

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2016 AT 5PM, STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

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

District Councillors: Nick Townsend, Caroline Tucker

Seven members of the public were also in attendance.

1. Apologies

No apologies had been received.

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 15th September 2016

Having been circulated, 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.

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

Legal width of a footpath

A parishioner asked if there was a legal width for a footpath. The question arose as the parishioner lives close to a footpath where the passable width of the footpath outside his entrance is reduced by a road sign. This, and the camber of the path, make it very difficult for people in wheelchairs or with pushchairs. The footpath is on Staplegrove Road, between Westerkirk and the Village Hall.

Cllr Bird noted that the removal of the soil that has slumped on to the footpath is a maintenance issue, rather than an improvement. Cllr Townsend agreed, but added that there is very little money available for maintenance, whereas there is a known fund available for improvements. He continued that footpaths that were in existence before the current legislation was passed, do not have to comply with it.

Cllr Debenham noted that there was a SCC Cabinet meeting taking place on Monday 21st November that members of the public can attend and raise issues.

The Clerk will contact SCC to report this issue.

Kibby's Field

A parishioner noted that Kibby's Field had been sold to a property developer and asked what the Parish Council's view was on this land being developed. Cllr Clark responded that it is thought that the field has actually been sold to an investment trust, rather than a developer. The Parish Council wrote to the Director of Planning and Development at TDBC on 1st August 2016, requesting confirmation that the field would remain part of the Green Wedge. No reply has yet been received.

The Parish Council support the field remaining as agricultural land, and would strongly object to any change of use.

6. Matters Arising

a. Overgrown trees obscuring traffic lights

The Chairman reported that a hedge had been created around The Grove opposite the Post Office which had removed any obstruction from the traffic lights and had increased visibility, particularly for pedestrians.

b. Blocked road drains

The Clerk reported that this had been reported online, and that a letter including photographs had been sent to SCC. No reply had been received at present.

c. Traffic speed signage

Cllr Clark is still in discussion with SCC about additional road safety measures installed on Staplegrove Road near the Village Hall. There is currently no progress to report.

d. Update on footpath in Manor Road Playground

Cllr Clark was pleased to report that work on the footpath is now complete. It is hoped that the footpath will encourage people to walk through the playground rather than on the road.

7. North Taunton Development

Cllr Clark reported that PM Asset Management (sponsors of the Eastern application – 34/16/0014) have indicated that the houses in this part of the development will be connected directly to the spine road. Ptarmigan (sponsors of the Western application – 34/16/0007) will not make this assurance. They propose creating a temporary 'drop down road' from the development onto Manor Road near Village World where traffic would be required to turn left on exiting the site. This road would be in place for up to five years.

Highways have also requested further information and assurances. These include that the spine road must be completed before 250 houses in the Western development and 326 houses in the Eastern development alongside a school; or within 5 years, whichever is the earliest.

The planning applications are likely to be heard in January/February 2017: ten days' notice will be given. Cllr Clark reported that he is working in conjunction with the Chair of the Parish Council of Kingston St Mary, and will send a joint letter to the Planning Committee members once the date for the planning committee is known.

8. Discussion of quotes for Tree Work in The Grove

In response to the biennial report carried out on The Grove, the Parish Council has requested three quotes for work to be carried out. The quotes were circulated and the wide variance in price was noted. The Clerk was asked to check the public liability insurance of the provider of the lowest quote, and then to instruct them to go ahead if this was in order.

9. Renewal of membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

The Clerk requested that she renew membership of the SLCC as this was a useful source of information and advice. The cost was the same as the previous year. All members of the Parish Council agreed this.

10. Request for funding from the Community Justice Partnership

The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from the Somerset Community Justice Partnership asking for financial support. The organisation is a charity which works with local Police and volunteers to provide Restorative Justice. The Parish Council felt that this was a worthy cause and asked the Clerk to send a donation of £25 towards their work.

Further information about the charity can be found at www.scjp.org.uk

11. Dog Fouling

Cllr Bird reported that she had been approached by a Parishioner about the possibility of installing two dog waste bins. The Clerk tabled information about the cost of installation and emptying provided by the DLO. The cost of a 50 litre new dog bin and installation is £345.00 plus VAT and the cost emptying the bin is £2.77 plus VAT per bin per visit. It is recommended that the bins are emptied twice weekly.

Members of the Parish Council expressed their concern about the overall cost of these, when dog waste can be put into a householder's normal refuse. There was also potential for dog waste bins to be abused and used for general waste. The Parish Council decided not to proceed with the installation of further dog waste bins.

12. Suspension of Electoral Review of Taunton Deane

The Parish Council has received notification from the Local Government Boundary Commission. This reported that the electoral review of Taunton Deane Borough Council, started on 28 June 2016, has been suspended as a result of the discussions taking place regarding the merger of TDBC and West Somerset District Council. More information can be found at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-west/somerset/taunton-deane>

13. Parish website – Business directory

The Clerk reported that twelve businesses had currently requested to have their details included on the Parish website's business directory. A request had been received from Staplegrove Pharmacy to have the £5 charge waived in respect of their agreeing to host the Parish Council's noticeboard. The Parish Council agreed on this occasion.

14. Proposed change to Parish Council stationery

Cllr Ware proposed an update to the Parish Council's headed paper and had created an alternative using an image of the church. Cllr Bird felt that the image of the church might cause confusion between the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council. Other ideas for images had similar difficulties.

Members of the Parish Council were asked to consider ideas which would be discussed at the next meeting.

15. Planning applications

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

16. Financial matters

a. September & October 2016 Bank reconciliations

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

b. Receipts and payments since last meeting

		£
Receipts:	Santander bank interest (September)	12.12
	TDBC – maintenance grants	1700.00
	Aviva – repayment of excess paid in respect of damaged wall in Manor Road	250.00
	Santander bank interest (October)	11.74
	David Collard and Co. – website entry	5.00
	Les Marsh Carpets - website entry	5.00
	Heritage Independent Financial Consultants - website entry	5.00
	Lentells Ltd - website entry	5.00
	Arboricare Ltd - website entry	5.00
	Somerset and Westcountry Stairlifts Ltd - website entry	5.00
	Welch and Co. - website entry	5.00
	Shirt Attack - website entry	5.00
	The Firs Nursing Home - website entry	5.00
Payments:	Arboricare – felling tree behind post office	114.00
	Charlie Saville – footpath maintenance (August and September)	158.75
	H McInnes – September salary and expenses	288.88
	HMRC – September tax	55.40
	Staplegrave Parochial Church Council – grass cutting grant	525.00
	Grant Thornton – external audit of accounts (2015/16)	120.00
	H McInnes – October salary and expenses	365.59
	TDBC – photocopying (September meeting)	35.76

c. Budget Statement as at 31st October 2016

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

17. Correspondence

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by the Centre for Sustainable Energy who were offering free talks about Smart Meters to rural parish councils. The Parish Council did not wish to take up this offer.

18. Any other Business

Cllr Ware tendered his resignation from the Parish Council. He explained that, due to personal circumstances, he was moving out of the Parish. As a result he not feel he could represent

Parishioners adequately. Cllr Clark expressed his regret at the loss of an experienced and active Councillor and added his thanks for Cllr Ware's contributions. This was reiterated by the other Parish Councillors.

19. Date of next meetings

The next meeting of the Parish Council, will be held on Thursday 19th January 2017 at 5pm.

The subsequent Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 16th March 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.