

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2010 AT 5.00 PM AT STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Dr G Hayes (in the Chair), Mr M Clark, Dr T Harris, Mr J Morris, Mr D Ware, PC Andy Davies and Mrs E Waymouth, Somerset County Councillor (SCC).

Louise James, a resident of Scott Close and Taunton Deane Borough Councillor (TDBC) was in attendance for agenda item number 11.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Greig, TDBC's Parish Liaison Officer.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 August 2010, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Swing in children's playground

The Chairman reported that Sutcliffe Play SW had admitted that they had sent the wrong maintenance advice for the swing. The Parish Council had not been informed that the bearings should be greased twice a year. Due to this omission the arm had badly rusted and seized. It had now been cleaned and greased by Sutcliffe Play and instructions on how to undertake the greasing had been received. The Clerk had drafted a letter for the Chairman to sign expressing the Parish Council's disappointment at the level of service received from Sutcliffe Play SW and asked for the warranty to be extended by two years from October 2010, the date that the swing was repaired. As the greasing of the swing was a major job, involving the dismantling of the arm, the letter also suggested that Sutcliffe Play SW should agree to arrange and pay for the greasing of the swing twice a year for the next two years to make up for their error.

Notice board at Post Office

Noted that the repaired notice board had been re-installed at the post office and the car driver who had damaged it had met the repair bill of £370.00.

Tree works in The Grove

Following planning approval and the consideration of three quotes for the health and safety work required to some of the trees in The Grove and Staplegrove Children's Playground, it had been agreed to accept the quote from Arbortech Professional Tree Services Ltd (£370 plus VAT for The Grove, £340 plus VAT for the Playground). Five dead elms in the eastern section of The Grove, identified by Arbortech, would also be felled as they were close to the public footpath. Arbortech's quote of £200 plus VAT to fell these trees had been accepted (total bill for The Grove £570 plus VAT). The work was due to commence on 24 January 2011. Agreed to grant £408.00 to the Playground Trust to cover the cost of its tree work plus VAT at the new rate of 20 %.

A request had been received from 2 parishioners to reduce the crowns and thin two Sycamores in The Grove, which although not unhealthy or dangerous were proving a nuisance, in terms of their size. Another parishioner had, however, strongly objected to the proposed work to the Sycamore near Post Office House, as the tree provided a useful screen to his property. Agreed not to pursue the work to this tree. It had subsequently been pointed out that the other Sycamore, at the boundary of 4 Westerkirk Gate, was diseased at its base. The Clerk would contact David Galley, tree expert at TDBC, to see whether it would be more appropriate to submit a planning application to fell this tree.

It was agreed that Matthew Peaster, Woodland SW Ltd, who had been employed to cut back the thicket that was choking The Grove had made an excellent job of opening up some of the paths, at a cost of £120 plus VAT.

Replacement of dead Cherry tree at Lawn Road

Noted that TDBC would supply a Sorbus Torminalis, which would be between 4-5 metres in height, to replace the dead Cherry tree at Lawn Road, at a cost to the Parish Council of £105 plus VAT. TDBC would pay to remove the dead tree and plant the new one, which would be dedicated to 40 Commando.

Standing orders

The Clerk gave each councillor a copy of the Standing Orders, which had been revised at the last meeting.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

6. PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (PACT)

Tom Harris was pleased to report that, following publicity in the Parish Journal, 7 new volunteers were to be trained to join the Community Speed Watch (CSW). He gave praise to Ian Talbot for his enthusiasm and organisation skills in leading the CSW.

PC Andy Davies confirmed that drivers on Manor Road appeared to be slowing as a result of the presence of the CSW. He went on to report on a number of heavy plant thefts from outbuildings in the area.

7. STAPLEGROVE TRUST

Noted that Heather Williams had been re-appointed as one of the Parish Council's representatives on the Trust for a further 4 year term of office from the Trust's AGM in 2010. The term of office of the Parish Council's other representative on the Trust, Tom Harris, ran for four years from the Trust's AGM in 2009.

8. PARISH FOOTPATHS

The resignation of David Lock, who maintained the parish footpaths, was noted. Agreed that the Clerk should contact John Kenny in February 2011 for details of the gardener used by the church, to see if he was interested on taking on this role.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Received and noted a paper by the Clerk on the potential risks facing the Parish Council and the measures taken to overcome them.

10. SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS

Agreed that the Clerk should become a member of the above Society in view of the current changing economic climate and its effect on public finances. Membership of the Society would enable her to keep up-to-date with legislation and receive support and advice. The Parish Council would pay the £8 joining fee and annual fee (£82 for £2010).

11. PROPOSED MULTI USER GAMES AREA (MUGA) FOR HUDSON WAY PARK

Louise James tabled details of the responses to her survey inviting comments on the proposed MUGA. The comments in the main were positive although only a small percentage had replied. She intended knocking on doors to get further responses. She reported that it had been hoped that the majority of the funding would be obtained from Poole landfill site's Viridor Credits grant scheme. The Poole site had, however, subsequently closed and the grant would now be at the discretion of the Viridor Board, provided Louise submitted an application by the end of November 2010.

The Parish Council supported in principle Louise submitting an application form to request funding, on the proviso that that the Parish Council had sight of the completed application form first. It was agreed that Louise should:

- Seek clarification on whether planning approval was needed for the MUGA. The Parish Council believed that fencing over 2m high was subject to planning permission.
- Ask TDBC to confirm that it would assist with the funding, take on ownership of the MUGA,

insure it and be responsible for its future maintenance.

- Identify all sources of funding

The Parish Council stated that it would not be making a commitment to provide funding for the MUGA, at this stage, due to the current financial climate.

12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Noted a paper giving details of planning applications received/decisions made, since the last meeting.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

- The Clerk read out a letter from the Staplegrove Youth Football Club thanking the Parish Council for its £250 donation to go towards the Club's building refurbishment.
- Noted a letter from the Parochial Church Council treasurer giving thanks for the TDBC grant for maintenance of the churchyard and noting that the Parish Council was unable to add to it this year due to budgets being under pressure.
- A letter from TDBC's Parish Liaison Officer advised Parish Councils to ensure they had sufficient funds to cover the costs relating to Parish elections next year. Noted that even uncontested elections would involve some costs being recharged to Parish Councils. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's reserves would cover this cost. The letter went on to say that all Parish Councils should have reserves to cover the cost of any election or by-election should this occur at any time. The Clerk would make a note of this when the Parish Council sets its budget each year.
- Noted a letter from the Rural Services Network, a group of local organisations that dealt with rural matters.
- The Clerk gave details of a letter from TDBC inviting applications for funding towards improvements and/or creation of new play areas, to be awarded initially for older children and teenagers.
- Noted that SCC Rights of Way Warden scheme had been restructured, with Sally Vickery being appointed for Area 2, which included Staplegrove.
- The Clerk confirmed that she had publicised in the Parish Journal SCC's policy on salting routes and what it could and could not do in winter weather. Advice for motorists for keeping safe in icy or snow conditions was also given. Noted that in addition to the regular service of positioning salt bags at strategic locations in rural areas and refilling salt bins SCC was offering, for this year only all Parish and Town Councils the opportunity to collect ten 20kg bags of de-icing material. The Chairman would collect and store the bags for self-help use on the public footpaths/highway as and when required.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank reconciliations

The Clerk circulated details of the bank reconciliations for August, September and October 2010, which had been checked and certified by a parishioner.

Receipts and payments since last meeting

	£
Receipts: Mr John Barnes – payment for repairs to notice board he drove into	370.00
TDBC - Maintenance Grants (PCC £525, Rec' £425, Footpaths £750)	1700.00
Alliance Leicester – bank interest	1.04
Alliance Leicester – bank interest	0.08
Alliance Leicester – bank interest	0.96

Alliance Leicester – bank interest	0.08
Fees for entry in business directory on website:	
David Marks Carpets	5.00
Jeffrey Acreman Ltd	5.00
David Collard & Co	5.00
Impact Design	5.00
Staplegrave Lodge B & B	5.00
Heritage Partnership	5.00
Greenway Motors	5.00
Care West Country (Firs Nursing Home)	5.00
Shirt Attack	5.00
Barratt & Canniford	5.00
Stillmans (CM Cook & JH Cook)	5.00
Lentells Ltd	5.00
Les Marsh Carpets	5.00
Payments: Staplegrave Youth Football Club – donation	250.00
Staplegrave PCC – TDBC maintenance grant	525.00
Staplegrave Children’s Playground –TDBC maintenance grant (£425) PC donation for running expenses (£300)	725.00
J Peake – Clerk’s ¼ year salary and admin expenses 1 June	1028.35
Mr D Lock – footpath maintenance	240.71
TDBC – supply and installation of seat, Hudson Way playground	693.25
Notice-It Ltd – repairs to accident damaged notice board	370.00

Budget statement as at 1 November 2010 and 2011/12 precept request

Received and noted a budget statement as at 1 November 2010. The Parish Council was mindful of the current economic climate and the effects on public finances and agreed to keep the precept request for 2011/12 the same as 2010/11 at £10,000.

Local government finance

Noted letters from the Chief Executive of SCC and the deputy leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and expressed disappointment that attempts were being made to drag parish councils into the politics regarding the scale of cuts to SCC services. The Parish Council acknowledged that there were difficult times ahead but agreed that it would not increase its precept in order to take on some of the services currently undertaken by SCC.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- The Chairman reported that he had attended a Staplegrave Urban Extension workshop on 9 November when it had been announced that due to the problems associated with high voltage power lines there were no longer any plans for a Northern Outer Distributor Road, which would have had an impact on Staplegrave.
- Noted that work by Wessex Water to replace a water pipe from Corkscrew Lane to Staplegrave Road had been deferred to early in the New Year.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 8 February 2011 at 5pm followed by a meeting of the Staplegrave Children’s Playground Trust.