

## **STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Held at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory.**

**Present** – Janice Pearce (Chair), Anne Merritt (Vice-Chair), Heather Venn, Peter House, Ian Upshall, Jason Morgan, Danny James.

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

**131. Apologies for absence** – Ann Finn, John Hembrow, Sue Buller (District Councillor), David Fothergill (County Councillor)

### **Declarations of Interests and Dispensations –**

Janice Pearce – WI CIL application – Member of the WI

Ian Upshall and Jason Morgan – SEG CIL applications – Chair and member of SEG

Anne Merritt – Youth Project CIL applications – Leader of the initiative

Councillors will abstain from any vote regarding the above declared interests.

**Public question time** – No members of the public are present.

### **132. Planning**

**36/22/0016 Dene Cottage. Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory** – Erection of a two-storey extension to the rear of the dwelling (resubmission of 36/22/0002)

DECISION – REFUSAL 30-09-22

There are no new planning applications to consider

### **133. Conclusion of the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return)**

The Clerk informs the report from the external auditor - PKF Littlejohn - has been received. On the basis of their review the AGAR is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

It was noted that the public rights was not published before the start of the period. The Clerk queried this as she complied with regulation 15 which states the notice includes the first 10 days of July and was available for 30 working days. PKF Littlejohn responded the day of announcement cannot be the same day as commencement. The Clerk accepts this citing next year she will make sure there is at least 1 clear working day in between the 2 dates next year. The conclusion notice was published on the website before the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

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

#### **Review of the Church Path CIL application**

This application has been withdrawn by the applicant.

#### **Review of the WI Petanque Court application**

The WI submitted a revised quote for the Petanque Court of £2,274.00 inc. VAT. The WI informed if the extra £274 could not be funded by the PC, then the WI would pay the difference.

It is agreed that further discussions between the WI and Village Hall trustees would be required to finalise the details of the application. The quote does not include removal of excavated material, so this would need to be considered. Based on the outcomes of discussions with the Village Hall trustees being positive the PC propose ringfencing £2,274 for the project; JP abstains from the vote; 6 were in favour – MOTION CARRIED.

#### **Ringfencing funds for acquiring land and future projects**

JP informs acquisition of land has been an agenda item in the past, but to no fruition. JP refers to a project in Cornwall where land was acquired in a deprived community which was very beneficial for

wellbeing within the community which included growing vegetables and planters of herbs which people could help themselves.

IU informs, as lead of the SEG, he has arranged a meeting with land agents regarding a possible piece of land. This is a small but significant step. It would be beneficial if a piece of land could be donated to the community at a peppercorn fee. IU reports a project such as a community woodland would require ongoing funding for groundworks, planting etc. It would require involvement from the community to realise the goal.

AM enquires whether the plot of land at the allotments has been investigated for use. IU responds the SEG have contacted the allotment association – along with all community groups - as a community woodland would be a whole community project.

It is agreed to not ringfence funding for the project at this time until further investigations are made with regards to acquiring a suitable piece of land.

**IU to circulate a document on community woodlands to the PC  
Clerk to add the item to future agendas**

### **Review SSG PC Youth Project – Equipment and provision for young people - £30,000**

JP reports AM has done a considerable amount of groundwork and research into this project. The final results of such a big investment need to meet the expectations of the community. The money could be used to attract match funding and grant funding from other sources. JP informs this will be a big project and a working group is required to implement the initiative.

AM agrees citing if the money is allocated to the project; further consultation with the youth of the village can commence to ascertain what they want and what can be afforded. Further fund-raising initiatives can be organised – this is something the young people can own and be a part of.

HV informs a meeting has been held with the SSG tennis club which clarified some of the issues surrounding additional use of the courts. HV states it was a clear, explanatory, and positive meeting. The tennis club have agreed to inform in full by correspondence the limitations on the use of the courts.

HV adds once a full outline has been received, this can be communicated to the community with the PC assisting with raising the profile of the club and the facilities that are available for use by the community. HV expresses that some families may struggle with even a nominal fee to use the facilities, but this could be facilitated with financial assistance from sources such as the SSGTC and Reeves Feast; so access is inclusive to all.

A discussion ensues surrounding the importance of consulting with the youth and the community, communicating information, and how best to manage the expectations to provide the best value for money of such a large investment.

The possibility of using the £30,000 investment to apply for match funding and the possible location of new equipment is discussed – these details would need to be finalised with considerations for the residents of Huntham Close and events on the Playing Fields such as the village bonfire.

IU recommends all stakeholders are part of discussions including the HOTV and any Youth initiative they may be considering for the purpose of producing a coherent plan to present to the young people. Concerns are raised regarding use of HOTV building as it is a licensed premises and may present safeguarding issues.

JP proposes the PC ringfence £30,000 CIL monies for 12 months. This will allow time for a working group to be established and proposals to be finalised. AM abstains from the vote, 6 were in favour – MOTION CARRIED.

JM and DJ agree to assist with acquiring estimates, establishing locations for proposals, investigating grants available and to explore avenues to deliver options and a robust plan including all costings and contingency.

***Do you have a few spare hours a month? Are you someone that could assist as part of a working group to take this Youth project for our young people forward to make it a fantastic success that will benefit the whole village? If so, please email the project lead Anne Merritt***

**[annemerritt@btinternet.com](mailto:annemerritt@btinternet.com)**

**SEG – Creating a sustainable environmentally conscious SSG – Resolution to fund the project through CIL monies for £2,500**

The application from the SEG was discussed at the previous meeting. It was agreed the PC support the application to receive CIL funding. The PC propose to allocate £2,500 to the SEG application. JM and IU abstain from the vote; 5 were in favour – MOTION CARRIED.

*Clerk to transfer funds to the SEG. Clerk to inform SEG of the process to report spending and receipts to the Clerk for submission to the CIL officer and for accounting purposes*

**The Willowset – Outstanding works for a forest school, sensory area, SEN equipment and associated equipment. Resolution to fund the project through CIL monies for £7,540**

The application from the Willowset was discussed at the previous meeting. It was agreed the PC support the application to receive CIL funding. The PC voted unanimously to allocate £7,540 to the Willowset application – MOTION CARRIED.

*Clerk to transfer funds to the Willowset. Clerk to inform the Willowset of the process to report spending and receipts to the Clerk for submission to the CIL officer and for accounting purposes*

**135. Transfer of the allotments to the PC**

The Clerk reports there is no update as yet. The solicitor has not received any response to any correspondence sent to the developers' solicitor. GG has agreed to contact the developer directly to request the matter is moved forward.

JM informs he has been in contact with the case officer regarding the outstanding planning application 36/21/0015 that has been outstanding since 05/05/2021. The case officer reported a decision on this application should happen soon.

**136. Community Plan and engagement project**

DJ reports the steering group have held their first meeting, which was productive and attended by almost all members. A logo has been developed along with the strapline 'The Stoke St Gregory Village Plan - Our vision for the future of our village.'

All of the objectives ahead of the first CCS deadline have been completed. The CCS trainers provided feedback on the work completed thus far as "very robust and clear."

There is another meeting of the steering group planned to ensure the group are geared towards the next deadlines of 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Work will be happening within the village to obtain topics that are important to the community and to provide a draft project plan.

The Steering Group consists of Danny James, Janice Pearce, Kate James, Russell Kidd, Elly Kidd, Gill Slattery, Paul Fielding, Alfred van Pelt, and Kelly de Silva.

*For further updates on the Stoke St Gregory Village Plan please join the Facebook group or email [ssg2023villageplan@gmail.com](mailto:ssg2023villageplan@gmail.com)*

**137. County Councillor report**

In the absence of County and District Councillors there is no report

**138. Young People; next steps**

Item discussed during Minute 134.

**139. Dog fouling**

The Clerk reports she will be working on a proposal in December/January for a local initiative based on a similar initiative to the green dog scheme. The Clerk plans to suggest local dog owners who wish to join a dedicated group to help raise awareness on the issues surrounding dog fouling could be given high viz dog collars and a badge indicating they are part of a local green dog scheme. A dedicated Facebook group could be considered so people know the volunteers are approachable and helping to assist to reduce the amount of dog fouling within the village. This is in a very preliminary stage and the Clerk welcomes any input as she builds the proposal for the PC.

#### **140. Cost of living crisis – warm hubs**

JP reports she has held a meeting with representatives from local groups with regards to setting up warm hubs over winter. Jane White will be chairing the group. JP informs it is a complex and sensitive issue and the aim is to provide something that is inclusive to all. Options being considered are a basic commodity larder where people could donate what they can afford, 'cuppa and a catchup,' and games evenings.

Co-ordination and distribution will require focus and local groups are planning to work together to support each other with the initiative. SCF (Somerset Community Foundation) are offering grants of up to £1000 to assist with warm hubs. Offering a meal is being considered as if people are choosing to heat or eat – food provisions could be offered.

JP welcomes any support or ideas for the warm hub provision.

IU informs of a local health professional who has expressed an interest in assisting suggesting contact is made with them.

#### **141. Jubilee Trees**

IU reports there has been no further update from re-imagining the levels or the PFMC regarding Jubilee trees. As it is now the end of the planting season this may need to wait until March 2023. IU expresses concern about trees being planted at the Playing Fields as previously saplings were not adequately maintained and perished.

There is a discussion which raises some issues with the current state of the playing fields and the old pavilion.

It is agreed that the PC representatives on the PFMC committee raise the issues at the next PFMC meeting.

HV recommends AM joins the PFMC meetings as the SSGPC Youth Initiative representative with GG, GB, and PH as appointed PC representatives. All agree.

#### **142. Removal and disposal of old grit bins and installation of new bins.**

The Clerk reports DJ is now in receipt of the replacement grit bins for Griggs Hill and Curload. The Clerk has ordered the salt from SCC but has not been informed of a date for the bins to be replenished.

It is agreed to keep the bins in their current locations. IU agrees to clear the vegetation growth around the grit bins. HV offers to dispose of the old and damaged grit bins.

#### **143. Broomfield Park Housing development**

Nothing to report

#### **144. Highways**

PH informs the ditch at the top of Dark Lane has recently had some work done. PH states it is a huge improvement. The PC express thanks to the landowner and contractor who have done this.

HV reports there has been a considerable amount of activity at the Athelney bridge. The works have highlighted issues with hedge cutting and the maintenance of private hedges that are ingressing onto roads.

HV requests hedge maintenance is added to the next PC agenda citing this has been an issue in the past. In the past, homeowners were contacted to request hedges were cut back and maintained. PH asks who would be responsible for the ingress onto roads – would this be SCC Highways or homeowners?

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

#### **145. Footpaths**

##### **Path at Polkesfield**

The Clerk reports there has been no further communication from SCC Highways (reported 12.08.22) regarding a resolve for making access from the privately owned path access onto the highway safer.

IU has cleared the piece of concrete and tidied up the access point allowing easier passage for mobility vehicles and pushchairs.

#### 146. Stoke Environment Group

IU reports events were recently held as part of the Great Big Green Week. Some were well attended, others were not. The SEG are considering a 'share resource hub' for all to share tools and resources such as tools, paint, tiles etc. to minimise waste and help each other. Good relationships are being built between the SEG and other economical and environmental groups such as the centre for sustainable energy and South West eco Centre.

IU reports the swap event was not well supported but hopes as people's perceptions change it could work in the future. The initiative is the same as 'free to a good home' on social media - but people did not seem keen at this time.

#### 147. Floods

Nothing to report

*As we enter the flooding season it is important to check all drains and gullies are cleared to assist with any groundwater issues. If you notice any that any are blocked or require maintenance this can be reported directly to Somerset County Council via the website*

*<https://services.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/?issue=GUL&serviceCode=HRI>*

*Alternatively, if you do not have internet access, please contact the Clerk on 07701 053 903 with the location and postcode of the defect and it will be reported on your behalf.*

#### 148. Playing Fields

Discussed during Minute 141

#### 149. Heart of the Village

HV reports the HOTV AGM meeting will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm and encourages people to attend. HV adds it is a vital community asset.

#### 150. Village website

The Clerk reports there has been a recent issue with the website which has needed to be outsourced to teapot creative to resolve the problem. This may incur a cost for the remedial action. An invoice should be presented shortly if work is required.

IU expresses the website looks antiquated in its appearance. It serves a purpose, but it could be updated and requires more communication.

**Clerk to feed this back to the website administrator**

#### 151. Broadband

JM reports Airband have been recently doing surveys in Meare Green, Curload and Woodhill.

#### 152. Consultations and Surveys

**Somerset tree consultation – deadline 21.10.22** – It is agreed all should complete the survey individually

**LCN (Local Community Network) Consultation – deadline 17.10.22** – It is agreed all Parish Councillors should email their views for the Clerk to collate for a response by 15.10.22. All Parish Councillors are encouraged to complete the questionnaire individually.

#### 153. Financial matters

##### Standing Orders

01-09-22 K de Silva – Clerks Salary for September

£395.85

**Payments to be authorised**

01-10-22 K de Silva - Clerks Expenses -	£22.59
<i>Printing materials for noticeboards and condolence table £4.00</i>	
<i>Flowers for condolence table £6.00</i>	
<i>Minute Book £12.59</i>	
01-10-22 N Sloan - Web administration	£120.00
01-10-22 J Williams - Grass Cutting/ Mowing	£90.00
26-09-22 SSG PFMC - Hire of the pavilion for PC meeting	£25.00
12-09-22 PKF Littlejohn - External auditors	£360.00

**Payments Received**

SWT Parish Grant and Precept	£9030.00
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**Other financial items**

Bank Reconciliation for August completed by JP

HV proposes all payments are made, JM seconds the motion – all in favour

HV recommends there should be more signatories to the account. DJ, JM, and IU offer to be a signatory.

**Clerk to send out information on updating the mandate**

**154. Other items for discussion****Return to the Meeting Room**

It is agreed that PC meetings will return to the meeting room from the main village hall.

**Confidential Item – HR**

The Clerks hours are discussed. The Clerk is unable to achieve the workload in the allotted 29 hours and is regularly exceeding these hours. JM proposes the Clerks hours are increased to 40 hours per month which will be reviewed in April 2023, IU seconds the motion – all were in favour.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.35pm

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held in the meeting room at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on Monday 14th November 2022 at 7.30pm. Please email any items for the agenda to the Clerk (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) or the Chair (pearcejanice@hotmail.co.uk by Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**