

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 24 AUGUST 2010 AT 5.00 PM AT STAPLEGROVE VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Dr G Hayes (in the Chair), Mr M Clark, Dr T Harris, Mr D Ware, PCSO Tony Wearmouth, Ms J O'Brien, Taunton Deane Borough Councillor (TDBC) and Mr D Greig, TDBC's Parish Liaison Officer.

Louise James, a resident of Scott Close, and TDBC Councillor, was in attendance for agenda item number 10.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from John Morris and County Councillor Elaine Waymouth.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the annual meeting held on 25 May 2010, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

6. PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (PACT)

PCSO Tony Wearmouth reported on the crime statistics for the Staplegrove parish from 26 June to 24 August 2010, adding that many of the problems had emanated from one particular establishment, which had now quietened. He confirmed that he had written a letter for the Head of Staplegrove Primary School to issue to all parents in September, reminding them to park considerately on Hudson Way.

Tom Harris expressed concern that despite repeated requests in the Parish Journal there was still a shortage of volunteers for the Community Speed Watch (CSW). Tony agreed to follow up with Chris Fry, the former CSW Coordinator, whether any more volunteers had been trained recently and whether the volunteers were covered by the police's insurance policy. Jayne O'Brien stated that she would be willing to be trained and help out when time permitted. It was noted that Kingston St Mary Parish Council had drawn up a draft Agreement for Staplegrove Parish Council to sign if it wished to share its radar gun. In view of the fact that a radar gun had subsequently been acquired for the use of the Staplegrove CSW, for the long-term, it was agreed not to sign the Agreement. Kingston St Mary Parish Council would be informed that Staplegrove had acquired the use of a radar gun but would like to keep the option of sharing theirs open in case the gun had to be returned at some time in the future.

7. CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND, MANOR ROAD

Play equipment

Noted that at the start of the school holidays someone had a lit fire in the dish roundabout and the metal gate and seat had been vandalised on several occasions. The Clerk had taken an hour to clean the roundabout and the Chairman and Michael Clark had made a robust repair to the gate. The Playground Trust had instructed Andrew Hull to repair the seat and the Clerk had reported each incident to the police.

Annual safety inspection

The annual safety inspection report was noted. The Clerk had asked Sutcliffe Play for their advice on the trip hazard under the commando frame, caused by the safety surface having separated from the edging. They had stated that the best solution was to trim back the wet pour surface and replace it and add a new border around the perimeter at a cost in the region of £1950. In view of the expense, it was agreed to try Michael Clark's suggestion of filling in the gap between the safety surfacing and the edging with fine sand and allowing the grass to grow over it. Plans to repair the seat, which was the

responsibility of the Playground Trust, had already been made prior to the health and safety inspection and had recently been completed by Andrew Hull.

The Clerk reported that Sutcliffe Play had been asked to look at the arm of the swing above the bucket seat, which had seized. A representative from the company had sent photos of the swing, together with a report, to the factory for feedback and would confirm a date when it would be looked at by his maintenance team, in due course.

8. ACCIDENT DAMAGE TO PARISH COUNCIL NOTICE BOARD

Noted details of an accident at Staplegrove Post Office car park on 28 July 2010 when a driver had lost control of his vehicle and, as well as causing other damage, knocked over the Parish Council notice board. The Clerk had forwarded to the driver a quote for £370 from Notice-It Ltd for the repairs and re-installation of the notice board. The driver had decided not to deal with the matter through his insurers but had delivered to the Clerk's home one evening, the payment in cash. The Clerk had issued the driver with a receipt and had banked the cash the following morning. Notice-It Ltd had been instructed to undertake the repairs. The Clerk will continue to chase the clothing collection company, whose yellow bin had been hit in the accident, to move it so that the notice board could be re-installed.

9. TREES

The Grove – health and safety report

Noted a report by Sylvarbor Consultants on the trees in The Grove. The Chairman reported that, with the Clerk, he had met with David Galley, TDBC's planning officer responsible for trees, and discussed the report. The Clerk had subsequently submitted a planning application to TDBC to fell one Ash, one Sycamore and 3 Elms and to carry out tree management work to one Oak and various trees adjacent to the Old Post Office. Once planning permission was received the Clerk would seek three quotations for the work for the Parish Council's consideration. Once the tree work had been undertaken a working party of volunteers would be requested to help thin out the thicket in The Grove.

Replacement of dead cherry tree on grassed area at Lawn Road

Agreed to the suggestion by Bob Wolfenden, a former parish councillor, that the dead Cherry tree on the grassed area at the south end of Lawn Road be replaced with a new tree dedicated to 40 Commando. The Clerk had written to TDBC who managed the grassed area, who confirmed that were happy to have the tree replaced and would supply a quote to have it removed and a new one of the Parish Council's choice supplied and planted. The Chairman suggested a Wild Serbice (Serbus).

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

Louise James, a resident of Scott Close, outlined her proposal to establish a Multi User Games Area (MUGA) for Hudson Way park. She referred to the possibility of funding from Viridor and TDBC and added that the Parish Council would have to submit the funding application. The Parish Council agreed that in principle it was a very good idea, with a lot of merit, but there were many concerns that needed to be addressed. There was a fear that the MUGA would be put in place, at a cost in the region of £80,000, and would not be used. It was important to find out if this is what the young people of Staplegrove wanted and whether the community, and in particular those residents it could have an impact on, would be supportive. Louise confirmed that the proposal was in the early stages and at some point a formal consultation would be needed. She agreed initially to liaise with PC Andy Davies and talk to young people in the area to seek their views and would come back to the next Parish Council meeting with more information.

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Noted a paper giving details of planning applications received/decisions made, since the last meeting. Concern was expressed that a parishioner had a residential caravan on his property without planning permission and David Greig suggested the Chairman refer the matter to John Hardy, TDBC's Planning Enforcement Officer if he wished to pursue the matter.

12. STANDING ORDERS

Agreed to adopt the Model Standing Orders revised by the Somerset Association of Local Councils. The Clerk would issue a copy to each councillor.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

- Noted an email from Jackie Calcroft and Chris Rix of Lawn Road, thanking Parish Councillors for their commitment and especially those who had been out tidying up. They added that they were appreciative of recent improvements to the notice board and seat in the Children's Playground, Manor Road.
- A letter from the Staplegrove Youth Football Club thanking the Parish Council for its grant towards its changing rooms refurbishment was read out.
- The Clerk circulated copies of a survey for Parish Councillors to complete, giving their views on community safety issues.
- Noted letters from No Need For Nuclear explaining their views on nuclear power stations and a letter from EDF energy giving details of a stakeholders' workshop in Taunton on 14 September 2010.
- The Clerk asked any Parish Councillor interested in filling the vacancy for a parish council member of the TDBC Standards Committee to let her know.
- An email inviting nominations for the Chairman of Somerset County Council's Awards for Service to the Community 2010 was discussed. Noted that our nomination of Elizabeth Hayes in 2009 had been successful. Michael Clark suggested a name for nomination for a future year as circumstances made it inappropriate to nominate him at this time. The Clerk made a note of the suggestion and would ensure it was put to the Parish Council to consider in the future.
- Noted that plans by Wessex Water to improve the water mains, deferred in 2008, would take place by the end of 2010. The scheme was to lay a 450mm water pipe between Corkscrew Lane and Staplegrove Road to replace an existing 12inch pipe, which will then become redundant.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank reconciliations

The Clerk circulated details of the bank reconciliations for May, June and July 2010, which had been checked and certified by a parishioner.

Receipts and payments since last meeting

	£
Receipts:	
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.96
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.08
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	1.12
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.07
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	1.08
Alliance & Leicester – bank interest	0.08
Payments:	
Aon Ltd – insurance renewal 1 June 2010 to 1 June 2011	703.66
Staplegrove Youth Football Club – grant towards changing block refurbishment	200.00
J Peake – clerk's ¼ year salary & admin expenses 1 Apr – 30 Jun 2010	1026.17
PWLB – ½ year loan repayment	750.81
Moore Stephens – audit of Annual Return y/e 31 March 2010	158.62
David Lock Garden Services – footpath maintenance	205.00
Somerset Playing Fields Association – annual safety inspection of play equipment	75.00
Sylvarbor Consultants – H & S report on The Grove	85.25

Maintenance grants 2010/11

The Parish Council was disappointed to learn that yet again TDBC's Maintenance Grants budget had been frozen. The Parish Council would receive the same amount as in previous years, namely £750 for footpaths, £525 for churchyard maintenance and £425 for the playing field maintenance.

David Greig stated that he could not promise that this budget would be available in the future. The Clerk reported that £750 for footpaths was likely to be sufficient as she had allowed an extra £150 in the budget to cover any shortfall. Similarly she felt that £425 should cover the grass cutting in the Children's Playground. She reported that the Playground Trust had very little income (£11.02 interest annually on War Loan Stock plus a small amount of bank interest) and required £300 in 2010/11 to cover expenses other than grass cutting (internal audit fee, tree inspection, seat repairs, insurance and

SPFA subscription). It was agreed that as trustee of the Playground Trust the Parish Council had a responsibility for the Playground and agreed to grant the Trust £300 to cover these expenses. In view of difficult financial times ahead it was agreed that the Parish Council would not top-up TDBC's grant for the churchyard maintenance. The Clerk was asked to explain to the Church why it was unable to give a donation and to warn them that there was a possibility that next year TDBC's grant might be cut.

As the TDBC Maintenance Grants might not be available next year it was agreed that the Parish Council would need to make some provision in its precept request for 2011/12 to cover the £750 for footpaths and £425 for the Children's Playground it would normally expect to get. In this connection David Greig reported that the Parish Council would need to make provision in its budget next year in case it needed to hold an election. Likely costs would be in the region of several hundreds of pounds if the election were to be held on the same day as TDBC elections or approximately £2000 if it were on a different day.

It was agreed that in view of the financial situation the Parish Council would have to cut the amount it donated to the Staplegrove Youth Football Club from £500 to £250 this year. The Clerk was asked to notify the Club that it could not promise a donation next year.

External audit of 2009/10 accounts

Noted that the external audit of the Annual Return had been completed and the closure of the audit advertised on parish notice boards. The external auditor had no comments on the Annual Return.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

David Greig reported that as the Standards Board for England was being scrapped it was likely that the Code of Conduct would be revised as a result.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 16 November 2010 at 5pm followed by a meeting of the Staplegrove Children's Playground Trust.