

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 14th February 2022

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

Present – Graham Glead (Chairman) Ann Finn, Janice Pearce, Peter House, Simon Dauncey, Sue Buller (District Councillor), David Fothergill (County Councillor)

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva (Clerk), Charlotte Sundquist (Footpath Officer) and 3 members of the public

204. Apologies for absence – Heather Venn, Sara Sollis, Anne Merritt, John Hembrow, David Fothergill will arrive at 8pm

Minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish council meeting held on Monday 14th January 2022 were agreed by all to be accurate and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of Interests and Dispensations – GG declares an interest in Item 208, 209 as a member of the allotment association and item 217 as a member of the Playing Fields and will abstain from any vote.

Public Question Time

A member of the public enquires about the process for an application to use CIL funding to purchase equipment to be used by the group of volunteers that are maintaining the footpaths within the village for a sum of approximately £500.

GG responds the group of volunteers are providing a service to the village and expresses the gratitude of the PC for all the hard work done. GG recommends that as no CIL money is likely to be allocated in the near future, this cost could be covered from PC reserves. GG requests a list of equipment required, and costings is provided to the Clerk and the item is added to the next agenda for approval.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda for approval

IU reads from a written report citing there are a number of topics on the agenda that are of significant public interest and asks if it is possible for the PC to consider the benefits of holding a separate meeting - without the formalities of a PC meeting - to discuss CIL and The Green Charter.

IU informs most of the community would agree the PC addressing the needs of younger people is important with the SEG actively promoting the involvement of younger people within their planned projects.

IU expresses concern regarding the decision taken at the January PC meeting to explore funding a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) citing the cost could be more than the CIL fund amount and worries over ongoing maintenance costs if agreed.

IU asks the PC for clarification on the selection, decision making process and timescales for awarding CIL, stating the SEG supports the PC's sentiment that the community should decide the infrastructure seeing investment.

IU reports members of the SEG remain unclear about the status of the expression of interest (EOL) submitted for CIL funding allocation - citing the PC's stance that a community vote will take precedence over EOL's submitted - and that no clarification of allocation for funding has been received.

IU refers to minute 180 stating "since the results were published, there has still been very little input or comments from residents of the village". IU questions if this is due to the community not understanding the processes or being given the opportunity to provide their input. IU continues the published results of the survey still remain unclear making it difficult for the community to understand the basis of a decision to explore a MUGA. IU states the SEG are not opposing a MUGA but the decision to explore this option has come as a surprise.

IU continues that a statement in Minute 180 regarding suitability of the patch of land at Polkesfield for rewilding is very different from the support for creating a wild space for the community. The SEG

is not aware of this assertion but the characteristics of this area of land are in keeping with similar projects elsewhere. The SEG support the establishment of any wild space that may be enjoyed by the community at a minimal cost whilst contributing the villages' carbon capture capability.

Another topic IU would like to see further community engagement is the Green Charter, citing the SEG would be keen to engage with the PC to adopt the model document into a working practice effectively contributing to forming a parish plan for the 21st century, allowing the village to focus on environmental and climate issues – but accepts this would require a lot of work.

IU refers to the publicised accounts of SCC citing the county councils nationally recognised commitment to climate change should be filtered down and applied within individual parishes.

IU requests the PC to consider enabling the community to engage in an open and transparent forum along with other groups within the community on the matters raised.

A member of the public asks if the PC have taken action regarding postal collection times with Royal Mail as currently, collection times are incorrect, and they request an update to be published on the website and within the community.

The Clerk responds that a complaint has been submitted to Royal Mail with an inadequate response only received earlier today. The Clerk informs that since the government sold the remaining stake in Royal Mail in 2015, the Parish Council has no power other than lobbying for the public service provided by a private company.

GG states the village has de facto lost first-class postal service as a result of Royal Mails efficiency programmes and it is not acceptable.

SD agrees Royal Mail are a private company, that are restructuring services, stopping all overtime and the PC has no greater voice than the individual.

SB informs the changes in the postal collection service in SSG is no different than is other villages.

GG to include Royal Mail service revisions in the Stoke News and on the website.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

The more residents who voice concerns over Royal Mail's service revisions within SSG, the greater the argument for Royal Mail to consider revisiting their decision. Please visit;

https://business.help.royalmail.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/607 to fill out a complaint form.

36/21/0032 9 Huntham Close, Stoke St Gregory – Conversion of a garage into ancillary accommodation and erection of a single storey extension to the side for use as a garage/store
DECISION: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 06-01-2022

36/21/0035 The Old Stores, Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory – Erection of a detached garage in the garden to the rear of the dwelling

The following response was agreed;

“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council unanimously support this application as it has no visual impact from the road or to neighbouring properties with the proposed garage being built with materials in keeping with the main property”.

Regulations for pop up sites within the village

GG reports that on research of this matter, any pop up over 150m square or operating more than 28 days per year require planning permission. All others are fine as long as dwelling deeds do not prohibit it or that there is not subsequent traffic or public nuisance.

206. CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)

GG reports that there are no plans to spend CIL funding on a MUGA until preliminary investigations have been explored.

GG proposes that with Parish and County elections in May, no CIL expenditure will occur until a new Parish Council is formed in May 2022. PH seconds the motion; all were in favour.

GG reports that as a result of a formal request from a member of the public for all the information contained within the CIL survey responses the spreadsheet collated by SD was distributed to the member of the public. GG refers to the analysis of the results compiled by the member of the public

of the results citing it is a work of some diligence, but provides little in the way of further conclusion than those published by the PC.

GG informs on the distribution of ticks on the survey, stating no item had more than one tick with ticks being on multiple items on each form. GG also states some non-constructive comments were omitted from the original analysis.

GG explains the most popular areas for CIL investment included road improvements and pothole repair. SCC have an online system for reporting potholes and road defects, and SCC Highways aim to fix or resolve reported defects within a timeframe of 28 days. This investment should not be included in the PC portion of CIL funding investment as it is done centrally by County.

GG states the purpose of the survey was aimed to assist members of the community to make decisions about where they would like to see investment – citing it is a huge shame more did not respond.

GG informs the MUGA proposal relates to health and fitness ranking within the top three. There were originally intentions to use Section 106 to fund a MUGA, but Section 106 has been superseded by CIL.

GG asks the PC if more analysis of results should be undertaken.

JP responds current analysis is insufficient to make final decisions. The top three outcomes for investment were health and fitness, environment, and footpaths/bridleways, and should be further investigated.

JP asks if more input on the community's views for CIL expenditure on infrastructure could be sought through the school, pre-school, levellers, and other community groups.

GG expresses that a lot of effort was put into publicising and distribution of the survey.

A member of the public asks about the distribution of ticks on the surveys. SD responds on the surveys collected, none had more than one tick in a section – subsections were not ticked after the main heading.

JP suggests CIL should be added to the CYP meeting to gain the ideas of the younger people, and more research could be done through other local groups.

SD asks if this approach runs the risk of duplication of results, as some of these people are likely to have replied to the survey.

PH asks if it would be possible to identify duplications. SD responds yes as most people included their personal information on the surveys.

GG debriefs on the item –

No decisions will be made on CIL expenditure until after the May elections when a new Parish Council is formed – motion passed.

The three top clear areas of health and fitness, environment and footpaths/bridleways for investment will be further investigated and explored to better define the needs of the community.

GG will write an article for the Stoke News to publicise this asking for responses to be sent to the Clerk

PC to prompt local groups and the CYP meeting for further discussions into CIL investment.

DF joins the meeting

207. Replacement bench at Polkesfield

The Clerk reports SB requested an update on the replacement bench on 17-01-22 from the Polkesfield housing Officer at SWT. No response or update has been received.

SB agrees stating they will request an update under the title of complaint as the composite bench replacement agreed should not have taken this long.

208. Transfer of the allotment deeds to the PC

GG reports the developer of Broomfield Park is now in a position to transfer the deeds of the allotment to the Parish Council. GG states we knew this was imminent have budgeted accordingly for solicitors' costs. GG proposes approaching AS solicitor to undertake the legal work as they have completed work for the PC in the past effectively, AF seconds the motion; all were in favour,

GG to contact the proposed solicitor to undertake the transfer of deeds to the PC

209. Transfer of the water and electric meters at the allotments

GG informs the developer installed a tank within the development to catch run off water to supply the allotments. There is also an electric meter for the sump pump to feed the water to the allotments and water meter for if drought of the tank occurs during prolonged dry periods.

GG asks the PC who should take control of the meters and payments; the PC or allotment association? JP enquires about the current costs of the electric and water. GG responds currently they are zero as neither are used as there is sufficient water in holding tanks.

AF states that the rental costs of the allotments should cover the cost of supplying electric and water citing when people rent homes, they do not expect utilities to be paid.

SD agrees that usual allotment rental costs reflect if water and electricity is provided.

AF proposes the transfer of the electric and water meters, and any billing should be transferred to the allotment association with rents for plots covering the costs, SD seconds the motion; 3 members agree; 1 abstains from voting.

GG to inform the allotment association and arrange transferral of the metres to the allotment association

210. Covid 19

DF reports current covid figures are being driven by primary school age children. Hospital and social care are at breaking point – not due to covid, but because of delayed treatments, ill health, and mental health issues as a result of the pandemic.

GG proposes removing the item from the agenda as there is little the PC can now do. Statistics are widely published, and all restrictions are liable to be removed shortly; all agree

Clerk to remove the item from the agenda

211. Unitary Authority / local Government reorganisation

DF reports the structural changes orders went to the government on 24th January and will be debated in parliament on 23rd February It will then be presented to the House of Lords on 14th March for approval. The day the elections will need to be called is only 5 working days later – so it is a very tight timescale. This will mean Parish and Unitary Council elections will happen on 5th May 2022.

212. Elections May 2022

DF advises Parish and Unitary Councillor nominations will need to be submitted by 21st March 2022. The Clerk informs she is attending SALC 'Preparing for elections' training on 16th March 2022 to understand the steps that need to be taken by the PC.

213. Young people; first steps

GG informs there is also a meeting planned for 8th March with the young people of SSG with further details to be confirmed.

214. Maize planting communications

The Clerk informs that it was this time last year a communication was sent to local farmers requesting field margins are not cultivated and a margin if 1.5m on which there should be no planting of crops on public footpaths

GG agrees to revise the communication ready for approval and circulation

GG to revise and circulate an updated communication

215. Willey Road Housing development

GG reports the development was officially opened recently.

AF informs that she is aware of families that have purchased houses in Broomfield Park and in Monkton Heathfield recently with the standard of the build in Willey road being to a much higher spec with no snagging requirements in comparison to the house in Monkton Heathfield.

GG states that 40% of the housing at Broomfield Park is social or reduced market price housing and all have been finished to a very high standard with little differences.

GG informs there are some boundary disputes – but this is not PC business.

GG informs the hedge onto the Willey Road still needs to be cut before the end of February when the fledgling season starts. GG reports he has informed the residents of the contacts to carry this out – citing if it is not done imminently, the PC will be required to carry out the work and charge the association.

216. Highways

Speed Limit Meare Green

The Clerk reports that at the January meeting the TMO informed works could possibly be scheduled for February, as no objections were received when the TRO was advertised. The clerk has requested a further update and costings for the work but has received no response.

DF agrees to chase this with the TMO for a further update.

Speedwatch

No speed watch activity has taken place

Works Road Closures in the village planned for February

GG reports there is currently considerable disruption within the village with road closures for road patching and resurfacing with more overnight closure planned for Bull Place Bridge.

The Clerk informs she has contacted SCC highways on multiple occasions to obtain a brief of all planned works as the one.network website and road signage do not seem to reflect reality – frustratingly, thus far this has come to no avail.

The PC are trying to update the website as we can obtain information.

Currently we are aware of –

Griggs Hill – Emergency Road Closure issued 04-02-22 from 9th -15th February

Slough Lane – Churley road closures from 9th – 15th February

Bull place bridge – closed 9pm – 6am from 21st – 25th February

North Curry Greenway – delays likely – 23rd – 25th February

There are also planned road works in Langport in February

Overnight road closures on the A358 at Thornfalcon from 15th March for 15 Nights

Bull Place Bridge – Stathe 19th – 23rd April for Wessex Water Works

Throughout February and March there are a considerable amount of roadworks and closures throughout the district. Please allow extra time for journeys, check <https://one.network/> prior to travelling and report any issues to SCC Highways on 0300 790 6275

The PC will post updates on the website as we receive them.

217. Footpaths

Update on steps – footpath T25/15

GG expresses gratitude to AF for her persistence in resolving the Health and Safety issues at the steps on Footpath T25/15.

AF reports that since holding a meeting with a Rights of Way Warden, it has been agreed that SCC will repair the steps going into both sides of the bank and install a handrail of 14' from the gate to the bottom of the slope with no cost being incurred by the PC.

Quote from the PFMC for step access from Willey Road – approval for expenditure

GG reports the PFMC have obtained a quote to install step access from the Willey Road/Broomfield Park to the playing field gate which is currently a steep and dangerous exit and entrance.

The quote of £1776 + VAT obtained includes step access and a handrail but not a rail at the bottom to prevent stepping directly onto the Willey Road.

GG asks how the cost should be covered – by the PFMC, PC or possibly CIL at a later date.

PH states it should not fall under the remit of the PFMC.

AF agrees citing that it is a health and safety issue that should be the responsibility of the PC.

GG to request an amended quote to include safety rail at the bottom

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

DF enquires if the PC are aware of the Drove towards Helland being blocked by the landowner.

AF responds this area would fall under North Curry and will contact NCPC.

AF to contact North Curry Parish Council regarding the blockage on the drove

218. Stoke Environment Group

JP reports the planning for the next Environfair is well under way with Ian Upshall project managing. A photography competition has been launched and there will be more focus on activities for younger people.

JP continues the hedge planting at the Village Hall has been a successful event with a good attendance of volunteers with focus shifting to the Spinney.

GG expresses gratitude to the SEG for all the hard work with the hedge planting and work on the spinney opposite the hall.

The Green Charter

JP refers to the Green Charter model document produced by Deborah Speed of Langport Town Council that has been circulated to all Parish Councils in the area.

JP recommends the statement of intent and values could be adopted with objectives of the charter being discussed and adapted to promote and fulfil that are specific to Stoke St Gregory.

GG recommends at future meetings this section of the agenda can be used to discuss, adapt, and adopt the charter as a working document for the Parish

Clerk to add adopting statement of intent and values to the next agenda, and subsequent agendas add different objectives to break down the document for implementation.

219. Floods

PH expresses concern around gully emptying within the village with excess mud and debris from current roadworks that are underway.

GG agrees citing that as verges have become more compromised due to heavy vehicle traffic, drains are more exposed and sometimes not at the lowest point of the roads which is impacting drainage capacity.

PH adds there has been incidences of standing water on the bends by the sewage pumping station due to blocked gullies.

Clerk to request gully emptying throughout the village with SCC Highways

Clerk to report standing water issues to SCC Highways at the sewage pumping station be nds

Although not an agenda item, GG would like to highlight on two occasions bags of what appears to be dead fledgling pheasants have been dumped in the village, one at Slough Lane and 10 days later one near the bends at the sewage pump station. This is a concern with current bird flu issues and also it is unpleasant.

DF advises the removal of fly tipping and animal carcasses will be actioned when reported to SWTC.

We hope these are isolated incidences, if you do find anything dumped please report via SWTC website for removal <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/street-care-and-cleaning/fly-tipping/> or call 0300 304 8000. If you notice anything suspicious or items being dumped, please report this to the Police on 101.

220. Playing Fields

Nothing to report

221.Heart of the Village

GG informs the HOTV are exploring the possibility of a grant for businesses that contribute to the tourist economy. The deadline is 14-03-22

222. Village Website

Nothing to report

223. Broadband

The Clerk reports she is in the process of arranging a suitable date for an Airband meeting and presentation with the representative for the community.

224. Consultations and Surveys

No Consultations

225. Financial Matters

Standing Order

Kelly de Silva – Clerks Salary February 2022 £377.00

Payments for authorisation

18-01-22 Kelly de Silva – Clerks expenses – Stamps and secure postage £7.35

01-02-22 Nick Sloan – Website Administration £120.00

Payments received

None

GG proposes all payments are made, SD seconds the motion; all were in favour

Other financial items

Monthly bank reconciliations for December and January checked by GG – all was correct

Quarterly Accounts

The Clerk reports the Q3 accounts and budget review was circulated 10-01-22. Overall, the PC is in a good position to come in on budget at year end. With a budgeted annual spend of £17,453.12 for the 2021-22 financial year, we are currently at £12,412.24 with the only major expenditure expected being the transferral of the allotments, but the £2000 was allocated and rolled into the 2022-23 budget for this so will even out if it happens before the end of the financial year.

The budgeted income for 2021-22 was £17,630. YTD, we have an income of £17,458 with an expected £895.73 VAT reclaim submitted. This is slightly over budget due to interments in the burial ground which are forecast on a 5-year median.

226. Other items for discussion

A member of the public asks the PC for further discussion regarding the formal request to the PC for all information contained within the responses to the CIL survey – Actions required.

GG and SD state all information from the surveys has been shared via a spreadsheet sent to the member of the public on receiving the request – there is no other information, however SD will attempt to resolve this issue

SD to liaise with the member of the Public

DF and SB Leave

The Clerk informs on seeking advice from SALC the PC can share redacted (all personal information obscured under GDPR) copies of the completed surveys at the request of the member of the public for a printing fee of £28.

The member of the public states they would be content with access to redacted surveys and wish to obtain the information to extract into a spreadsheet with a member of the PC for further analysis.

SD agrees - as he was instrumental in the analysis of the results, he will convene with the member of the public to share the surveys.

SD and the member of the public to arrange a convenient date to provide the information requested.

Dates for the APM

Clerk to check availability with the VH and confirm a date

Speaker for the APM

The Clerk asks if there are any recommendations for who could complete the internal independent audit this year as Liz Hembrow has stepped down after many years of diligent work

PC to consider a suitable replacement

227. Confidential Item

GG proposes all members of the public are requested to leave for the discussion of a confidential item which includes sensitive and personal content; all agree.

Four members of the public leave

The content of this item will not be published in the public minutes

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held in the main hall at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on Monday 14th March 2022 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 4th March 2022