

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9th May 2022

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

Present – Janice Pearce (Chair), Anne Merritt (Vice-Chair), Heather Venn, John Hembrow, Peter House, Ian Upshall, Jason Morgan, David Fothergill (County Councillor)

In Attendance – Kelly de Silva (Clerk), and 2 members of the public

27. Apologies for absence – Ann Finn

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

IU requests all approved and signed minutes are published.

Clerk to upload electronically signed versions of approved minutes to the website.

Declarations of Interests and Dispensations – IU declares an interest in minute 43 as Chair of the Stoke Environment Group.

Public Question Time – A member of the public informs that it is difficult to hear proceedings in the main hall. The Clerk enquires if the hall is fitted with a hearing loop. The member of the public explains that compatible hearing devices are required to work with the loop. It is agreed that until such a time when it is deemed suitable to return to the meeting room, business will be conducted at a clear volume for the public.

A member of the public enquires if the agenda could contain greater detail on items for discussion. The Clerk explains the current format (a brief heading for each item) allows for broad and unrestricted discussions, allowing for lawful decisions to be undertaken. If an item is not on the agenda; a decision cannot be lawfully made. The Clerk continues that agenda items which have specific areas for discussion will be included on the agenda for publication.

28. Planning

36/22/0002 Dene Cottage, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory - Erection of a two-storey extension to the rear

APPLICATION WITHDRAWN (E25-04-22)

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

CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 14-04-22

36/21/0034 17 Church Close, Stoke St Gregory - Installation of frosted windows to the first floor (retention of works already undertaken)

CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 29/04/22

36/22/0007/NMA Crossway Farm, Stoke Road, Stoke St Gregory - Application for a non-material amendment to application 36/17/0027 for amendments to windows, doors, and internal partitions (E26-04-22)

The following response was agreed:

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

29. CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)

The Clerk reports she has circulated the NALC, SWT CIL 123 Regulation briefs and the Expressions of Interests to the newly formed PC (E03-05-22). The Clerk informs the PC of the CIL payment schedule and deadlines for the funds to be used.

Received	Amount	Spend deadline
16/04/2020	£16,097.68	16/04/2025
27/10/2020	£17,005.09	27/10/2025
25/10/2021	£32,195.35	25/10/2026
TOTAL	£65,298.12	

JP enquires if it is appropriate to arrange a public meeting focused solely on the CIL matter. IU asks what the purpose of this meeting would be. JP responds the PC has currently gathered a small sample of information from the completed CIL surveys and Expressions of Interests which the PC have already received; but further public consultation should be considered so that all members of the community have an adequate opportunity to have an input regarding the CIL investment.

IU asks if the PC feels there is sufficient information and processes in place to be able to progress with a public meeting and asks how would the PC evaluate any further input.

JP states there is a requirement to agree a process after the meeting that is fair and transparent.

IU expresses concern over the current lack of processes around assessing the community input, registering expressions of interests for CIL investment, and how to address the outcomes.

IU continues he feels passionately about this matter, highlighting the need for decisions on whether to spend the CIL on one project or several smaller projects.

JH refers to the investment deadlines suggesting it would be wise to hold a portion of the funding back because fundamentally this money is to improve infrastructure and there may be investment required in the future that is not immediately apparent. JH recommends an initial sum should be agreed and allocated to the first tranche of spending.

JM suggests the sum invested on each proposal should be commensurate to the proportion of the community that would benefit from the investment.

HV suggests the processes need to define how the community make proposals and what would be the criteria for a proposals.

The Clerk asks DF if he has any input on how other PCs in his ward have dealt with CIL investment.

DF responds most other PC's have not used CIL for the purpose of awarding grants to projects, but rather for investing in infrastructure such as fingerposts, benches, funding a local transport service and bus shelters.

HV notes that as a village we are very privileged with our assets of this kind of nature.

JP asks what figure should be considered for investment in the first tranche of CIL project funding.

JH recommends the PC consider setting a £10k cap on proposals for project investment.

PH states it should be important that the information gathered from the CIL survey is still relevant and considered alongside any further input gathered from a public meeting and further consultation. All agree.

The Clerk recommends that as key decisions still need to be made about the processes - August could be an appropriate time to hold a public meeting as this is historically a quieter month for PC business.

JP summarises; A CIL meeting date should be agreed for August

A sum of money for the first tranche of investment should be agreed

Look at current expressions of interest and encourage further community input.

IU offers to develop a document outlining a process to consider for the investment. All agree.

HV expresses concern that inevitably the final decision of investment will be that of the PC. IU responds that processes need to be transparent. HV states the transparency is in the public parish council meetings and published minutes.

IU to devise a document as a starting point for consideration of the PC for the processes on CIL investment and circulate prior to the next meeting.

30. Transfer of the allotments to the PC

The Clerk reports GG has made attempts to contact the solicitor but there has been no response in time for this evening's meeting. GG has agreed to continue to facilitate the transferral of the allotment to the PC.

31. Use of bicycles on the footpath between Church Close/ Broomfield Park and the allotments

JP informs that during the April meeting public question time it was highlighted by a member of the community that children were cycling at speed along the footpath behind Church Close/Broomfield Park raising concerns this is 'an accident waiting to happen'.

AM reports that a deterrent for bicycle use on footpaths in Polkesfield are the staggered bars. IU notes this would be inappropriate as it would impede anyone using a mobility vehicle or pushchairs and suggests installing no cycling signage that can be purchased for less than £10.

JH suggests the PC visit the location when they are on site visits for planning applications to view the path and identify an appropriate solution.

DF informs the ownership of the footpath should be considered before any action is taken as there is a likelihood that it could be in the ownership of the developer ahead of becoming a Highways public footpath.

JM reports he has been in personal consultation with the planning officer at SWT who has informed him the Broomfield Park planning application was in the final stages of consideration.

JP to contact the developer to discuss ownership and possible options to consider mitigating the use of the path by bicycles

Clerk to include a visit to the location on planning site visits prior to the next meeting

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

32. Queens Jubilee

Update

AM reports she has made numerous efforts via social media and by contacting local groups but there has been no further events to add to a proposed programme.

AM informs the bellringers are considering ringing the church bells as part of a collective nationwide scheduled ringing of the bells.

SSG Village jubilee events include;

A village breakfast on Friday 3rd June at the Williams Hall

Afternoon Tea on Saturday 4th June at the Baptist Church

Joint Songs of Praise on Sunday 5th June on the Playing Fields

A village picnic on Sunday 5th June on the Playing Fields

A craft beer festival at the Royal Oak (day to be confirmed)

Tree Planting

The Clerk informs that since the last meeting she has publicised on social media the proposal of the PC beginning preliminary enquiries to acquire and plant trees for children that live within the parish to commemorate the Queens Jubilee. So far, the Clerk has only received 1 email and 6 comments on Facebook about the proposal - which is a low level of interest so far.

IU responds the trees that could be acquired at no cost would not be planted until the appropriate time later in the season and there is still a requirement to identify a suitable public space to plant the trees.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

Members of the PC to consider suitable public spaces that could be considered for planting

Location for a commemorative bench

AM reports that since the last meeting she has paid careful consideration to the location of the memorial bench which is being donated by the local Blacksmith in lieu of playing field gates. AM suggests although it is a nice idea having the bench in the centre of the village near the Royal Oak, with traffic and the size of farm machinery that use the square it may not be the most ideal or safest location.

JM recommends the Playing Fields. The Clerk informs although this would be an appropriate location, there have been issues with vandalism of benches in the past.

HV suggests the burial ground. PH responds the burial ground is already served by a bench that was donated by the family of Mr. Musgrove.

JM recommends the bench should be located for the greatest benefit of the village and that would likely be the Playing Fields. JH agrees the playing fields would be an appropriate location – but the bench would need to be resilient.

HV proposes the commemorative bench is sited at the Playing Fields, JH seconds the motion; all in favour.

Clerk to contact the PFMC regarding citing the commemorative bench at the Playing Fields.
JP to liaise with the Blacksmith regarding the bench

33. Unitary Authority/Local Government Reorganisation

DF reports there is currently 400 employees working on delivering tranche 1 of the 70 actions that must be in place when the Unitary Authority takes office in April 2023. DF explains that tranche 2 involves everything required to be in place over the 3 months after taking office with ongoing matters allocated to tranche 3.

DF informs the recent elections have disrupted the processes; but with 7 workstreams ongoing, the unitary authority plans are moving forward.

DF continues there are currently four pilot Local Community Networks (LCN's) with a consultation for the implementation of LCN's planned for September 2022.

DF will be the guest speaker at the APM on Thursday 26th May at 7pm and will offer more of an insight into the Unitary Authority at this meeting.

34. Elections May 2022

DF reports that himself, David Fothergill, and Norman Cavill have been elected as County Councillors for the Monkton and North Curry ward in the May 2022 elections and will represent the ward within the Unitary Authority from 1st April 2023.

Councillors Sue Buller and Barrie Hall will be the wards elected District Councillors until the conversion to a single authority on 1st April 2023.

35. Young people; first steps

AM reports local village groups have been contacted and representatives are expressing keenness to participate in the project. AM informs a meeting within the next month is in the process of being arranged. The meeting will engage young people and local groups on moving the project forward to the next phase. AM informs there is enthusiasm to move this forward and hopes in due course CIL investment may be used to realise the project and help support the young people of SSG.

36. Annual Parish Meeting 26th May 2022

The Clerk reports plans for the Annual Parish Meeting are underway with the presentation of reports planned from the outgoing Chair - Graham Gleed, the newly appointed Chair – Janice Pearce, guest speaker David Fothergill will be presenting a piece on Unitary for Somerset; Anne Merritt and Sara Sollis will be presenting on the Young Peoples Project, with David Smith presenting a report from the Stoke Environment Group.

The Clerk informs some local organisations have submitted reports and hopes more will be submitted in the coming days.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Thursday 26th May at 7pm in the Williams Hall. The agenda is available on the village website, Facebook and in the noticeboard. The meeting will be followed by a glass of wine, beer, or a soft drink with an opportunity to speak to Parish Councillors. Due to the pandemic this is the first 'in person' APM since 2019 and the PC wish to welcome all to the parish meeting.

37. Casual Vacancy/ Co-option

The Clerk reports that as the Parish Council was not contested, we have 8 nominated members in the newly appointed PC with one vacancy to fill, so the process of declaring a casual vacancy will now commence to be filled by co-option at the next PC meeting (13th June).

HV recommends all members of the PC take the opportunity to attend the SALC training courses either as a new member, or as refresher training for those existing Councillors.

IU suggests the PC should be more pro-active in engaging with the community citing most people do not understand the role of the PC. IU suggests the insufficient responses to the CIL investment stem from the community being unaware of what was happening. HV responds the community are aware of the PC and its business through the public meetings held once a month and published minutes. IU states this is passive engagement and suggests it may be beneficial for members of the PC to have a monthly drop-in session at the Royal Oak / Café where members of the community can meet the PC

and discuss local issues. The Clerk recommends this could be done on the same Saturday morning as planning visits citing the PC - although an elected body - does offer their time voluntarily.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

JM concurs citing people are happy to let things just carry on, but more community engagement and pro-activeness could yield better results.

JM asks about the PC's use of social media. The Clerk informs this is an area requiring more focus, but the Clerk does not have the time within the salaried hours or sufficient cyber-training at present to undertake this.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

A member of the public requests a news item for the village website and publication including information about the newly formed PC.

Clerk to make a poster and circulate to the PC prior to publishing

38. Dog Fouling

JP reports dog fouling is an on-going issue within the village.

The Clerk informs a possible next step could be contacting SWTC to request posters for the village and imposing a PSPO under the anti-social behaviour, crime and policing Act 2014 which can cover "fouling of land by dogs and removal of dog faeces". The clerk continues other initiatives which could be considered are:

- The green dog walkers' scheme

- Chalk stencils with messages highlighting fouling

- Glow in the dark posters targeting night-time fouling (the issue is often exasperated under cover of darkness)

- Adopting a council reporting app

- Request PCSO support enforcing dog fouling fixed fines under s8 of the anti-social behaviour, crime and policing act 2014.

IU suggests the installation of dog bag dispensers similar to those at Ironbridge and Burrow Mump could be considered but do come at a cost of £406.00 each with each additional dog bin costing £1000 annually.

Clerk to contact SWTC regarding a PSPO

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

39. Reeves Feast

HV agrees to supply a report for publication at the APM informing the community about the Reeves Feast charity.

40. Highways

The Clerk informs the signage for the 30mph speed limit in Meare Green has now been installed. The Clerk has contacted the TMO regarding the roundels and line painting. The TMO responded they were contacting the line painting contractor today (9th May) and will respond with an update.

IU raises concerns that the repeater signs are located in the wrong place at incorrect intervals with signage having inadequate unlit yellow backing. DF informs that traffic management would not install signage that was not compliant with legislation.

The Clerk recommends that as it has taken over 2 years to get to this stage, we allow for the work to commence and audit the works once completed.

Speedwatch

Nothing to report

Water mains replacement scheme

The Clerk informs that Wessex Water have contacted the PC regarding a proposed water mains replacement scheme within the village that could commence from July 2022 and run for 31 weeks. This is to replace existing cast iron water mains originally laid in 1933 which have reached the end of their serviceable life. Wessex water wish to determine if any additional measures could be implemented for what will be a period involving some disruption.

PH states the signage for the works needs to be correct. PH refers to the road closure issues earlier in the year where incorrect diversion signage was displayed along with roads being closed at different

times to those shown on signage and one.network.

Clerk to respond citing the requirements for correct signage and dates for road closures and diversions

Clerk to obtain further information and write an article for publication

42. Footpaths

The Clerk informs there has been several comments received regarding about the footpath from Polkesfield to Dark Lane. Apparently at the gate on to Dark Lane the turning from the path to the pavement is very hazardous for mobility scooters, there are several that often make the journey from Polkesfield to the shop. It has been suggested some regrading of the path may be necessary. IU adds there may be an issue with access to the path and the metal field gate currently in place citing the gate is rough with no pedestrian access.

JM asks if there is a legal requirement regarding the access on this path. JH responds just that it is walkable.

HV recommends adding this to the site visits to view the issue prior to further discussion at the next PC meeting.

Clerk to include a visit to the location on planning site visits prior to the next meeting

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

43. Stoke Environment Group

SEG update

IU reports the spinney is progressing and in bloom creating a wonderful habitat for wildlife. IU informs focus is now on the Envirofair which will be held on Saturday 25th June from 10am - 4pm at The Williams Hall. IU continues 25-30 wildlife organisations will be attending with a visit from the 'Fixy McFixface' van to promote mending and recycling of products. Students from Strode college will be making a film about the event and there will be many activities ranging from building bird feeders and bee houses to birds of prey displays.

IU informs the focus will then be on the 'Great Big Green Week' which runs from 24th September – 2nd October where the SEG will be facilitating home surveys on energy use, a village planting scheme and clothes and toy swaps.

IU would like to remind people about 'No Mow May' to help promote biodiversity for bees and other wildlife and informs there are new initiatives such as caring for god's acre on the horizon.

The Green Charter – working group

HV asks about the purpose of a working group for the green charter.

JP explains that during COP26 Langport Town Council devised and adopted the green charter which was recommended for each Parish to adapt and adopt the charter to promote climate action and awareness within the community.

IU offers to construct a draft of the charter that would clearly define the document's use in SSG and design the terms of reference for a working group to be established.

IU to draft the charter document for the purpose of SSG and terms of reference for a working group and circulate to the PC ahead of the next meeting.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda.

44. Floods

Flood revision group

PH informs no action has been taken

IU recommends that local flooding could be incorporated into the green charter

45. Playing Field

Nothing to report

46. Heart of the Village

Nothing to report

47. Village Website

Nothing to report

48. Broadband

Nothing to report

49. Consultations and surveys

None received

50. Financial Matters

Standing Orders

01-05-22 K de Silva – Clerks Salary	£395.85
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Payments to be authorised

01-05-22 Nick Sloan - Web Administration	£120.00
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01-05-22 K de Silva - Ink (Black and colour + 1xl black cartridge)	£51.72
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14-04-22 G Wagen and James - Strim mow burial ground	£42.00
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17-04-22 Guru Website hosting annual payment	£59.99
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15-04-22 J Williams – Grass cutting	£90.00
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Payments Received

14-04-22 SWT Precept	£8800.00
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Other financial items

Bank Reconciliation for March completed by GG

The Clerk informs the Standing order to amend the Clerks salary after a pay review in April had not been actioned and therefore the Clerk received the previous salary sum of £377.00. It is agreed the Clerk invoices the PC separately for the outstanding amount of £18.85 and amend the Standing Order when authorising the payments this month.

The Clerk continues the Guru web hosting bill requires to be paid as a matter of urgency to avoid disruption to the village website. It is agreed the Clerk pays this bill immediately and adds the reimbursement to the Clerk to the payments for the signatories to authorise.

HV proposes all payments with the mentioned amendments are agreed and paid, JH seconds the motion; all were in favour.

The Clerk requests a member of the PC to complete the bank reconciliation check for May at the end of the month informing it cannot be a signatory for due diligence purposes. IU offers to complete the May bank reconciliation.

51. Other items for discussion

HV requests letters are written to the outgoing PC members Graham Gleed, Sara Sollis and Simon Dauncey thanking them for their contribution and service to the community – all agree.

JP to compose the letters

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in the main hall at The Williams Hall Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on Thursday 26th May 2022 at 7.00pm.

All are welcome. There will be light refreshments and an opportunity to speak to Parish Councillors and village group representatives after the meeting.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 13th June in The Williams Hall. Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory at 7.30pm, please email any items for the agenda to the Clerk (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) by 31st May 2022.