

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 11th May 2020

held remotely via Zoom.

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

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva

1. Apologies for absence – Charlotte Alexander (Footpath Officer)

Minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 9th March 2020 were agreed by all to be accurate, and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Thursday 19th March 2020 were agreed by all to be accurate, and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of interests and dispensations - GG declared an interest in minute 18, for the reimbursement of the cost of the planning application for the change of use for the Royal Oak.

All Councillors are granted a dispensation by the Clerk as per Minute 145 (09-12-19) under Section 31 (4) of the Localism Act 2011 to participate in any discussions or vote on the matter of the HOTV project.

Public question time – No members of the public were present.

Resolution to agree remote attendance at meetings – On the advice of SALC the Clerk circulated a document for the remote attendance at meetings to be adopted into the Standing Orders whilst meetings could not take place in person due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place. GG proposed the document was adopted, NS seconded, all were in favour.

2. Planning

36/20/0004 Willowdene. Windmill, Stoke St Gregory – Replacement of a single storey side extension with a 2 storey extension, replacement of single storey side extension and extension of the rear porch.
DECISION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 15/04/2020

36/20/0002 Windmill Barn. Windmill, Stoke St Gregory – Change of use of land from agricultural to domestic with relocation of access
DECISION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 29/03/2020

36/19/0036 The Cottage. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of a garage/car port and formation of vehicular access (retrospective)
DECISION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 16/03/2020

36/20/0001 Williams Hall. Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory – Siting of container to temporarily house the village stores on land adjacent to the village hall
DECISION : CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 03/04/2020

36/20/0006/CLA River Tone Railway Bridge, Stanmoor Road, Athelney – Application for prior approval under part 18 class A for bridge works
DECISION : WITHDRAWN

36/20/0003 Little Pincombe Barn. Woodhill Barn, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of a first floor extension, ground floor extension and garage
Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agreed electronically to “no comment”

36/20/0007/LB Lane End Farm. Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory -Replacement of No8 windows and No1 door

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agreed the following response electronically:

“We support this application because the proposed windows will be more in keeping with the age and appearance of this Grade 2 listed house than the existing ones”

36/20/0005 The Royal Oak Inn. Huntham Lane, Stoke St Gregory – Change of use of public house to public house and shop for general groceries

The PC agreed the following response;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council fully supports this application”

36/20/0008 Coates Willow & Wetland Centre. Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of No2 single storey buildings to be used as Coates English Willow Heritage Centre with relocation of parking

The PC agreed the following response;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council strongly supports this application”

3. Covid 19

GG reports that the Village has responded amazingly well during these difficult and uncertain times. The community has shown a positive and measured response to the lock down restrictions that have been in place.

GG thanks the Clerk for her contribution; responding to requests for assistance within the community. GG further commends Rachel Parish from The Willow Set for her services providing free meals and delivering food donations to the elderly and vulnerable.

SS asks if the PC could do something in the future to recognise the good will of neighbours and those members of the community who are assisting people that are shielding

It was agreed that this could be considered when the time was more appropriate.

DF reports that to date there have been 100 deaths in Somerset from Covid-19 and the coronavirus infection rate in Somerset is one of the lowest in the country. Although every death is a tragedy, we are incredibly fortunate that the numbers are not greater. The infection rate has been kept low due to people adhering to lock down and shielding measures that have been put in place by the Government.

DF continues that out of 250 care homes in Somerset, just over 30 (less than 10%) have Covid-19 cases within them.

Two new care homes have been built in Yeovil and Wellington that are able to take in Covid-19 patients.

It has fallen on SCC to source 70% of the PPE required within the County, at a cost of £10 Million, with the Government supplying the remaining 30%.

DF states that the hospitals have been coping well, with Musgrove at 47% of capacity and Yeovil currently at 51%.

Recycling centres are starting to re-open with social distancing measures in place, with pre-school and schools possibly re-opening soon.

To date, SCC has received £25.5M Covid-19 funding from the Government but has spent £47M.

DF states that SCC will balance the budget, but with loss of income and loss of Council tax payments at present, it will be challenging.

SB reports that the District and County Councils have been working well together, with District Council flat-out helping the elderly and vulnerable.

SS enquires if there has been an uptake on people applying for Universal Credit, to which SB responds yes.

PS reports the Government has funded £45M towards business grants, with £30M already allocated. He states that successful grant applications must meet a very strict set of criteria, and he is assisting people who have narrowly missed qualification. He adds that there could be a more flexible scheme in place to apply for the grants in the near future.

4. Frequency of Parish Council meetings

GG asks the members of the PC if it would be appropriate to change the frequency of the PC meetings during the current situation.

HV responds that she feels it more will be beneficial to have continuity and that the PC meetings remain on the second Monday of the month, as it always has been - albeit remotely and via Zoom until restrictions allow otherwise.

GG proposes that the PC meetings will be held via Zoom on the second Monday of the month, HV seconded, all members agreed.

5. Replacement for the grass cutting contract

GG reports that due to ill health the current contractor will no longer be able to maintain the grassed areas within the village.

The Clerk reports that she has contacted 2 possible new candidates for the work and is awaiting quotes.

SS and JH make 2 other suggestions of local businesses that could be contacted to carry out the work.

HV suggests that the works identified could be split between contractors to deliver the most cost effective option.

KdS to continue contacting local businesses as a matter of urgency to attain quotes for the work and report back to the PC.

6. The Summer Newsletter

Jean House had contacted the Clerk questioning whether the compilation, printing and distribution of the Summer newsletter should still go ahead.

PH recommends that the newsletter should go ahead if it is possible.

PH reports that currently the usual printers only has 1 person working due to social distancing restrictions.

NS agrees that the newsletter should definitely still go ahead, and suggests including an article to thank people on their efforts during these difficult times.

AF questions whether distribution will be possible with some usual distributors shielding at present.

PH suggests that there will be sufficient volunteers to distribute the newsletter within the village.

All PC members agree to the Summer newsletter going ahead.

KdS to contact JH to confirm. Any articles for submission should be forwarded to Jean House (jeanhouse@btconnect.com) before Friday 22nd May 2020.

7. Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Clerk reports that the AGAR and end of year accounts have now been completed and are currently with the Internal auditor for review.

The AGAR documents must be agreed and signed during the June PC meeting, then published and sent to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn.

HV thanked the Clerk for delivering an inordinate amount of work under the current circumstances.

8. Broadband

It has been reported to the PC by a resident that the broadband in Meare Green and Curload has been particularly slow/poor recently.

NS reports that currently there are 2 options available within the village: BT and Rural Broadband South-west. Both are currently experiencing extraordinary demand as more people are at home all day. Streaming & video conference services consume high bandwidth and usage of this nature has grown exponentially since lockdown began.

NS continues that BT have always been unreliable, but there could be an option to formally invite RBS to extend their wireless network if enough residents came together to make this option viable, and there may be a possibility for the PC to consider offering funds to subsidise the erection of a new pole and transmitter.

HV recommends including an article in the Summer newsletter inviting residents to contact NS to register their interest in RBS so a plan could be devised to facilitate a provision to contribute.

NS requests that if any residents who may benefit to contact him on curloadfarm@gmail.com ,with no obligation, so a formal proposal may be made to RBS.

An item will be published in the summer newsletter with more details.

9. Willey Road Housing Development

GG reports that work has accelerated since lockdown measures have been lifted within the construction industry, although he notes there has been an issue with dust recently.

GG suggests that a name for the development should be decided in the near future.

SS enquires whether this might be opened to the community via the newsletter and/or website so they may submit their suggestions to the PC. GG recalls there was a suggestion made previously by a resident that the development should be called “Wells Hay”, which was well received.

GG to contact JH with an item for the newsletter

KdS to add the item to the next agenda

10. Footpaths

GG states that he has received a detailed report from CA with regards to the footpaths, and informs that CA has been left feeling frustrated by lack of success on her first request within the role.

A letter to the main contractors and landowners which was circulated on her behalf by the Clerk appears to have been ignored. The letter requested that they leave a sufficient (1.5 metre) margin at the edge of all fields subject to right of way.

11. Highways

GG reports that a recent communication from SCC after a full council meeting - which was held on 19th February - states that within the next two years an advisory 20 miles per hour speed limit would be implemented outside schools in the County. This includes Stoke St Gregory Primary School which has been assessed and prioritised for implementation.

GG thanks DF for his work towards this.

DF informs that currently all road teams are working and repairing potholes that are being reported.

GG reports that emergency vehicles using SATNAV are being guided down the Huntham / Broad Lane which may not be considered the quickest or safest route.

GG to have this noted with the information providers.

12. Allotments

GG reports that the allotments are looking amazing at the moment.

There is some discussion happening as to whether excess produce could be sold through the community village shop.

SS enquires on behalf of a resident in regards to current proposals with the land between the last house by the footpath, allotments and village hall.

GG responds that he is waiting for a response from the developer with regards to the planning submissions that are expected to be made.

13. Playing Field

SS reports that the children's play area and tennis courts are currently closed in line with Government guidelines, but the main playing field is still open for exercise.

SS continues that potentially the tennis courts may re-open soon in line with guidelines issued by the LTA. The pavilion is almost complete and an interest has been expressed for an under 14 football team to hire the pitch and pavilion when it is safe to do so.

Unfortunately, there is liable to be no cricket this year due to the social distancing measures in place.

SS notes that currently the playing fields has a significant amount of outgoings, especially with the grass cutting and maintenance required which is a concern given there is no current income.

14. Heart of the Village/ Shop in a box

GG reports that the community shop is trading well with up-to-date information available on the village website.

The process for the committee elections is now under way, with hope an elected committee can be in place by June.

15. Village Website

NS requests that if anyone has information they would like to have shared on the website they should contact him as it is important to keep it current.

16. Flood

Nothing to report

17. Consultations and Surveys

Response for the motion from Cllr Berman from Wiveliscombe PC re: Taunton unparished area

GG asks the PC if we wish to register a concern.

DH states the the Parishes are subsidising the work in the town, which is unfair and should be addressed by the District Council.

PS responds that it is odd that there is no town council for Taunton. Currently there is a new administration under way which may raise a small precept, but nothing in comparison to what villagers pay, and it will take time to implement.

It was agreed that a response would be drafted and discussed at the next meeting.

GG to draft a response. KdS to add the item to the next agenda.

18. Financial Matters

APRIL

Standing Order

01-04-20 K de Silva – Clerks salary for March	£283.33
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Payments authorised electronically for April

28-04-20 Phil Space – Rental of the SIAB container	£267.84
28-04-20 Rockwell Print – Printing of the spring newsletter	£63.00
28-04-20 SSG Tennis Club – Agreed grant (Min. 217)	£1500.00
28-04-20 GURU – Website hosting for 3 years	£59.99

GG proposed all payments were made, HV seconded and all agreed

Payments received in April

15-04-20 SWT Precept	£8000.00
16-04-20 SWT CIL Payment	£16,097.68
27-04-20 Crescent Funeral Services	£300.00

Payments for authorisation

Standing Order

01-05-20 K de Silva - Clerks salary for May	£283.33
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Reimbursement to the Clerk for printer ink & toner	£23.66
Reimbursement to GG for the change of use planning application for the RO	£231.00
G Wagen James – Strim/mow the burial ground 30-03-20	£36.00
G Wagen James – Strim/mow the burial ground 14-04-20 & 27-04-20	£72.00
Came & Co Insurance renewal	£420.59
SWT uncontested parish election fee	£100.00

HV proposes all payments are made, SS seconded, all agreed

Other financial items

Bank reconciliation to the end of April checked by NS

End of year accounts circulated 28-04-20

19. Other items for discussion

The Clerk has received a request from the Baptist Church to write an article for the June Newsletter.

HV queries why the Chairman's report can not be used, GG advises that it has a different remit.

KdS to write the article and submit to the PC for approval before posting

The Clerk informs that she will now be attending an online CiLCA course

SS requests that the PC write a letter of thanks to Shaun Street and Paul Fielding for the organising, playing and filming of the last post at the Church gates on VE day.

GG to draft and circulate

PS would like to inform the PC that he has written to the Willey Road housing developer with regards to the hedge.

PS has noted that a lot of the hedge has gaps and advises cutting it at ground level and letting it regrow.

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.57pm.

The next meeting will be held remotely via Zoom on Monday 8th June at 7.30pm.

Please email any items for the agenda to the Clerk (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) and the chairman (grahiamgleed@gmail.com) by 31st May 2020.