

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9th August 2021.

Held in The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory.

Present – Graham Glead (Chairman), Sara Sollis (Vice-Chair), Janice Pearce, Ann Finn, Anne Merritt, John Hembrow, Peter House, Simon Dauncey

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

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

Minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 26th July 2021 were agreed by all to be accurate and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of Interests and Dispensations – SS declares an interest in Minute 91 – Planning Application 36/21/0015 as a resident of Church Close.

Public Question Time – One member of the public is present to answer any questions that may arise from the PC regarding planning application 36/21/0025.

Ian Upshall (IU) is present as a member of the public and representative of the Stoke St Gregory Environment Group (SEG) regarding the following points.

1. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Interest in when costings for submissions to the CIL money should be requested
2. IU would like to offer thanks to the Clerk for information supplied to the SEG
3. Highways – The 30 MPH sign on Griggs Hill has been obliterated and requires replacing with vegetation cleared around the signage
4. IU reports it is quite odd that the national speed limit is applicable in central areas of the village which seems inappropriate in locations such as Dark Lane, Huntham and Slough Lane. IU requests the PC consider reviewing the speed limit in these areas with a suggestion of a 20mph speed limit throughout the village
5. IU reports that after the release of the UN IPCC report – which makes for grim reading – now is the time to act on Climate Change. IU requests the support of the PC to facilitate working with other groups within the village.

SS responds that speed limits and road infrastructure will be included on the upcoming CIL survey which will ascertain the priorities of the community regarding CIL spending. SS continues that implementation of speed limit reductions can be lengthy and expensive process, and as signage would rarely be enforced SS suggests it may be better to encourage drivers to change their behaviour and drive slower within the village.

JH states the lanes that currently have the national speed limit could be considered as self-restricting by SCC Highways.

Clerk to add speed limit on Slough Lane, Dark Lane and Huntham to the next agenda

Clerk to add 30mph signage on Griggs Hill to the next agenda

Clerk to add PC facilitation with other groups in the village to work with the SEG

One member of the public is attending with regards to Minute 104 website administrator, two members of the public were in attendance to observe.

91. Planning

There have been no SWT planning decisions since the previous meeting,

36/21/0025 The Barn. The Willows, Curload, Stoke St Gregory -Change of use of land with alterations to parking provisions, boundary treatments and outbuilding/carport
Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agreed the following response:

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council fully support this planning application”

36/21/0015 Broomfield Park, Willey Road, Stoke St Gregory – Variation of condition 02 (approved plans) and conditions Nos. 1,2,3,5,12,13,15,17,18,19,21 and 22 of approval 36/18/0035 (Erection of 34 dwellings with associated works) to allow change of use of landscape buffer to Southern boundary to private gardens, re-positioning of pumping station and associated infrastructure, changes to boundary treatment and landscaping and removal of conditions 4 (access), 9 (surface water on highway), 11 (visibility), 14 (electric charging points and 16 (wheel wash) (part retrospective) (Amended)

The following Response was agreed:

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council have no further comments on the current amendments of this application”

(1 member of the public leaves)

92. Unitarian Authority

GG reports that in the absence of County Councillor David Fothergill and District Councillors Sue Buller and Barrie Hall, there is currently little to say on this subject. GG states there are many questions still to be answered around what the next steps will be, what will happen to projects spearheaded by the four current District Authorities; what implications it will have on local authorities such as the PC and what the local networks will comprise of moving forward. GG recommends the item remains on future agendas.

93. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The clerk reports no additional expressions of interests for CIL funding since those last reported at the previous PC meeting on 26th July 2021.

GG reports that enquiries had been made with regards to distributing the survey via the same network used by the Stoke Newsletter - but the logistics of a separate mail drop had proven to be difficult and unpractical.

GG recommends the survey is now distributed at the same time as the Stoke Newsletter in early September.

SD reports he has spoken to the proprietors of the Lemon Tree in Meare Green, Stanmoor Garage in Athelney, and the HOTV shop / pub – all of which have agreed to be collection points for completed surveys. SD continues that an independent email address has been set up for those wishing to scan the survey and send to cilqss@gmail.com

GG suggests that the deadline for completed surveys should be 30th September 2021. All agree.

SS reports that the use of Survey Monkey was considered, but due to the complexity of some of the questions, this would not work. SS continues that there should be hope for a high percentage of responses due to the household distribution and multiple collection points within the village.

JP enquires if there is an option for completed surveys to be collected from the households of residents who are housebound or isolating.

SD responds he will include his telephone number on the survey and would collect completed surveys from those that could not deliver them to a collection point or scan and send them to the email address provided.

SS reports that she has surplus coloured paper that can be used for printing the newsletter and SS volunteers to analyse the results as she has extensive experience in this field through her employment.

GG to contact NS to enquire on availability to print the surveys

GG to contact Neil Morgan to arrange distribution of the survey with the Autumn Stoke Newsletter.

94. Opening up safely and reconnecting communities fund

GG reports that SCC has allocated £500,000 for town and parish councils to help support the safe reopening of parish/community facilities and ensure good prevention control measures are in place. SALC will be working with SCC on this project and are managing the fund on their behalf, with support from SCC Officers.

The underlying aims of the fund are to:

1. Opening up safely – to make community facilities COVID-19 secure

2. Reconnecting communities – supporting projects that will support people to get out safely and re-engaged with community activities.

GG explains that there will be two rounds of funding.

Initially, all parishes can apply for up to a maximum of £1500 of funding. Grant requests of up to £1500 are likely to be approved quickly if they meet the broad criteria of the fund, and payments will be made to applicants throughout September.

As not all parishes will apply for funding, parish and town councils are therefore permitted to submit an additional application if they wish to do so. SALC will convene a panel to allocate the remaining funding after October.

For projects over £1500 applications must demonstrate at least one of the following:

1. Parish and Town Councils working together
2. Providing support to those disproportionately impacted (vulnerable groups, BAME, older people or those with pre-existing health conditions who were previously isolating)
3. Promoting equality and inclusion and fostering good relations
4. Considering sustainability where it is an ongoing initiative including how the project will be funded in the future.

The Clerk reports that there have already been two requests to access this funding - from the Church Rooms Charity (not affiliated with the Church) for a modest sum to reopen the Church Rooms by funding a new shed for storage of items currently inside the building and The Willowset for £5000.

Clerk to distribute information and application form to local groups.

If you are a local group that could benefit from this funding allocation, please email the Clerk on ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk or call on 07701 053903. The deadline for submissions to the PC will be Friday 3rd September 2021 at 5pm.

95. Phone Box at the playing field

GG reports that since the last meeting (26-07-21) no more work has commenced.

SS recommends since work has already commenced it should be completed, citing it would be a terrible shame for it to fill up with cobwebs and rot away again.

If you have a few hours spare to volunteer for helping paint / clean the phone box or if you have any ideas on the future intended use of the phone box, please email the Clerk ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk or the chair grahamgleed@gmail.com

96. Covid 19

In the absence of County Councillor David Fothergill there will be no C19 report.

GG requests members of community continue to be vigilant and cautious with regards to spreading the virus, especially as there are still reported active cases within our community.

97. Willey Road Housing Development

SS reports that there have been signs of containers and machinery being removed from the site. SS continues that due to the national shortage of some building materials there could still be some expected delays with the completion date of the development.

GG reports there will be a drop in event hosted by Willow Tree housing partnership for those interested in renting or shared ownership of the allocated houses on the Broomfield Park development. This will be held in the conference room of The Williams Hall on 18th August from 3pm – 6.30pm

98. Highways

Speed limit in Meare Green

The Clerk reports that since the last PC meeting there has been no further update from the Traffic Management Officer at SCC.

The Clerk continues that given the extensive delays David Fothergill had made enquiries with SCC. DF informed the Clerk that the traffic engineers responsible for the works order and TRO have been temporarily relocated to the school 20 mph zones project ahead of the term's re-start. Highways expect to issue the TRO in September for the speed limit reduction works in Meare Green.

Speedwatch

Nothing to report

AF informs that as a consultee, she has received information that due to ongoing works to the A358, sections of the road and its side roads will be closed in order to complete surveys.

For more information on these works and all road closures please visit <https://one.network/>

Report of Tractors driving dangerously

The Clerk reports that on the evening of 22nd July at 9.30pm a member of the community reported three tractors driving recklessly and at speed along Stanmoor Road. The member of the public reported this immediately to the Police and would like to raise the issue to prevent a recurrence. GG acknowledges the complaint suggesting it should be forwarded to Burrowbridge PC as the location of the incident would fall within their Parish.

Clerk to forward the email to the Clerk for Burrowbridge PC

99. Footpaths

Footpath T25/27

The Clerk reports that a member of the community contacted the PC and the Senior Rights of way Officer at SCC requesting confirmation of the status of the footpath diversion T25/27. They had cited that the right of way continues to be poorly maintained, it is ploughed to the edge, overgrown and the route is reported to be littered with broken stiles and signage.

The Clerk informs that she has not received a response from the Senior Rights of Way Officer on the matter.

CA informs that she is confused by the permissive route. It appears the original footpath route has been moved but the stile remains 30 metres to the left with the field ploughed with grass along the route reaching 1 metre in height. CA continues there appears to be one sign towards Curload, the gate is off its hinges. CA states it is accessible, but unsatisfactory.

GG asks if there is any guidance that can be communicated directly to the landowner. CA recommends new / improved signage for the re-direction of the footpath and that the stile at the large field to the rear of the farm is potentially unsafe and needs some maintenance.

GG to compose a letter to the landowner to circulate to the PC.

Update from the Footpath Officer

CA reports that after a meeting with Phil Stone a suggestion was made that a joint letter from North Curry and Stoke St Gregory Parish Council could be written to farmers regarding cropping and ploughing of public rights of way.

GG responds that over the last 2 years, communications have been sent to little effect. GG queries if further letters would help or exasperate the situation. CA informs that recent communications regarding slurry spread on public footpaths have delivered results. CA continues that reporting issues to SCC is an ineffective system often yielding no results. CA suggests direct contact made in collaboration with the SEG may be more effective.

CA reports the dangerous stairway on footpath T25/12 requires immediate attention. CA enquires who the landowner is so permission could be sought to fix it.

GG recommends making a polite enquiry with a neighbouring farm to attain the landowner.

GG to contact Meare Green Farm to ascertain landownership of the broken stairs

AF to report the obstruction to Rob Coates and ROAM Somerset.

CA wishes to thank all of those who have been walking the local footpaths with secateurs and assisting with the maintenance of local routes.

100. Climate/Environment issues

Stoke Environment Group (SEG) Update

JP reports that the SEG have been busy planning an Environmental Fayre on 16th October from 10am-4pm at The Village Hall, with displays from the local school children, the hedgehog survey, information on cutting carbon emissions as well as representatives from the Wildlife Trust and companies that supply natural products.

JP continues that a pamphlet on best practice in the home is being compiled for publication by Karen Housego, with work on local footpaths moving forward with thanks to Sarah Evans.

JP also expresses gratitude to Ian Upshall and Fiona McQueen who are heavily involved with the group and setting up projects. JP requests that other local groups work with the SEG to collaborate on initiatives, citing this is a village affair which requires all to work together if we are to have a meaningful impact on our local environmental issues.

JP informs she has recently attended a carbon neutrality course, JP is now producing a piece of work that will be accredited by the course providers. The piece of work will focus on how best to communicate impartially with the community. JP requests the cost of £10 for the accreditation is covered by the PC. GG proposes the £10 cost is paid by the PC, PH seconds the motion, all agree.

JP to inform the Clerk of payment method and invoice to cover the cost of accreditation for the course

GG reports that the SEG has approached the Village Hall Committee to propose hedge planting around the inside of the existing village hall boundary fence. GG informs that the Village Hall Trustees support this proposal, but permission from the landowners is required – this being the Parish Council.

A member of the public asks who will be responsible for the maintenance of the hedge. Ian Upshall responds the Village Hall, SEG, PC could work together to maintain the hedge, seeking professional guidance on the best way to approach the maintenance.

AF enquires what would happen to the fence on the inside of the hedge as it may present an issue cutting the hedge on the fence side. GG responds there is already some issues with rot at the bottom of the fence.

GG proposes the PC support the planting of the hedge around the perimeter of the Village Hall, SS seconds the motion. All were in favour.

Section 137 seed funding for the SEG

GG reports the SEG is currently functioning with no financial income and is experiencing outgoings from the initial set-up. GG informs the Village Hall is currently allowing use of the space at no charge, but this is inconsistent with other local groups who are using the hall and it may not be possible to maintain this use indefinitely. GG continues that the SEG must be self-sustaining if it is to remain viable.

SS asks if the allotment association received seed funding when it initially set-up, GG responds yes. *(The Clerk briefly explains the finances of the PC informing that after Q1 grants spend is high but could be absorbed by contingency and earmarked project funds allocated in the 2021-22 budget)*

SS states that the PC has financially supported a lot of other groups within the community and seed funding support should be offered to the SEG.

PH asks how the SEG plan to fund the group in the future so that it remains financially sustainable.

IU responds that it is not the intention of the SEG to continue asking for financial support from the PC but is looking into grants that can be applied-for as well as other fund-raising opportunities.

GG proposes that - subject to a bank account being opened by the SEG and a constitution being devised - the PC grant £500 of seed funding to the SEG. SS seconds the motion, all were in favour.

GG to circulate information on devising a constitution to the SEG

For further information on the SEG meetings, minutes and projects are available on the Village Website www.stokestgregory.org

101. Floods

Nothing to report

102. Playing Field

SS reports that the PFMC have been working incredibly hard in preparation of the grand opening of the Dennis Silk Pavilion by Di Silk and Marcus Trescothick on Saturday 21st August from 1pm.

If you are able to volunteer with assisting the PFMC with the success of this event please email neil.sollis@btinternet.com

103. Heart of The Village

Nothing to report.

(One member of the public leaves)

104. Village Website

Website administrator and approval of retainer fee

GG introduces Bob Cervis (BC).

BC informs he moved to SSG 2 years ago from London. In his time in the city, he was a lateral journalism production editor for Reuters website. In the last 18 months, he has been part-time managing the Oxfam bookshop in Taunton.

BC continues to explain that working as an administrator for the village website will be an opportunity for him to further integrate into Village life after volunteering with the HOTV and will allow him to utilise his skillset of website administration.

PH states that moving from a voluntary web administrator to a paid one is a big step. GG adds that BC will be working for the PC as a contractor and not an employee. BS confirms that he has worked freelance within his sector for many years and will be responsible for all his own tax returns.

The Clerk asks BC how he plans on keeping the website up to date and relevant as one of the current issues is that local groups do not always keep information up to date.

BC responds he has ideas on how content can be improved and will be working to PC spec and making proposals in due course.

GG proposes Website Administration is contracted to BC at 10 hours per month and a retainer fee is agreed. SS seconds the motion.

105. Broadband

Airband

The Clerk reports that the Airband co-ordinator has been in contact and wished to attend a PC meeting to present an overview of the project, it's technology and products that will be available.

The Clerk continues that so far, no date has been agreed, but the Airband co-ordinator had suggested a zoom meeting could be set up.

GG recommends that a Zoom call would not be the best course of action, and requests they attend a meeting after October subject to their availability.

Clerk to contact the co-ordinator to arrange a date to attend a PC meeting after October.

106. Consultations and Surveys

SCC Bus Consultation & Back Bus Better

GG states that SGG is very fortunate to have a reliable bus service serving the Village but asks if any SEG strategies could be used to increase use of the bus service, as all too often it is only used by a handful of people.

SS responds cost may be a major factor. AM agrees, stating it is over £5 for a return journey to Taunton and it would be cheaper to drive if making regular journeys.

SS recommends that survey is best completed on an individual basis via the SCC website.

National Resilience strategy call for evidence

The PC agree there was very little context and relevant content to the survey, and a response would not be submitted.

107. Financial Matters

Standing Order

K de Silva – Clerks Salary for August	£377.00
Josh Williams – Sunrise Horticultural Services – Strim and Mow	£90.00
SALC Annual Subscription	£253.78

GG proposes all payments are made, SS seconds the motion, all were in favour.

Payments Received

SCC Climate Emergency Fund Grant for the HOTV	£10,000
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Other Financial Items

The Clerk reports the SCC Climate Emergency Fund grant was transferred to the HOTV account on 28-07-21

The Clerk requests the Cheque for the RABI donation of £200 in memory of Parish Councillor David House is signed by the signatories (Min.54 14.06.21). (AF and JH Sign)

The Clerk informs Lloyds have not been able to process the change of address for the Clerk and have asked for the mandate change to be re-sent (AF and JH Sign)

The Clerk informs that the information required from SD to become a signatory would require KdS and SD to fill out the form together. (KdS to contact SD to complete the mandate forms to be a signatory)

The clerk informs that SS has completed the last 4 months bank reconciliation checks. GG offers to complete the next checks.

108. Other Items for discussion

Nothing to report

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.10pm.

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held in the main hall at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on Monday 13th September at 7.30pm.
Face Masks and Social Distancing are advised.**

Please email any items for the agenda to the clerk (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) or the Chairman (grahiamgleed@gmail.com) by Friday 3rd September 2021.