

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13th July 2020

held remotely via Zoom.

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

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva and 2 members of the public

39. Apologies for absence – David Fothergill (County Councillor) Charlotte Sundquist (Footpath Officer)

Minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 8th June 2020 were agreed by all to be accurate; and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of interests and dispensations - HV declared an interest in Minute 40, planning application 36/20/0014/AGN. GG declared an interest in Minute 55, reimbursement for the allotment insurance.

Public question time – One member of the public was present with regards to planning application 36/20/0011 at Swaynes. Stoke Road, Meare Green, for the removal of condition No.2 (for temporary siting of mobile home). They feel strongly that the mobile home should be removed as per the original application 36/94/0010. They refer to the mobile home as an eyesore and state that it directly impacts their privacy.

One member of the public was present with regards to planning application 36/20/0010 and was available to answer any questions members of the PC may have.

40. Planning

36/20/0014/AGN Laburnum Farm. Woodhill, Stoke St Gregory – Application for prior notification for the erection of an agricultural building for storage of feed
The following response was agreed by the PC;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council supports this planning application”

36/20/0011 Swaynes. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory – Application to remove condition No.2 (for temporary siting of a mobile home) of application 36/94/0010
The following response was agreed by the PC;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council does not support this application. Members of the PC strongly feel the mobile home should be removed and the land returned to its former use and condition, as per the original permission of the application on 25th July 1994.”

36/20/0010 The Staddles. Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory – Change of use of the annexe from ancillary accommodation to holiday let
The following response was agreed by the PC;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agreed unanimously to support this application”

41. Review of PC representatives on local committees in lieu of an AGM due to C19

GG reports that as per Minute 26, it was agreed to review the positions of representatives on local committees.

GG continues that the only necessary change would need to be on the HOTV committee, as the representative must be one of the elected management committee members.

PS informs that there is no requirement for a PC representative on the HOTV committee, the only requirement is that they give feedback to the PC.

GG asks if the following representatives are happy to stay in their positions until the next AGM in May 2021;

Village Hall representative – John Hembrow

Playing Field representatives – Graham Gleed and Peter House, with Glynn Banks named as a delegated representative by PC members

Allotment Association – Graham Gleed

All agreed to continue in their current positions until the next AGM.

GG proposes Nick Sloan be appointed the PC representative on the HOTV committee, all were in favour.

42. Covid 19

GG reports that in the absence of DF there would not be a full C19 report.

GG continues that the latest statistics show there had been no new confirmed cases in Somerset for a few days, although it is impossible to say if there is a trend; it would appear we are at the bottom end of the curve. This does not mean we are out of the woods yet.

GG reports that the village hall would not be re-opening until at least September due to the complexity of the guidelines that would need to be adhered to.

HV reports that guidelines concerning the shop are under review as is it expected to be announced that face masks will be compulsory in shops. HV has spoken to Jo and Carolyn about the possibility of shop staff wearing face shields.

43. Unitarian Authority Proposal

GG reports that as DF is unable to attend the meeting and the district councils are yet to form a coherent response, the report commissioned by SALC & SLCC on the recommendations on the role of Parish Councils in the event of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is from GG's perspective, the most important and relevant document on the issue to-date.

GG continues that it is unfair to ask for an opinion with such a short deadline and a serious lack of information on the proposal. Information has been woolly, ill defined and an apparent lack of balance.

DH states that he personally strongly supports the Unitary Authority proposal – that it offers better value for money and the PC should support it.

PS apologises for the lack of an counter argument from SWaT, citing de-prioritisation resulting from the current C19 pandemic. Resources have not been available for the research and compilation of a counter argument.

PS continues that the notion that the proposal will save money is worthless. A case in point being the costly and chaotic merging of Taunton Deane and West Somerset councils. By shifting the decision making to Parish Councils it applies more pressure on the volunteers and Clerks who may not have the degree of expertise required. District Councils deal with a totally different range of issues to County Councils. SWaT will be presenting a response, but will request that there be closer relations between district and county rather than a Unitary Authority.

HV states that devolving to Parish Councils must come with its own funding scheme.

SS states that she works with Unitary Authorities in her professional role – it would be good to devolve some decisions to Parish Councils and areas of responsibility would be clearer.

NS responds that it would be crazy to rush this through.

GG expresses that there are too many issues with inconsistencies.

SB reports that there is a meeting this evening to discuss the SCC business case.

GG asks the PC whether there is support for the proposal – there has been no opportunity to discuss and agree the proposal properly and there is no binary answer.

GG requests that members of the PC read the report again to familiarise themselves with the information and reply to all via e-mail in order that the PC may formulate a response for the consultations ahead of the deadline.

HV requests confirmation that it shall in effect be an e-mail vote whilst people appraise themselves to be more informed before making a decision, GG agrees.

All members of the PC to read the SALC document and respond with feedback to all members of the PC by Friday 17th July.

44. Defibrillator

GG reports that for the second time since installation the defibrillator has been used.

HV states she was contacted as the user was unsure what to do with the equipment after use. The Clerk removed and replaced the used equipment.

It was agreed the Clerks details would be displayed inside the case of the defibrillator. It was agreed unanimously that another set of pads and a battery should be purchased.

Clerk to purchase replacements through SJA

45. Unpleasant Odours

GG informs that the Clerk was contacted on 19th June about a strong methane smell in the Meare green area in the early hours of the morning. This coincided with slurry spread which did smell for a few days. The Clerk contacted Wessex Water as after strong odours were previously reported, a fault was subsequently detected at the sewage works – however Wessex Water have not confirmed any issues after this latest report.

GG recommends that it is a watching brief and the PC will follow up if there are any other reported occurrences.

46. Willey Road housing development

GG reports that at the last meeting the PC agreed the name of the road would be Wells Hay (minute 28). Road naming is not a simple process. The developer would be required to make the submission of the road name themselves.

Ian Upshall has contacted the PC offering his services to make a welcome pack for new residents of the development.

NS states that there is already a leaflet in existence, but it requires some updating. GG notes that since the leaflet was compiled similar information has been added to the village website.

It was agreed that NS would contact Ian Upshall to discuss further.

NS to contact IU regarding the welcome pack

GG reports that the Clerk was contacted by a resident of Church Close on the 9th June to report horrendous levels of dust being thrown up towards Church Close and Willey Road. GG notes that the dust levels were particularly bad at that time and has every sympathy with the residents of Church Close. Since this was reported, the weather has been wetter which has helped to ease the situation.

SS expresses that there are a few issues that should be reported to the developer.

There is a real problem with thistles and weeds in the buffer zone that are encroaching into resident's gardens. It should be requested that he cut them down as it is not safe for residents to gain access into the building site.

SS continues that there have been complaints of excessively loud amplified music from radios and there is also some frustration with the resolution of the buffer zone.

GG to contact the developer with the issues raised

47. Footpaths

GG reports that footpath T25/27 has been the subject of considerable discussion recently. A significant amount of headland clearance work has been undertaken by the farmer (AG) since the PC received the initial report.

HV reports that she has been corresponding with AG to find a resolve to the issues, he is quite upset with the degree of crop damage and with off-lead dogs running through the crops.

PH advises that the footpath should have been updated and rerouted before now as it runs through an old barn and is impossible to follow exactly.

AF suggests a Highways act section 25 agreement would be appropriate to formalise a new route. It would require approval from the documented owner of the land and the tenant.

PH notes that there is a need to be mindful that the re-route does not affect the original purpose of the path.

AF to contact the officer to attain advice on matter.

GG reports that the top step of the stile going through the mead is now completely detached
JH to investigate and repair

48. Highways

Nothing to report

49. Climate change Athelney/ Environmental issues

GG reports that there was a recent caravan fire in Hectors Yard; the ferocity and duration of the fire suggested the caravan may have contained more than standard fixtures and contents. Despite the intensity of the fire there was no call to the fire brigade.

With a mounting number of scrap cars and accumulation of waste it is getting out of hand – the escalating situation has been reported to the Environmental Health Officer by at least 3 neighbouring residents.

NS reports seeing large plumes of smoke from the site on Friday 10th July.

DH states that he was recently at the site and is concerned that it is being used for the wrong purpose and should be reported to the enforcement officer.

NS to contact the owner to discuss the issues raised

50. Playing Field

SS reports the pavilion has now been officially handed over to the PFMC.

DH responds that the building is a great improvement and asset to the playing fields.

SS states that there has been an increase in the number of families using the playing fields recently – which is great to see. Cricket will be resuming this month and when the timing is appropriate there will be an official opening arranged.

HV questions the recent camper vehicle that has been parked in the fields.

SS responds that this was a decorator working locally, but it will be addressed at the next PFMC meeting. Although the school have camped on the playing fields, it should not be encouraged for personal use.

51. Heart of the Village / Shop in a box

NS reports that everything is going to plan with the purchase of the Royal Oak and that it is hoped completion will occur before the end of July.

The shop is performing well under the current circumstances.

Updates and further information are available on the village website.

52. Village Website

GG commends NS on his work keeping the website relevant and current.

In the interest of keeping the website up-to-date with latest notices and information, NS requests SSG residents contact him directly on nicksloan@curloadfarm.co.uk

53. Broadband

SS reports personal experience of terrible broadband recently. NS responds that this may be due to the box at the Church Close/Dark Lane junction being overcrowded and people are using more bandwidth due to working from home and streaming.

NS apologises for the lack of progress with the wireless proposal. NS has received approximately two dozen responses regarding the internet service people are receiving, but there is not much enthusiasm to sign to wireless at present.

54. Consultations and Surveys

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

The drafted response from minute 36 of the June PC meeting was circulated to the District Councillors inviting them to comment. No further comments were made.

KdS to send the response to Wiveliscombe Town Council.

One Somerset Feedback Form & Response for the SLCC, SALC report on Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset

It was agreed that both consultations were discussed as part of Minute 43 – Unitarian Authority Proposal.

All members of the PC to read the SALC document and respond with feedback to all members of the PC by Friday 17th July for a collective response to be devised and circulated.

The Local Government Association consultation on the new model code of conduct

It was agreed that GG would complete the survey on behalf of the PC, sending it to HV for review before formally replying.

55. Financial Matters

Standing Order

01-07-20 K de Silva – Clerks Salary £283.33

Payments for Authorisation

01-07-20 K de Silva – Reimbursement for the following items;	
Toner Giant – Printer Ink and toner XL	£41.50
Secure postage of the AGAR to the external auditors	£7.50
New Minute book and notepad	£11.48
TOTAL	£60.48
02-07-20 G Gleed – Reimbursement for the allotment insurance	£163.18
15-07-20 SALC – CiLCA support training	£275.00
17-06-20 SWaT Council – Installation of dog bin & emptying	£628.20
20-06-20 Williams Hall- Hire from 11-11-19 – 19-03-20	£91.00
24-06-20 Sunrise Horticultural Services – mow/strim grass areas	£90.00

NS proposes all payments are made, HV seconded, all agreed.

Other financial items

Bank reconciliation to the end of June checked by GG
Quarterly accounts circulated 07-07-20

LH has requested that in lieu of a fee for completing the internal audit a donation of £50 be made to FCN (Farming Community Network). The money can be earmarked for use in Somerset and will mainly be used to fund the nurse at Sedgemoor Market.

All members of the PC agreed

KdS to contact LH for details of how the donation can be made

56. Other items for discussion

Confidential item – Matter relating to a member of the community.

GG commends SB on the admirable work SB has undertaken to assist the member of the community. SB reports that she will continue to assist in resolving the matter and hopes for progress soon.

NS reports that he has received a request from a member of the public for a bin in the burial ground. JH responds that this has complicated practicalities as flowers can't be disposed in a black bin, but plastic and metal from wreaths cannot be disposed in a green bin.

HV advises that people take their waste home with them to dispose of.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda for further discussion

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.01pm.

The next meeting will be held remotely via Zoom on Monday 10th August 2020 at 7.30pm. Please email any items for the agenda to the Clerk (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) and the chairman (grahiamgleed@gmail.com) by 29th July 2020.

