

Minutes of the meeting of STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL held on Thursday 18th March 2021 at 5pm

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Michael Clark (chair), Alan Debenham, Simon Moon, Ian Talbot, Ros Went; Clerk Janet Coates

County Councillor Rod Williams, District Councillor Dixie Darch

MINUTES

1. **Apologies for absence** – apologies received from Cllrs Sully and Firmin
2. **Declarations of interest not already recorded** – no additional declarations made.
3. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021.** Having been circulated the minutes were agreed and signed by the chair as a correct record of proceedings.
4. **Police Report** The clerk reported that the Police now issue a monthly newsletter that covers Taunton West not just Staplegrove. January newsletter recorded 53 crimes in the Taunton West area. The clerk had requested February newsletter and will forward it on to the Parish Council.
5. **Questions from members of the public** - the clerk had received two questions. Firstly, a resident had asked can double yellow lines be painted along Bindon Road opposite Chaplins to alleviate the bottleneck there that results in stationery traffic including coaches, lorries emitting their exhaust fumes? Cllr. Williams replied that this issue was looked at in detail in 2017/18 and SCC Highways after consultation with residents and businesses planned to paint double yellow lines but then a number of residents were against the scheme and it had to be dropped. Cllr. Clark asked if Cllr. Williams could raise it again with SCC Highways as the situation had worsened due to increased traffic following the completion of Trenchard Way and with Bindon Road now being part of a principal route to the West Country from M5 Junction 25. The second question from a resident concerned recent bonfires that had filled the Grove with smoke on more than one occasion. It was decided to monitor the situation and if it continues the clerk will report the matter to Somerset West and Taunton Environmental Health. Cllr Moon has a record of the dates of the bonfires.

6. Clerk's report to include matters arising from previous minutes

- i. **Kibby's Field** – clerk reported that following the last meeting she had emailed the strategy team at Somerset West and Taunton again to state that due to the green wedge and garden town status of Taunton the Parish Council do not expect to see Kibby's field listed as a site for development and will object to any such listing.
- ii. **Precept submitted** - clerk reported that she had submitted the precept to Somerset West and Taunton and that she has requested that the precept is paid into the Parish Council current account. The clerk reported that the interest currently being paid on the Reserve account does not cover the cost of transferring funds between the accounts.
- iii. **Grove Tree Report** clerk reported that Gareth Machell (SW stump Grinders) has carried out the tree report and has included the trees in the children's playground and the newly planted one in Lawn road. Gareth has advised that in the summer he will check for ash dieback and Dutch Elms disease but there is nothing drastic to report. The clerk will ask that the three trees on the Village Green are inspected in the future. The clerk reported that following a question from the Insurance broker she had confirmed that SW Stump Grinders have professional indemnity insurance. Charlie Saville has completed the clearing work on both sides of the Grove and that has opened up the Grove and clearly defined the paths.
- iv. **Report of 'dangerous wall' and possible landslip on Staplegrove Road** clerk has reported the bulge in the wall between Brindle Close and The Firs to Building Control (BC). BC have inspected the wall and spoken to the householder that owns the wall. BC are happy that wall is not a danger but it is now noted and they will keep a check on it. The clerk has reported the bank near Wall House and SCC highways have reported that they have the matter in hand and will speak to the householder. Cllr Bird asked that the clerk follow this up to see if householder has been contacted as she is concerned about the state of the bank.
- v. **Noticeboard outside Staplegrove School** clerk was notified that the Parish Council noticeboard outside Staplegrove Primary School had been taken down when a new fence was erected around the school perimeter. The noticeboard is in a bad state of repair, so with the agreement of Cllr Clark and Cllr Talbot, the clerk has arranged for the noticeboard that has been lying outside the Co-Op to be installed at the school.
- vi. **Internal Auditor** clerk has arranged for Jill Larcombe to be the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council 20/21 accounts and the playground trust 20/21 accounts.
- vii. **Thank you from CAB** clerk reported that CAB had written to thank the Parish Council for the recent donation of £200.

- viii. **West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Development plan- consultation open until April 30th 2021** clerk reported that she had received details of the plan which is an update on original plan to bring it up to date to reflect 'garden town status; change in council,etc. Cllrs Clark, Debenham and Williams requested that the plan was forwarded to them.
- ix. **Somerset Day – Fly the Flag** clerk reported that she had received information about celebrating Somerset Day on 11th May by flying the Somerset Flag and bunting etc. Cllr Williams also reported that 2021 is the Queen's Platinum Anniversary and that some Parish Council are considering how to celebrate/mark the occasion.

7. North Taunton Development – Update Cllrs Clark and Talbot are attending 3 weekly meetings with Simon Fox the Project manager for Somerset West and Taunton (SWT). Cllr Darch also attends these meetings. Cllr Clark reported that a revised plan for the first 173 houses is still expected from Redrow. Cllr Talbot reported that Redrow's plan had gone to an Independent Design Review Panel as requested by SWT planning. Cllr Talbot reported that for example concerns about driveways leading directly onto the spine road and poor flow through the site are two of the issues that Redrow have reviewed. It was also noted that the access to the show homes that had appeared on the reserved matters plans had been removed and that footpaths are proposed from the site onto Manor Road near the cricket club to link to the pavement and access from 'Village World' to go east. However, there is no plan to put a pavement through the double bend and that this is not a legal requirement for Redrow.

8. Update on Expression of Interest to Somerset West and Taunton for a combined footpath/cycle track on the southern path through the Grove. Clerk reported that after enquiries by Cllr Moon and David Bird the Footpaths Liaison Officer, County Roads of SCC Highways were identified as the department that a request to 'overturn' the no cycling order on the footpath needed to be made. The clerk submitted the request written by Cllr Clark and David Bird and followed up the request two weeks later but has not yet had a response from County Roads but has heard from the Rights of Way officer who is now chasing this up. Cllr Darch suggested emailing the SWT Cycling Champion to garner more support and Cllr. Williams also agreed to contact SCC Highways on behalf of the Parish Council.

9. Request from Stogursey Parish Council to support proposal on how to use S106 money in West Somerset - the clerk reported that Stogursey Parish Council had requested support for their proposal on how S106 money could be used. In the West Somerset area S106 money can only be used for children's playgrounds but in Taunton S106 money can be used more flexibility. The clerk and Cllr Talbot reported that there are huge sums of S106 money not being spent in both Somerset and across the country due somewhat to the restrictive nature of how it can be spent. The Parish Council agreed to strongly support Stogursey with their proposal for more flexibility to use S106 money in West Somerset.

10. Anti-social behaviour in Staplegrove

i Extension of alcohol ban - email from Scott Weetch SWT - the email had been circulated with the meeting papers. An extension of an alcohol ban is not considered to be effective and that reporting incidences to the Police and working with the Police is the approach to take. The clerk reported that following the last meeting, she had asked the Police to include the footpath between Staplegrove Road and Showell Park on their beat.

ii. Litter at the Co-op - Cllr Went and Moon expressed concern over the numbers of times, the waste bin at the Co-Op is full and over-flowing and leads to rubbish being strewn across the car-park and when windy being blown along Staplegrove Road. It is believed that most of the rubbish originates from customers of the shop and post office and even though the Co-op has provided an additional small bin, this has not been enough to alleviate the problem. Cllr Went agreed to write to the Co-op Chief Executive to express her concern and ask what additional action the Co-Op can take. Cllr Moon reports the over-flowing bin regularly and he asked that the Parish Clerk also report it.

iii. Dog waste - Cllr Bird reported that at least one dog owner is leaving bags of dog poo on Rectory Road beyond Hill Head Cottages, one local resident has tried to address this but without success. Cllr Moon advised that this is a reportable incident to SWT and that the Clerk report it.

iv. Scooters in the Grove - Cllr Moon had reported an incident a few weeks ago but there has not been another incident. Any incident of misuse has to be reported to Zipp scooters and if it is a persistent problem, Zipp can geo-fence the Grove.

11. Support for request to widen pavement on Staplegrove Road between Silk Mills Roundabout and the Post Office/Co-op. Cllr Williams gave an update. Cllr Williams has been in contact with SCC Highways and SCC are prepared to carry out maintenance to the path to recover its full width where it has been lost to mud and grass but the widening and resurfacing of the path along its length is not considered essential and would have to be applied for through the Small Improvements Scheme(SIS). Cllr Williams reported that the SIS is currently closed so he will be asking SCC that as the SIS is currently closed how else can this improvement could made.

12. Somerset Unitary – to consider Parish Council response to Government Consultation on One Somerset and Stronger Somerset . Cllr Williams spoke about the proposal for One Somerset and Cllr Darch spoke about the Stronger Somerset proposal. Both councillors stated that the decision will be taken by Government and whichever is chosen there will be changes in responsibilities for Parish Councils. The detail of those changes is not yet known and it will be imperative that the Parish Council keeps abreast of them and gets involved with what those changes mean. It was agreed to vote on which was the preferred option of the Parish Council once Cllr Williams and Cllr Darch had left the meeting. **Cllr Williams left the meeting**

13. Adoption of Freedom of Information Policy – clerk had circulated the Freedom of Information Policy and it was agreed to adopt it.

14. Planning Applications – details on Somerset West and Taunton website

- i. **34/21/0007 Proposal: Erection of 2 No. dwellings with parking and associated works at Little Orchard, Staplegrove** Cllr Clark and Cllr Bird had both visited the site and spoken to residents of the cottages. It was noted that this site has had previous planning applications turned down due to the unsatisfactory access due to poor visibility onto the A358. The Parish Council felt that this had not improved since the last application and that traffic was now probably heavier and faster. Agreed to submit objections to the proposal due to unsatisfactory access. **Cllr Darch left the meeting.**
- ii. **34/21/0008 Proposal: Erection of porch to front, two storey extension to the side and erection of a single storey extension to the rear of 42 Mallory Close, Taunton .** Parish Council agreed to submit ‘no comment’
- iii. **Applications decided on by Planning Committee since last meeting 34/21/0003 and 4/LB and 34/21/0005/T** Clerk reported that the first 2 applications related to Stonehouse Farm and ‘no comment’ had been submitted. The third application was annual pollarding of maples in the clerk’s own garden and it was agreed that no comment was needed. **Cllr Went left the meeting**

Item 12. Somerset Unitary - as Cllrs Williams and Darch had left the meeting a discussion continued on the two proposals. The benefits of a unitary authority were acknowledged; concern over how the size and population of Somerset could be managed equally and fairly; acknowledgement that SCC manage services across the county no;.concern that the local working relationship that exists between Parishes and their District councils could be negatively impacted; concern over 4 District Councils being replaced by 17 Local Community Networks. A vote was taken on the preferred option of the Parish Council. 1 vote was in favour of the One Somerset proposal, 3 votes in favour of Stronger Somerset proposal and 1

abstention. It was agreed that the clerk would send the vote result to the Government Consultation by 19th April.

15. Financial Matters

i. Bank Reconciliations – December 2020, January 2021

These has been circulated with the agenda, Cllr Talbot had confirmed that he had carried out the independent check and signed them as correct.

ii. Budget Statement - 28th February 2021

This was noted and that budget overspend of £1500 expected which is largely due to the essential tree work needed after the storm last year.

iii. Receipts and Payments since last meeting see table below

These were noted.

16. Proposed dates of next meetings to include Annual Parish Meeting and Annual General Meeting

Thursday 6th May 2021 – 6pm to be held via zoom

Receipts and payments since the last meeting

Receipts		£
	Santander – bank interest – Jan, Feb	0.28
	VAT refund	558.75
Payments		
	Clerk's salary – Jan/Feb	809.67
	Citizen's Advice Donation	200.00
	Litter picker	15.99