

## STOKE ST. GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in the meeting room at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory.

**Present** – Janice Pearce (Chair), Anne Merritt (Vice-Chair), Heather Venn, Ann Finn, Peter House, David Cuthbertson, Lawrence Bostock, Cllr. David Fothergill (Somerset Councillor)

**In Attendance** – Sally Taylor (Clerk) and three members of the public

**Apologies** - ~John Hardy, John Hembrow

**133. Approve and sign the minutes of the October meeting** – The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and signed accordingly.

**134. Interests and dispensations** –None.

#### **135. Public Question Time –**

Paul Kenefick asked if the PC has a strategy for residential development. He said that he has looked for one and cannot find anything although he believes there has been in the past. Also nothing in the CP.

He said that there had previously been a policy of no additional housing to be built on the right hand side of Woodhill (in the direction away from the Square)

His two questions:

- 1) What is the PC doing about a development plan for residential development?
- 2) If the village needs more houses to make it sustainable what is actually needed in terms of numbers of properties by type/size of property?

JP responded that Housing was not included in the CP as Stoke St Gregory was not considered to be a priority area for social housing, so the plan was Community based. However, agrees that the PC should be working towards having a plan/strategy for housing development.

AF asked were we not bound by SCC – not a development village.

DF clarified the current position as regards housing need by stating that there is currently no need for low cost/social housing showing on the housing list.

Noted that there is undeveloped land at Willowfields.

Alastair Capps (Applicant for planning application 36/23/0025) made a representation regarding his application. Although works for developers this is a personal application for his own residence with no intention of profiteering from project. This is an infill site within an urban area, it has services and other properties around it. The dwelling has been designed around the assets of the site and is an agricultural style building with off road parking. The environmental and ecological aspects of the project will add value and enrich the area.

#### **136. Planning**

**36/23/0026 and 36/23/0027** Erection of an agricultural umbrella building to cover an open cow feeding yard at **Huntham Farm, Stoke St Gregory** (E01/11/23)

HV commented that this is a very large development. It is within the existing farm area and is not visible from anywhere else. The general feeling that a site visit would be required prior to representation to Somerset Council. ST to arrange.

**36/23/0025** Erection of 1 No. dwelling with driveway and associated works on **land off Woodhill, Stoke St Gregory** (E01/11/23)

AM stated that she is in favour of this application where there is currently wasted land, and is happy with access having visited the site.

HV stated that she had an issue with boundaries and is concerned about access. Also the loss of the hedges which will change the vision of that section of the road and the possible detrimental affect to the residents in the area.

Highways have not commented on the application as yet.

JP said that it is a narrow access and has concerns about the removal of the hedge.

PH has concerns about visibility. Mr Capps said that calculations of visibility splay have been made, if the hedge is left in this would not be good. However the driveway is wide and he has calculated that a full turn around of vehicles within the grounds of the property is possible and therefore will not be reversing on to the road. Earth banking/dry stone walls and pollenators along the roadside improve the visibility. The planting list is on the plans.

DC stated that the design does match some other properties in the village.

LB said that there are plenty of other locations in the village where visibility is worse.

AF is happy with the landscaping but would wish wilding aspects of the project are conditional on continuation.

Five of the Councillors voted to support the application, conditionally that landscaping and wilding as detailed in the plans continue to be adhered to over time and form a condition of sale should the current landowner subsequently sell the property.

One Councillor abstained.

*Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agree to support this application subject to conditions*

**36/23/0024/AGN** Application for prior notification for the erection of 2 No. agricultural buildings for willow drying at **Meare Green Court, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory**. (E01/11/23)

No decision to be made as prior approval is not required.

### **137. Stoke St Gregory 2023 Community Plan**

Update to be provided to the Church Magazine and Stoke News.

Village Fete will be held on Saturday 6 July 2024. JP asked the Councillors to agree to fund the attendance of Huish Episcopi Band which will cost £150. All in Agreement.

A discussion around having a regular drop in surgery for the public to meet with a Councillor for updates/questions. It was agreed that this should be on a trial basis, and initially quarterly. LB offered to run the first session on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December in the HOTV café between 10am and 12pm. To be advertised in Stoke News.

The noticeboard was discussed and it was agreed that the current location is adequate, however the condition of the board is not good at all and requires replacement as a matter of urgency. Cost is likely to be between £2000 - £2500. ST to research.

The website was discussed and it was felt needs updating. New councillor have not yet provided photographs, email addresses and telephone numbers for this. JP asked for these be sent to ST as a matter of urgency for forwarding on to NS.

### **138. Project Play**

No update on funding applications. DJ will be meeting with young people to update on progress. Still planning to have Phase 1 up and running for Summer 2024.

Preparations for fundraising event on 25<sup>th</sup> November going well. School choir opening event. Have obtained some Christmas decorations from Monkton Elms Garden Centre. First community choir rehearsal cancelled due to weather. Two rehearsals planned prior to event. AM reported plenty of interest. Two anonymous residents have sponsored this event.

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

Neil Sollis has now secured a grant of £11k for the provision of a shelter for the Playing Fields for young people. This funding has been secured independently from CIL.

#### **140. Damage of the Coppice at the Village Hall**

Hi Lines met with JP GG and IU. They are very apologetic for the upset they have caused to the Community.

As a compensatory gesture they are to make payments of £1,000 each to SEG and to the Village Hall. A formal apology will be published in Stoke News and they will make good the damage done

#### **141. Anti-social behaviour**

There have been further incidents of vandalism. The general feeling is that there has always been issues with some young teens in the village over the years. It was agreed that highlighting it on social media will encourage them to continue. NS is managing issues at the playing field and has a good understanding with the youngsters in the Village. Now the playing field is having CCTV it is likely the Hall will also consider this

#### **142. Somerset Councillor Report**

Report from DF is attached.

The main issue at present is the financial deficit of Somerset Council. If the Council apply for a S114 notice then independent advisors will decide where to make cuts. DF confirmed that CIL money is not affected in any way. Grants from the Council will be. A question was raised about Burial ground grants, ST to establish if we receive one, and any other grants in the accounts.

The Council cannot borrow any money until it sells assets. It is looking to devolve assets to PCs who will then be responsible for their maintenance. This will have an affect on precept. PCs can raise precept to cover costs.

DF advised to look what might get cut and focus on what we can do.

DF informed the PC of changed to waste collection days from February to realise savings from more efficient routing of collection vehicles.

#### **143. Emergency and Incident Response Plan**

Representatives and coverage all now established so the Plan can go online.

#### **144. Broomfield Park**

JHa sent an update on the planting at Broomfield Park. He met with Olivia Saunders from GTH Property Management who Currently act for the Management Company. They walked around the development identifying the dead and missing trees. She confirmed that she had sent the details through to Otter Construct instructing them to carry out the works. To date nothing has happened.

#### **145. Highways**

JP reported that PCSO Steve Chapman had attended the School that morning. He reported that the school patrol sign by the playing field was obstructed by hedge. It is understood that cutting this back has been requested and is in hand. He also reported that there is no TRO in place, however DF advised that this is not compulsory and therefore should not be a concern. DF advised we should write to Kate Brown to confirm. ST to write to KB.

All that can be done is for everyone to keep nagging for considerate parking.

It is understood that a grant has been applied for to provide a disabled parking space outside of the shop. AF suggested that the barrels outside of the pub/shop cause an obstruction and should be moved, especially as it is now confirmed that the pavement is owned by Highways.

#### **146. Footpaths**

AM to contact the relevant housing associations to seek clarification over ownership of ditch at bottom of Polkes Field.

#### **147. Stoke Environment Group**

Report already circulated to members.

#### **148. Defibrillators**

Discussion around location for placement of new defibrillators. AM to speak to Danny James re siting one at his property. If not Simon Williams or Old Pigeons may be good fits. Nicola Coate supportive of having one for Meare Green at Coates English Willow but wanted more information on operations.

AF has researched free defibrillators from the British Heart Foundation. Need to apply by March, but one machine may be provided as long as 200m from any other location. Anywhere along Curload would be more than that distance from Stanmoor Motors. AF to pursue. AF has looked at St Johns, but more expensive.

Grants are available also. ST to look in to this. Also need to establish a procedure/responsibility for replacing parts should any be used.

#### **149. Flooding**

New Flooding rep's have been appointed.

Blocked drains were a problem with recent storms. Phil Churches who lives in Polkes Field borrowed his employers drain clearing lorry and cleared floods in North Curry and Stoke St Gregory. Agreed that he needs to be formally thanked. ST to obtain contact details.

#### **150. Playing Fields**

Bin to be purchased. ST to arrange.

#### **151. HOTV**

Nothing further to discuss.

#### **152. Consultations and Surveys**

Consultation from Somerset Council on devolution of assets has previously been circulated. ST to identify any grants from Somerset Council which may be under threat. All to review papers circulated for discussion at next meeting. Review of these papers will need to inform the budget/precept process. Will have to look at worst case scenario in budget preparation. ST to prepare proforma and circulate with agenda for next meeting.

#### **153. Financial Matters**

##### **Standing Orders**

##### **Payments to be authorised**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| 01-11-23 J Williams - Grass Cutting October                     | £100.00 |
| 01-11-23 N Sloan - Web administration (Oct)                     | £120.00 |
| 20-10-23 G Wagen & James - Burial Ground (Oct)                  | £46.20  |
| 11-10-23 Williams Hall Inv 415 PC Meeting Room Hire             | £60.00  |
| 11-10-23 Williams Hall Inv 406 Defibrillator Training Hall Hire | £22.00  |
| 01-11-23 S Taylor Clerk Salary for October                      | £391.50 |
| 01-11-23 Rockwell Print and Sign Ltd                            | £77.00  |

Payments approved. HV proposed, LB seconded

A discussion took place around the sponsorship for Stoke News. It was agreed that each quarter a different sponsor to have the box at top to advertise, and would pay £77 to cover printing costs. No

reduction for anyone taking the whole year, which is not preferred in any case.

#### **154 Other items for discussion**

AM proposed a donation from the PC of £150 each to the School and Willowset towards Christmas lunches for the children. There was concern that it would be expected each year if continue to provide.

In light of the earlier discussions around financial issues in the County it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to make these payments this year. All agreed not to support this year, but that it would be reviewed again next year.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to have an additional signatory for bank transactions. LB agreed to do this. ST to arrange once has access to the banking system.

The meeting was closed at 9.45pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm in the meeting room at The Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory.