-19 in the next month

Clerk to circulate the spreadsheet for the claim

The Clerk proposes that the PC set up a separate account to receive the CIL payments for good practice, compliance and accounting.

It was agreed by all that this would be a good idea

Clerk to investigate opening the extra bank account with Lloyds

AF & HV sign the paid receipts for November

NS & HV sign the paid receipts for December

188. Other items for discussion.

GG requests that the Future of local government in Somerset – next steps; the Unitarian authority discussion circulated 08/01/2020 be added to the next agenda

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

The Clerk has received the invoice from the PFC for the reimbursement of the public liability insurance.

GG advises that the grant form be sent to the PFC and the receipt added to the next agenda.
Clerk to send the grant request form to the PFC

Buckingham Palace garden party nominations – it was agreed there would be no nomination.

The Clerk requests authorisation to attend a SALC audit course in preparation for the AGAR on 01/04/2020 at a cost of £35.00

It was agreed by all that the clerk could enrol.

SS requests the Phone Box at the entrance of the playing field be added to the next agenda.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

GG to contact the local scout group to attain if there is still interest in the phone box as a project.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.17pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 10th February 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 31st January if possible.