

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL STARTING ON
THURSDAY 19th MARCH 2020 AT 2.30PM
VIRTUAL MEETING**

On Monday 16th March 2020, the UK Government brought in social distancing guidelines in response to the covid-19 pandemic. The Parish Council decided that an open public meeting on 19th March 2020 was not possible. As an alternative it was decided to hold the meeting remotely using email over a period of time. The first meeting was scheduled for 2.30pm on 19th March and that the first 6 agenda items would be considered at this first meeting. Arrangements would be made for the rest of the agenda following this first meeting. The Parish Clerk contacted the usual attendees at PC meetings to advise them of decision and invite them to take part by email. The Parish Clerk also published the information about how to join the meeting on the Parish Council website and noticeboard.

PRESENT by email:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Michael Clark (chair), Simon Moon, Ian Talbot, Ros Went
Alan Debenham – joined meeting by email at 3.50pm
Clerk: Janet Coates

1.Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Darch and Cllr Williams

2.Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests

No additions or amendments

3.To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2020

Having been circulated, the minutes were taken as read and will be signed as a correct record of proceedings by the Chair. (signed on 23rd March 2020)

4. Police matters

The Police had sent a written report. The clerk reported that there were 17 contacts to the Police. The clerk advised that PCSO Tony Wearmouth will no longer be covering Staplegrove area from 1st April as he is moving to a different beat area.

5. Questions from members of the public

No members of the public had contacted the clerk to either join the meeting or ask a question.

6. Clerk's report - the clerk had circulated the following report by email

- i. Route 60+ session – well attended, at least 6 positive messages of feedback received. This has been passed on to SCC. Grateful to the Friendship Club for offering to change rooms
- ii. VE day celebrations – Norton Fitzwarren clerk passed my email to NF Village Hall as they are organising event, not heard back. Also not heard back from school. Probably superseded now by Covid-19
- iii. The Grove - £700 grant from Cllr Rod Williams received early March. SW Stump Grinders has tidied up the fallen tree, leaving the bulk of the trunk insitu. SW Stump Grinders have surveyed the surrounding trees and have advised that one large tree

has been left 'exposed' and as all its canopy is on one side which is also the Staplegrove Road side that we apply to have the canopy reduced. I have submitted the request to SWaT as tree is in conservation area. Use of wood chippings – SW Stump Grinders did not feel it was cost-effective to chip the branches they were removing but they always have wood chipping available and would deliver a load for £20 as and when we wanted it.

- iv. Courses were very informative and the clerk will gradually implement some changes eg signature of clerk on agenda (legal reqt)
- v. The IT equipment and laminator have been purchased and added to the asset register
- vi. Dog Bin Hudson Way playground – a parishioner has written to the clerk asking that the bin near the large playground is re-sited as although outside the playground fence it is very close to the benches within the playground and the smell in the summer was very offensive. Clerk has visited the site and agrees and has submitted request to SWaT for bin to be re-sited.
- vii. Somerset Playing Fields Association (SPFA) – email received to ask for nominations. The deadline is 31st May – judges will visit during June – and the awards will be presented at the AGM/Presentation Evening on Friday, 18th September. Entry is free, just want the location/postcode of nearest house. Do we want to enter this year?

It was agreed that the Parish Council would enter SPFA competition this year and Cllr Moon would submit the application.

The Chair then proposed that item 11 could be decided upon in this meeting.

11. Planning and Planning Applications

- a. Report from Planning sub-committee meetings on 10th February 2020 and 25th February 2020 – minutes of both meetings are on the parish website, 'no comment' was submitted on both applications.
- b. To consider application 34/20/0005LB Proposal: Erection of detached garage and formation of swimming pool at Stonehouse Farm, Edgeborough Farm Road, Staplegrove. It was agreed to submit 'no comment'
- c. Request to carry out work on trees in the Grove at the back of the Old Post Office – it was agreed that the clerk would submit an application for this work and to also include management of the hawthorn tree that is overhanging the path behind the Post Office.

After this item the Chair proposed that this meeting should stop and that another meeting scheduled for Monday 23rd March at 2,30pm to continue with the rest of the agenda. The meeting closed at 4pm.

On Friday 20th March 2020, the following advice was received from NALC

We are expecting government guidance on holding meetings remotely early next week, and NALC will also produce further guidance next week. In the meantime, if local councils decide to not hold meetings and take decisions by email or other remote methods NALC feels it's likely that afterwards if there were a challenge that the courts will accept that exceptional times called for exceptional measures. In the absence of government guidance, we would suggest for now only taking decisions remotely for truly urgent issues. In this case, local councils should evidence their decision making as best they can, for example by asking councillors to confirm their votes by email to the clerk for the clerk to keep as a record of the decision.

In light of this advice, the chair, vice-chair and clerk discussed the rest of the agenda items and made the following recommendation on how to deal with them.

Item 7	Discussion by email - Chair to lead
Item 8	Decision by email
Item 9	Delay discussion/ review in 2 months
Item 10	Delay discussion/review in 2 months
Item 12	Information - clerk to email information on i and ii
Item 13	not relevant now
Item 14	not relevant now
Item 15	Decision by email

Monday 23rd March 2020

7. Update, discussion and approach to take on North Taunton Development, following submission by Redrow of planning applications – reserved matters - 34/19/0035 and 34/19/0036.

Chair - Cllr Clark emailed the Parish Councillors, District Councillors , County Councillor and ROSAG on the current position following the parish meeting on 10th February. He asked Cllr Williams to explain his position on the spine road as it was not in line with the views of the Parish Council and many Staplegrove residents and to also explain Redrow's statement to him that it is in their (Redrow) interest to complete the spine road within an 18 month time-scale.

This discussion has been suspended during the covid-19 situation

Wednesday 25th March 2020

8. Financial Matters

Proposal to agree the financial authorisation limits set within the financial regulations agreed at the last Parish Council meeting in January. Proposal to agree the updated Internal Financial Controls Statement.

The clerk emailed the updated Financial Regulations with the proposed financial limits and delegations set by the RFO and the vice-chair. The relevant paragraphs are 1.14, 4.1, 11.1.h.

The clerk also emailed the Parish Council's Internal Financial Controls Statement which has been updated in light of the updated Financial Regulations and following a recommendation from last year's internal audit for the RFO to keep a computer -based spreadsheet to record payments and receipts rather than the current manual ledger.

These were agreed unanimously by email by all the Parish Councillors. The clerk has kept a record of the emails.

Friday 27th March 2020

15. Exempt Session – exclusion of the Public and Press

Tenders/quotes for footpath maintenance and website work

The clerk emailed the Parish Council a summary of the three quotes received for the website work. The decision was made to award the work to Gatekeeper Services.

Monday 30th March 2020

The clerk emailed the Parish Council a summary of the two quotes for the footpath maintenance work. The decision was made to award the maintenance of the footpaths that are not on the highway to The Veg Patch and to ask Howard Ltd to maintain the footpaths that run alongside the highway.

The clerk has kept a record of the emails.