

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL AND ORDINARY MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 26TH MAY AT 6.20PM, STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT:

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

District Councillors: Nick Townsend and Caroline Tucker

PCSO: Tony Wearmouth

Three members of the public were also in attendance.

Minutes of the annual meeting

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Danny Wedderkopp.

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 Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2016/17

Michael Clark and Bryn Evans were unanimously re-elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively.

Minutes of the ordinary meeting

4. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2016

Having been circulated, it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2016 were taken as read and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

5. Police Matters

PCSO Tony Wearmouth introduced himself to the Parish Council. He reported that he knows the area well as he had worked in it before, and had requested to come back. In the period between 26th April and 26th May 2016, there had been 32 calls made to the Police relating to Staplegrove Parish. This is down from 49 in the same period last year. Of these calls, there were six reported crimes made up of three thefts, two assaults and one incident of criminal damage.

Tony passed on his contact details: telephone number 0788 9655 312, email address tony.wearmouth@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk He also noted that the non-emergency number is 101, or that the website <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/> can be used to find contact details or report a crime.

Cllr Ware asked about the possibility of putting a speed camera van on Bindon Road (near Chaplins), PCSO Wearmouth noted this request.

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

a. Manor Road Play Area

The Chairman reported that three quotes had been received for the path through the playground and the DLO's was the cheapest. The Clerk was asked to instruct the DLO to proceed. It was noted that the damage to the wall had been repaired.

b. Hudson Way Play Area

It was noted that the fencing had now been completed by the addition of the gates. An additional bin had been installed inside the fenced play area. Cllr Tucker agreed to contact Debbie Arscott to see if there was any money left from the section 106 funding, and suggest that it could be used to supply and fit a table tennis table.

c. Blocked road drains

The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Gary Warren in the Highways department of Somerset County Council. A reply had been received from Dennis Quick indicating that the Highway superintendent had agreed to check the road gullies in the location of Manor Road and Staplegrove Road. He would also drive around the Staplegrove Parish during wet conditions and note the drainage systems and how they are performing.

It was noted that blocked road drains could be reported directly to Somerset County Council 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.

d. Parking in Showell Park

A letter had been received from the Nuffield Hospital in response to the Parish Council. The Hospital have plans in place to improve their parking arrangements, but they are awaiting agreement for its funding from head office, and the removal of Tree Protection Orders from TDBC. They agreed to remind staff about considerate parking and keeping speed to a safe level.

e. Noticeboard in Bindon Road

The Chairman reported that a noticeboard had been purchased and put up on the exterior of the pharmacy, next to the cash machine. Thanks were extended to Max Punni (of the pharmacy) for his agreement to this, and to Trevor Cavill for putting the noticeboard up.

8. Matters arising from the Annual Meeting of Parish Electors

There were no matters arising from this meeting.

9. Casual Vacancy

The Chairman reported that two people had expressed an interest in filling the vacancy. One of the interested parties lives very close to three other Councillors, so it was felt that it was in the best interest of the Parish to appoint someone who was closer to the large group of parishioners around Bindon Road. Ros Went was co-opted to the Parish Council. The Parish Council expressed their thanks to the other volunteer who had expressed an interest.

10. North Taunton Development

It was noted that the outline planning application had recently been received for the eastern part of the North Taunton Development and that the Parish Council were currently formulating their response to this. The Chairman noted that everyone was able to put forward comments, and encouraged people to do this, ideally before the 9th June deadline, but that letters will still be accepted after this date.

It was noted that this application included 194 dwellings adjoining Corkscrew Lane and Manor Road. It was reported that a very productive meeting of WARG had taken place the previous evening. The Parish Council extended their thanks to WARG and RoSAG for their work in relation to these planning applications.

Cllr Debenham queried how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments were allocated. It was noted that these payments were made over six years from the date that planning approval was given, and were based on Council Tax Band D. The payments are split between the County and District Council at a percentage rate of 80/20. The payments are lower if planning permission is given subsequent to appeal.

Cllr Townsend stated that, historically, developers have gone back on agreements or requests for work to be done in a particular order, for example completing access roads first. He noted that once planning permission is granted that there is very little control that can be exerted on the developers. Cllr Clark asked if it was through that making contact with MP Rebecca Pow might be helpful. The consensus was that it would make little difference.

Cllr Evans reported on a meeting where Nick Bryant (Planning Policy Manager) spoke. Mr Bryant noted three key areas of concern: suitability, deliverability and viability. It was also noted that there was no realistic possibility of the spine road being funded by the County Council. While Western Power had agreed to fund putting the power lines underground, there was a query about the health and safety issues of building houses over them. This needs to be raised.

Cllr Evans also reported about a section of the Core Strategy which stated that there was an assumed 2.8% growth in GDP and, that if growth fell below this, then development could be delayed. It was agreed that this also needed to be brought to fore.

The Parish Council noted that the local primary school was over-subscribed year on year. Cllr Townsend reported that there are currently insufficient primary school places available in Taunton, but that the new school in West Monkton would create some additional spaces. It was noted that while the planning application had an allocated space for a new school, there is currently no funding for its construction. It was also noted that there is no new provision for secondary school expansion, where places are already very limited.

Cllr Clark reiterated the importance of as many people as possible formulating letters about concerns they had and submitting them to the Planning Committee. It was also suggested that it might be beneficial to prepare separate letters on each issue.

11. Replacement ‘dog exercising/fouling’ signs for Hudson Way play area

After a discussion, it was decided that a decision would be made at a later date about the replacement or alteration of these signs.

12. Renewal of insurance policy for 1 June 2016 – 31 May 2017

The Parish Council agreed with the renewal of the policy. It was noted that two changes had been made to the Parish Council’s asset register and to check that the insurance policy reflected these.

13. Internal control document and risk assessments

The Parish Council noted the two documents and agreed that the internal controls listed were sufficient. The clerk highlighted the addition of the section in the risk assessment about litter picking and it was agreed that this was sufficient.

14. Broadband Voucher Scheme

The Parish Council had been contacted by Connecting Devon and Somerset with regard to the provision of a voucher scheme for homes who experience broadband speeds below 2Mbps. This information has been put on the Parish Council’s website.

15. Route 60+ senior driver presentations

The Parish Council had been contacted by Somerset County Council's Road Safety Team who were offering to deliver Route 60+ presentations. The Parish Council decided not to go ahead with this at this time.

16. Planning applications

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

17. Financial matters

a. March & April 2016 Bank reconciliations

The Clerk circulated the details of the bank reconciliations for March and April 2016, which had been checked and certified by an independent person.

b. 2015/16 accounts and asset register

The Parish Council approved the 2015/16 accounts and they were signed by the Chairman. It was agreed that the asset register needed to be updated to reflect the new noticeboard and the decreased value of the information board in The Grove, which had been vandalised.

c. Internal audit of 2015/16 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.

d. External audit 2015/16 – to complete the Annual Return to the external auditor

The Clerk presented the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2016. The annual governance statement and accounting statement were duly signed. It was 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.

e. Receipts and payments since last meeting

Receipts:	Santander bank interest (February, March, April, May)	£34.16
	Precept and Grant from TDBC	£13,483.00
	Transfer part precept to Santander from NatWest	£10,000
Payments:	Helen McInnes – March salary and expenses	£300.73
	HMRC – February and March PAYE	£46.80
	TDBC photocopying for March meeting	£13.80
	Charlie Saville – March footpath maintenance and playground strimming	£157.50
	Transfer part precept from NatWest to Santander	£10,000
	TDBC grass cutting (2015-16)	£630.00
	Charlie Saville – April footpath maintenance	£190.00
	PJ Signs – PC noticeboard for Bindon Road shopping area	£129.60
	Helen McInnes – April salary and expenses	£312.22
	HMRC – April PAYE	£55.20

18. Correspondence

No correspondence had been received.

19. Any other Business

a. Affordable Housing Open Day

The Parish Councillors had been invited to attend TDBC's Affordable Housing Open Day on Wednesday 8th June. Cllr Debenham agreed to attend.

b. Maintenance of external communal areas of new development

Cllr Evans reported that each house in the proposed new development would be expected to pay a yearly fee towards the cost of maintenance of the external communal spaces. It was noted that this is common practice with new developments.

However, there are several cases within Taunton where the maintenance company have subsequently folded and therefore no external grounds maintenance is taking place. If this were to happen in the North Taunton Development, and the work had to be taken on by TDBC, the cost implications would be huge. Cllr Evans wondered if there were any back-up strategies in place for this kind of consequence. Cllr Clark suggested that this was another issue that could be included as a comment to the planning application.

20. Date of next meetings

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 21st July 2016 at 5pm. The subsequent Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 15th September 2016 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 Clerk circulated proposed dates for future Parish Council meetings which are outlined below.

- 17th November 2016
- 19th January 2017
- 16th March 2017
- 18th May 2017 – starting at 6pm, to include annual meeting of electors etc
- 15th June 2017