

STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 15th May 2023 in the meeting room at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory.

Present – Janice Pearce (Chair), Anne Merritt, Peter House, John Hembrow, Ian Upshall, Ann Finn, Danny James, Jason Morgan, David Fothergill (Somerset Councillor)

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

29. Apologies for absence – Heather Venn

Approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting.

DJ expresses that the final paragraph of Minute 3 of the April meeting should be amended to read the following;

"DJ informs the PC that the Community Plan has taken a huge amount of work to deliver. Each and every member of the PC has a responsibility to work hard and deliver the plan. DJ suggests that prior to the APCM next month every member of the PC should consider their position if they do not feel they have the time, drive determination or desire to take a lead on delivering the plan."

The other amendment relates to Heather's comments half way down page 2. It needs to include the fact that HV explicitly said "it was not the role of the PC to lead on the delivery of the plan."

All agree to amend the minutes as requested.

Clerk to amend the minutes, circulate and add to the next agenda for approval and signing.

JP states that as a Parish Council it should not be implied that there is no support for the community plan as this is what the PC is here for to deliver.

Declarations of Interests and Dispensations – None

Public question time – A member of the public is present regarding planning applications 36/23/0010/AGN and 36/23/0011/AGN and welcome any questions regarding the applications from the PC. They inform there will be further planning applications submitted in relation to the above applications, so they are able to remain compliant with upcoming changes in regulations over the next 3-4 years.

The member of the public explains the apex, aspect and covering of the proposed planning application.

JP thanks the member of the public for their representations.

A member of the public is present regarding the proposed 'Health Hub' initiative. They explain the proposals have support from the PPMC and that the CIL application for funding has now been withdrawn.

They are now working on an independent 'not for profit' business plan to set up a formal structure for a charity and secure funding to realise the project. They explain that using CIL funding would mean additional scrutiny and the project could be developed and funded through grants without it being in an unencumbered way.

They wish to clarify if the PC would still support the project in principle.

The PC agree to support the project as a whole and request the PC is kept abreast of developments.

PH suggests that once the charity has been set up and acquired the relevant permissions, they could re-apply for CIL funding as it would be an asset for the whole community.

JP thanks them for their work on the proposals and for the previous informative presentations they have given to the PC.

30. Planning

36/23/0010/AGN & 36/23/0011/AGN – Slough Court, Slough Lane, Stoke St Gregory –

Application for prior notification for the erection of an extension to an agricultural building to cover an open yard.

The following response was agreed;

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

Replacement fencing at the school.

JP reports that following a visit from a Health and Safety Officer it was deemed the fencing around the front of the school on Huntham Lane/Willey Road was inadequate and advised a 1.8m fence should be installed around this area. Until this is actioned, this area of the outside of the school is unable to be used which makes it difficult for outdoor activities.

JP notes that although it will change the visual aspect of the school, the safety of the pupils is paramount.

31. Stoke St Gregory 2023 Community Plan

DJ reports the plan has now been in the public domain for almost a month. The steering group which initially worked on the plan has now been disbanded with plans for a new group to be established to assist with delivery, accountability and tracking the actions which will be published on a quarterly basis.

JP informs a priority for the actions should be communication – especially as Jean House will be stepping down as Editor of the Stoke News. JP hopes that the way the plan was worded has not led to JH making this decision to step down after almost a decade. JP states that over and above all other communications, websites, and social media – Jean’s work with The Stoke News has been, by far, the best form of communication in the last decade reaching all residents, old and young alike.

JP explains the feedback that came back from the survey was that it would be beneficial if the Stoke News was published more regularly, but this will face its own challenges in terms of the costs and volunteers required to produce and distribute the publication more than quarterly.

JP suggests there is now a lot of work to be done in finding a new editor or a team of volunteers to compile and distribute the publication as well as finding sponsors to support the costs incurred to publish the Stoke News.

PH informs JH has agreed to continue as editor until a replacement editor or team has been found. PH questions how the content for a more frequent publication will be found as it is already difficult to obtain all the current information to fill the quarterly publications – the same with the website content – it is only as good as the information that is fed into it and some local groups, classes etc are not forthcoming with providing up to date information. A more frequent publication would also possibly require an advertising team to secure sponsorship to maintain more frequency.

DJ informs the outcome of the survey for the plan was that it is a great publication, and it would be great if it was published more often – it is not a criticism of the publication in its current form – it is a question to be asked.

JP informs to fulfil the actions of the community plan, then the PC need to promote and encourage better communication as that is required to keep the interest and keep people updated on what is happening.

IU informs that actions of the community plan should not be done in piecemeal – there is an opportunity for actions to be done in parallel as nothing exists in isolation. A plan for communication and engagement is what is required – this should include the Stoke News, noticeboards, websites, social media – all general communications throughout the village and how the PC engage with the community.

If you are interested in supporting the Stoke News in its future either as a team member or as an editor, please contact Janice Pearce or Anne Merritt for further information. Contact details for all Parish Councillors can be found in the village website at www.stokestgregory.org

32. Project Play (formerly the Youth Project)

DJ has circulated a presentation to the PC regarding different types of equipment and MUGAs (Multi Use Games Areas) which could be considered at the playing fields ahead of the meeting. This will be presented to the PFMC and to the young people of the village.

JM expresses he can see the advantages of the different types of MUGAs, with the conventional MUGAs aimed at more team activities with the new style MUGAs having more independent play equipment.

DJ explains that some of the newer style MUGAs can be made bespoke to the requirements of the young people in the village.

DJ informs that currently the Playing Fields has one of the best football pitches in the area due to the drainage and this should be incorporated into the plans.

JM enquires if fencing would be required to lessen the impact on the neighbouring properties if the MUGA option were to go ahead.

DJ responds with a bespoke MUGA it could be configured in such a way and be far enough away from neighbouring properties that it would have minimal impact. Also, the use of softer spray concrete will lessen any sound than conventional concrete.

DJ reports he will now be consulting with the children at the school during an assembly and engaging with older children by holding consultations at the Pavilion in the coming weeks to gauge the appetite for what the young people would like to see in the village ahead of plans being developed and moved forward.

DJ requests the support of the PC to continue progressing with consultation and planning to develop a draft plan for the project plan. All members of the PC agree.

For more information on the preliminary proposals and what could be achieved by the investment in the Project Play please look out on social media for dates at the pavilion for presentations and engagement or contact Danny James or Anne Merritt.

33. CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)

Petanque Court

JP reports the Village Hall committee have expressed an interest to take on the Petanque Court as a Village Hall concern with CIL funding provision.

PH expresses surprise at this asking why the WI will no longer be a part of the installation of a Petanque Court.

JP explains that as the WI have limited funds and resources it could be considered a preferable outcome to progress with the project and its future maintenance once the WI have assisted with installing it, especially as it will be situated on village hall land.

IU asks if the village hall will now submit a separate CIL application to the original submitted by the WI.

JP informs the WI will submit the CIL application for the installation with the Village Hall maintaining the site in the future.

A discussion ensues over the hard standing area and implications of any differences to the original CIL application.

IU requests more information and transparency is required as to who will be responsible for exactly what with the Petanque Court ahead of any monetary investment.

AM suggests further discussions are required with the Village Hall and WI to ascertain who will be fundamentally responsible for the proposed installation and maintenance.

34. Community Health Hub

Item discussed during public question time.

35. Anti-social behaviour at the Village Hall

JM and IU are keeping a watch in brief with only one incident being reported to 101 in the last few weeks.

IU would encourage people to keep reporting any late-night anti-social behaviour via the 101 online reporting system. This assists the police to build a portfolio to provide increased patrols if required.

36. Somerset Councillor report

Please see the appended report submitted to the PC from Councillor David Fothergill.

37. Insurance renewal for 22/23 - £519.66

The Clerk reports the PC committed to a 3-year term contract with Gallagher last year with this year's policy and premium circulated ahead of the meeting for consideration.

The PC agree unanimously to continue with the policy at the annual cost of £519.66.

38. Emergency Incident and Response plan

IU reports the plan is a work in progress which is developing. IU informs that after recent flash flooding events in South Somerset it has highlighted the importance of identifying vulnerable areas and access routes with neighbouring parishes which could become inaccessible and impede emergency services attending in the event of an emergency.

IU informs once the framework is established further assistance and information will be required from the PC.

39. Defibrillator and training subsidiary request

JP reports the WI are arranging a CPR and defib training session at the village hall on 9th September from 10.30-1pm with Dr Hickman. This would be free for anyone in the village to attend.

JP asks if the PC could consider covering the cost of the hall hire for the training event with the WI supplying refreshments.

The PC agree unanimously as it is important that members of the community can be trained in life saving defibrillator training.

JP informs the defib box could do with a tidy up.

The Clerk reports the pads are due to expire and more should be purchased. Currently the Clerk is the nominated first responder – which is no longer viable as the Clerk does not reside in the village. The Clerk currently checks the defib is working and reports it monthly to the circuit. The Clerk recommends this task is allocated to someone who is in the village.

JP informs as a result of the training; several people could be responsible for its upkeep – not just one person.

IU to liaise with JM to demonstrate how to check the defib is working properly.

40. Kings Coronation

JP reports that due to the weather, the fete had to be moved to the hall for 5 hours for it to commence.

The event was a success with local groups all coming together and fundraising for their own causes.

JP thanks all the organisations that participated and to all attended.

JP suggests that as part of the community plan the annual village fete could be an annual date in the diary with a dedicated group spearheading the event to make it bigger and better.

DJ expresses it could be an opportunity to take the original fete idea and invite more younger people involved from the outset with organisation of future events.

If you would like to take part in organising an annual event for Stoke St Gregory, please contact Janice Pearce.

41. APM (Annual Parish Meeting)

The APM will be held on Monday 22nd May at 7.30pm.

This will include presentations from the Chair of the PC, Danny James and the Community Plan, The Chair of Governors and Headteacher from the school and a chance to have a drink and a chat with Parish Councillors. All are welcome.

42. Broomfield Park

JM informs there is still a hold up with the planning officer and the final planning permissions which could be the reason the transfer of the allotments is still outstanding.

DF agrees to contact the planning officer for an update as this has been ongoing now since 2020.

43. Highways

The Clerk has been making enquiries with Somerset Council and the Traffic Management Officer to ascertain if a SID (Speed Indicator Device) or VAW could be a viable option in Meare Green and what costings would be involved.

44. Footpaths

JP reports the SEG, and footpath group have created local footpath guides which are being distributed. IU informs the weather has slowed down some of the progress, but signage has been installed in places and routes cleared.

IU reports that due to the weather, he has not been able to visit footpath T25/25 but he will endeavour to do this and report it via the Somerset Council website.

If you have a few hours spare to help or are able to walk the footpaths, please contact Sarah Evans of the Footpath Group

45. Stoke Environment Group Update

IU has circulated a report to the PC ahead of the meeting.

IU reports the Envirofair will be on 6th June. The SEG have also attended other events including the fete and the open gardens to raise awareness.

There is a nature walk planned on 1st July in collaboration with the Somerset Wildlife Trust (more information is on the SWT website) and a bat detection evening planned for early September.

IU informs the proposals to the PFMC of an offer to help with tidying of the playing fields has sadly not received any response. IU states the condition of the Playing Fields has not improved since it was highlighted almost a year ago. There is now fly tipping of dumping grass in the hedge, there are still derelict urinal toilets left in the playing field, which is a living memorial to those who fought and died in the war which is disrespectful. IU informs this should be raised and resolved.

IU has been in contact with a local land owner regarding planting more trees and the SEG has also been offered stewardship of the community orchard which is being investigated.

The SEG has also been working with a student from a local college to make a video on community environment action which will be shown at the Envirofair.

46. Community Woodland Proposal

No further updates

47. Playing Fields

AM reports the bin at the Playing Fields is broken.

DJ agrees to discuss with the PFMC who would be responsible to replace the bin – the PC or PFMC.

DJ reports the broken bench on the park has been replaced by a donation from Simon Williams. The PC thank Simon for this kind donation.

DJ and C have moved the goals which were dumped at the top of the playing fields. With the money raised by two local residents at a Christmas fair these have now been refurbished with nets installed and supports to be put in place.

DJ thanks Sammi and Lawrence Baldwin for their fundraising efforts for this improvement to happen and states it is something that should have been done by the PFMC long ago – it cost £370, took 2 text messages and 10 minutes to resolve.

The PC thank extend their gratitude to the Baldwins for their assistance.

48. Heart of the Village

Discussed at the APCM that preceded the meeting.

JP will write to the HOTV regarding PC representation on the committee.

49. Consultations and surveys

Nothing to report.

50. Agenda Restructure

The Clerk requests the PC to consider the structure of the agenda as currently there are too many items and not enough focus on items that need to be discussed.

The Clerk welcomes input from the PC on agenda items that should be included rather than always having standing items.

DJ agrees citing the meetings should be for agreeing the decisions with items being kept more to the point.

51. Financial Matters

Standing Orders

01-05-23 K de Silva – Clerks Salary for March (29 Hours)	£395.85
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Payments to be authorised

N Sloan - Website Administration - April	£120.00
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N Sloan – Reimbursement for sending the clock spring	£11.31
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Rockwell sign & print - Winter Newsletter	£74.00
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Rockwell sign & print - Spring Newsletter	£74.00
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K de Silva - Clerks expenses	£117.89
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(Envelopes & Stamps £5.60, paper £4.20, Printer Ink £17.80, Web hosting inv. £89.99)

Payments Received

Precept 23/24	£19,550.00
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Other financial items

None.

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

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.46pm

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held in the meeting room at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory on Monday 12th June at 7.30pm.