

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON  
THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 5PM  
COMMITTEE ROOM STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:**

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

District Councillors: Dixie Darch (until 6.15pm), Ed Firmin (from 6.15pm)

County Councillor: Rod Williams

Clerk: Janet Coates

Three members of the public were also in attendance.

**1.Apologies**

No apologies were received.

**2.Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests**

No additions or amendments

**3.To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2019**

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

**4. Police matters**

PCSO Lyndsay Smith attended the meeting to report on last 2 months, in total there were 42 incidents which included 10 concerns for welfare (double the amount of previous period). More detail was given on the burglaries which were sheds and garage. Parking near Chaplins was discussed, County Cllr Williams reported that residents there are largely in favour of existing parking arrangements as it slows the traffic down. PCSO reported that the police have not received any requests from the emergency services to remove a physical obstruction (vehicle).

Cllr Debenham spoke about the difficulty in reporting phone scams to the Police.

**5. Questions from members of the public**

A member of the public asked what the Parish Council could do about the number of drains that are blocked by weeds/grass etc. This is a matter for SCC Highways and County Cllr Williams agreed to take up the matter with them.

**6.Clerk's report**

The clerk reported that as she was new in post and not at the last meeting she had included on the agenda some items from the previous meeting that had been deferred

- i. Quarterly asset register check was completed in August
- ii. BT have started a consultation exercise to remove the phone box in the lay-by on A358. 3 calls have been made from it in the last 12 months
- iii. Route 60+ training, date of 6<sup>th</sup> March has been provisionally agreed with the Village Hall and SCC. Clerk to check room limit.
- iv. Agreed that Cllr Moon will check inbox during clerk's annual leave

## **7. Update on works to Duckpond Path**

Cllr Clark reported that works were completed on time, one member of the public has complained about tarmac around the gate nearest the duckpond that prevents the gate from being moved. Cllr Clark has responded to state the gate has not been closed for some considerable time due to the state of the gate post and that the Parish Council are happy with the works. Cllr Clark also noted that the owner of the field alongside the path had helped the contractors considerably by allowing them to drive their lorry onto the field.

## **8. Update of works to and maintenance of the Grove, and works to ash roots in playground**

Cllr Clark and Cllr Talbot met with the contractor to discuss and agree the works to be done on the 3<sup>rd</sup> section of the grove to 'open it up' now the bird-nesting season is over. Cllr Talbot has also had discussion with the owner of Staplegrove House about the hedge and pallets.

The roots of the old ash have been removed which hopefully will discourage future honey fungus growing in the area. The 'new' tree is recovering well and it is suggested that grass seed is thrown onto the old ash roots area.

## **9. Discussion of North Taunton Development, following meeting with 'West' developers' representatives:**

### **a Discussion on preservation and extension of Staplegrove's Green Wedge**

Cllr Clark reported that a reduction in homes has now been suggested but he wanted to stress the importance of the continuous green wedge from Hudson Way through to the planned extension northwards as an essential item of the North Taunton Development, being necessary to maintain our Green Community status as Taunton is now a Green Town. Action agreed: Cllr Clark will email Somerset West and Taunton (SWaT) Strategic Manager, Nick Bryant, to record the need for this to be firmly established.

### **b Discussion on spine road connection points to existing highways**

Cllr Clark reported that the current plan on where to connect the spine road has been agreed by the outline planning consent and that will be the fall-back position. However, it is assumed that the two developers will appoint a Highways contractor and the financial value and the goodwill value to local residents of connecting the spine road to Mill Lane and then to the Silk Mills roundabout will be out-lined to the successful contractor and it is hoped they will see the advantages of this revised connection point. Meeting also discussed SCC highways statement that there will be no extension of the spine road to form part of a northern relief road. Opposition to the proposed drop-down road will continue to be pressed for by all councillors.

Action agreed: Cllr Clark will email Nick Bryant (SWaT strategic manager), Redrow and Alyn Jones – Operations Director Economic, Community and Infrastructure SCC on: location of spine road connection and non-extension of spine road.

### **c Discussion on distribution of the £7.2m grant**

Cllr Darch made the point that it is a loan not a grant and that SWaT have to apply for the money from central government and Redrow may or may not accept the loan. Discussion on terms of loan and that they need to be favourable to encourage Redrow to take loan to support funding of spine road.

Action agreed : Cllr Darch to find out current position on loan

## **10. Discussion on Tackling Climate Change – what part can Parish Council play?**

Cllr Debenham noted that there are two events in Taunton – Going Green event on Saturday 21st in Castle Green and strike against climate change on Friday 20<sup>th</sup>. Also that there is a local renewable energy scheme that needs over 200 houses to be involved.

Cllr Darch reported on a number of schemes to help tackle climate emergency that she is involved with in Kingston St Mary and that might be of interest to Staplegrove

Tree-planting scheme including hedging plants – PC would need to identify land and let her know. Felt that not much land available and PC maintain the Grove for the community.

Litter pick on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September as part of Somerset Wildlife Trust big litter pick - clerk to put details on facebook

Pollinator plan – current exercise to map land owned by Swat and SCC to find areas for tree planting and wildflower meadows

Electric Vehicle Community Charge Point – grants available from SWaT . Clerk reported that the application letter had been received and read out the information that was needed for the application to be made by 1<sup>st</sup> November. Agreed that the information needed was very detailed and needed a lot more time, research and planning that was not possible by the deadline. Cllr Darch said she would feed this back to SWaT and that one view was that supermarkets/car-parks and other town centre locations should be considered as sites for electric charging points.

Cllr Williams suggested that the PC could make a written contribution to the Somerset Climate Emergency framework document. He reported on the progress that SCC and SWaT had made so far and that the framework document that includes 9 thematic workstreams will be published shortly and open for consultation. There is a full council meeting on November 27<sup>th</sup> where the framework will be discussed and members of the public can attend.

## **11. SWaT Statement of Community Involvement Consultation (19/7 to 30/09/2019)**

Clerk reported that this concerned future planning arrangements and had been discussed under agenda item 20 of the meeting on July 18<sup>th</sup>. Consultation is open until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

## **12. Consideration of adoption of new Financial controls based on NALC model document**

Clerk reported that this had been deferred from last meeting and had been started by the previous clerk, clerk needs to find out more and will report at next meeting. In terms of banking, agreed that clerk should continue with process to make Cllr Ian Talbot a signatory on the Nat West account.

## **13. Discussion of timetable for discussion and adoption of new policies: GDPR,FOI, Press/media and completion of Parish Council website overhaul**

Clerk reported that this had been deferred from last meeting and had been started by the previous clerk, clerk needs to find out more on the new policies and will report at next meeting. Clerk reported that the website has been updated with contact details and recent minutes of meetings and agendas. Clerk said that she doesn't find the website easy to navigate and will contact the website 'writer' to discuss.

## **14. Discussion of risk register**

Items on the risk register that need to be updated and amended were identified and discussed. Clerk to make amendments and follow up with handyman on his expired certificate to work safely on highways.

## 15. Planning Applications

- a. Report from Planning sub-committee meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> August – clerk reported there had been two applications, one we had supported and the other raised no objection. Minutes of the meeting are on the parish website
- b. Decisions since last meeting

34/19/0017 - Replacement of front porch and part of garage with the erection of a single storey extension and widening of access at 279 Staplegrove Road, Taunton – Conditional approval.

## 16 Financial matters

- i – Bank reconciliations - July and August – these were circulated to the meeting
- ii – Budget Statement – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 – circulated to the meeting
- iii – Receipts and payments since last meeting as below. Clerk briefly explained each entry.

### Receipts and Payments since last meeting

Receipts		£
	Santander – bank interest August	15.12
	Santander – bank interest September	15.55
	SWaT - grant	1700.00
	HMRC VAT repayment	449.13
Payments	Howard SW LTD – June Grass cutting	192.00
	Salary - July	271.53
	Rhys Hatherall - Website hosting	80.00
	Charlie Saville – July Footpath maintenance	199.00
	Jill Larcombe – Internal Audit Fee	100.00
	SPFA – Playing Field Annual Inspection	80.00
	Howard SW Ltd July Grass-cutting	192.00
	Staplegrove PCC – Churchyard maintenance	525.00
	Salary - August	356.67

## 17. Any other business

Cllr Bird acknowledged the help that a former Parish Clerk had given the new Parish Clerk and that she should be financially reimbursed for her time. Cllr Clark to email to thank her and ask her to submit her time.

One member of the public asked if PC knew about forthcoming road closure and the suggested diversion route. Advised that PC do know and Cllr Williams responded that SCC advise of the safest alternative route for the majority of traffic and expect local residents to know of shorter routes.

Cllr Williams reported that each County Councillor has been given £2000 for the purpose of benefitting the area they serve. Any ideas about how Staplegrove might use up to £700 should be sent to Cllr Clark.

Cllr Williams reported that Kingston St Mary have just bought and installed a permanent speed indicator device which has already seen an improvement in car driver behaviour as they enter the village. Cllrs Clark and Bird reported on the PC's failed attempts to get SCC to agree to any permanent traffic speed reduction signs/equipment to be allowed on Staplegrove Rd between the village hall and the shop, Cllr Williams was asked in light of Kingston St Mary's new device if he could ask SCC Highways ( Joe Sharp) how Staplegrove could have a similar device installed.

Cllr Bird reported on the success that Cllr's Moon's application to Somerset Playing Fields has had. The playground was awarded Highly Commended in the Smaller Fields Category and Cllrs Bird and Debenham attended the awards ceremony to receive the certificate. Cllr Bird asked that we publish the success in the Parish Journal and in the minutes. Clerk to put article in Parish Journal and facebook.

Clerk asked if any other councillor wished to attend either the VAT course for parish councils or the SALC AGM. Agreed that Clerk and Cllr Debenham could attend the VAT course at a cost of £90.

Meeting closed at 7pm