

## STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022

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

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

**In Attendance** – Kelly de Silva (Clerk)

**77. Apologies for absence** – None received

**Minutes of the previous meeting** – The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were agreed by all to be accurate and signed by the Chair.

**Declarations of Interests and Dispensations** – JH – Planning application 36/22/0009. JH will abstain from any vote and discussion unless providing information on the planning application.

**Public question time** – No members of the public were present

#### 78. Planning

**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  
DECISION – CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 22-06-22

**36/22/0009 Willments Farm. Church Road, Stoke St Gregory** – Erection of an agricultural building

The following response was agreed;

*“Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support this application on the basis reassurances are sought within the conditions the building will not be used in the future for livestock and with the only discharge being rainwater and surface runoff into a soakaway as per the planning application.”*

*Due to the County Councillor attending another PC meeting, it is agreed to bring forward Minute 83*

#### 83. County Councillor Report

DF refers to the County Councillor report circulated to the PC which included information on Local Government Reorganisation, Somerset’s integrated care board, the County Council’s financial position, arts and culture strategy, food energy bills support, SEND services consultation, a financial wellbeing project, road safety and horse riders and grass cutting and surface dressing. DF welcomes any questions on the report.

HV asks what circumstances triggered the SEND consultation and how will provision of these services move forward. DF responds there is room to improve on the services currently provided. The standing down of CCG has slowed things down. DF informs the survey will be open until September and anyone who comes into contact with the services is welcomed to complete the survey. HV asks how parents are being informed about the consultation. DF informs it has been communicated through SCC services and Parish Councils talking about it. DF reports it is an interesting time at the moment for these services – with CCG stepping down, Unitary council being formed and the merging of Musgrove and Yeovil hospital – all happening at a similar time.

*The County Councillor report will be published along the minutes on the website. More information on the items mentioned can be found at [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk)*

#### 79. Payment request for the allotment annual insurance

The Clerk reports the PC have historically paid the insurance for the allotments and the playing fields. These costs are included in the budget, but as with all costs, they have increased more than the 5% CPI factored into the budget. The allotments association insurance premium request for this year is £206.48. Last year it was £165.18, the budget allocation in the 2022-23 budget is £173.44 for the cost.

All were in favour of reimbursing the allotment association for the payment of the insurance.  
**Clerk to add the reimbursement to the payment schedule.**

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

JP reports she has circulated a PIIP (Parish infrastructure investment plan) completed by a Parish of a similar size to SSG with similar infrastructure. JP continues it will be a good exercise for the PC to complete a PIIP for SSG to assist with making decisions on CIL investment. It will help to identify what infrastructure requires focus; for example, health facilities and transport - if some residents do not have access to public transport, then they are unable to get to the doctor surgery, dentist, or other medical appointments.

JP informs the village is fairly well heeled and lucky for assets we have within our village with the exception of provision for young people who have very little other than the playing field, some dated equipment and limited access tennis courts.

JP states the PIIP needs to be completed as a priority to be able to help devise a plan to assist the PC moving forward with a process for allocating CIL. It will enable the PC to establish what the high priorities are for infrastructure investment within the village.

JM recommends each Parish Councillor comment into a PIIP offline prior to the planned CIL focused PC meeting in August. The PIIP can then be discussed and agreed in full council. A WRAG rating for possible projects then could be established identifying the priorities.

**Clerk to collate PIIP responses and circulate a single PIIP with all comments included prior to the meeting.**

IU states the PIIP is likely to feed into the CIL decision process although they are not mutually exclusive; they are two processes in their individual forms.

JP responds it will assist with having a platform to work from to initiate the process of making decisions for infrastructure investment. The PIIP will help identify what are high priorities. Ideally, the PC need to fulfil those high priorities, which will dictate what portions of CIL is allocated to what project.

IU suggests as part of the process it could be established if items within the PIIP are high or low costings – then actual costings can be sort after the meeting.

PH asks for clarification on the format of the meeting. Is it a Parish Council meeting that is open to the public or is it a public meeting held by the Parish Council?

JP responds it is a PC meeting open to the public that will solely be focused on allocating time to the CIL discussions. PH asks if the meeting will be in accordance with PC meeting legislation where there is an allocated public question time at the start of the meeting and then the public are not permitted to speak throughout the meeting without the meeting being closed or by approval by the Chair. JP confirms this will be the case, but it will be an opportunity for people to hear our processes as a matter of openness and transparency with an opportunity to speak at the start of the meeting.

IU suggests members of the community should be able to have an input throughout the meeting. JP informs this is a meeting to develop the processes, there will be an opportunity at the start of the meeting, but for the meeting to deliver a result, the meeting needs to be structured and managed.

JM expresses comments and input made by parishioners should be recorded and considered.

PH states there has been many opportunities for the community to have an input; this meeting should be defining how decisions are made.

HV recommends the public question time is increased to 30 minutes if necessary. All agree.

JP informs the meeting will be publicised on social media, the Parish Magazine, Instagram, and prominent places throughout the village.

IU states he is unclear as to the objectives of the meeting. IU asks - where do the PC expect to be by the end of the evening? IU states there is still no decision process in place.

AM responds its an opportunity to listen to the community and define a process – we cannot make split decisions.

JP states the PC need to prioritise what infrastructure is required for our village; from this we decide and deal with the high priorities identified through the PIIP.

IU asks how the expressions of interest (EOIs) will be incorporated into the PIIP? JP responds they will be incorporated on a rating of whether it meets the needs of high, medium, or low infrastructure requirements.

HV states the EOIs can only be considered for investment if they fulfil the rule of CIL – for the provision, improvement, replacement operation of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands the development places on an area (2010 CIL regs s59c).

IU states the PC need a robust criteria for decision making. JP responds we do have criteria in the CIL regulations we must adhere to.

AF suggests a criteria that could be considered is how much the PC has previously granted to certain groups/projects within the village. IU notes this is a criteria that is not within the regulations that AF is suggesting.

HV states the PC is an eclectic, knowledgeable body which brings different levels of experience to the table. HV continues the PC is the elected body to make decisions for the improvement and wellbeing of the community.

IU states a clear process that can be articulated to the public should be developed. JP responds any agreed investment must fulfil the CIL regulations.

HV informs each consideration needs to be based on merit – the PC should not be too descriptive otherwise there is no flexibility. JM suggests proper costings would also need to be acquired prior to decisions being made.

JH agrees suggesting it would be unlikely any final decision on allocation would be decided in the August CIL meeting. HV states discussions have been going around for far too long, all members of the PC and community can have an input; it is time to make decisions without being too descriptive. JP suggests the PC know the needs of the Parish, we have the EOIs, we know the criteria – if we have a high priority project should be able to consider it.

DJ questions the point of the meeting. AM responds the point of the meeting is openness and transparency and to discuss the processes to be able to start making decisions.

DF requests to enter the discussion. DF states there is nothing more difficult than spending money, as everyone will have a different view on how to spend it. The PC is a sovereign body that exists to represent the Parish. The PC understand the needs of the Parish. As long as the PC operate within the financial regulations and CIL regulations you are entitled to make decisions without the process becoming too complicated.

JP summarises the PC has offered many opportunities over the past 12 months for members of the public to attend meetings - all PC meetings are publicised public meetings. JP questions how much interest has there been realistically? CIL has been in newsletters, Parish magazines, social media, published minutes, the CIL survey, the website – people know about it. JP states the meeting should go ahead as planned. The PC should do the best job it can, by defining the needs of the village, prioritise those needs and meet the needs of the village in an intelligent way that prioritises our community.

## **81. Transfer of the allotments**

Nothing to report

## **82. SALC – Community planning and engagement project**

The Clerk informs with the leftover funding from the re-opening communities fund, SCC has agreed with SALC and CCS to run a programme for 14 successful Parish Councils to provide funding, tools, and resources to compile a community plan. Members of PC and members of the community should compile this plan; for the benefit of the community.

The Clerk reports the expression of interest form needs to be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> July.

It is advised a committed steering group for the project should be in place in August, ready to hit the ground running for the first training session planned on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The Clerk continues it is a great opportunity, but it needs to be completed by a March deadline and will need a group of at least 8 multi-skilled people to commit to its completion – this is not a project the Clerk can undertake alone. The Clerk continues to put it into context a plan can usually take between 2-4 years to devise at a cost of up to £5,000. SALC would offer mentors and tools to complete the plan.

The Clerk informs she has concerns about the short deadline, citing there will be a huge amount of work involved. With the time allocation and commitment required and considering the ongoing projects of the PC such as CIL, the Green Charter, and the Youth Project it could be difficult – but it

is a fabulous opportunity. The Clerk states the village does need a new plan with the last one being compiled in 2003.

The Clerk continues SALC will fund the project but not printing costs. Bruton Town Council spent £3000 on printing alone – so this will be a factor to consider.

IU asks is there an opportunity to do the training then produce something in our own time. The Clerk informs the SALC and CCS would expect the plan to be completed by March as part of the initiative. AF informs in the past the PC has considered formulating a neighbourhood plan with an open ended deadline but it was too much work for a voluntary group to undertake.

IU states we need a plan that covers the next five years; the fact it's a lot of work and will take a lot of time is not a reason not to do it. We have threats to public services, uncertainty over Unitary, Local Government Reorganisation and a climate emergency.

DJ, IU, JP and the Clerk agree to be involved in the project if the PC is a successful applicant to the SALC initiative.

The Clerk suggests the PC publicise the initiative to ascertain if there is an appetite from members of the community to join and commit to a steering group, Then the PC can submit an expression of interest to SALC by 31<sup>st</sup> July.

*Are you passionate about your village?*

*Do you want to help ensure that we have a long-term plan for the future of SSG that we can all get behind? Would you be willing to join a small team of volunteers to help coordinate and deliver a plan for SSG? If the answer is YES, then please contact the Clerk to find out more.*

***This is not a PC plan – it is a community plan and should be made by the community.***

#### **84. Digital Communications and public engagement**

HV reports there is a Parish Council Facebook page, but it has not been particularly active. There is a villager's page which seems to have more of an audience.

The Clerk reports she has circulated a Digital Communications policy to the PC. The purpose of this policy is so the PC have a set of guidelines to adhere to. The Clerk informs digital comms is not something she can solely take on and recommends 3-4 Parish Councillors who are proficient in using social media set up an active Facebook page, Instagram and possibly Twitter to engage with the community in a digital aspect. The Clerk suggests this should not replace other written communications for those members of the community who are not tech savvy.

DJ agrees to be a part of a Digital Comms group aimed at engaging and supplying more information to the community. JM agrees citing it is a great avenue to communicate and engage as most people are now using social media on devices.

The Clerk enquires prior to her taking the on the role was there a village email list and is this something that could be re-ignited with the digital communication team building a database and circulating information with people blind copied into correspondences. JM responds all PC information could be shared via social media as there may be GDPR issues if emails are sent to those who have not agreed to receive them.

DJ states the PC can start the process of improving Digital Communications in the hope of engaging more people and younger members of our community – if the community do not engage, then at least the PC have tried. The Clerk responds social media is only as good as the information fed into it.

The PC resolve to adopt the Digital Communications Policy – all were in favour,

DJ, KdS, JM and HV agree to be moderators for social media. Posts should be circulated in draft to the moderators for approval prior to publishing.

#### **85. Young People; next steps**

AM reports the project is moving forward. AM has a meeting planned with SH and SW to assist with quotes for devising an expression of interest for CIL funding and to ascertain figures to apply for external grant funding. AM has approached JP, HV and DJ and members of the community to develop a PC appointed working group for the Youth Project.

AM informs the five main outcomes from consulting with the young people; that they would wish to see are football goals, basketball nets, a hardcore surface, exercise equipment and new play equipment.

AM has also received enquiries for new seating and benches in the under 12s area.

AM continues the HOTV are in the process preparing the function room to provide a safe meeting place with adult supervision - but this should be independent of the PC initiative.

AM would like to start a monthly Youth Café with AD with a once a month offering. AM requests the PC allocate £100 seed funding to enable hiring the pavilion, and initial costs. AM informs the Youth Cafe would not be a profit-making exercise - it would be minimally charged for to cover the costs and its sustainability. HV states this is a good idea and recommends the PC support this. All were in favour of granting £100 seed funding to the project.

#### **AM to purchase the provisions and be re-imbursed by the PC**

AM reports she would like to arrange a family event organised on behalf of the PC to provide a Rounders match, bar, and BBQ. AM informs a member of the community has generously offered to fund this event with any proceeds going back into the Youth Project.

The Clerk informs a Temporary Events Notice (TEN) would need to be applied for. The Clerk holds a personal license for the sale of alcohol so could potentially apply for the license. If this were not successful, the PFMC could possibly apply. The Clerk will check that the public liability insurance covers the event.

All agree it would be a good idea and support the initiative led by AM.

AM requests that she is appointed as PC representative on the PFMC committee due to working closely with the committee with the Youth project.

The Clerk informs there is currently PH as an appointed PC representative with GG and GB as delegated PC representatives.

#### **Clerk to add this item to the September agenda**

### **86. Dog Fouling**

#### **Green walkers dog scheme**

The Clerk reports this scheme appears to be a District Council implemented initiative. The Clerk has contacted Chichester Town Council to see if they would share any details on best practice of their initiative for implementing at a Parish level or advising how to get District support.

### **87. Jubilee Trees**

IU reports he has contacted reimagining the levels (RTL) who have agreed to supply as many trees as the PC would like, so seven trees (for each class of the school and Willowset) would be happily accommodated. RTL require information on what type of trees would be appropriate. IU will speak to RTL about the positioning of the trees. IU raises concerns over the care of the trees as others that have been placed on the playing fields are almost dead. The saplings do require care and watering in – the recipients would be expected to look after them. JM recommends a native mix of trees that would work together would be a nice idea. JH states trees that require minimal maintenance would be a good idea.

#### **IU to measure distance and ascertain how many trees would be suitable and liaise with RTL**

### **88. Broomfield Park**

Nothing to report

### **89. Highways**

The Clerk has raised the issues presented by IU to the TMO. The TMO responded with a plan of the site showing the locations of the repeater signs and roundels. The first roundel is near Cedar Moor which is approximately 180m from the first 30/village name plate. The second is approximately 130m near Thistledown and the third another 160m near The Linney. Then there is a repeater sign outside the Old Stores. The TMO has offered to discuss the matter further on the telephone, but the Clerk is awaiting a response back from them.

### **90. Footpaths**

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

The Clerk reports this has been chased with the contractor who has informed it will be done within the

next two weeks. The Clerk has emphasised it is a Health and Safety issue and they have said it ill be done before the school holidays when more people will inevitably be using the Playing Fields.

## **91. Stoke Environment Group**

### **SEG update**

IU informs the Envirofair was very successful. There will be a meeting on Wednesday to discuss outcomes and feedback. IU thanks all that supported it. The feedback will be used to develop a five-year plan for projects moving forward. The next event is the Great Big Green Week which is a national event at the end of September. The SEG will be planting several thousand wildflowers, holding a swap shop for clothing, toys etc. The SEG will also be offering energy surveys from thermal imaging that will help with saving energy costs. The SEG are building a network with other local environment groups. IU will be presenting at the AGM of Climate action Athelney on Friday. The SEG are also still working on identifying a green space that could be utilised to provide a woodland garden for the community.

### **Green Charter**

IU reports he has circulated a document to the PC regarding the Green Charter. HV comments that this is an excellent document. IU informs this is something he whole heartedly believes in. We are in a Climate Emergency and this community has an obligation to address climate change and play our part with the Green Charter.

IU informs the average person creates around 15 tonnes of carbon equivalent per year. If you imagine within Broomfield Park that is 60 people who did not originally live in the village – this equates to an extra 900 tonnes of carbon a year. This County has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This strategy should be part of the process of doing something positive about the villages impact on the environment.

JP suggests a working group is developed to report back to the PC in September.

JP, JM, and PH agree to be a part of the working group for the green charter.

*If you are able to contribute to the Green Charter working group, please contact Ian Upshall*

## **92. Floods**

AF reports there was minor flash flooding in Meare Green possibly due to blocked gullies. The Clerk responds anyone can report this via the SCC website who will come and clear the gullies.

*If you notice a blocked gully or even a pothole, these can be reported directly to SCC via the website*

*<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-blocked-drain-on-the-road/>*

*<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-pothole-or-road-defect/>*

## **93. Playing Fields**

Nothing to report

## **94. Heart of the Village**

Nothing to report

## **95. Village Website**

The Clerk informs NS has requested to remove some of the outdated banners for C19 on the website. The PC agree citing there still should be something highlighting Covid is still with us.

## **96. Broadband**

Nothing to report

## **97. Consultations and surveys**

None received



## 98. Financial matters

### Standing Orders

01-07-22 K de Silva – Clerks Salary £395.85

### Payments to be authorised

SALC - Councillor training	£25.00
SALC - Councillor training	£60.00
SALC – Councillor training	£50.00
J Williams - Sunrise horticultural services - Grass cutting	£90.00
K de Silva - Clerks expenses - Purchase of 2 x No cycling signs	£25.20
A4 Paper pack & plastic wallets	£5.50
N Sloan - Website administration	£120.00
Williams Hall - Hire for meetings (March-June inc. Youth meeting)	£113.00

### Payments Received

None

### Other financial items

June Bank reconciliation completed by IU

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

## 99. Other items for discussion

### Confidential Item

The PC resolve on the advice of District to hold this item in a confidential session to respond to advice circulated. This will not be published in the public minutes.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.45pm

**The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 8th August and will focus primarily on Community Infrastructure Levy 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 August 2022.**

**The following normal PC meeting will be on 12th September 2022.**