

## STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 in the meeting room at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory.

**Present** – Janice Pearce (Chair), Anne Merritt (Vice-Chair), Heather Venn, Peter House, John Hembrow, Ian Upshall, Danny James, Jason Morgan, Sue Buller (District Councillor)

**In Attendance** – Kelly de Silva (Clerk) and one member of the public

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

**Declarations of Interests and Dispensations** – None

**Public question time** – NS informs the PC the Parish clock suspension spring has broken. This repair is quite a specialised job, and it is hoped there is no damage to the pendulum. NS informs he has contacted the company which service the clock for a quote to repair work.

The PC agree to a maximum limit of £500 is authorised for repair of the Parish Clock.

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

#### **211. Planning**

**36/22/0026 16 Willey Road, Stoke St Gregory** – Replacement of conservatory with the erection of a single storey extension to the rear.

The following response was agreed;

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

**CTIL12723121** – Consultation to upgrade existing telecommunications installation at Dykes Farm

The following response was agreed;

*“Stoke St Gregory Parish council support the upgrade and modifications to the existing mast as there is a requirement for improved telecommunications and network coverage throughout the village”.*

#### **212. Parking Issues on Willey Road**

No issues reported. This may be due to the festive break when the school was closed.

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

#### **213. Village Website**

The website administrator (NS) is present to field questions regarding the website.

DJ informs it is no criticism; but the website appears slightly dated citing there are other PC websites which are better graphically and for navigation. DJ explains these things naturally evolve and are developed overtime. IU suggests the inclusion of hyperlinks to ease navigation.

JM suggests members of the PC send links to the Clerk to collate regarding suggested improvements for the website.

*All to send links and suggestions/comments and brief explanations of why to the Clerk to forward to NS*

NS informs the principle of the website when it was built 5 years ago was to be clear, simple, and accessible. NS agrees the website could be more attractive; but it is for the PC, local groups, and villagers to provide up to date content for the site. All content received is always uploaded very quickly.

SB comments out of 6 other Council websites she regularly uses; she finds the SSG very easy to navigate.

IU requests information on the google analytics to assist with establishing which pages are accessed more frequently and where effort should be focused.

*NS to send analytic information*

NS informs the website should be used as a specific source for information – but there is a lack of forthcoming information and news items submitted for inclusion on the website. Current news items

have been generated by the administrator independently. It was always the intention the site would be an easily accessible source of local information. DJ agrees citing the website is only as good as the information inputted.

HV requests local groups are reminded to update information for the village website and provide up to date content for the website to communicate with and share information with the community.

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

*Do you have a local news item, local group information, events, classes to publicise on the calendar, meeting dates of a village group or even some photographs you wish to share to include on the website please send these either to the Clerk at [ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) or Nick Sloan at [curloadfarm@gmail.com](mailto:curloadfarm@gmail.com)*

## 214. CIL (Community infrastructure levy) update

### Petanque Court

The Clerk asks what information would be required to pursue the proposal of a Petanque Court. DJ advises plans (a set of drawings; including sections), specific location, construction method would all be required to build a planning application. Once this has been provided, DJ agrees to view the proposal and offer any further advice.

HV and JH suggest the WI - as applicants - should be contacted to submit a more comprehensive set of plans, supporting information and 3 quotes for the work. Ongoing maintenance and management would also need to be finalised.

**JP to liaise with the WI prior to progressing the project with other stakeholders**

SB agrees to communicate with the SW&T planning to enquire what type of planning is required.

**Clerk to send current details obtained to SB.**

## 215. Finalise and agree the 23/24 budget and precept

The Clerk reports it was agreed at the previous meeting it would be inappropriate and unjustifiable to increase the precept above the rate of inflation. Costs are increasing for everyone across the board and the PC costs are no exception to this.

The Clerk has circulated a revised budget document to the PC for consideration distributing planned income for the 23/24 Fiscal year in line with a Parish precept increase of 11.08% from £17,600 to £19,550. The Clerk recommends with prudent financial management for the remainder of 22/23 a surplus saving of £3,326 can be made. This surplus added to other income (predominantly the Burial Ground – forecasted from a 5-year average) of £1,508 totals £24,384. The proposed total budgeted outgoings for the PC for 23/24 is £24,384.50. The precept increase for each Band property is set out below;

		22/23	23/24	Increase/(decrease) amount	%
Tax Base					
SW&T		393.82	410.74	16.92	4.30%
Precept					
Parish		17600	19550	1,950	11.08%
Band D amount		44.69	47.60	2.91	6.50%
A	6 / 9	29.79	31.73	1.94	6.50%
B	7 / 9	34.76	37.02	2.26	6.50%
C	8 / 9	39.72	42.31	2.58	6.50%
D	9 / 9	44.69	47.60	2.91	6.50%
E	11 / 9	54.62	58.17	3.55	6.50%
F	13 / 9	64.55	68.75	4.20	6.50%
G	15 / 9	74.48	79.33	4.84	6.50%
H	18 / 9	89.38	95.19	5.81	6.50%

HV thanks the Clerk for the work on the budget and precept planning.

HV proposes the 23/24 proposed budget is accepted by the PC, JM seconds the motion, all in favour – MOTION CARRIED.

HV proposes the 23/24 proposed precept is accepted by the PC, JM seconds the motion, all in favour - MOTION CARRIED.

**Clerk to send precept request form to SW&T**

#### **216. Private hedge cutting and maintenance**

The Clerk reports she has emailed the TMO at SCC Highways for advice to ascertain what is the responsibility of property owners/occupier and highways with regards to private overgrown hedges which ingress onto highways and footpaths or obstruct visibility splays. A response is yet to be received.

SB informs it is essentially the property owner/occupiers' responsibility. The PC has no authority other than to consider writing to property owners where hedges are overgrown to politely request, they are maintained. If the request is ignored and the overgrown hedges are problematic for highway and footpath users, the PC can request County Council to cut the hedge. SCC are likely to write to the landowner to further request the hedge is cut back. If this request is not actioned; then SCC may cut the hedge and bill the hedge owner directly.

DJ informs another route to consider is contacting Environmental Health Officer.

HV reports GV has been asked to cut the hedge by the sewage works. This will be done in the coming weeks.

**Parish Councillors to identify and photograph the locations where hedges are ingressing onto highways and footpaths for the purpose of establishing property owners/occupiers to contact. All information to be sent and collated by the Clerk.**

*As the fledgling season will run from March to August, now is an ideal time to cut back private hedge growth that is ingressing onto public footpaths and highways. The PC politely request private hedges are cut back and maintained to avoid issues for footpath and road users. Please do check for any active nests prior to cutting. The PC appreciate the anticipated assistance of the community with this.*

#### **217. SSG Village plan update**

DJ reports the survey was extended until the end of December with 385 responses received. DJ expresses thanks to all those who took the time to complete the survey. The data has now been received. A CCS analysis and reporting training session being held on 12<sup>th</sup> January for nominated members of the steering group.

Once the analysis is complete representatives from the steering group will meet with local groups to establish potential solutions and next actions based on the results.

The village plan will then be presented and adopted by the Parish Council. This will be reviewed a minimum of bi-annually.

A short presentation will be made at the Annual Parish Meeting on the survey outcomes and the village plan.

#### **218. County Councillor report**

In the absence of DF, there is no report.

#### **219. The Younger Generation Project (working title)**

DJ reports the name of the project is currently a working title and will be renamed to an appropriate title as the project progresses. Work is commencing in the background.

#### **220. Emergency and incident response plan**

IU reports the plan is a work in progress. IU is currently looking at the flood plan which requires updating with replacement flood wardens appointed.

**Clerk to circulate original flood plan to the PC**

IU is researching other examples of emergency/incident plans and elements for inclusion in the plan

such as power/internet outages which affect the Piper system used by vulnerable people. Identifying those who may use the system or are most vulnerable is a challenge due to GDPR.

The plan will devise a system/guidance without being over prescriptive to manage the first few hours of an incident ahead of the emergency services or relevant agencies being deployed.

IU informs the detailed framework will be ready to circulate soon for feedback and input. The finished plan should be integrated with neighbouring Parishes.

JP suggests a contact on each road or area within the village could be appointed as an emergency contact within the plan. The Clerk responds a similar network was effective during the pandemic when a person from each area of the village volunteered to assist the vulnerable, shielding or anyone requiring assistance.

IU has approached the Village Agent to progress this format.

## **221. Warm community hubs**

JP reports a meeting by the volunteers is planned for this month to further discussions and plans moving forward.

## **222. Street lighting in Church Close**

JM informs as the lighting columns are on a timer and not a sensor; it may be a case of they are turned off completely or left as it is due to the huge financial implications of replacing lighting columns.

IU reports the street lights are on all night, this equates to at least five hours of wasted energy and light pollution – there is a requirement to think of positive changes to move forward with reducing the impact on the environment.

JP suggests writing to residents in Church Close to gauge the opinion of street lighting. Depending on the outcome; this area could be used as a trial prior to approaching other areas in the village who may be interested in less street lighting.

**JP to draft a letter to circulation to the PC for approval. JM and IU to deliver the letter and engage with residents for the overall opinion of the residents.**

## **223. Gates and access from allotments to Church Close**

IU refers to Minute 201 highlighting the access issues for pushchairs and those with mobility issues through the current gate at the allotments from Slough Lane. The larger field gate is locked for security reasons.

JH suggests a field gate with a separate pedestrian gate could be considered. HV informs if this was an option; CIL monies could be used to fund the replacement.

**Clerk to request the contractor replacing the Churchyard gate meets JM at the site to discuss options and obtain a quote.**

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

The Clerk informs there has been no update received.

JM informs there are issues/delays with planning and the development agents. This could be a reason for the delay in the transfer of the allotments.

## **225. Kings Coronation**

JP informs the Kings coronation will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023 with a bank holiday on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May. JP asks if the PC would support inviting local organisations and agencies to organise an event to celebrate the occasion. All agree.

JH suggests if the school or local groups are planning events; the PC can support them.

**JP to contact the PFMC to ascertain if the Playing Fields are available. JP to engage with local groups and the school to co-ordinate a possible event.**

## **226. Broomfield Park**

Nothing to report.

## **227. Highways**

The Clerk reports she has emailed the TMO at SCC to enquire if there are any road safety

improvement schemes which can be considered (Minute 185) and to request the invoice for the Meare Green works ahead of the end of the financial year. No response has been received – the delay may be due to the festive break.

IU informs the grit bins have not been filled and asks why the replacement bin at Griggs Hill is on the Baptist church property. The Clerk reports the grit bin location and order for salt was submitted to SCC in September.

**Clerk to contact County Roads to enquire why the bins have not been replenished and request this is done as a matter of urgency**

IU reports there are a number of large potholes on the Willey Road from Broomfield Park towards Griggs Hill.

**Clerk and IU to report via the SCC website**

*Potholes, road defects and verge damage can be reported directly to Somerset County Council and the more people who report them; the higher the likelihood of being fixed quicker. Just visit the links below with the location of the problem*

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

<https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

## **228. Footpaths**

IU reports the footpath group are working alongside the SCC appointed footpath officer to maintain footpaths and the accessibility after a hiatus over the Christmas period.

The Clerk reports that during the recent bad weather and high winds the gate in the Burial Ground has come down and the post is rotted. The Clerk has obtained a quote from a PC approved contractor to replace the gatepost, rehang the gate, labour, and disposal of waste for £165+VAT. The Clerk asks the PC for approval to commence with the work as per the quote. All agree.

**Clerk to commence with the repairs to the Burial Ground gate.**

## **229. Stoke Environment Group update**

IU has circulated a report ahead of the meeting informing the SEG met recently to review the activities of the last 12 months and identify tasks to be undertaken in 2023. The SEG have supported the work of the village plan steering group and are ready to respond to the identified needs of the community, environment and climate change.

Work is ongoing to finalise plans to refurbish the bus stop near the Royal Oak.

Environfair23 will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 and there is lots of work happening behind the scenes to further the success of previous events.

Work on the telephone kiosk will commence in the Spring.

The SEG welcomes new members and appreciates the support offered to date.

## **230. Community Woodland proposals**

IU reports positive discussions are ongoing with land agents but due to the festive break, there has been no progress since mid-December. It is hoped more information will be forthcoming by late January.

## **231. Playing Fields**

### **Review of PC representatives**

The Clerk reports a communication was sent to the delegated PC representatives on the Playing Fields Management Committee who confirm they are happy to continue in their roles.

IU suggests it would be helpful to open up communications with the PPMC representatives to raise any issues and to be able to offer support to the village group. PH suggests the PC representation on the PPMC is reviewed now. PH proposes standing down as a representative with DJ replacing PH in the role as a PPMC representative for the PC. All in favour – MOTION CARRIED.

## **232. Floods**

HV reports water levels are currently high with Currymoor 84% full. Pumping cannot commence currently, but pumps are being brought in to Northmoor, Saltmoor and Dunball. HV informs this is the most serious flooding since 2014 so the management is critical – but the moors are doing what

they are supposed to be doing; but people should be mindful. HV anticipates the EA will be offering more regular updates. HV informs the EA have been clearing drains at Stathe which were blocked causing road flooding which has been an ongoing issue in this location.

### **233. Heart of the village**

Nothing to report

### **234. Broadband**

JP informs work appears to be commencing with Airband Broadband which has been severely delayed, with surveyors out within the village.

### **235. Consultations and Surveys**

None received

### **236. Financial Matters**

#### **Standing Order**

03-01-23 K de Silva – Clerks Salary for December (29 hours)	£395.85
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#### **Payments to be authorised**

01-01-23 N Sloan – website administration	£120.00
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#### **Payments received**

None

#### **Other financial matters**

Cheque from Minute 208 to be signed

Due to illness and the festive period December's payments were not authorised until January so will appear in the January bank reconciliation.

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

### **238. Other items for discussion**

None

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.07pm

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be held in the meeting room at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.30pm. Please email any items for inclusion on the next agenda to the Clerk at [ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk) by February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**