

## STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

held remotely via Zoom.

**Present** – Graham Gleed (Chairman), Sara Sollis (Vice-Chair), Ann Finn, Janice Pearce, John Hembrow, Simon Dauncey, Sue Buller (District Councillor), Phil Stone (District Councillor) David Fothergill (Arrives at 8.15pm)

**In Attendance** – Kelly de Silva (Clerk), Charlotte Sundquist (Footpath Officer) and seven members of the public

**24. Apologies for absence** – Heather Venn, Peter House, David Fothergill (will arrive at 8.15pm)

**Minutes of the previous meeting** – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were agreed by all to be accurate and signed by the Chairman.

**Declarations of Interests and Dispensations** – None received

**Public Question Time** – One member of the public is present to observe the climate / environmental issues item and would like to promote “No Mow May”, an initiative to help wild flowers, insect and bee habitats.

One member of the public asks GG if he had contacted SWT planning department with regards to the updated planning application being submitted by the developer of the Willey Road Housing development. GG responds he has not contacted the planning department, but he will if the occupants affected by the planning application wish him to do so. GG confirms the developer has assured the application had been submitted and received by SWT, with all fees paid, but it has not been registered yet nor has it appeared on the planning portal. GG suggests the delay in the application being processed by SWT could be due to a backlog in the planning department as a result of the ongoing phosphates issue.

The member of the public requests that if the newly submitted planning application for the buffer zone behind Church Close has not been registered by Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May, then SWT planning department should be contacted for an update.

The member of the public asks for clarification as to why a new planning application had to be submitted and why the works were not covered in the original application. GG responds the developer was left with no other option as a Planning Officer at SWT had stipulated that a separate planning application should be submitted.

GG concludes that there is little left to say on the matter until the latest application is registered and circulated to the PC as a consultee; it is hoped this would in time for the June meeting.

**GG to contact SWT planning if the updated planning application for the buffer zone has not appeared on the planning portal by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

### 25. Planning

**36/21/0005/LB The Laurels. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory** - Replacement of mineralised felt roof covering with standing seam zinc covering on the extension to the South West of the dwelling.

DECISION - CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 14-04-21

**36/21/0002 Brae Barn. Curload Road, Curload, Stoke St Gregory** - Installation of 16 No. solar panels to the South West roof with wall mounting of a solar inverter and associated battery energy storage on the North West elevation.

DECISION - CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 15-04-21

**36/21/0010 Court Cottage. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory** - Erection of extension to storage building at the rear (AMENDED APPLICATION) (20-04-21)

It was agreed that the amendment to this planning application did not require the original response to support the planning application submitted 13-04-21 to be modified.

## **26. Donation in memory of HRH Prince Phillip, The Duke of Edinburgh**

GG suggests that a donation of either £50 or £100 should be made to The Duke of Edinburgh Award youth award programme. It is agreed £100 would be an appropriate donation. GG proposes £100 donation be made by the PC to the Duke of Edinburgh awards in memory of HRH Prince Phillip. SS seconds the motion, all were in favour.

**Clerk to arrange payment of the donation**

## **27. Road traffic and parking in the Square and around the centre of the village**

GG informs that the recent parking and traffic issues in the centre of the village - particularly around school drop off and pick up times - appears to have improved slightly. SS agrees that there has been some alleviation in the issue.

SD reports there was an issue on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April with the number of cars parked in the square after the Church service with people visiting the Royal Oak after the service. A resident in the square requested the parked cars be moved. The request was adhered to.

SS states that it is a highway and legal to park there, but the resident who requested the cars to be moved is elderly and is less mobile. SS informs that for the resident their window is “their window to the world” and consideration should be applied.

GG enquires if the item should remain on the agenda. It is agreed the item would remain on the agenda for another month and review at the next meeting.

**Clerk to add the item to the next meeting agenda**

## **28. Casual Vacancy**

GG reports that shortly after the last PC meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Parish Councillor David House – who had participated in the meeting – had sadly passed away. GG continues that the funeral of David House was held today (4<sup>th</sup> May) with many members of the community lining the church yard to pay their respects.

GG informs that the Clerk will contact the Monitoring Officer at SWT to declare a Casual Vacancy and the process to fill the Parish Councillor vacancy will commence from the June PC meeting.

**Clerk to inform the Monitoring Officer and commence with the Casual vacancy process**

## **29. CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)**

GG reports since the last PC meeting, all applicants have been notified that the allocation of funds would probably not happen until the final tranche was received by the PC, which is expected in October 2021. This is to allow sufficient time for public consultation and submission of further applications.

SS reports the information the Clerk had circulated on Gislingham Parish Council’s approach to CIL allocation and consultation was interesting. SS asks what the PC can do in the interim to understand the residents’ main priorities around the allocation of CIL.

SD agrees that Gislingham PC had adopted an interesting approach, but the documents circulated did not include a copy of the questionnaire that was used to obtain the information Gislingham PC had gathered. SD requests that he make contact with them to obtain the questionnaire so this could be considered as a template for the PC public consultation.

**SD to contact Gislingham PC to request a copy of their public consultation questionnaire.**

PS enquires into how much information the PC has obtained regarding the amount of CIL money that will be issued from SWT, as North Curry PC has seen changes from original figures expected up by up to 50%.

GG responds the Clerk has contacted the CIL Officer, Rebecca Staddon, at SWT on several occasions in order to confirm the PC’s portion of CIL monies, timeline of payment and the rules around allocation of CIL. There appears to be no reason to expect a change in CIL PC portion allocation.

AF requests that following on from the presentation made at the APM by The Willowset preschool, it would be beneficial to know the precise number of children that use the facility, requesting a breakdown of how many children are specifically from the SSG Parish and neighbouring parishes as this would assist further discussions of their CIL application for £64,230. GG responds that these questions will be asked as the applications are considered.

GG reports a resident from Polkesfield had made a heart-felt plea to the PC to consider a small children’s play area on the patch of land by the houses. The resident states the Playing Fields is too far for the children to visit on their own, so they are playing in the street, which

is not ideal for elderly residents, many with health issues or for the safety of the children. SS states that the piece of land is privately owned and there had been a suggestion in the past that this land would be developed. SS continues that if the landowner wished to develop this area, there is a possibility Section 106 money could be applied for with a small area of the land being allocated to a children's playground without impeding development of the land for the owner.

GG responds there are a number of children within the area and considering the traffic in the area, a solution should be sought.

SS informs a number of the houses on Polkesfield and Willow Mead are social housing and therefore the Housing Association could be contacted to explore a possible contribution to play equipment as it is very expensive to purchase.

GG states there are avenues to explore with the landowner and the Housing Association to attain more information around the idea of the proposal.

### **30. Litter pick equipment and costings**

GG reports that following the suggestion made at the last PC meeting he has obtained costings for litter picking equipment which the PC could purchase and then be borrowed by residents and organisations within the village. GG continues that considering each item required costs on average £10-£15 each the PC should consider an investment of £200.

SS responds that she believes this is a worthwhile investment, JP adds that the equipment could be used by the school to assist with their local climate change projects.

GG proposes an amount of £200 is ringfenced for the purchase of litter picking equipment, SS seconds the motion and all were in favour.

**GG to purchase the equipment up to the cost of £200**

GG wished to express the thanks of the PC to Ian Upshall and Tom Duxbury who are regularly litter picking around the village.

### **31. Phone Box at the Playing Field**

GG reports that with the branches stripped back there is a considerable amount of manual work required to dig it out, prepare the paintwork and replace glass panels before the renovation can commence.

Neil Sollis has agreed to assess the next stage of works and a member of the public present at the meeting offers to help with the manual aspects. GG thanks NS and JM for their kind offer of help with the project.

### **32. Covid 19**

GG requests this item is deferred until DF arrives at the meeting; GG informs that all indicators are showing positive signs at present.

### **33. Willey Road Housing Development**

GG reports that since the last meeting dialogue had been opened with the residents on Church Close who are affected by the partitioning fence by the footpath. The occupants have requested the developer consider a substantial 1.8m high brick screen wall at no cost to the occupants, or an alternative of a 1.8m timber fence but with concrete posts and gravel boards for the purpose of durability.

**GG to contact the developer to discuss the proposal of upgrading the partitioning fence.**

GG reports he has contacted the previous footpath officer to receive the gate that will replace the broken stile entering the allotments from Church Close. Once it has been delivered, it will need to be erected.

SS recommends asking the workforce at the housing development who may be willing to install the gate.

**SS to request if the site workmen would be willing to install the gate**

A member of the public enquires who is responsible for maintaining and mowing the footpath. GG informs in the past it has been the goodwill of the neighbouring properties that have done this. The member of the public states they will continue to do this as a gesture of goodwill.

### **34. Highways**

The Clerk reports that the Traffic Management Officer (TMO) at SCC has apologised that they have not yet visited the site of the proposed 30 MPH speed limit zone in Meare Green to

mark-up for the works order to be drafted. A backlog of works accumulated over the winter period has caused significant delays. The Clerk continues the TMO states they will endeavour to arrange the site visit for the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021, and will send an updated report thereafter.

SS enquires whether the funding for the speed limit reduction works will come from CIL funding or PC reserves.

The Clerk responds the PC have £10,000 in reserves for a project fund that could be earmarked for the implementation of the scheme, but this will be a topic for discussion in the future.

*(David Fothergill joins the meeting. GG requests item 32. Covid 19 is discussed)*

### **32. Covid 19 (deferred from earlier)**

DF reports current case figures for the Somerset County are 12.9 per 100,000 citing a significant improvement. The figure is slightly higher in Mendip, with SWT reporting only 15 new cases.

DF continues the vaccination programme is now requesting 40+ year olds receive their vaccinations with reports of some 36+ year olds being invited too.

DF explains it is still extremely important to follow government guidelines as restrictions are being lifted with Somerset currently in a particularly good state.

### **35. Footpaths**

CS reports she had received a call from an incredibly angry resident regarding the state of footpath T25/19. It was harrowed in April, completely obliterating the footpath and public right of way. CS continues that she has reported this via SCC's online reporting tool and additionally contacted George Montegue at SCC directly. Unfortunately, to-date there has been no response and no remedial action taken. CS asks what approach can be taken next - the ploughing of the headways has worsened this year in spite of March's PC correspondences sent to farmers requesting that footpaths are not ploughed or planted in order to leave the 1.5m for Right of Way. CS comments that the blatant disregard for the requests amounts to a kick in the face: it is a question of principle.

DF requests that he is copied into the correspondences with the Rights of Way department at SCC to assist with a resolve on the matter.

GG informs a correspondence has been agreed and will be sent to the farmer of the field with regards non-compliance with March's request.

AF recommends that CS should contact Rob Coates at SCC to progress the complaint about the ploughing of the footpaths.

CS reports that the steps leading from Meare Green to the Moor have also been reported to SCC as they are in an extremely poor state and require fixing as a matter of urgency.

SS reports a stile on footpath T25/10 is defective, with the bottom step coming away from the stile, meaning it is becoming increasingly difficult to use. JH responds that he will visit this stile to assess what remedial work could be undertaken.

GG requests the Network Rail proposal (correspondence circulated by PH) of removing the Gainsload Bridge in Athelney is added to the next meeting agenda

**Clerk to add the item to the next agenda**

### **36. Climate / Environmental Issues**

JP reports collaboration of the SSG Climate emergency group with the school is going well with assemblies and climate projects going ahead.

GG reports the group is focused on building rapport with the school, fostering local level involvement and leadership. GG continues the group are working on dialogue to nurture community engagement and hopes of holding an open day are building momentum.

A member of the public would like to request that people within the village support the "NO MOW MAY" initiative to help provide insect habitat, wildflower, and food for Bees. The member of the public also informs that the Diocese of Bath and Wells are supporting an initiative for the re-wilding of church yards and burial grounds. The member of the public suggests rewilding of the area around the Village Hall where the shop in a box was located could be an option.

The Clerk responds that the burial ground is very much in use and areas around memorial head stones should be mowed and maintained, but the area at the rear of the burial ground

could lend itself to being rewilded. The Clerk informs she has contacted the grass maintenance contractor requesting the mowing is not done in May to support the initiative.

AF enquires about how wild it would be allowed to grow, especially with some species such as nettles, dog weed and brambles being prevalent in the area.

CS responds this will be tricky and will require an element of maintenance to prevent overgrowth of species such as those mentioned which are prevalent due to the high levels of Nitrates in the soil within this area.

**Clerk to contact the burial ground maintenance contractor with regards to rewilding the rear section of the burial ground and management of overgrowth.**

**Clerk to add the item to the next agenda.**

### **37. Floods**

Nothing to report.

### **38. Playing Fields**

SS reports the process of dismantling the old Athelney Railway Station building is underway with aspirations of it being renovated by its new owners to accommodate an Airbnb in the future. This would allow for the investment to be recuperated by its new owners.

### **39. Heart of the Village**

GG reports that the pub is now trading in line with Covid regulations with a steady customer base visiting. SD informs the pub offers a public service, with a regular customer base that will grow overtime with the restrictions being lifted allowing for internal areas to be utilised.

### **40. Village Website**

GG reports that Nick Sloan (NS) continues to work diligently on the website. GG enquires whether the PC should consider employing a member of the community to advance and upgrade the site thereby relieving some of the pressure on NS.

JH states that one of the issues with maintaining the relevance of information on the website is that local organisations infrequently offer updates or information to be uploaded.

GG proposes the PC embark on a search for a member of the community to offer support to NS for maintenance and upgrading of the village website. SS seconds the motion, all were in favour.

**GG to draft a job description to circulate to members of the PC for consideration**

### **41. Broadband**

GG states this will be covered in the next agenda item.

### **42. Consultations and Surveys**

#### **Local Authority remote meeting call for evidence (deadline 17.06.21)**

GG recommends that he and the Clerk discuss the survey with a proposed response drafted for approval at the next PC meeting. All agree.

**Clerk to add the item to the next meeting agenda**

#### **Improving Broadband and NALC DCMS Rural broadband consultation**

GG states these two consultations are effectively the same consultation and recommends supporting the NALC response stating it is a sensible approach. All agree. SD recommends the government survey should be advertised on local platforms encouraging the community to respond.

**Members of the community are encouraged to respond to the online government survey on improving broadband in rural areas by visiting the gov.uk website.**

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-broadband-for-very-hard-to-reach-premises>**

#### **Consultation on the Ruishton & Thornfalcon**

It is agreed no PC response will be made

#### **Risk Management Plan for Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service**

It is agreed that GG and the Clerk will respond to the survey on behalf of the PC

### **43. Financial Matters**

#### **Standing Order**

01-05-21 K de Silva – Clerks Salary

£377.00

### **Payments for Authorisation**

06-04-21 K de Silva – Clerks Expenses – Colour and black Printer ink	£24.47
23-04-21 Came & Co – Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers – Annual PC insurance	£431.71
12-04-21 J Williams – Sunrise Horticultural Services – Grass Maintenance	£90.00

The Clerk informs that she has received the annual invoice from GURU webhosting services for the Village website at a cost of £59.99 inc VAT. The Clerk advises that even though the invoice is not included on the agenda, the PC consider authorising the payment of the invoice to avoid disruption of the website hosting service.

GG proposes the GURU invoice is included in the payments for authorisation, SS seconds the motion, all were in favour.

### **Payments Received**

SWT P1 Precept 21/22	£8000.00
Nick Sloan – Memorial Headstone Fee	£140.00
The Clerk reports that since the agenda was published there has also been another payment received from Fine Memorials as a Memorial Headstone Fee	£140.00

### **Bank Reconciliation to the end of April 2021**

The Clerk informs that as the meeting date had been brought forward to accommodate the change in face-to-face meetings regulations, the bank reconciliation was not completed in time to be checked before the meeting. The Clerk has circulated the bank reconciliation and account information with no issues to report. The Clerk continues that SS has agreed to complete the April and May bank reconciliations prior to the June meeting.

### **End of year Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**

The Clerk reports the end of year accounts and AGAR have been completed and circulated to the PC. Liz Hembrow has kindly agreed to complete the internal audit of the PC accounts.

The Clerk asks if the PC are satisfied with the circulated financial reporting and AGAR documents for them to be submitted for auditing.

All agree the accounts appear in order and can be submitted to the internal auditor.

### **44. Other Items for discussion**

AF reports that she been invited to attend a consultation on the current A358 works. AF requests that PC members view the online information on the works as the road layout has changed significantly since the first proposals and respond with any comments directly to her by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.58pm.

**The next Full Council meeting will be held in the Main Hall at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June.**

**The PC respectfully request that if you wish to attend the meeting, please notify the Clerk in advance so numbers may be monitored in adherence with Covid19 guidelines. Face masks and social distancing will be required.**

**Please email any items for the agenda to the Clerk ([ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk)) and the chairman ([grahiamgleed@gmail.com](mailto:grahiamgleed@gmail.com)) by Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**

