

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 10th February 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), Sue Buller (District Councillor)

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

189. Apologies for absence – None received

Minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 13th January 2020 were agreed by all to be accurate, and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of interests and dispensations- NS and GG declared an interest in minute 212 for the reimbursement of payments made on behalf of the PC.

Public question time – 1 member of the public was present to answer questions regarding planning application 36/19/0037, representatives of the Willow set (RP), SSG Primary School, and SSG Tennis club (SM) were present with regards to their grant applications (minute 192).

190. Planning

36/19/0048 Willey Road, Stoke St Gregory – Planning committee meeting 30-01-2020
DECISION – Approval that the off site play and open spaces provision contribution may be used to contribute to funding the pavilion as it will be providing off site play provision for the local community.

36/19/0037 Haynes. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory – Replacement of dwelling with No.1 dwelling with detached coach house.

The PC agreed by a majority of 7 to not to comment on the above application, with 2 members opposing the application.

SS requests that more members of the PC should be available to attend the site visits for planning applications in the future.

(1 member of the public leaves)

191. School / Willow set improvements

GG reports that no progress has been made regarding central CIL funding for the school, despite significant efforts having been made; GG asks SB and DF if there have been further discussions to report.

SB responds that she is extremely disappointed with the situation, and it appears that there is a stalemate between SCC and SWTC over the matter. On visiting the school some of the ongoing issues with the building were shocking and she accepts that the school is overcrowded - although current estimations suggest that the headcount will decrease in the future.

SB also mentions that if the Burowbridge development was to get approval, the only option would be for those additional children to attend other Primary Schools in the area, and not SSG.

GG states that capacity is not the sole issue at the school; inadequate facilities and a number of other fundamental issues need to be addressed.

DF reports that he has done all he can. DF explains that he has attended site visits to the school with leading council and cabinet figures in addition to commissioning an independent report, and that he feels that there are few options remaining at this stage.

DF informs that there is a maintenance schedule in place for the school, with repair works to the roof starting imminently. There has also been funding allocated to the renovation of the toilets with the plans currently under discussion - so there is a degree of work in progress.

SB adds that if SWTC were to offer part of the CIL funding from the development to SCC, there is no obligation for SCC to then allocate the money to the school.

DF responds that there is no process in place for SCC to be able to apply for the CIL from SWTC.

SB states she has not given up on the school and will continue to pursue the matter.

192. Grant applications

SSG Primary School – Grant application for £25,000

The representative from the school submitted a grant application to the PC for the improvement of the toilet facilities within the school. They report that although the school is an attractive Victorian building, it does not lend itself particularly well to the requirements of a modern school. Updated toilets are an absolute priority.

After lengthy correspondences with Councillor Frederica Smith-Roberts, there is an understanding that the PC portion of the CIL money could potentially be invested into the school - if the PC wishes to offer the grant.

The school representative continues that there has been £22K of funding made available by SCC for the project, but the estimated costs of updating the facilities is £55-£60K, therefore the school request an additional PC CIL grant investment of £25K.

DF confirms £22K has been earmarked with the Chief Executive in order to modernise the toilets, and the plans now need to be approved by the headteacher.

GG asks if the plans that have been submitted are satisfactory, DF responds that the plans are yet to be agreed and finalised.

JH states that the PC should not be responsible for funding the shortfall for the building work, as this should be funded centrally by SCC – the PC should be working with the school to better the facilities.

DF responds that the toilets and accessibility are facilities.

HV questions whether there is a degree of misunderstanding over the two CIL pots, regarding what comes to the PC and what goes to SWTC and how it may be allocated.

SB states that she will be pursuing this and requesting a scrutiny meeting with regards to the CIL funding.

NS states that the PC have not received any CIL payments to-date with the first instalment not due until April.

GG reports that the CIL calculations have been a travesty but we now expect there will be £64,350 dispersed across three separate instalments to the PC as follows:

1. April 2020: £16,097
2. October 2020: £16,097
3. April 2021: £32,195

GG explains that all grant applications submitted to the PC will become the subject of discussion before any allocations are made, and with regards to the amounts that are currently

being requested; those sums of money will not be available until - at the earliest - October 2020.

The Willow set – Grant application for £25,000

The representative from The Willow Set submitted a grant application to the PC for the purpose of applying for the upstairs part of the building where the Willow set is situated, to be turned into an office area, staff room, and baby room.

GG reports that The Willow Set is a huge asset to the village but the same logic applies to this and the School's application: for this amount of funding, the PC will not have the money to grant until at the earliest, October 2020.

The representative of the Willow Set reports that if funding continues to fall at its current rate the Willow Set will experience a per-child deficit of 15 pence per hour.

A breakdown of the accounts, funding and reserves for the Willow Set was explained to the PC.

GG notes that this is all clear and understood.

GG states both the School & Willow Set's interests in applying for PC CIL funds have been registered and a decision will be made pending receipt of CIL money and subsequent discussions surrounding allocation of that money.

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club – Grant application for £3.5K

The representative from the SSG tennis club explained that there is a shortfall in the funds available to cover the resurfacing of the tennis courts.

A temporary loan of £1.5K has been offered by its members. This loan is due to be repaid soon. Another £2K for the re painting of the courts is expected in the Spring.

HV questions when the work was undertaken, how did the Tennis Club expect to fund it, SM responds that it was expected to be covered by the developer.

GG states that many things had to be cut from the 'wish list' presented to the developer. GG continues that he had suggested that it would be unwise of the Club to proceed in light of the Club's own assertions around its inability to self-fund the project.

SM reports that now the courts have been resurfaced there is a once in a lifetime opportunity to increase the cost of membership of the club allowing them to build a sinking fund to eventually pay for the work.

NS questions whether the Tennis Club are asking for a grant or a loan, DF informs that the PC does not have the power to offer a loan.

JH asks whether other organisations and authorities have been approached for funding, especially if people from other parishes are using the facilities. SM responds no and cites the tennis courts are in Stoke St Gregory on land that the PC are custodians of.

SM continues that there are also plans to send a tennis coach into local schools such and SSG and North Curry to raise the profile of the club within the area and increase overall membership numbers.

SS requests the need for more information from the Tennis Club with regards to the grant. GG states that the Tennis Club is an asset to the village and commends them for their part in bringing people into the village.

GG requests the Tennis Club return to the PC with a business plan or proposal for the next meeting to discuss the grant application in further detail.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda.

Stoke St Gregory Playing Fields Management Committee – Grant application £212.80

The PFMC submitted a grant application to recover the cost of the Public Liability insurance. It was agreed by all PC members that this cost has always been covered by the PC under section 137, and the money would be reimbursed to the PFMC to cover the payment.

Clerk to arrange for the payment to be made to the PFMC for £212.80

(3 members of the public leave)

193. Speaker for the Annual General Meeting

HV reported that Steven Mews of the Somerset Wildlife Trust, had kindly agreed to be the guest speaker at the AGM to discuss climate change and what role the PC can play.

GG thanked HV for her efforts securing the speaker.

194. Climate change... is Stoke St Gregory too small to make a difference?

GG uses the quote “nobody is too small to make a difference”. He asks the PC if a climate change policy should be adopted by the PC and whether it would be appropriate for the PC to better connect with Climate Action Athelney.

NS states that the PC is open to any suggestions from Climate Action Athelney.

SS recommends that the PC should hear from the guest speaker at the AGM first, but admits the PC could do more, and perhaps Climate Action Athelney may be able to become an advisory body to the PC over climate issues.

SS reports that the PFMC and the School will be planting 60 trees in the playing fields and school grounds in the coming weeks, and has recommended to the PFMC to consider the possibility of purchasing a recycling bin for the playing fields.

GG requests that this item be added to the agenda as an ongoing topic for future discussion.

Clerk to add the item into the blue section of the agenda for future meetings

195. Footpath Officer Vacancy

The Clerk reports that there has been 2 residents that have expressed an interest in the vacancy.

The PC agree to the document circulated by the Clerk containing a description of the Footpath Officer role and HV adds that the PC should offer training to the successful candidates, and recommends that the role could be undertaken by a small team rather than an individual.

Clerk to circulate the role description to the candidates and invite them to the next meeting to discuss the vacancy.

196. Telephone Box

GG reports that he has approached the local Scout group who have said they could do something with the redundant telephone box after the Easter holiday.

GG also reports that the WI have expressed an interest in also converting the telephone box.

SS states that the telephone box is currently falling into a state of dilapidation, and should be attended to before the VE day celebrations and the inaugural opening of the pavilion.

GG to contact the Scouts with a deadline to make use of the telephone box

197. Litter Pick as part of the Great British Spring Clean.

GG reports that the Scout group will be holding a sleepover in the Village Hall and will be participating in the Great British Spring Clean by holding a litter pick in the village.

SS has received a request from a resident that plastic bags are not used to collect the litter, suggesting paper animal feed bags could be more appropriate.

JH offers a supply of the large paper bags that would be suitable.

GG to request the scouts use paper bags that can be provided.

198. PC Objectives

Item deferred until the next meeting.

GG requests the members of the PC to read the document circulated by NS and feedback any comments before the next meeting.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda.

199. Future of local Government in Somerset – next steps; the Unitarian authority discussion.

Item deferred until the next meeting as more information is required.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda.

200. Willey Road Housing Development

DH suggests that the PC should be granted access to visit the site to view works now undertaken.

HV reports that there had been an issue reported by the school with regards to the increase in HGV activity entering the centre of the village, but this does appear to have subsided slightly recently.

GG reports that there is still a need to engage the developer in conversation over the pavilion funding, and that communications will be reopened upon the developer's return from holiday.

GG continues that the developer is still scheduled to provide a store, but if this is not provided, as it is not a necessity, then what other contributions may be offered towards the completion of the pavilion and the infrastructure of the building.

SS expresses that there is an urgency to have the pavilion completed by the start of the sporting season.

HV asks if the pavilion building will be completed by the developer.

GG responds yes, but there could still be consideration to allocate some of the CIL funding towards the project, if required, in due course.

JH highlights that it is the access and parking that is more of a significant issue for the PC to consider.

HV requests that if PC CIL funding is used for the project, the PC gather multiple quotes before any funding is agreed for the work.

HV also requests that all dialogue with the developer is communicated and circulated to the PC members.

SS reports that the pavilion is looking great – the electricity will be installed soon and the PPMC will be adding the finishing touches to the kitchen, flooring and installing the benches.

201. VE Day

SS reports that the VE Day Committee is focusing heavily on the national events that are happening on the Friday & Sunday of the bank holiday weekend.

There will be a village breakfast at the Village Hall and work is under way to organise a Cricket match with the Dennis Silk 11.

SS continues that The Nations Toast to the heroes of WW2 will take place on the playing field.

The VE Day Committee are looking at the possibility of a tea dance or light supper, too.

JP reports that the Huish Brass Band have been approached to play and have quoted £150-£250 to play at the event.

SS requests that the PC make a contribution towards the VE day celebrations to cover the costs of £300 with a flex to £500 if required.

HV proposes that £500 be made available to the VE Day Committee for the celebration events. GG seconds, all in favour.

JP adds that if any residents have photographs or stories from this period and would like to share their experiences to contact Sara Sollis or Janice Pearce directly.

202. Footpaths

Nothing to report.

203. Highways

A resident had contacted the Clerk with regards to the severe potholes on Windmill.

This has been reported by the Clerk and AF to SCC Highways.

AF reports that Highways have marked the potholes so work to fill them should hopefully commence soon.

204. Allotments

Nothing to report

205. Playing Field

SS reports that the fence towards the bottom of the playing field has blown down in the recent bad weather.

This will be taken down, but advises residents using the playing field to exercise caution in the meantime, especially those with dogs off leads.

206. Heart of the Village / Shop in a box

GG reports that the HOTV fund-raising total has now reached £163K of the £200K needed to further the project.

PH questions the SIAB costs circulated by the Clerk as they have reached the limit of the £5K allocated for the set-up of the SIAB.

GG reports that the rent is still to be recovered. Once recovered this will reduce the PC's SIAB set up contributions to below the £5K allocated.

GG also reports that he has submitted the planning application for the SIAB as retention of works already undertaken.

207. Village Website

NS reports that the domain name for the site will be up for renewal 01-03-2020.

The PC agreed that the cost of £55 for 5 years was the most cost effective.

NS to renew the domain name contract for 5 years at £55.

NS reports that he is currently looking at the website and mobile applications accessibility regulations and believes that the site is already broadly compliant and there should not be the need for much work to be done.

208. Broadband

Nothing to report

209. Flood

NS asks if the gully on the Willey Road has been pursued, GG reports that it was emptied last week.

NS reports that during the recent flooding of Curry moor, the pump was stopped overnight due to a noise complaint.

NS advises that this should never have happened, raising concern that the pump was turned off whilst significant flood risk was still present. In future the pump should not be turned off overnight whilst flood risk remains high.

A manager from the EA made the decision to turn the pump back on and resume pumping.

210. Police

AF reports that further discussions are required before Speed Watch can be introduced, and continues to state that efforts have been compounded due to the many road closures / flooded roads in the area.

AF hopes to have dates booked in for Speed Watch over the next month.

(DF Leaves)

211. Consultations and Surveys

Consultation on the future of acute mental health inpatient beds for people of working age – it was agreed that the PC would not respond to the survey.

Consultation on Employment Local Development Order (LDO) for small scale industrial space – it was agreed that this was the least relevant of the consultations and although they are very well compiled they are aimed at the individual rather than a PC body, therefore PC members were asked to complete the questionnaire individually.

SWTC local plan issues and options consultation – it was agreed to defer this until the next PC meeting (deadline 16-03-20)

SWTC Climate emergency plans consultation – It was agreed that again, it was compiled for completion by the individual rather than the PC body, GG requests PC members to complete the survey independently.

PH requests that the climate consultation should be publicised within the village.

HV recommends that the links be uploaded to the website for residents to complete too.

NS to upload the consultation link to the website, Clerk to display the information in the noticeboard and at the Village Hall.

NALC feedback for the Joint Practitioners Guide – It was agreed that as this is a document specifically used by the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer so they would complete the survey.

Clerk to complete the online NALC questionnaire.

212. Financial Matters

Authorisation of payment

Reimbursement to GG for the submission of the planning application (36/20/0001) for the SIAB	£142.00
Reimbursement to GG for flash band and plumbing supplies for the SIAB	£169.72
Reimbursement to NS for acrylic panel and banners for the SIAB	£202.24
PhilSpace Hire of the SIAB 09/02/20 – 31/01/20	£198.72
Clerks expenses – Printer ink and paper	£29.49

Standing Orders

01-02-2020 K de Silva – Clerk salary for January 2020	£283.33
---	---------

Received

None

JH proposes that all payments be made, HV seconds, all in favour.

Other financial items

The bank reconciliation to the end of January 2020 was circulated by the Clerk and checked by GG.

HV & NS sign January paid invoices.

The VAT claim for 2018-19 was submitted by the Clerk on 20-01-2020 for £468.00. This payment was received 04-02-2020 into the PC bank account.

213. Other items for discussion

None

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.23pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 9th March 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 February if possible.