

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 5PM, STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Michael Clark (in the chair), Alan Debenham, David Ware, Ros Went

District Councillors: Nick Townsend, Caroline Tucker

Four members of the public were also in attendance.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from PCSO Wearmouth who was on leave.

2. Code of Conduct - Declaration of interests

All the Parish Councillors have a personal interest with respect to the North Taunton Development.

3. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2016

Having been circulated, it an addition was made to the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2016 which read "A card of condolence was sent to Caroline's husband. Geoff and Elizabeth Hayes attended the funeral." Otherwise, the minutes were taken as read and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

4. Police Matters

There was no representative available at the meeting, and no report had been received.

It was reported that residents in Lawn Road and Stoneleigh Close had received notes from the police stating that they should not park on the pavement. It was noted that the roads had not been designed for kerbside parking. However, many households have more than two cars. Since the notices had been received, some residents have altered their car parking arrangements.

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

Overgrown trees outside post office

A parishioner reported that the trees outside the Post Office on Manor Road were overgrown and obscuring the traffic lights.

Blocked drains

A parishioner raised concerns about the number of blocked drains and gullies throughout the Parish. He noted that he had raised this previously, but that the situation had not improved. Cllr Townsend reminded the meeting that any person can report this to Somerset County Council (SCC) on their website <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/problems-on-the-road/report-a-blocked-drain-on-the-road/> or by telephone, 0300 123 2224. The Parishioner said that he had done this on many occasions.

It was noted that during winter the combination of overflowing drains and freezing temperatures could lead to potentially hazardous conditions for road users.

The Clerk will contact SCC to report this issue.

6. Matters Arising

a. Request for traffic calming report from SCC

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had requested a copy of the report on the traffic calming measures that are in place on Manor Road. This request had been turned down.

b. Hudson Way play area – report on remaining section 106 funding

Cllr Tucker reported that she had been in contact with Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and that there was some section 106 funding still available. The exact amount would be known once work had been completed on the skateboard ramp. The Parish Council suggested that more seats might be needed near the new play equipment. Other suggestions were for a table tennis table or gym equipment. The possibility of removing the redundant play equipment to free up more space was also discussed.

c. Update on traffic speed signage

Cllr Clark reported that he was still in discussion with SCC about additional road safety measures installed on Staplegrove Road near the Village Hall. He noted that the data collected recently on the road had shown that speed limit was often exceeded during off-peak times. However, the average speed over a 24 hour period was used to see if additional measures were needed. Congestion on the road at peak times had brought the average speed to a level lower than that required to trigger action.

Cllr Clark will continue to pursue this matter, noting that he is soon to meet with Jo Sharpe and will also raise the possibility of re-widening the footpath. The Parish Council had also recently received a communication from a resident regarding the possibility of creating a cycle path, to encourage more children to cycle to school in safety.

Cllr Ware enquired about the costs of buying road safety signage. The Clerk will investigate this.

d. Update on footpath in Manor Road Playground

Cllr Clark reported that he and the Clerk had been in contact with Darren Hill at DLO with regard to the unfinished path in the Manor Road Playground. The outstanding work has been agreed and the Parish Council will continue to monitor progress. No payment will be made until the work is completed to a satisfactory standard.

7. Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Clark noted that Cllr Evans' resignation meant that the Council was without a Vice Chair. The Councillors were asked who they wanted to propose anyone for the role. Cllr Bird proposed Cllr Ware, Cllr Debenham seconded this. Cllr Ware thanked the others for his proposal and accepted the role.

8. Casual Vacancy – co-opting of new Councillor

Three volunteers had come forward to fill the Casual Vacancy. The Parish Council were pleased to receive these high calibre applications. Ian Talbot was selected with particular reference to his high level of involvement in Parish affairs. The other candidates were thanked for their interest.

9. North Taunton Development

Cllr Debenham asked if it was known when the applications would be heard by the planning committee. Cllrs Townsend and Tucker said a date was not yet set, but likely to happen late in the year.

Cllr Clark reported that PM Asset Management, the promoter of the Eastern application had stated that the development's impact on traffic would only be 'slight'. Cllr Clark had written to Lisa

McCaffrey (SCC) to rebut this. He had also asked for confirmation that the traffic assessment carried out for the promoters included the vehicular movements from the 425 houses from the east end, the 200 houses from the west end, the existing traffic currently using Manor Road/Corkscrew Lane, and the additional movements resulting from the construction workers and material deliveries. No confirmation of this has been received.

It was also noted that a letter from David Fothergill stated that the spine road would only be an access road for the development. Cllr Clark stated that it could easily become part of an outer distributor road which would have benefits for traffic flow.

A discussion took place regarding the need for a housing development of this size, as the employment opportunities within Taunton had not grown as predicted. Cllr Ware noted that if the development of Hinckley Point C does go ahead, it is possible that workers may prefer to live in the Staplegrove area, rather than the west side of Bridgwater.

10. Tree inspection report and proposed works in The Grove

The biennial tree report on The Grove had been received from Arboricare. This identified works that need to be carried out to maintain the safety and health of the trees in the area. It was proposed that the works would be carried out in two parts, in order to spread the costs. The first phase of works will include the removal of standing dead wood and branches, and the lowering of the hedge opposite the Post Office. The Parish Council noted that they had contacted David Galley (TDBC) who had confirmed that no permissions are required for this work, only a conservation area notification.

11. Planning applications

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

12. Financial matters

a. July & August 2016 Bank reconciliations

The Clerk circulated the details of the bank reconciliation for July and August 2016, which had been checked and certified by an independent person.

b. Receipts and payments since last meeting

		£
Receipts:	Santander bank interest (July)	12.48
	Aviva – insurance payment in respect of damaged wall in Manor Road	1,610.00
	Santander – account adjustment	150.00
	Santander bank interest (August)	12.65
Payments:	Adsborough Builders – repair to damaged wall in Manor Road	2,232.00
	Arboricare – Tree inspection report	396.00
	H McInnes – July salary and expenses	291.78
	HMRC – July tax	57.20
	TDBC - photocopying	15.65
	H McInnes – August salary and expenses	282.72
	HMRC – August tax	57.00

c. Budget Statement as at 31st August 2016

The Clerk circulated the Budget statement as at the 31st August 2016.

d. Santander interest rate

The Clerk noted that Santander were reducing the interest rate on the Parish Council's account from 0.5% to 0.25%. It was agreed to stay with this account at the moment as interest rates are being cut across the majority of financial institutions.

13. Correspondence

No correspondence had been received.

14. Any other Business

The creation of a footpath along Manor Road/Corkscrew Lane was discussed. This is felt to be imperative if the housing developments are approved, in order to allow safe access. All present agreed that this section of road was extremely dangerous for pedestrians. Cllr Clark noted that a letter to the planning committee had suggested that they come to Staplegrove to walk along this section of road to see what it is like 'first hand'. It is not known if anyone has taken up this offer.

15. Date of next meetings

The next meeting of the Parish Council, will be held on Thursday 17th November 2016 at 5pm.

The subsequent Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 19th January 2017 at 5pm.

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