

## STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 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, Sue Buller (District Councillor)

**In Attendance** – Kelly de Silva (Clerk), and 5 members of the public

**52. Apologies for absence** – Ann Finn, David Fothergill (County Councillor)

**Minutes of the previous meeting** – The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were agreed by all to be accurate and signed by the Chair.

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

The Clerk informs all attendees that prior permission (in writing) has been sought from all members of the PC to suspend standing order 1m, to allow for the recording of the meeting by the Clerk. This is for the sole purpose of the accuracy of the minutes as the Clerk has fractured her right thumb and may not be able to write as clearly and quickly as discussion develop. The recording will be deleted once the minutes are written and will not be distributed or used in anyway other than for this purpose.

**Public Question Time** – A member of the public informs the PC they have been researching CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). They refer to a comment made by David Fothergill at the May PC meeting stating, “other PC’s have not used CIL for the purpose of awarding grants to projects, but rather investing in infrastructure such as fingerposts, benches, funding local transport services and bus shelters.” The member of the public refers to several other Town and Parish councils who have awarded grants. The member of the public also refers to a comment passed about the CIL 123 list citing this was abolished in 2019. The 123-list included what money could be spent on with the CIL list being what money is being spent on - which is included in the annual reporting. The member of the public states it is entirely up to the PC what CIL is spent on.

Cllr. Buller reports there is supposed to 123 list with more information on this available on the SWT website and also via the CIL officer Rebecca Staddon at SWT.

The Member of the public informs they have contacted the CIL officer 12 months ago who referred them to the CIL regulations.

*The regulations state - CIL funds must be spent in accordance with the following CIL*

*Regulation:59C. A local council must use CIL receipts passed to it in accordance with regulation 59A or 59B to support the development of the local council’s area, or any part of that area, by funding—*

*(a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation, or maintenance of infrastructure; or*

*(b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.*

The member of the public refers to the dissolving of the 5 Somerset Councils in April 2023 to form a single authority and asks if spending should commence before this happens.

Cllr. Buller responds it would be extremely unlikely that SCC would recall any CIL money already received by the PC. At the moment it is anticipated planning departments will continue to maintain the current areas and CIL spending reporting.

JP thanks the member of the public for their input which will be taken on board as discussions on CIL develop.

### **53. Planning**

**36/22/0006 - The Wagon House. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory** - Change of use of land from agricultural to residential with the erection of an ancillary outbuilding (E19-05-22)

The following response was agreed:

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

**36/22/0005 - The Wagon House. Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory** - Installation of a ground mounted solar array of 16 No. panels on land (E19-05-22)

The following response was agreed:

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

**36/22/0008 - Willments Farm. Church Road, Stoke St Gregory** - Conversion of outbuilding to ancillary accommodation with change of use from former dual-use farmyard and domestic curtilage (E01-06-22)

The following response was agreed:

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

**36/21/0012** Correspondence from the public (E02-06-22)

The Clerk refers to a correspondence received from a member of the public requesting support from the PC to SWT planning to remove the unlawful cesspit as a matter of urgency – planning application 36/21/0012.

HV informs the PC have already submitted a response to this application (27-07-21).

The member of the public requests the PC correspond with the Case Officer to support the immediate removal of the unlawful cesspit citing they were informed this should have been removed in August 2021 and it should now be removed from the ground as a priority due to environmental concerns.

The PC agree to draft a communication to the Case Officer in support of the removal of the cesspit.

**Clerk to draft a letter and circulate to the PC for approval**

### **54. Co-option for the Parish Council casual vacancy**

The Clerk explains the procedures as set out by SALC on the co-option process. The Clerk reports there has been one applicant for the casual vacancy – Mr. Danny James. The Clerk welcomes questions from the PC to the candidate.

HV asks the candidate why they did not stand in the recent elections. DJ responds he had initial concerns regarding time commitments as he wishes to be able to commit 100% to the role. DJ has discussed these concerns with members of the PC and previous Parish Councillors on being notified of the casual vacancy, these concerns have been resolved.

The PC resolve to hold a vote by a show of hands rather than a paper ballot.

AM proposes the candidate with HV seconding him to stand for co-option. All were in favour of co-opting Danny James on to the PC. DJ signs the declaration of acceptance of office and joins the meeting. The Clerk issues a register of interests' form requesting it is returned as soon as possible so the Clerk may provide this to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of appointment.

### **55. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**

The Clerk reports that Rebecca Goodchild has recently completed the independent internal audit of the Parish Council financial records. All was deemed in good order with all internal objectives being adhered to. The Clerk expresses thanks to Mrs. Goodchild for the diligent and thorough auditing of the PC accounts.

**55.1** Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agree that the Annual Governance statement in Section 1, which requires the PC to ensure a sound system of internal control is in place for the preparation of the accounting statements was adhered to, is signed by the Chair, and Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Kelly de Silva.

**55.2** Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agree that the accounting statement in Section 2 of the AGAR as presented by the Clerk/RFO were accurate for the 2021-22 financial year and is signed by the Chair and the Clerk/RFO.

KdS to send the AGAR to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn. KdS to publicise the period for the exercise of public rights and send to NS for publication on the website

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

JP reports there is the proposal from the previous meeting to hold a specified CIL public meeting in lieu of a regular August PC meeting to inform the community better on what CIL is, the regulations on CIL spending, to formulate priorities for spending and distribution scales for projects. JP continues this should be an opportunity to develop a process to assimilate the information to represent and benefit a majority of the community. JP suggests the poor response rate to the CIL survey last year and attendance to PC meetings when discussions have been held may be a result of the pandemic citing the PC need to provide every opportunity for the community to have a say in the infrastructure investment.

DJ questions if August is the most appropriate time for a specified CIL meeting as many people may be on holiday. The Clerk informs August is historically a quiet month for PC matters, with a considerable number of Parish Councils not even holding PC meetings in August. This would be an ideal opportunity to have a meeting purely focused on CIL.

IU states the PC needs to be clear of a defined process. IU refers to a recent Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP) document drafted by the Clerk for consideration. IU suggests using this document and the asset register as a starting point to audit the infrastructure within the village to assess what we have, needs repairing, or requires replacing.

HV states the PC also have the Expressions of interests that have been submitted and the results of the survey; so, there is a baseline to work from. HV questions if the PC continue with consultation, will it be the same 20% of people that respond again. AM agrees citing the PC will never please everyone; but as a result of the survey, a baseline of what the community wish to see investment in was identified with the top three being health and fitness, environment and footpaths & bridleways.

JP suggests the community require a starting point of ideas for investment so that people have something to object to or support.

IU recommends a metric system should be developed to ascertain/measure factors such as value for money and community impact – things that will assist the community to make a decision on infrastructure investment.

SB advises the PC not to overcomplicate this matter informing she is aware of three Parishes that have had to return CIL money after it was not allocated within the 5-year window.

HV states she feels strongly that the PC is an elected body of representatives for the Parish, with a responsibility to represent the majority. The PC is diverse in its members, the PC should not stipulate a set of rules too heavily for the decision-making process.

JH agrees stating the PC is appointed to do a job, although there is a requirement for consultation – the final decisions will be that of the PC.

IU suggests CIL should be used for infrastructure which would not usually see investment. IU refers to the state of repair of some of the road signage within the village. The Clerk informs replacing road signage, especially nameplates and similar is the responsibility of the PC.

PH informs it is time to develop this item, citing there is an element of focusing on physical rather than social aspects. PH suggests enough consultation has been done – the PC should now complete a PIIP for the August meeting to move this forward.

JM enquires if additional funding for projects could be sought. The Clerk responds this would be based on certain criteria and a project would need to be identified first.

JP summarises – the August PC meeting will primarily focus solely on CIL, the PC will complete the PIIP to identify infrastructure requirements, it will be a public meeting, so people have an opportunity to attend.

JH recommends a figure is agreed for initial spending with an amount retained for future investment (within the 5-year timeframe) that may be required as a result of the new housing development.

The Clerk recommends the PC investigate West Monkton PC who have received huge CIL payments on how they have managed the processes.

**Clerk to resend all expressions of interest and CIL information prior to the August meeting**  
(One member of the public leaves)

## **57. Transfer of the allotments to the PC**

The Clerk informs the solicitor has been on annual leave. Graham Glead is continuing to make contact with them on behalf of the PC with regards to the transfer of deeds for the allotments.

## **58. Use of bicycles on the footpath between Church Close, Broomfield Park and the allotments**

JP reports she has visited the site with JM, PH, and IU to discuss a resolve to restrict the use of bicycles on the footpath that are travelling at speed. JP informs the use of bicycles on this footpath is hazardous for the neighbours - some of which are elderly. The footpath cannot be obstructed for the use of wheelchairs/mobility scooters or pushchairs.

PH recommends the use of chevron barriers similar to those at the playing fields - as this would prevent cyclists being able to travel at speed. PH states that bikes should not be cycled down the path as it discharges onto a public footpath.

JP informs until a decision from SWT for planning application 36/21/0015 submitted on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 is considered, the footpath is still the property of the developer. JP informs she has not been able to contact the developer to discuss the matter.

SB offers to discuss this with the Case Officer as this application should have been completed by this point in time. JM responds he has been in contact with the Case Officer who has expressed due to the workload within the planning department at SWT, this has led to a delay on a decision for this application.

HV proposes the PC explore the costings and mechanisms of installing chevrons on the footpath, with the PC purchasing 2x no cycling signs to be installed to highlight the problem.

**PH to liaise with the Clerk on the type of chevrons discussed**

**Clerk to purchase 2x No Cycling signs**

## **59. Review and adopt policies**

### **Code of Conduct**

The Clerk informs the new Code of Conduct circulated is the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct which is being adopted by many Councils across the Country.

HV proposes the new Code of Conduct is adopted by the PC. JH seconds the motion; all in favour.

### **The Burial Ground Table of Fees**

The Clerk informs of the cost increases for the burial ground which would bring it in line with the PCC table of fees.

HV proposes the Burial Ground table of fees is increased to keep costs in line with PCC costs. JH seconds the motion; all were in favour.

### **Insurance Renewal**

The Clerk informs the latest insurance policy brokered by Came and Co has been circulated for review (E19-05-22). The Clerk recommends agreeing to a 3-year fixed contract for the purpose of value for money.

HV proposes the insurance policy is renewed for a 3-year fixed term. JH seconds the motion; all were in favour.

## **60. County Councillor report**

In the absence of Cllr. David Fothergill there will be no report.

## **61. Digital communications**

The Clerk informs she is in the process of developing a digital communications policy. The item is deferred until the next meeting.

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

## **62. Young people; next steps**

AM reports the project is moving forward with another meeting planned for 15<sup>th</sup> June with will be attended by representatives from the HOTV, PFMC and some young people to discuss items that could be purchased and next steps.

AM requests the PC fund a planning cost of £60 to ascertain what can and cannot be considered for the project at the Playing Fields. AM states this is a box ticking exercise.

The Clerk responds if the application was developed by the Young People Project Team, then the Clerk can submit it on their behalf. All agree.

HV informs when she was on the PPMC there was an initiative to supply a shelter that required no supervision – this suggestion was met with phenomenal opposition at the time.

AM responds the young people in the village have expressed they wish to have a designated space. The HOTV could provide an adequate space, with the pavilion being considered for a youth café style project. HV notes these activities would require adult supervision at all times but providing a space that does not require supervision may be worth considering.

IU enquires about costings for the project. AM responds the project team are starting from the beginning. There has been suggestions of a MUGA (Multi-use games area) but the cost of this would be more than any funding available. AM continues there have been suggestions of supplying exercise equipment on the Playing Fields that could be used by everyone, not just young people. AM informs there are plans to have a HOTV assisted fund raising event for the project in the future.

### **63. Dog Fouling**

The Clerk reports she has contacted SWT to enquire if there is any possibility of obtaining a PSPO or assistance / support with regards to the dog fouling issues within the village.

The Clerk informs the enquiry was initially met with a response stating SSG was not part of SWT, and the case was immediately closed. The Clerk has pursued with enquiries in an attempt to gain support from District on the matter. Although no person at District has offered any advice - a lengthy talk with the dog warden proved interesting.

The Clerk informs there is one dog warden covering Yeovil to Minehead. They informed the Clerk they have been requesting no fouling stickers for over 2 months from SWT – to no avail.

The dog warden has agreed to have a visible presence in SSG over the next couple of weeks to try and assist with combatting the dog fouling problems. This is all they can do at present.

The Clerk asks SB if more can be done from a District level. The Clerk acknowledges is not a priority problem - but dog fouling is an issue for many Parishes and Towns, and we require support.

The Clerk comments it feels like there is a lack of support from District at present, and fears this may continue until it becomes ‘one council’ next April. The Clerk states it will make for a very frustrating 9 months if things are going to continue like this.

SB advises the Clerk to email her the issues to send to the portfolio manager at SWT for review. SB informs there are staffing issues at SWT meaning posts are vacant with staff on secondment to SCC. SB informs SWT as an entity is in existence until April 2023 and must function how it should.

HV enquires about the Green Dog Walkers Scheme the Clerk circulated information on and requests the item is added to the next agenda

**Clerk to add the Green Dog Walkers Scheme to the next agenda**

### **64. Jubilee trees**

JP reports to date there has been very little response to the tree planting and no area identified.

PH informs the only public areas that could be considered are the Village Hall, Allotments and Playing Fields. AM responds the bank on the playing Fields could be suitable for 6-7 trees. PH advises caution over planting trees in an area where people park cars.

HV suggests the PC obtain several trees to dedicate to each class/year group of the school starting with the Willowset up to Year 6. HV continues a competition could be considered in conjunction with the school to design a plaque for each tree. All agree this could be a good idea.

The Clerk asks IU what the timeframes are for acquiring the trees and planting them. IU responds it depends on the varieties of trees and would need to discuss this with ‘Reimagining the levels’ who are offering the trees.

**IU to contact reimagining the levels regarding obtaining and planting 7 trees**

**JM to contact the PPMC to gauge interest and support in planting trees at the Playing Fields**

AM thanks the Clerk for the initiative to supply each child at the pe-school and school with a gift of a packet of wildflower seeds to commemorate the Queens Jubilee, which was well received by local families. Each packet contained 1sq metre of British pure wildflower meadow seeds (that will flower year after year) – so we would potentially be providing 100 sq. metres of wildflower to promote biodiversity and habitats for butterflies and bees as well as offering a gift to the children of SSG.

HV notes the cost of this project was very reasonable. The Clerk responds after seeing a similar idea, the initiative was realised at a cost price courtesy of Buntlicious as they thought it was a great idea and wanted to support it.

#### **65. Willey road housing development**

Nothing to report.

#### **66. Highways**

##### **Speed limit in Meare Green**

JP reports the 30mph speed limit is now implemented on Meare Green. HV informs there has been positive feedback about this project from local residents. A member of the public asks if there is a possibility of supporting the speed limit with a SID (Speed indicator device). The Clerk informs these units can cost upwards of £1000 + VAT + annual charges and analysing the data – so they are very expensive.

IU raises concerns over the positioning of some of the repeater signage. The Clerk requests any input or feedback is sent to the Clerk to bring to the attention of the TMO at SCC highways.

##### **Speedwatch**

Nothing to report.

#### **67. Footpaths**

##### **Access to the Playing Fields from Willey Road**

The Clerk informs the contractor has informed this access should be remedied in the next week.

##### **Path at Polkesfield from Dark Lane**

JP reports this site was visited by JP, IU, and JM. It was noted a large boulder was the culprit to the access issues. JM and IU have offered to remove the boulder. JP thanks IU and JM for this work.

#### **68. Stoke Environment Group**

##### **SEG update**

IU reports work is focused on the Envirofair which will be held on 25<sup>th</sup> June with participation from over 30 organisations. IU informs there has been leaflet drops and publicity that has generated a lot of interest in the event. It will be a happy, friendly family focused day to promote small changes that can make a big difference.

IU continues the next project for SEG will be the Big Green Week which runs from 24<sup>th</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The SEG have applied for grant funding to assist with the purchase of equipment for this initiative and are waiting to hear if the application has been successful.

IU reports the SEG are now in the process of developing a 5-year plan to establish the group's strategy in SGG in conjunction with the SCC environmental strategy and the ecological emergency documents from SWT and Sedgemoor District Councils.

IU informs the SEG are in discussions with a local landowner to provide a plot of ground to provide a community woodland, meadow and self-maintained allotment area. There are lots of good ideas moving forward.

##### **The Green Charter – working group**

IU states the Green Charter is an aspiration that the PC need to turn into action. IU informs the PC can learn from other examples of how the charter has been adapted to consider how we can influence it to be part of a bigger strategy for SSG. IU suggests forming a group of people who can start to work on the green charter as there is limited time within PC meetings to focus on this. JP agrees citing it will be beneficial to have other local groups on board with developing the charter into a working document. IU responds a wider expertise to work on the charter would be a good idea but has experienced little response from local groups in the past on environmental issues and initiatives.

IU offers to build a proposal and remit for the establishment of a working group. JP and JM offer to assist IU with the working group.

HV enquires if this is something the SEG could work on. IU responds it is something that should be led by the PC.



HV states other local organisations need to be identified and understand why it is important to work together to adapt and adopt the green charter.

**IU to build proposal and working group remit and circulate prior to the next meeting**

#### **69. Floods**

The Clerk requests that as there is no action being taken over the flood group revision it is removed from the agenda.

All agree. HV recommends the flood title is still kept on the agenda.

#### **70. Playing Fields**

Nothing to report

#### **71. Heart of the village**

Nothing to report

#### **72. Village website**

PH suggests there should be a possibility for local businesses to have input on the information available on the website. JP agrees and will discuss this with NS and draft an article for the newsletter.

**JP to liaise with NS prior to draft an article for the newsletter**

JM would like to suggest that Facebook and social media is used more for the purpose of community engagement. JM would like to see the right documents being published to gain footfall citing people source more information electronically in this day and age. The Clerk agrees and will have a policy written on digital communications for the next meeting with nominated Councillors being responsible for input on the pages.

HV recommends the PC view North Curry PC's Facebook page as this is delivered well. HV informs the use of social media and twitter was extremely useful during the 2014 floods.

#### **73. Broadband**

Nothing to report

#### **74. Consultations and surveys**

None received

#### **75. Financial matters**

##### **Standing Orders**

01-06-22 K de Silva – Clerks Salary	£395.85
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##### **Payments to be authorised**

20-05-22 SALC - Councillor Training	£50.00
20-05-22 R Goodchild - Internal audit of accounts	£65.00
20-05-22 SALC - Councillor Training	£25.00
20-05-22 SALC - Councillor Training	£60.00
23-05-22 N Sloan - Reimbursement for back up battery on Parish Clock	£15.49
30-05-22 N Sloan - Website Administration	£120.00
19-05-22 Buntlicious - Jubilee seeds	£132.99
25-05-22 Buntlicious - Extra Jubilee seeds	£17.74
30-05-22 Gallagher Came and co Insurance	£509.07
31-05-22 The Cumbrian Clock co - Annual Parish clock service	£198.00
13-05-22 G Wagen & James - Strim/mow Burial Ground	£84.00
30-05-22 ICO Annual renewal CHEQUE	£40.00
01-06-22 K de Silva - Clerks expenses and APM refreshments	£79.86

##### **Payments Received**

16-05-22 N Sloan - Additional Inscription on memorial stone	£27.00
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23-05-22 Night safe - Deposit of Cheque for Burial Fee

£600.00

### **Other financial items**

Bank Reconciliation for March completed by IU

Clerk overpaid by 1p on expenses in May so clerk will be underpaid by 1p in June

HV proposes all payments are made, JH seconds the motion; all in favour.

### **76. Other items for discussion**

The Clerk recommends a letter of gratitude is written to the Blacksmith for the donation of the Jubilee bench. The Clerk suggests purchasing a plaque to place on the bench, so people are aware the Blacksmith donated the bench to commemorate the Queen's platinum jubilee. The Clerk quotes this should cost no more than £20. All agree.

**JP to write a letter of gratitude to the Blacksmith. Clerk to purchase a plaque up to the cost of £20**

HV raises the issue of the sound in the hall for the meetings and the use of the hearing loop as a member of the public was recording the meeting citing, they were having difficulty hearing proceedings.

The Clerk informs this issue has been raised before and was informed the hearing loop is only compatible with an appropriate hearing aid device. PH adds microphones and equipment is also required for a loop to be effective. The Clerk expresses surprise the meeting was recorded without prior permission sought.

**Clerk to seek advice on the recording of meetings**

The Clerk suggests an alternative is to return to the meeting room.

**Clerk to add returning to the meeting room to the next agenda**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.31pm

**The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 11th July 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](mailto:ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk)) or the Chair ([pearcejanice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pearcejanice@hotmail.co.uk)) by 1st July 2022.**