

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 18TH JANUARY 2018 AT 5PM, STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Michael Clark (in the chair), Alan Debenham, Simon Moon, Ian Talbot, Ros Went

District Councillor: Caroline Tucker

County Councillor: Rod Williams

Clerk: Helen McInnes

Eight members of the public were also in attendance.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from PCSO Tony Wearmouth.

2. Code of Conduct - Declaration of interests

All the Parish Councillors have a personal interest with respect to the North Taunton Development, as does Cllr Tucker.

3. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2017

Having been circulated, the minutes were then taken as read and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

4. Police Matters

The Clerk read out a report sent by PCSO Wearmouth. In the period between 13th December 2017 and 13th January 2018 there had been a total of 36 calls to the police from the Staplegrove area. Eight of these calls have been from the same person who is suffering from mental health issues and the police have adopted a multi-agency approach working alongside TDBC and the mental health team to provide the correct level of support. There have only been four actual crimes two thefts, one burglary and one relating to damage. PCSO Wearmouth also reported that no calls had been received relating to nuisance parking in Showell Park.

5. Questions from Members of the public re items not on the agenda

- i. A Parishioner noted that the traffic lights near the Post Office were partially obscured by overhanging vegetation. The Clerk agreed to investigate and take action as required.
- ii. Elaine Weymouth spoke with regard to the 'Love Musgrove MRI Scanner Appeal' and made a request for a donation from the Parish Council. The Parish Council agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.
- iii. A Parishioner noted that the Norther Inner Distribution Road (NIDR) was poorly signposted as a route into and out of Staplegrove. As a result, some traffic which might use the road, joins already congested routes.

6. Matters Arising

i. Update on parking in Showell Park

Cllr Rod Williams reported that Somerset County Council's (SCC) Highway department had agreed to extend the double yellow lines. Cllr Clark asked if this meant that new lines were to be added opposite the junctions or that the existing lines were to be extended. The former was what had been requested. Cllr Williams had no further information, but suggested contacting Steve Deakin at SCC. The Clerk agreed to seek clarification.

7. Update on highways matters

- i. Cllr Williams reported that he had received a response from SCC regarding the eroded footway near Westerkirk Gate. The Area Highways Team are aware of this issue. An order has been placed to push back the mound as far as possible where it has encroached onto the footway. This will be limited by the extent of the footway and the stability of the mound. It is expected that the work will be completed in the next few months. Dennis Quick is the officer leading on this work.
- ii. Cllr Williams continued to feedback about the damaged railings and road surface on Corkscrew Lane between the junction with Whitmore Lane and Whitmore Road. Here an order to replace the railings has been placed with SCC's contractor; there is currently no date set for these works. The resurfacing of Corkscrew lane has been scheduled to start on the 5th March 2018 which will address the road surface issues that have been reported. In addition to the surfacing works, issues with the highway gulley in that location will also be addressed at the same time. Dennis Quick is the officer leading on this work.
- iii. The Taunton School Greenway Road Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) is now going through the final approvals stages. The consultation plan should be available to the school mid-February. Nick Cowling and Kerry Jones will be leading the SIS bid at this stage. It was noted that £12,500 had been found from three sources to fund these improvements. Cllr Williams clarified that these were works to improve the crossing and had been initiated after the fatality last year.
- iv. There was no information relating to the Parish Council's concerns about car parking on Bindon Road.
- v. Cllr Clark asked if there had been any mention of the Parish Council's repeated request to have SLOW marked on the Staplegrove Road near the Village Hall. As there had not, Cllr Williams was asked to raise this on the Parish Council's behalf.
- vi. The Chair introduced Alan Paul and invited him to speak about the proposed 20 year Transport Plan which has been produced jointly by SCC and Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC). Mr Paul explained SCC are holding a meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee on Tuesday 30th January 2018 10.00 am where the Transport Plan will be discussed. A copy of the document can be found on TDBC's website at <http://www2.tauntondeane.gov.uk/webpages/tdbcagendas/RtnPDF.aspx?ImgName=Item+5.PDF&PMI=20172005> Mr Paul feels strongly that the plan is flawed and needs to be challenged by being open to public scrutiny and subject to community engagement.

Cllr Williams noted that the plan is available for public scrutiny and confirmed that it would be discussed at the 'Place' scrutiny meeting where members of the public can table questions. Cllr Clark asked how members of the public had been informed about this. Cllr Williams did not have further information on this point.

Mr Paul continued that he will be encouraging SCC to commit to face-to-face consultations about the plan. The plan is currently at a high level and there should be opportunities for discussion before further detail is added. It was noted that the presentation of some data from previous traffic surveys could be considered misleading. For example, the percentage of traffic heading for the town centre was shown as very high. However, the area considered as 'town centre' was much larger than many would consider to be the case.

Cllr Clark shared the question that he was proposing to ask at the meeting. [A copy of this is available on the Parish website <http://staplegroveparish.co.uk/development-of-staplegrove/connecting-our-garden-town-transport-strategy-scrutiny-meeting-30th-january-2018/>] The Parish Council were in agreement with the question. Cllr Williams noted that questions needed to be registered in advance of the meeting, and went on to outline the possible 'outputs' from the meeting.

- vii. Cllr Clark asked if there was any further information on the progress of the request for money from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. Cllr Williams did not have further information on this point.
- viii. Cllr Clark introduced Heather Williams who runs the Community Speedwatch scheme and thanked her for her continuing efforts. Cllr Clark asked about the possibility of adding a Speedwatch position along Staplegrove Road, possibly from the bus stop on the South side of the road looking towards the Post Office. Mrs Williams said that this would be possible subject to agreement to the new site from the Police. The Clerk agreed to contact the Police on this matter.

Mrs Williams asked if the Parish Council might fund replacements for the two Speedwatch signs along Manor Road as these had deteriorated significantly. The signs would cost around £48 each. The Parish Council agreed to this expenditure and the Clerk would organise their purchase.

8. Request for funding from Citizens' Advice Bureau, Taunton

The Parish Council had received a request for funding from Citizens' Advice Bureau, Taunton. This was felt to be a worthwhile organisation and the Parish Council agreed to a £100 donation.

9. Budget for 2018-19 and precept request

The Clerk had circulated the proposed budget for 2018-19 and the suggested precept request. It was noted that this was slightly higher than last year as the biennial tree inspection of the Grove was due. The Parish Council agreed the budget and the precept request of £9,400.

10. Use of Social Media to engage with parishioners

The Clerk noted that the Parish of Staplegrove included areas including Grove Gate, and the area of housing around Hudson Way and Bindon Road. In general, the members of the public who came to meetings were from the areas of the Parish nearer to the Village Hall and church. The Clerk suggested a trial of Facebook or Twitter to try to engage with more Parishioners. This had proved successful in neighbouring Bishops Hull.

Cllr Moon noted that TDBC used both Twitter and Facebook successfully, and found it a useful way of communicating. The Clerk noted that the use of social media would be in addition to all existing communication methods and would often just provide a link to the Parish website.

Cllr Tucker asked if the Bishops Hull Facebook site was a public one. The Clerk noted that it was set up as a private group, which meant that the Clerk could check people's credentials and block people who posted inappropriate content.

The Parish Council decided to postpone making a decision on the proposal to the next meeting in March. The Clerk agreed to find out more information about the types of group that were available.

11. Proposals for use of CIL funding

Cllr Debenham had circulated his proposal to use the CIL funding towards a renewal energy project within the Parish. He highlighted Brendon Energy as a local company who might help. The Clerk had contacted Brendon Energy who had explained that changes in the feed-in tariff had made solar energy projects much harder to make viable. In addition, the current amount of CIL funding was felt to be insufficient for a project that was larger than a domestic installation. Cllr Clark noted that the Village Hall committee had investigated the possibility of installing solar panels, but the site was unsuitable due the number of surrounding trees.

The Parish Council agreed to keep the money, and to continue to investigate possible uses of it that would benefit local people.

12. Proposed single new council for Taunton Deane and West Somerset

Cllr Debenham noted that he was personally against the merger and had made several representations as such. Other members of the Parish Council reported that they had responded as individuals. Cllr Moon stated his personal interest as an employee of TDBC. Cllr Tucker indicated that in several areas, the two Councils has shared services for around five years. Where this was happening, it seemed to work well.

It was felt that it was difficult to identify how the merger would affect members of the Parish specifically, so no representation would be made by the Parish Council.

13. Discussion of quotations for tree work in The Grove

The Clerk had circulated three quotations for works to be undertaken in the Grove. The Parish Council asked the Clerk to accept the quote from South West Stumpgrinders and Tree Services as it was the lowest price. It was agreed to accept the offer of a contribution towards the works from the occupants of the Post Office House.

14. Discussion of grass cutting quotations

The Clerk had circulated two quotations for cutting the grass in the Children's Playground and outside Staplegrove House. A third quotation was tabled at the meeting. The Parish Council asked the Clerk to accept the quote from Howard SW as it was the lowest of the three, but to send a letter checking the terms of the quotation.

15. Planning applications

i. Decisions since last meeting to be noted

The Chairman talked through a paper giving details of planning application received and decisions made since the last meeting.

ii. Discussion of planning application

34/17/0033 – Change of use from Class D2 (gymnasium) to Class B1 and B2 at Unit 13 Apple Business Centre, Frobisher Way, Staplegrove

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

16. Financial matters

i. Bank reconciliations – November and December 2017

The Clerk circulated the details of the bank reconciliation for November and December 2017, which had been checked and certified by an independent person.

ii. Receipts and payments since last meeting

		£
Receipts:	TDBC – Burial ground grant	525.00
	TDBC – Playground and footpath grant	1175.00
	Santander – bank interest (November)	6.15
	Website entry – Nuffield Health	5.00
	Website entry – John Packer	5.00
	Santander – bank interest (December)	6.39
	Website entry – David Marks Carpets	5.00
	Website entry – Les Marsh Carpets	5.00
Payments:	SLCC – Annual membership	78.00
	SPFA – Annual membership	15.00
	Staplegrove Parochial Church Council – Burial ground grant	525.00

	Helen McInnes – November salary and expenses	310.20
	HMRC – November PAYE	58.00
	SLCC – ILCA course fees	118.80
	Helen McInnes – December salary and expenses	289.72
	HMRC – December PAYE	59.80
	Information Commissioner – Data Protection Register	35.00

iii. Budget Statement as at 31st December 2017

The Clerk circulated the Budget statement as at the 31st December 2017.

iv. Clerk's update

Salary

The Clerk is currently employed on LC1, scale point 19, (£18,560 pa / £9.647 per hour) for 7 hours a week. In April 2018, she could progress up to scale point 20 (£19,238 pa / £9.999 per hour).

As outlined in the contract of employment, the Council may withhold an increment if it is considered that performance fell below the level expected, or award an additional increment for exemplary performance if it chooses to do so. The Clerk requested that if any member of the Parish Council felt that either of these is the case, that they contact either Cllr Clark or Cllr Bird before the next meeting.

Pension

In November 2015, it was agreed to pay the Clerk 4% of salary towards a pension. The Clerk would like to request that this money is paid to her, or put in a separate account, to allow her to purchase additional contributions towards her existing Teachers Pension. This can only be done in multiples of £250. This was agreed by the Parish Council.

Printer ink

The Clerk has audited the cost of purchase printer ink as this is an expenditure that can be reimbursed by the PC.

Last financial year £105.49 was spent on printer ink. If the Clerk subscribes to HP's Instant Ink service for £7.99 a month this will cost £95.88. This allows for up to 300 pages to be printed a month. It may also mean that less printing will be done by TDBC, therefore making further savings. This was agreed by the Parish Council.

13. Correspondence

No correspondence had been received.

14. Any other Business

Cllr Debenham commented that SCC have proposed to increase Council Tax by 6%, whilst also acknowledging the need to make cuts to certain services. He noted that there is a meeting where this will be discussed on 21st January 2018 at SCC.

15. Date of next meetings

The next meeting of the Parish Council, Thursday 15th March 2018 at 5pm. The subsequent Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 17th May 2018 at 6pm and will include the annual meeting of electors.

A meeting of the Staplegrave Children's playground Trust will follow both these meetings. All meetings will be held at Staplegrave Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm

These minutes are approved as a correct record _____

Date _____