

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 25 AUGUST 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, Mrs E Waymouth, Somerset County Councillor (SCC), Mr D Greig, Parish Liaison Officer, Taunton Deane Borough Councillor (TDBC), PC Andy Davies, PCSO Tony Wearmouth and two members of the public.

Tom Harris paid tribute to John Wright, treasurer to the Staplegrove Trust and community spirited parishioner, who had died recently and who would be sadly missed.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from David Ware and Jayne O'Brien, TDBC Councillor.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Michael Clark declared an interest in a planning application for 'Brookside', Rectory Drive and confirmed that he had not taken part in any discussions on the matter.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the annual meeting held on 19 May 2009, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Traffic matters Corkscrew Lane/Manor Road

The Chairman was pleased to report that the new signage and road markings, to try to slow drivers and make them aware of cyclists and pedestrians at the bad bend at the junction of Corkscrew Lane/Manor Road, were now in place. PC Andy Davies reported that the majority of responses to these measures had been positive.

The Grove – information board

The Clerk gave details of the cost of replacing the information board in The Grove. As the original artwork was no longer available it was considerably more expensive than the Parish Council had anticipated. As relatively few people looked at the board it was felt that the Parish Council could not justify this expense. The Parish Council would tidy up the board instead.

The Grove – grassed area outside Staplegrove House

The Chairman reported that Deane DLO were to cut the grass here in future, at a cost of £15.75 per cut plus VAT.

Footpath opposite 'Anjalin', Manor Road

Noted that SCC had cut the vegetation here but had not sided the bank. SCC had stated that it was the responsibility of the landowner to maintain the hedge and bank. The Clerk had consulted the adjacent landowners who had stated that they were not the owners. It therefore appeared that no one was taking responsibility for the bank and hedgerow. The Clerk had met with TDBC's Heritage and Landscape Officer who said the Parish Council could remove the hedgerow if it wished but felt removing it would cause more problems than it solved as the vegetation was holding the bank together. It was agreed that the Chairman should pursue his suggestion of looking into having the hedge cut well back and providing a low fence inside the footpath to retain the bank and keep the vegetation off the footpath. He would seek three quotations.

Pinch point scheme – replacement trees on church site

The Clerk reported that the delay in planting the replacement trees on the church site, removed as part of the pinch point scheme, had been caused by SCC having to consult the statutory undertakers, particularly as there was an electricity sub-station on site, and they were notorious for being slow in responding. SCC had nearly all of the responses and was planning to plant the trees in the autumn. The Clerk had informed the PCC.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

In response to a question from Tom Tennant of Lawn Road, concerning the reluctance by First Bus Company to use the sheltered bus stop opposite the junction of Showell Park in favour of the one at

Westerkirk Gate, the Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council had raised this matter with the bus company on many occasions. Despite the fact that the Westerkirk Gate stop was on a narrow footpath, provided no shelter to bus users and caused traffic congestion when buses stopped here the bus company refused to use the sheltered bus stop opposite the junction of Showell Park as it meant crossing two lanes of traffic. The meeting felt this was an unacceptable reason as there were many towns and cities where buses performed a similar manoeuvre. A private company also picked up school children here without any problems. Tom agreed to collect a number of signatures in support of the use of the sheltered bus stop instead of the Westerkirk Gate stop, which the Clerk would send to the bus company with a covering letter by the Parish Council. County Councillor Elaine Waymouth and PC Andy Davies would also write to the bus company in support of this.

6. PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (PACT)

PCSO Tony Wearmouth gave some statistics on crime in the area in the last three months. Noted that the incidence of antisocial behaviour had increased but it was anticipated this would decrease once the children went back to school. Tony had visited Staplegrove School on a number of occasions and had spoken to a couple of inconsiderate drivers. He had also contacted the school Head who had subsequently issued letters to parents outlining what constituted a motoring offence and the penalties that would be applied. A letter would be sent out again at the start of the new school term. Tony was thanked for this and asked to continue this work so that hopefully parents got the message that they must consider other motorists and local residents when parking near the school.

In response to a request to complete a PACT Work Sheet, reviewing the working practices of our PACT, it was agreed that the form did not fit our format. Due to the relatively few PACT issues in the parish it had been agreed not to hold a PACT meeting but to have PACT on the Parish Council agenda instead. It was felt that the PACT was working well and the Parish Council appreciated the dialogue between the Parish Council, Police and public and there was no need to change this format. The Clerk would respond in a letter accordingly.

7. COUNTY COUNCILLOR ELAINE WAYMOUTH'S COMMUNITY BUDGET

In response to a request from County Councillor Elaine Waymouth for ideas for projects to receive funding from her community budget it was agreed that a contribution towards the fencing project for the footpath opposite 'Anjalin' on Manor Road, referred to under minute 4 above, would be most welcome. The Clerk added that in response to a request from a parishioner who had asked for more seats in the Hudson Way playground she had asked TDBC's Parks Department if they could replace the rotten wooden slats in the current seats but felt it would be nice if the Parrish Council could pay for an additional seat for the playground and this could perhaps be part-funded from Elaine's community budget. The Clerk would contact TDBC to find out how much it would cost to supply and install a new seat and would contact Elaine once the quotes for the fencing for Manor Road were in as well.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Received and noted a paper by the Clerk on the potential risks facing the Parish Council and the measures taken to overcome them.

9. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Agreed to adopt the draft Equal Opportunities Policy presented by the Clerk to the meeting. The Policy would be published on the parish website.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

11. CORRESPONDENCE

- Details of the planned work by the Highways Agency to upgrade and repair the drainage system on the M5 from junctions 25-26, due to start on 1 September 2009, were noted.
- The Clerk read out an invitation from the Taunton and District Citizens Advice bureau to attend its Annual General Meeting. There were no takers.
- The Clerk asked for any nominations for SCC's 'Chairman's Awards for Service to the Community

2009' to be forwarded to her by 27 November 2009.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank reconciliations

The Clerk circulated details of the bank reconciliations for May, June and July 2009, which had been checked and certified by a parishioner.

Receipts and payments since last meeting

	£
Receipts: Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.63
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.06
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	1.04
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.06
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.99
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.07
Payments: Allianz Insurance plc – insurance renewal June 2009 – June 2010	668.06
G Bennett – footpath maintenance and strimming o/s Staplegrove House	457.69
J Peake – Clerk's ¼ year salary and admin expenses	1000.41
G Bennett – strimming o/s Staplegrove House	26.96
PWLB – ½ year loan repayment	750.81
Moore Stephens – audit of Annual Return y/e 31 March 2009	155.25

External audit of 2008/9 accounts

Noted that the external audit of the Annual Return had been completed and the closure of the audit advertised on parish noticeboards. The external auditor had no comments on the Annual Return.

Maintenance grants 2009/10

The Clerk reported that, once again, David Greig had informed her that his maintenance grants budget had been frozen and we were only likely to receive the same amount as in previous years. The Clerk stated that the shortfall between the grants and the actual amounts required was becoming greater each year. There was likely to be a particularly wide gap this year for the maintenance of the churchyard. The grants should be received by the next meeting when the Parish Council will be required to decide how much of the shortfall it was able to make up.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Tom Harris reported that the PCC were in the early stages of looking into the possibility of selling a piece of church land in the far north west corner of the churchyard in order to pay for internal improvements in the church.
- Elaine Waymouth referred to complaints by a household opposite Staplegrove School about the amount of small huts, climbing frames, bike sheds etc that had appeared recently at the school and which were affecting their view. She had consulted the Head who said she would consider moving one of the sheds and it was hoped this would appease the situation.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 10 November 2009 at 5.00 pm. A meeting of the Staplegrove Children's Playground Trust will follow.