

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 14th December 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, David Fothergill (County Councillor)

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

135. Apologies for absence – Sue Buller (District Councillor), David Fothergill will be arriving later due to attending another PC meeting

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

Declarations of interests and dispensations – A resolution was agreed on 9th December 2019 (Min145.1) that the council delegated the power to the Clerk to grant dispensations. The power rests with the relevant authority under section 31 (4) of the Localism Act 2011 and the basis is set out under section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011.

The Clerk grants the dispensation for the written request form received from the Parish Council Chairman Graham Gleed under section 31 (4) of the Localism Act 2011 for Councillor Gleed;

a) to participate or participate further in any discussions of the matter of the HOTV project at meetings

b) to participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter of the HOTV project at meetings.

The dispensation is sought in order to facilitate a meaningful discussion and vote in an area of key importance for the future of the village.

The period of the dispensation granted will be for 12 months, with immediate effect.

SS declares an interest in Min.136, item SPP/0365/01/RevF – the boundary behind Church Close as a resident

GG declares an interest in Min.142, item North Curry electric charge points as a member of the Village Hall trustees

(PH leaves the meeting due to technical issues, he has several attempts to re-join the meeting without success, GG will send apologies to PH for the technical issue)

Public question time – One member of the public is present with an interest in Min.142 Climate/ Environmental issues.

One member of the public is present with regards to planning application 36/20/0028, another member of the public joins later to observe item SPP/0365/01/RevF

136. Planning

36/20/0023 Lovells House. Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory - Erection of a detached garage with store/hobby room above

DECISION - CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 17-11-20

36/20/0011 Swaynes. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory - Application to remove condition No.01 (for temporary siting of mobile home) of application 36/94/0010

DECISION - REFUSAL 18-11-20

36/19/0032, 36/19/33, 36/19/34 & 36/19/35 Lower Huntham Farm. Huntham Lane, Stoke St Gregory - Erection of an agricultural building for the housing of livestock (resubmission of 36/19/0010, 36/19/0009, 36/18/0017 & 36/19/0035) (retention of part works already undertaken)

DECISION - CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 04-12-20

36/20/0026 9 Woodhill Terrace. Stoke St Gregory – Erection of a conservatory to the rear
The following response was agreed unanimously;
“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support this planning application”

36/20/0028 33 Church Close, Stoke St Gregory – Replacement of conservatory with the erection of a single storey extension to the side
The following response was agreed with one abstaining;
“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council strongly support this planning application”
(One member of the public joins the meeting)

SPP/0365/01/RevF – Boundary behind Church Close

GG reports that he, DH, SS and AF visited the Willey Road Housing development on 12th December 2020. During this visit, the developer confirmed that the 20m buffer zone behind the houses on Church Close did not require planning permission.

GG reports the developer stated to the visiting Parish Councillors, that with the change in conditions submitted to SWTC, the pumping station (with agreeance from the allotment association) was relocated to the orchard with the loss of one tree - that had already perished - and a water tank had been supplied for the use of the allotments. Due to the relocation of the pump, a service access road was no longer required, thus leaving a clear 20m strip of land for the buffer zone.

GG continues that when the developer submitted the change in conditions to SWTC, there was no reply from SWTC before the eight-week response period had expired. As a result of there being no objections or communications from SWTC the change in conditions was deemed discharged and the works shown on the submitted plan were authorised.

A member of the public enquires whether the updated documents will be published, as currently the SWTC planning portal is still showing outdated drawing plans. They continue that solicitors will require these documents for the transfer of the land to the residents, and that these documents should be in the public domain.

GG answers that he will ask this question to the planning department and states the planning office should have received a copy of the updated drawings.

Confidential item APP/W3330/C/20/3260489 is deferred until later in the meeting

(One member of the public leaves)

137. Census 21st March 2021

GG reports the Clerk had circulated a handbook to the PC which was received from the ONS Census Engagement Manager.

GG continues that local councils are obliged to assist people who struggle to use the internet, or do not have direct access to the internet to complete the online forms. GG expresses the support of the PC and suggests discussions to agree an appropriate way of offering this support are held nearer the time as the pandemic makes it difficult to plan effectively so far in advance.

Clerk to invite the Census Engagement Manager to an upcoming PC meeting.

Item 5 on the agenda, Covid19 is deferred until the arrival of DF

138. Willey Road Housing Development

GG reports that some of the houses on the development are now occupied with sales progressing on the rest, and there is now a waiting list.

DH thanks those involved in the site visit, stating it was immensely helpful to view the development.

AF states the houses visited appear to have been well finished to a high standard.

SS reports the allocated affordable homes have been purchased, with the next group of occupants of the site expected to move in this week. Construction of the remaining houses is anticipated to be complete by February 2021.

GG reports several of the affordable homes have been purchased by people on the original submitted list, benefiting local people with strong connections to the village.

HV raises concerns about a pinch point with the access of the development onto the Willey

Road, citing significant blindness caused by the wall and protrusion of the curb.

GG responds the only outstanding change to be made is the footpath adjacent, and the splay of the road should comply with regulations.

DH agrees with HV's concerns around traffic measures at this location of the road, and expresses concern over child safety when crossing the road to gain access to the Playing Fields. DH enquires if the implementation of the 20 MPH speed limit could commence before this point.

GG suggests asking DF when he joins the meeting.

Clerk to add Willey Road traffic safety measures to the next agenda.

AF enquires about the Broomfield Park road sign that has been installed at the entrance to the development.

HV questions the implications of a name change further down the line.

GG responds that the request to name the development Wells Hay is still on the table – the Broomfield Park name is for marketing purposes and should be changed once the site is handed over.

139. Footpaths

GG reports there has been a considerable number of positive comments received regarding the renewal of the steps at the rear of the Playing Field. GG thanks Neil Sollis and Glynn Banks for their work on this.

140. Highways

Speed Limit in Meare Green

The Clerk reports that after the Traffic Management Officer had driven the proposed route in the last month, they felt the limit would best begin at either the existing 40mph, or slightly before this, where the village nameplate is located. The Traffic Management Officer suggested that the speed limit could be incorporated in a village name plate sign and roundels put on the ground here as you enter the 30mph limit.

AF states the village boundary runs by Gould Farm, which is a blind summit where the road narrows and suggests this would be a more preferred location for the start of the 30mph zone. The Clerk responds that she has already suggested this location to the Traffic Management Officer but will suggest it again.

HV enquires as to the cost implications and where the money will come from.

The Clerk states that the Traffic Management Officer is currently working out the plan and costings and the PC will use this plan as a basis for consultation with the residents to see if there are any objections. The Officer had previously suggested the work may cost close to £8,000 and that 20% for the total cost is expected to be paid in advance.

GG states that the decision as to whether the payment is made from the PC reserves of CIL money should be made once the plans have been received.

(DF Joins the meeting)

Speed Watch

AF reports that during the latest lockdown, they were unable to conduct any speed watch activities but there is a session planned for next Thursday.

GG asks DF about whether the implementation of the 20mph zone outside the school will extend past the housing development.

DF informs the 20mph zone outside the school will only be in force whilst the School is in attendance and reports the scheme should be going ahead imminently.

School drop off / Pick up

GG reports that there have been several traffic issues around these times in recent weeks with inconsiderate parking blocking roads and driveways.

SS states that the current situation is awful, with cars parked close to walls and children exiting the vehicles onto the road and into traffic. People park as close as possible to the school – almost on top of the zigzag lines, with so many cars on either side of the road at the top of Huntham Lane that emergency vehicles would be unable to get through.

SS continues that the Playing Fields have offered their car park for use by parents, with ample parking also available in other locations such as the Royal Oak car park, the village hall car park and the church car park – but people seem reluctant to walk the small distance from those locations to the school.

DF states that other schools in parishes he supports are also experiencing similar problems and that it needs to be enforced. DF enquires if there has been Police support to enforce these issues in the past. GG responds there was, and it may have to be an option for the future if there is no improvement.

GG suggests that the staff should lead by example by parking in some of the more suitable spaces available, as they also park as close as possible to the school.

HV suggests asking the Headmistress to discuss this with the staff.

Clerk to add this item to the next agenda

(One member of the public leaves)

141. Covid 19

DF reports within Somerset case numbers were 84 per 100,000, but these figures have significantly increased. Taunton Deane figures were 87 per 100,000 but these numbers are also rising, with numbers being driven by outbreaks in care-homes in Martock and Burnham, there appears to be a decrease in community transmission.

DF continues that Yeovil Hospital has been overwhelmed by cases and Musgrove Park Hospital is coming under increasing pressure. Up to the end of November, there had been 260 recorded Covid deaths in the County, with more currently being reported.

DF continues that there is talk of the County moving into Tier 3, mostly due to Hospital capacity.

Yeovil Hospital has received its first delivery of the Covid vaccinations, with 975 per delivery. These deliveries must be defrosted together and administered within 5 days in the Hospital or 3 days in GP surgeries.

DF expresses that the vaccination programme is challenging as it is difficult to get the over-eighties into Yeovil – as it is a Covid-positive hospital. Due to a small number of allergic reactions to the vaccination, all patients must be observed for 15 minutes.

DF continues that there are plans for vaccination centres at Taunton Racecourse and The Bath and West Showground. SCC has redeployed 20% of its staff for logistical purposes to support the vaccination programme, this will inevitably have an impact on other services.

DF states that even with the relaxation of bubbles over the Christmas break, the message is the same – Hands, Face, Space, observe the rules and guidelines and keep the disciplines in place.

HV states that people have a choice: to keep family members safe people do not have to relax the rules for Christmas.

DF reports when the new tiers are announced this week, there will be a live briefing and Q&A on Thursday 17th December at 7pm via Microsoft teams. The link is available on the SCC website.

142. Climate/Environmental Issues

Forward Strategy Group (FSG) for Climate Issues

GG reports that the proposal to create an FSG for Climate issues has been publicised on various platforms, but disappointingly there has been no interest from the local community.

GG continues a correspondence was sent to neighbouring parishes to gauge appetite for collaboration on climate matters. The only responses having been received from North Curry PC and Curry Mallet.

GG informs that a network is already in place in South Somerset which appears to be more active on the subject supported by a representative from SSDC. GG suggests that something similar could be achieved by SWTC, however there currently seems to be little input from them on the matter.

GG informs he is currently making enquiries into self-help standard methodologies for carbon footprints with a study from Exeter University and will report back to Council when more research on the issue has been done.

SS and JP state they are both interested in forming a FSG for Climate Issues. GG responds that although the PC feel strongly about the issue, there is the challenge of how a small voluntary organisation can best make an impact given the other issues the PC also must consider.

JP suggests GG, SS and JP hold a meeting to discuss how best to approach this to encourage more members of the community to come on board.

HV asks whether there is any interest from Climate Change Athelney. GG responds that currently the group are meeting infrequently and there has been little response. GG will

however continue discussions with Brian Jeannes on the matter.

If you care about our unique natural environment and would be prepared to contribute to maintaining it, then the PC would like to hear from you. You can register your interest by e-mailing the Parish Clerk on ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk

Rural Energy Initiative

GG reports that the Rural Energy Initiative requires grant funding from the Climate Emergency Community Fund. There has been some enthusiasm from NCPC on the issue. GG continues that there may need to be some investment required to participate in the initiative, and he will hopefully have this clarified for the next PC meeting.

AF enquires that with three large dairy farms in the area, could a biomass digester be considered.

JH informs this has been considered but it is unviable at present owing to the volumes of product that would be required to operate one.

HV adds when transporting the product to a digester there is also a duty to be mindful of the impact transportation would have upon access to the area.

JH informs that as technology progresses it may become viable, but he cannot see reaching this point at any time soon.

GG enquires whether a local farmer would be willing to participate in the Climate FSG.

North Curry Electric Charge Points

GG informs that the Village Hall applied for a grant of 50% of the expected £3,000 expenditure to supply two electric car charging points at the Village Hall. Due to the current pandemic situation is yet to be implemented.

With the Climate Emergency Community Fund, it could be possible to apply for a grant of 100% of the expenditure, although if this fund is over-subscribed - as is anticipated - there may be no access to either funding source.

The PC agreed unanimously in November 2019 that from a moral prospective the PC supported the application, however the PC did not support the proposal financially.

GG asks if the PC would consider joining forces with NCPC for the installation of the charging points at the village hall.

SS enquires that if there is oversubscription to the Climate Emergency Community Fund and the grant is not secured, would there still be enough time to apply for the 50% grant that was originally available, and would the Village Hall Committee then be willing to resubmit an application to the PC to support the funding of the electric charge points.

GG responds he will ask the Village Hall Committee.

SS proposes the Village Hall Committee is invited to make a grant application to the PC for the residual sum for the installation of the electric charge points. AF seconded the motion, GG abstained from voting, the remainder of the Council were in favour.

GG to inform the Village Hall Trustees of the motion passed.

GG recommends item 15 Consultations and Surveys is discussed at this point as both relate to Climate Issues

143. Consultations and Surveys

NALC Climate Change Survey – GG has completed a response for the 4 questions in this **Climate Positive Planning – Interim Policy Statement on planning for the Climate Emergency** – GG invites any comments from the PC to be made by December 31st2020 via e-mail

144. Floods

No Business

145. Playing Fields

SS reports that the steps have been renewed at the rear of the playing field, but it is currently too boggy on the fields to complete much else. The Stoke Stampede usually held in January has been cancelled due to C19, but there are hopes that something similar could be arranged for April.

146.Heart of the Village

No comment

146. Village Website

GG notes that some of the contacts require updating and he will undertake this task

147. Broadband

No comment

(DF, NS and one member of the public leave the meeting)

APP/W3330/C/20/3260489 Deferred from earlier

Due to the nature of the information submitted for discussion and General Data Protection Regulation the minutes of this item will not be published. A response will be agreed by the PC and published in due course.

148. Financial Matters

Standing Order

01-12-20 K de Silva – Clerks Salary	£283.33
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Payments for Authorisation

K de Silva – Clerks expenses – Stationary	£11.50
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G Wagen & James – Invoices 2481 & 2482 – Strim and mow the cemetery	£108.00
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GG Proposes that all payments are made, HV seconded, all were in favour

Payments Received

Fee for additional inscription on an existing headstone	£27.00
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Other Financial Items

Bank reconciliation for November was completed and signed by SS

SS has completed 3 months of bank reconciliation checks. JP offers to complete the next three.

149. Other Items for discussion

The Clerk reports Taunton and District Citizens Advice Bureau have contacted the PC to invite support for their annual fund-raising appeal. The last donation of £100 was made on 14th January 2019.

SS adds given the donation to the British Legion was increased, and the Citizens Advice Bureau has been in significant demand throughout the pandemic, the CAB donation should be increased, too.

GG proposes a donation of £150.00 be made to the Taunton and District Citizens Advice Bureau, SS seconded the motion, all were in favour.

HV mentions that the hedges on Willey Road may have not been trimmed sufficiently, which could be exasperating the pinch point and visibility splay exiting the housing development.

Clerk to add this item to the next agenda.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.11pm.

The next meeting will be held remotely via Zoom on Monday 11th January 2021 at 7.30pm.

Please email any items for the agenda to the Clerk (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) and the chairman (grahiamgleed@gmail.com) by 1st January 2021.

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council would like to wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

