

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL AND ORDINARY MEETINGS OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH MAY 2018 AT 6.15PM, STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Michael Clark (in the chair), Alan Debenham, Simon Moon, Ros Went
District Councillors: Caroline Tucker
County Councillor: Rod Williams
Clerk: Helen McInnes

Five members of the public were also in attendance.

Minutes of the annual meeting

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Joan Bird and Ian Talbot.

2. Code of Conduct - Declaration of interests

All the Parish Councillors have a personal interest with respect to the North Taunton Development. Cllr Tucker declared a pecuniary interest.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2018/19

Cllr Moon proposed Cllr Clark as Chair, and Cllr Went seconded this. Cllr Went proposed Cllr Bird as Vice Chair and Cllr Moon seconded this. Cllr Clark and Cllr Bird were unanimously re-elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Cllr Clark signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

Minutes of the ordinary meeting

4. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2018 were taken as read and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

5. Police Matters

No report had been received from the Police.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

7. Matters Arising

i. Cars and vans parked in lay-by along Staplegrove Road

The Clerk reported that she had emailed the 'Man and Van'. He explained that he currently did not have business premises and that his vehicles would cause more of an obstruction if parked near his residential address. He is looking for suitable premises and will park the vans as close together as possible to minimise the space they use.

The other car parked in the lay-by, was moved after Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) contacted the owner about the illegality of advertising from a lay-by.

ii. Reduction of height of hedge near Post Office

Cllr Clark reported that the height of the hedge had been reduced to allow clear visibility of the pedestrian crossing lights. The hedge line had also been brought in substantially allowing clearer access to the footpath.

8. Matters arising from the Annual Meeting of Parish Electors

There were no matters arising from this meeting.

9. Parishioner concerns about parking at junction of Mill Rise and Grove Gate

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by a Parishioner about difficulties caused by inconsiderate parking at the junction of Mill Rise and Grove Gate. She circulated photographs sent by the Parishioner.

The Clerk has spoken to PCSO Wearmouth about these issues who had explained that the laws surrounding what constitutes a 'junction' are quite complex. He has issued the Clerk with notices that can be put on parked cars which are causing a difficulty in turning.

County Councillor Rod Williams said that he will discuss this with the Parishioner if she contacts him. The Clerk will pass on his email address.

10. Narrowed pavement on south side of Staplegrove Road near pedestrian crossing/Post Office

The Clerk had been contacted by a Parishioner about the narrowed pavement on south side of Staplegrove Road near pedestrian crossing/Post Office. Photographs of the area were circulated. The Clerk had contacted Somerset County Council's (SCC) Highway department. They have replied that the footway has been identified and a works order placed with our highway contractor for siding working to take place.

11. Highways update

i. Purchase of Community Speed Watch signs

The Clerk reported that there had been some issues regarding the supply of the signs. The Parish Council have received advice from SCC's Highways department about where signs can be placed, and the types of sign that are permissible. This will continue to be investigated.

ii. Request for SLOW on Staplegrove Road near Village Hall

Cllr Williams reported that SCC Highways have rejected this request as it is not felt to influence driver behaviour. He went on to say that he is not prepared to pursue this any further on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr Clark countered that SLOW has been painted on the NIDR in several places, without additional signage, and someone at SCC Highways agreed to this. It is felt that the need for it is greater on Staplegrove Road. The Parish Council will continue to pursue this. The Clerk asked Cllr Williams if he would support this plan if it was initiated by the Parish Council; he answered that he would.

iii. Recovery of the full width of the footway near Westerkirk Gate

Cllr Williams reported that this is scheduled to be completed within the next three weeks. [Post meeting note – this work has now been completed. Thanks have been extended to Cllr Williams for his support.]

iv. Parking issues/restrictions in Showell Park and Bindon Road

Bindon Road

Cllr Williams reported that he had been in conversation with SCC Highways about adding parking restrictions near the eastern end of the road (near Lloyd & White and Chaplins). This would stop on-street parking causing a bottle neck/blocking the road. However, several letters of opposition to the scheme had been received from residents. As a result, the scheme has been shelved. Cllr Williams added that the Fire Service had been contacted and said that appliances are not held up here.

Cllr Tucker expressed surprise at this, as she has seen Fire appliances stuck at this point in the road.

All the other councillors present felt that the refusal to take action by SCC Highways is unacceptable. Cllr Clark requested that Cllr Williams continues to lobby SCC Highways about this issue. Cllr Williams requested support from Taunton School on this issue.

Showell Park

Cllr Williams reported that resurfacing is not scheduled to take place on this road. It was noted that Cllr Clark and Cllr Williams had met with a representative of SCC Highways several months ago about adding stretches of single yellow lines to Showell Park. This would stop all day parking by staff, but would allow for short stay parking for residents' visitors. SCC's proposal is for shorter stretches of double yellow lines. It is hoped that these double yellow lines will help to ease the parking situation, and the Parish Council will continue to monitor this.

12. Update from County Councillor Rod Williams – Parish issues

- i. Cllr Williams reported that there has been a reshuffle of cabinet appointments at SCC. Most committees have changed their composition.

He noted that SCC have 'started a conversation' about a possible reorganisation of local government and are looking towards the creation of a Unitary Council. This has been considered (and rejected) in the past, but it is felt that the situation is different now. The main reasons given for this are that:

- all councils are under acute financial pressure;
- savings can be made through economies of scale;
- there is a feeling at SCC that district councils tend to be reactive rather than proactive.

The current ideas are that there would be one or two Councils, with the overall number of councillors reduced from 300 to 150. There have been projected savings of between £28 million to £50 million.

- ii. Cllr Williams reported that 93.8% of parents had been allocated their first choice of school.
- iii. Cllr Williams told the meeting that he represents SCC on the Taunton Strategic Advisory Board (TSAB). The TSAB represents a wide spread of interests in and around Taunton and advises the TDBC on strategic matters affecting Taunton. One issue being considered by TSAB is the Taunton Garden Town concept. TSAB's advice is on the vision for Taunton and the strategic themes necessary to realise that vision; and, the quality of execution and the achievement of objectives. Cllr Williams is happy to receive views on what Taunton should be in 20 years' time, by email to: RodWilliams@somerset.gov.uk

13. Update on Parish Council's Facebook page

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's Facebook page had over 40 'Likes' and these continue to increase slowly. There had been contact from several Parishioners through the Page who had not previously engaged with the Parish Council. It was agreed that this seemed quite positive.

14. Discussion of maintenance needed to Parish Council noticeboard near Post Office

Cllr Clark reported that the single sided Parish Council noticeboard near the Post Office was very wobbly. It had been secured to a nearby telegraph pole to ensure the safety of users and passers-by. However, some maintenance was needed longer term. The possibility of underground cables

was highlighted, and the Clerk reported that she had a plan of electricity cables from Western Power Distribution.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact a local company to get a quote for works.

15. Renewal of insurance policy for 1 June 2017 – 31 May 2018

The Parish Council noted the insurance overview documents and the three quotes. It was agreed that the scope of the insurance cover was sufficient, and the company who provided the lowest quote (Inspire) was selected.

16. Review of Risk Assessments

The Parish Council noted the risk assessment document and agreed that no changes were required. Cllr Moon will provide the Clerk with some updated contacts at Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) to add to the risk assessments.

17. Purchase of replacement information panel for The Grove

The Clerk referred the meeting to the attached paper. The Parish Council feel that the Grove is an area of high amenity value and is a very visible part of the Parish. As such, it was felt that investing in a long lasting, high quality sign was of benefit to the community, and was agreed.

18. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Clerk reported that the requirements of the GDPR will affect the work of the Parish. However, some aspects of the Law are still open for interpretation – such as the independence of the Data Protection Officer and whether global email lists are covered. The Clerk will carry out a data audit following the advice of the Society of Local Clerks and Councils (SLCC).

19. Planning applications

i. Report from Planning Sub-committee meeting, 9th May 2018 (minutes attached)

These were noted by the meeting.

ii. Decisions since last meeting to be noted (paper attached)

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

20. Financial matters

i. Bank reconciliations – March and April 2018

The Clerk circulated the details of the bank reconciliation for March and April 2018, which had been checked and certified by an independent person.

ii. 2017/18 accounts and asset register –to note and approve

The Parish Council approved the 2017/18 accounts and they were signed by the Chairman. The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's reserves were quite high and there were funds available for some small projects that would benefit the people of the Parish. The councillors were asked to consider this and bring forward any ideas they might have. The asset register was also agreed as correct and up-to-date. The addition of photographs was noted as an improvement.

iii. Internal audit of 2017/18 accounts and review of the effectiveness of internal audit arrangements

The Parish Council noted the comments made by the Internal Auditor. It was also noted that Internal Auditor had carried out a limited internal audit and that the Parish Council ensured that effective controls were in place to prevent and minimise any possible financial losses through fraud and corruption.

iv. External audit – completion of Annual governance statement 2017/18

The Clerk presented the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2018. The annual governance statement was agreed and signed.

v. External audit – completion of Accounting statement 2017/18

The figures in the accounting statement of the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2018 were noted and agreed; the form was signed. It was also noted that the internal auditor had completed his section of the document. The Clerk will ensure that a notice is displayed inviting electors to inspect the accounts and supporting documents on request to her.

vi. Receipts and payments since last meeting

		£
Receipts:	Santander – bank interest (March)	11.93
	HMRC – VAT repayment	127.81
	TDBC - precept	9,400.00
Payments:	Love Musgrove MRI scanner donation	500.00
	Helen McInnes – March salary and expenses	312.01
	HMRC – March PAYE	59.80
	Helen McInnes – pension contributions	298.52
	TDBC – grass cutting (2017/18)	406.80
	Howard SW Ltd – April grass cutting	70.40
	Helen McInnes – April salary and expenses	343.74
	HMRC – April PAYE	45.20
	Charlie Saville – April footpath maintenance and playground strimming	229.50

vii. Clerk's salary

The Clerk reported that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on new pay scales to be implemented from 1st April 2018. If this pay increase is agreed by the Parish Council, the Clerk's salary will increase from £10.46 an hour to £10.67 an hour. The Parish Council agreed that the increase should be applied to the Clerk's salary.

21. Correspondence

The Clerk had been contacted by TDBC and asked to publicise an Affordable Housing Open Day on Wednesday 6th June 2018, to be held at Somerset County Cricket Ground between 3pm and 7pm. The Clerk will put posters on the Parish Council's noticeboards. It has already been added to the Facebook page.

22. Any other Business

- i. It was noted that some clearance work had taken place in the Grove. Cllr Clark raised the possibility of extending this further. The addition of snowdrops and bluebells was also put forward. This will be investigated and discussed at a future meeting.
- ii. The new skate ramps will be officially opened on 24th May 2018. These have been marketed by TDBC as a regional attraction, and are an asset to the community. However, when a similar facility was opened in Hamilton Park there was an increase in complaints from neighbouring properties about noise and anti-social behaviour.

The Hudson Way Park is not covered by a Public Space Protection Order, so there is no prohibition against alcohol consumption. The lack of toilet facilities and possible parking issues was also raised. Cllr Moon agreed to raise these potential issues with TDBC.

23. Date of next meetings

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 19th July 2018 at 5pm. The subsequent Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 20th September 2018 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.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm

These minutes are approved as a correct record _____

Date _____