

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2009 AT 5.00 PM AT STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Dr G Hayes (in the Chair), Mr M Clark, Mr A Debenham, Dr T Harris, Mr J Morris, Mr D Ware, Mrs E Waymouth, Somerset County Councillor (SCC), PC Andy Davies and one member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received David Greig, Parish Liaison Officer, Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC).

2. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2009, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Grove – information board

The Chairman reported that the information board in The Grove had recently been vandalised and suggested that as it was looked at by relatively few people and would be very expensive to repair or replace, it should be removed. The meeting felt it would be a shame to lose the board and agreed to retain it in the hope that an opportunity to fund its renewal would arise in the future.

Footpath opposite ‘Anjalin’, Manor Road

Noted that the Chairman had obtained three quotations to cut back the bank on the footpath opposite ‘Anjalin’, Manor Road, and provide a low retaining fence. Details had been circulated to members and the quotation from Orchard Fencing (Chris Rust) Ltd, although not the cheapest at £2378.98 plus £356.85 VAT, had been accepted as it was considered the best in terms of quality. The work had been completed in two days and it was agreed that the contractor had done an excellent job, which had resulted in a much wider footpath. County Councillor Elaine Waymouth had agreed to contribute £2000 from her Community Budget towards the cost of this project and the new seat in the Hudson Way playground, referred to below.

Pinch point scheme – replacement trees on church site

The Clerk was asked to remind SCC of their promise to replace, this autumn, those trees on the church land, removed as part of the pinch point scheme.

Showell Park bus stop and shelter

The Chairman thanked parishioner, Tom Tennant, who had collected in excess of 100 signatures supporting the Parish Council’s campaign to get the bus company to use the Showell Park bus stop and shelter instead of the one they favoured at Westerkirk Gate. The Clerk reported that she had sent the petition, together with a long letter documenting all the problems the Parish Council had experienced with the bus company to Transporting Somerset, SCC. The Transporting Somerset Operations Manager had subsequently met with the bus company and had proposed a site meeting in late November with the Chair and Clerk of the Parish Council and representatives from the bus company, Transporting Somerset and County Highways. Elaine Waymouth stated that if this meeting were not successful she would take up this matter on our behalf with Transporting Somerset.

New seat for Hudson Way Children’s Playground

The Clerk confirmed that a new heavy-duty seat for the Hudson Way playground had been ordered from TDBC and would cost in the region of £500 to supply and install. Once installed TDBC would take responsibility for its maintenance. As older residents had requested it the Clerk has asked TDBC not to place it near the skateboard ramp. As previously mentioned County Councillor Elaine Waymouth had agreed to contribute to the cost of this seat from her Community Budget.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

6. PLAY EQUIPMENT IN STAPLEGROVE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

The Chairman reported that the playground had suffered a spate of vandalism. The small play equipment had been sprayed with paint and the swing made unstable. The Clerk had reported the vandalism to the police and obtained a crime number. Sutcliffe Play SW had been asked for a quotation to remove and re-install the swing and this had been passed to our insurers to consider. The Parish Council was disappointed that the swing had not withstood this vandalism.

7. ST JOHN'S CHURCH - EXTERNAL LIGHTING

Noted that following an urgent request from the Church for help with meeting the cost of the bill to upgrade/replace the external lighting in the churchyard, which had been installed in the 1970s, and had recently failed, the Clerk had contacted both SCC and TDBC to see if they could assist. Both had said, as the lighting was on private land they could neither help with the bill nor take responsibility for the future maintenance of the lighting. Elaine Waymouth had agreed to donate £250 from her Community Budget towards the bill (£640 plus £96 VAT which the church was unable to claim back, total £736). The footpath through the churchyard was not only used when church services were on but on a daily basis, at all times of the day, by people getting from one end of the village to the other, without having to walk on Manor Road, which had no footpath. It was therefore agreed that the lighting was for the benefit of the parish as a whole and not just churchgoers and it was appropriate that the Parish Council should meet the remaining cost (£486).

8. PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (PACT)

PC Andy Davies reported that parking problems in the vicinity of Staplegrove School were declining following the issue of a number of parking and no tax penalty notices. The Parish Council expressed their gratitude to PCSO Tony Wearmouth who would be continuing to keep an eye on inconsiderate drivers at this location.

Andy added that a number of garages/sheds in Manor Drive and Corkscrew Lane had recently been broken into and that an arrest had been made.

John Morris raised the matter of parents using the children's play centre on Frobisher Way, over spilling onto Bindon Road and causing congestion, as well as parking on the junction. Andy reported that the police had issued a number of penalty notices here and County Highways were to install yellow lines in this area shortly.

The Chairman referred to a number of complaints from parishioners about speeding motorists on Manor Road. This was a perennial issue and it was agreed that this should be a PACT priority. Andy would look into the possibility of setting up a Community Speedwatch on Manor Road and would consult Kingston St Mary Parish Council to see if Staplegrove could borrow, for a fee, the speed gun that it had purchased. Tom Harris would do a piece for the Parish Journal asking for volunteers from Manor Road/Lawn Road, who would be trained by the police, to use the speed gun. Andy would also knock on a few doors to find volunteers.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Noted a paper giving details of planning applications received/decisions made, since the last meeting.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

- The Clerk gave details of the County Highway's winter service 2009/10 which she would publicise in the Parish Journal. Agreed to take up the offer to Parish Councils, for this year only, to collect some 20kg salt bags for self help use on the public highway/footpaths in the parish in the event of prolonged periods of ice and snow. The Chairman would collect the bags from the County Highways depot .
- In response to a letter from the Citizens Advice Bureau, asking for help with funding, the Parish Council re-affirmed its policy, due to a limited budget, to only assist financially those groups/organisations based in the parish.
- A letter concerning plans by the SW Ambulance Service to seek Foundation Trust status was passed to the Chairman to consider whether a response was necessary.

11. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank reconciliations

The Clerk circulated details of the bank reconciliations for August and September 2009, which had been checked and certified by a parishioner. The October bank reconciliation had not yet been completed, as bank statements had not arrived due to the recent postal strike.

Receipts and payments since last meeting

	£
Receipts:	
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.98
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.07
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.95
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.07
David Collard & Co – fee for entry in business directory on website	5.00
Jelf Insurance Brokers Ltd – ditto –	5.00
Stillmans (Somerset) Ltd – ditto –	5.00
Mortgage Select – ditto –	5.00
R & D Electrical Solutions – ditto –	5.00
Staplegrave Lodge B & B – ditto –	5.00
Impact Design and Marketing – ditto –	5.00
Churchill Accountants – ditto –	5.00
Chq from Churchill Accountants not paid by bank, chq returned to Churchill who did automatic transfer to our bank instead	5.00
John Packer Ltd - fee for entry in business directory on website	5.00
Taunton Pram and Nursery Centre – ditto –	5.00
Manor Glass – ditto –	5.00
TDBC – maintenance grants – PCC 525, Playground 425, footpaths 750	1700.00
Greenway Motors – fee for entry in business directory on website	5.00
Mrs C Hull, The Beauty Spot – ditto –	5.00
A B Hull, Builder – ditto –	5.00
Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital – ditto –	5.00
Altered Images – ditto –	5.00
Payments:	
G Bennett – footpath maintenance	289.05
J Peake – Clerk’s ¼ year salary and admin expenses	1011.86
Orchard Fencing (Chris Rust Ltd) – fencing and improvements to Manor Road footpath	2735.83

The Clerk reported that Alliance & Leicester had charged the Parish Council £7.50 for the cheque from Churchill Accountants, referred to above, which had failed. The Clerk had written to Alliance & Leicester saying that it was unfair that the Parish Council had received a charge for something that was the fault of Churchill Accountants and had asked for the charge to be reversed.

Budget statement as at 1 November 2009 and 2010/11 precept request.

Received and noted a budget statement as at 1 November 2009. A precept request of £10,000 for 2010/11 was agreed.

Maintenance grants and donations 2009/10

The Parish Council expressed its disappointment that once again TDBC’s budget had been frozen.

- a grant of £525 had been received from TDBC for the maintenance of the churchyard. The church was anticipating costs to be in the region of £1000, mainly due to the use of a contractor as the number of volunteers cutting the grass had declined for various reasons. The Parish Council felt that the church should actively try to recruit more volunteers via the Parish Journal but agreed to donate £100 towards the churchyard maintenance costs.
- TDBC had granted £425 towards the Staplegrave Children’s Playground maintenance costs. The Clerk stated that the cost of grass cutting was likely to be approximately £500 and the Parish Council agreed to top up the £75 shortfall. The Parish Council also agreed to donate £143 to the Playground Trust to cover the cost of insurance, Somerset Playing Fields’ Association subscription and fee for the audit of its accounts.
- £750 had been granted by TDBC to go towards the cost of footpath maintenance in the parish. It was felt that this sum was sufficient, as the footpaths had only received two cuts this year

because of weather conditions.

Donation to Staplegrove Youth Football Club

The Clerk gave details of the accounts of the Staplegrove Youth Football Club and it was agreed to give them a donation of £500, as in previous years.

Clerk's salary – 2009 pay award

Noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services had reached an agreement on the rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2009. The Clerk's salary would be increased from £10.09 to £10.20 per hour, back dated to 1 April 2009.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Alan Debenham referred to the dangerous bend on Corkscrew Lane and expressed the hope that a footpath would be constructed through the woods for cyclists/pedestrians. The Chairman confirmed that the matter had been fully explored by the Parish Council and SCC but was not viable due to lack of funding. It was felt, however, that the new signage and the removal of the central white line on the bend at the Corkscrew Lane/Manor Road junction had gone some way to improving the situation, with drivers being more cautious.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 9 February 2010 at 5.00 pm. A meeting of the Staplegrove Children's Playground Trust will follow.