

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9th March 2020

in the Williams Hall

Present – Graham Glead (Chairman), Nick Sloan, Ann Finn, Janice Pearce, David House, Peter House, John Hembrow, Phil Stone (District Councillor)

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva and 5 members of the public

214. Apologies for absence – Sara Sollis, Heather Venn, Sue Buller (District Councillor) David Fothergill (County Councillor)

Minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 10th February 2020 were agreed by all to be accurate, and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of interests and dispensations - NS declared an interest in minute 235 for the reimbursement of the cost for the renewal of the domain name for the village website.

Public question time – 1 member of the public (CA) was present with regards to the vacant role of the footpath officer – Minute 218, 1 representative of the SSG Tennis club (SM) was present with regards to the SGG Tennis Club grant application - Minute 217, 1 member of the public was present to report a broken footpath finger post to Frog Lane.

This was noted by the PC.

2 members of the public were attending to obtain information with regards to the planning application for the land separating Church Close residents and the Willey Road housing development.

GG informed the residents that the PC had received no information on this, but agreed to contact the developer for an update on when the planning application proposals will be submitted.

215. Planning

36/19/0031 – Lower Huntham Farm. Huntham Lane, Stoke St Gregory – Sub diversion-- of dwelling into 2 No. dwellings (retention of works already undertaken)

DECISION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 03-02-2020

36/19/0037 – Swaynes. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory -Replacement of dwelling with a detached coach house

APPLICATION WITHDRAWN 24-02-2020

36/20/0004 Willowdene. Windmill, Stoke St Gregory – Replacement of single storey side extension with a two storey extension and extension of the rear porch.

The PC agreed the following response;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support this application”

36/20/0002 Windmill Barn. Windmill, Stoke St Gregory – Change of use of land from agricultural to domestic with relocation of access

The PC agreed the following response;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support this application”

36/19/0032, 36/19/33, 36/19/34, 36/19/0035 – Lower Huntham Farm. Huntham Lane, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of an agricultural building for the housing of livestock (resubmissions of 36/19/0010, 36/19/0009, 36/18/0017, 36/18/0016 retention of works already undertaken)

The case officer at SWTC planning department confirmed a clerical error had occurred which resulted in the applications being resent to the PC for consultation. The applications were unchanged from the previous submission.

The plans are currently in consultation with Natural England.

The PC agreed there would be no change to the original response to the application agreed at the December PC meeting, Minute 146.

36/20/0006/CLA River Tone railway bridge. Stanmoor Road, Athelney – Application for prior approval under Part 18 Class A for bridge works

The PC agreed the following response;

“The Railway Bridge by the Athelney Crossing is the only structure blocking the flow of the River Tone from New Bridge to the confluence with the Parrett. No change is proposed to the current height of the soffit, which presents a solid blockage to between 100 and 400mm of water when the river is in flood (Hook Bridge spillway running), which is not uncommon.

The sensitivity of the Tone drainage system is bound to increase through the life of the new bridge, and we feel very strongly that this opportunity should be taken to modify the design so as to raise the soffit above the flood level of the Tone.

We appreciate that this is a permitted development, but we feel that the interference with the flow of the Tone, now and increasingly throughout the life of the new bridge, meets the criteria for objection.”

PS suggested that Burrowbridge PC be consulted on the proposed design as when Currymoor is flooded it can also effect Burrowbridge.

PS agreed to consult with Burrowbridge Parish Council on the application.

216. School / Willow Set improvements

GG reports that there has been two developments with regards to funding for the school.

SB has uncovered the Minutes from the TDBC full council meeting from Oct. 2nd 2018 and found them to clearly state that unallocated central CIL money still remains.

This has been communicated to the Headteacher and Chair Governor of the school, and they have subsequently made a request to access these funds for the much needed improvements to the school.

Secondly, SB corresponded to the PC that a meeting was held with a SWTC CIL professional to discuss the school's situation and the fact that there is currently no process for SCC to apply for CIL funds to fund the school's improvements and expansion.

The SWTC CIL professional confirmed that a process does not currently exist but informed SB that the SWTC are in the process of setting up a CIL panel which will consist of SCC representatives along with others; allowing parties to make bids for various funding.

217. SSG Tennis club grant application

The tennis club committee provided a detailed business plan to the PC, with an action plan and financial projections.

SM explained to the PC that membership costs had been artificially held low for the last 3 years to reflect the inadequate state of the tennis courts.

Even with the increase in membership fees it would only equate to £2 per week, which would still be incredibly competitive in comparison with clubs in the surrounding area.

There would be an extensive marketing campaign in the local and surrounding area to tap into potential new members, as well as visiting both primary and secondary schools to promote the coaching courses available.

GG states that the tennis club is an asset to the village because it brings visitors to SSG.

GG questions that the projected figures presented appear to be relatively conservative to which SM responded that they were realistic.

GG asks what will be the outcome if the grant is not agreed by the PC?

SM responds that the courts would remain un-painted and black, which would quickly damage players balls and footwear making it undesirable to play on which, in turn, would have a negative financial impact on the club.

GG questions if the TC could also include programmes for the physically challenged or differently abled,

SM reports that at present, there are no plans to provide access from the pavilion to the courts, but this could be an aspiration for the future.

PH questions that as the tennis courts are not continually in use, would there be scope for other bodies to use the courts.

SM reports that the school already use the courts for the annual netball tournament and use of this nature – especially by the school - could be promoted more, however the court fencing is not suitable for football use and as the specialist surfacing can easily become damaged, any extra use would need to be closely monitored.

NS states that as the landscape of the PC finances had changed with the receipt of the £12,000 from WOED for the reimbursement of the grant the PC had provided for the original cost of the resurfacing work – and the PC should support the TC.

GG proposes a £3500.00 grant to cover the shortfall of the resurfacing of the tennis courts. JP seconded, all were in favour.

Clerk to communicate with SM raise an order with courtstall to arrange the completion of the works for the tennis courts for £2000 and arrange payment of the £1500 grant to cover costs already paid.

218. Footpath Officer vacancy/appointment

GG reports that Cecil Boobyer had fulfilled this role within the community for many years, but due to increasing work commitments could no longer continue.

GG expresses the gratitude of the PC for his many years of service.

Charlotte Alexander (CA) has applied for the position and was asked by GG why she was interested in taking on the role.

CA reports that she walks the paths of SSG daily and over the last 18 years a great deal has changed.

CA believes that the footpath network should be treasured, but increasingly some of the routes are becoming fit for the very fit, and should be more accessible. CA expresses that she is 150% committed to the footpaths of the village.

GG informs that there are opportunities with SWTC to attend training courses to assist with fulfilling the role.

GG proposes that Charlotte Alexander be appointed as the Footpath Officer. NS seconded and all were in favour.

GG to obtain the footpath map from CB and the maps from TS for the use of CA in the role.

219. Update on allocation of CIL funding

GG reports that following discussions with WOED, there should be no requirement for the use of the PC portion of the CIL to be allocated to the pavilion building.

GG reports that SWTC planning department must approve the projects for which CIL money has been applied for prior to allocation.

This must also be reported to SWTC at the end of each year by the Clerk/RFO.

It was agreed that no decisions on CIL spending would be made until the PC was in receipt of the funds and all requests would be considered on their merits.

Clerk to add the item Community Infrastructure Levy to future agendas

220. PC Objectives

Two separate documents have been compiled to describe the role of the PC to the community and have been circulated to the PC members for their consideration.

GG explains that he feels it is important to have a document with a view of being able to say this is how we operate without bias or favour and this is what we do.

JH states that it is important for people to know the PC is an elected body with elections happening every 4 years.

PH adds that one statement in particular is a very clear statement about the role of the PC.

GG proposes that this statement is the accepted document to adopt and publish with regards to the role of the PC. All were in favour.

221. Future of the local government in Somerset – next steps; The Unitarian Authority discussion

GG reports that a correspondence from Councillor Frederika Smith-Roberts in response to the initial announcement from the Leader of SCC was scant on detail, had no substance and was non specific.

GG continues that with a lack of information no constructive discussion could happen.

GG questions the choice of using the same consultants that were used by SWTC - which has appeared very costly and failed to be a smooth transition. There could be a loss in democratic representation.

PH adds that the move to Unitarian could put more pressure on PC's to provide local funding for projects that should be provided for centrally.

DH recommends that as per Councillor Smith-Roberts correspondence states, she would be willing to visit Parish Councils to discuss the matter further, enabling the PC to gather more information on the proposal.

Clerk to correspond with Councillor Smith-Roberts office to arrange a visit to a PC meeting.

222. Willey Road Housing development

GG states that the residents concerns from the public question time with regards to the submission of the planning application for the land separating the development and Church Close has been noted and he will

raise their concerns with the developer.

GG to contact AL for further information on the submission of the planning applications.

GG reports that the development is running behind schedule due to the adverse weather and heavy rain that has been experienced.

GG asks the PC for the thoughts on a name suggestion for the development that had been published in the Stoke News which was “Wells Hay”

NS questions whether the school were still interested in a competition for the children to possibly name the development before any suggestions were considered.

GG to correspond with LM to attain if there is any appetite for the school to participate.

223. Climate change... is SSG too small to make a difference?

GG reports that a link had been established with Climate Change Athelney (CCA) and dates of their upcoming events have been published on the village website.

It was agreed to keep climate change on the agenda.

GG recommended that CCA should be invited to present a report at the AGM.

Clerk to invite CCA to the AGM

224. VE day

JP reports that the VE day committee has received items for the display in the village hall and these were currently being re-mounted. Coates has kindly offered to donate display boards.

JP continues that unfortunately, it has been announced that there are other events happening over the same weekend in close proximity, which may affect attendance – but there is still on-going planning happening to participate in the national celebrations, the pavilion opening, bugle and band playing and the village breakfast.

225. Footpaths

GG reports that the public footpath beyond Willowdene on Windmill was now un-passable.

CA adds that she feels horrified by the current state and that there may be plans for the path to be ballasted.

PH states that ballasting would be urbanisation and advises soil management and maintaining a soil path.

JH adds that he has mixed feelings of wire and a hedge for the path as this can become overgrown and hard to manage and maintain.

NS suggests that a formal request should be made for the suitable re-routing of the path and to express concerns about the current state that the public footpath is now in.

GG to correspond with the landowner expressing the concerns highlighted.

226. Highways

AF reports that the Speedwatch has finally been able to go ahead.

So far, 2 vehicles out of 107 were exceeding the speed of 40 MPH through Meare Green and these vehicles had been reported.

AF informs the PC that the locations for the Speed Watch need to have prior approval, and 3 locations had been approved along Meare Green.

AF continues that there could be a possibility of less vehicles on the road than usual due to the surrounding road closures and diversions.

GG reports that in light of the recent amounts of rainfall that has been experienced there has been a notable improvement with the flooding on the Huntham Lane.

DH reports that the flooding on Dark Lane has become an issue, gaining significant depth at times. DH advises contacting the landowner to clear the culvert by the gate which would dramatically improve the situation.

GG to correspond with the landowner to request the culvert is cleared.

227. Allotments

Nothing to report.

228. Playing Field

GG reports that the pavilion is now in the final stages, with the electric and heating systems currently being installed. Works are on schedule for completion in time for the May inaugural opening.

DH enquires about the drainage issues from the run off from the playing field onto the Willey Road.

GG informs that the drain was completely blocked with silt and soil. This has now been cleared and there has appeared to be a significant decrease in the flooding on Willey Road.

GG advises that the drain should be refurbished when the footpath has been installed.

229. Heart of the Village / Shop in a box

GG reports the HOTV has achieved the target of £201,000 in community shares, donations and contributions – thus releasing funding, grants and loans for the existing required amounts. There was no requirement for additional funding from the PC to assist with attaining the target.

GG continues that an offer has been accepted for The Royal Oak.

The clerk had received a late planning application for the SIAB;

36/20/0001 – Siting of container to temporarily house the village stores on land adjacent to the car park of Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory (retention of works already undertaken)

The PC agreed the following response;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support this application”

230. Village Website

Nothing to report.

231. Broadband

Nothing to report.

232. Flood

Nothing to report

233. Police

Nothing to report

Due to very little representation from the local PCSO it was agreed to remove this item from future agendas.

234. Consultations and Surveys

SWTC Local plan issues and options consultation – GG informs that this is a very lengthy survey that would require pre-scripted answers for discussion before participating.

GG states that it is with personal regret that this consultation was deferred from the last meeting and referred to the idea of North Curry PC, to appoint a sub committee to respond to surveys such as this.

PS adds that he has the response of another PC's very precise views on the consultation that he could share with the PC.

PS to forward the consultation response to GG to circulate for a collective response from PC members before the deadline 16-03-20

SWTC District wide design guide public consultation – NS agreed to draft a set of answers to circulate to the PC members for a collective response – Deadline 30-03-20

Community Buildings Survey – It was agreed that this had little relevance to the PC but was aimed more towards the village hall committee.

BTA Toilet Tax Survey – It was agreed that this survey was not applicable to our PC as there is no ownership of public toilets.

235. Financial matters

Authorisation of payments

Domain name renewal with LCN reimbursement to NS	£65.94
PhilSpace Hire of SIAB container 01-02-20 – 29-02-20	£250.56
The Cumbrian Clock Co service of the Parish Clock	£198.00

Standing Orders

01-03-20 Clerks salary for February 2020	£283.33
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Received

HMRC VAT claim for 2018-2019	£468.00
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Reimbursement from WOED for resurfacing the tennis courts	£12,000
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JH proposes that all payments be made, DH seconds, all in favour.

Other financial items

Bank reconciliation to the end of February was circulated by the clerk and checked by NS.

NS & AF signed the PFMC receipt

The receipts for February were not signed as HV was unable to attend. The clerk will present these to be signed at the next PCM by AF & HV
(PS and 5 members of the public leave)

236. Other items for discussion

The Clerk informs the PC that enquiries have been made to Lloyd's bank with regards to opening a secondary account to hold CIL money. This requires a letter with the signatures of 3 signatories confirming the request to open an identical account to the treasurers account.

The clerk presented this letter that was signed by the Clerk and PC members NS & AF.

The Clerk informs the PC that Liz Hembrow has kindly agreed to complete the internal audit for the PC.

Confidential item

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.20pm.

PLEASE NOTE THE NEXT PC MEETING WILL BE ON THE FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH DUE TO THE EASTER BANK HOLIDAY

The next meeting will be held on Monday 6th April 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 28th March if possible.