

Minutes of the meeting of STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL held on Thursday 16th September 2021 at 5pm

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Michael Clark, Alan Debenham (until 6.55pm), Simon Moon, Ian Talbot (Chair), Ros Went; Clerk Janet Coates

District Councillors Ed Firmin (until 6.10pm) Dixie Darch (until 7pm), County Councillor Rod William (until 7pm)

MINUTES

1. **To receive apologies for absence** – apologies received from Cllr. Sully
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 15th July 2021** – minutes agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4. **Questions from members of the public** - no questions from the public.
5. **Clerk's report to include correspondence and actions from last meeting**
 - i. **Police Report** - clerk reported that the Police are not able to attend. She had sent the latest newsletter to the parish council and noted that the Police are patrolling the churchyard more frequently due to the recent incident there
 - ii. **Grove Tree Report** - clerk reported that the recent survey had identified a large number of trees that are either dead or dying and quotes for the work had been obtained and will be discussed at item 16 on the agenda.
 - iii. **Somerset Waste Partnership(SWP) update** - clerk reported that SWP were starting a campaign that includes door to door leafletting to promote Recycle More which starts in November. Cllr Moon and the clerk will trial the new blue bag.

- iv. **Cycle track/footpath update** - clerk reported that she had an email from Sarah Elwood the Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Cycling Champion , Sarah stated that SCC Highways would not agree to removing the cycling bye-law as the path needs to be upgraded to *LTN 1/20-compliant (which means it would need to be widened, resurfaced and consider underground utilities)* at considerable expense. Cllr Williams confirmed that SCC will not support conversion to a cycle path as the path is too narrow. After discussion, it was agreed to ask Sarah Elwood to continue to press for basic repair work to be carried out to the path.
 - v. **Problems from large Co-Op delivery lorries** – Cllr Talbot reported that the large delivery lorries to the Co-Op were causing congestion problems in the car-park which impacted on The Old Post Office and often led to traffic jams/chaos on Manor Road. Cllr Moon, reported that the matter had been investigated by SWT Environmental Health but as the lorries deliver within standard working hours, no action from an Environmental Health perspective can be taken. Cllr Talbot will draft a letter for the clerk to send to the Co-Op to ask if smaller lorries could be used to deliver to the store.
 - vi. **Showell Park playground** – clerk reported that SWT are about to replace the playground equipment in the Showell Park playground.
- 6. Update - North Taunton Development** - Cllr Talbot reported that there had been no updates since the last meeting. The 'wetlands' application discussed at item 7 at the last meeting has not yet been submitted to SWT planning but is expected to be submitted by December.

7. Highways

- I. **Update on Bindon Road – proposal from SCC on yellow lines** – Cllr. Williams explained the proposal from SCC which included improving the junction of Bindon Rd and Staplegrove Rd by painting double yellow lines on Staplegrove Rd to improve the visibility and adding a left hand lane on Bindon Rd on the approach to the junction. The proposal included the painting of some double yellow lines along the south side of Bindon Rd near Dowell Close. Cllr Clark had considered the proposal and shared his proposed plan of the road lay-out which includes more double yellow lines to be painted between Chaplins and Lloyd and Whyte and between Chaplins and Matalan. The proposal and Cllr Clark's plan was discussed at length and it was agreed that Cllr Clark would reply to SCC Highways and request that in addition to their proposal, the double yellow lines on either side of the Chaplins entrance are extended by approximately 30-40 metres on each side. Cllr Clark also offered to canvas the businesses in the immediate vicinity for their support.
- II. **Speed Indicator Device** - Cllr Talbot reported that despite three email requests he is still waiting to hear back from SCC Highways on meeting to look at possible sites on Bindon Road. Cllr. Talbot will follow this up.

- III. **Stoneleigh Close- resurfacing** – the clerk reported that two residents had contacted her to ask for Parish Council support in asking SCC Highways to resurface the road. Agreed that Parish Council would support the request and Cllr. Williams said that he would take the matter up with SCC highways as well.

8. Open Spaces

- I. **Footpaths – maintenance schedule** -clerk reported that she had met with David Bird the Parish Paths Liaison Office (PPLO) to share their knowledge on who is responsible for footpaths in the Parish. The responsibility for keeping the footpaths clear including the hedges lies primarily with the land-owner and the SCC Rights of Way Officer works with land-owners to remind/encourage that they keep footpaths clear. A point of order was raised by Cllr. Went that where land is rented, then it is the tenant who has the responsibility. SCC carry out one cut per year on T24/6 the Rag Hill footpath but this year due to the number of complaints received also did a one-off cut on footpaths T 24/15 and 17. There is uncertainty on which footpaths, if any SWT has responsibility for and the clerk has been given a contact in SWT to follow this up. Cllr Williams offered to provide the name of the SCC officer who is Custodian of the Rights of Way in Somerset. The clerk will work on pulling the information together over the winter.
- II. **Grove - planting of bulbs** - Cllr. Clark stated that the funds received from Cllr Williams to enhance the Grove were still available and he would like to see bulbs planted in the Grove. It was agreed that native species in keeping with the Grove would be ideal. Cllr. Bird said that she knew someone in the village who had an interest in ecology and would contact him to ask for his advice on suitable bulbs for the Grove.
- III. **Consider removing bin from Children’s playground Manor Rd** - the bin is still regularly over-flowing and Cllr Moon is reporting this on a regular basis. The pros and cons of removing the bin were discussed and it was agreed that the playground needs a larger bin and that the clerk would follow up with SWT when a larger bin could be delivered.
- IV. **Consider removing bin and seat from path through wooded area between Staplegrove Road and Showell Park** – this area appears to be regularly used as a place to drink given the number of ‘empties’ found in the area. The pros and cons of removing the bin and seat were discussed but it was felt that this could result in those using this area moving to the children’s park or somewhere similar, so no solution to the problem other than to report the rubbish and keep the PCSOs informed that this is a ‘problem’ area.

9. Update on Local Community Networks (LCN) (Somerset Unitary) – Cllr Talbot reported that he and Cllr Bird and the clerk had attended a meeting hosted by West Monkton Parish Council in July at which SCC gave a presentation on LCNs. The structure and function of LCNs are in the early stages, so not much detail to report at this stage. Cllr Talbot and the clerk are attending the next workshop on LCNs on 7th October 2021. Cllr. Debenham stated that he still has concerns about the unitary decision.

10. Parish Council Elections 2023 - to discuss if Parish Council want elections to be brought forward to 2022 in line with 2022 unitary council elections - Somerset County Council are seeking the views of Parish Councils on aligning their next elections with the proposed unitary elections planned for May 2022. This was discussed and it was agreed that the clerk would feedback that the Parish Council wish to align with the unitary elections.

11. Queen's Platinum Jubilee - discussion/decision on how to mark the occasion – Cllr. Talbot reported that the idea of planting an avenue of trees alongside the duckpond footpath is being followed up and a letter is being sent from Cllr. Talbot to the landowner to ask if the trees could be planted there. Cllr Clark had followed up the idea of re-gilding the clock on the church tower and the Parish Council has agreed to fund this as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It was also agreed that a plaque could be placed on the church tower to recognise the work done as part of the Jubilee celebrations. Cllr. Williams raised the question of an event in the Parish to mark the occasion and it was agreed that the clerk contact other groups to see if there is interest and support in setting up a committee to run an event.

12. Consideration of adoption of new Standing Orders based on National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model document 2018. These had been circulated with the meeting papers. Cllr Talbot and the clerk had made insertions and deletions to fit with Staplegrove Parish Council. All agreed to adopt these Standing Orders.

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

- i. **Application 34/21/0018** has been considered by the planning committee since the last meeting and no comment was submitted.
- ii. **Application 34/21/0019LB** was considered at a planning committee meeting on 3rd September. The following comment was submitted
The council has no objection to the development as an annexe to the main house but would be concerned if it became a separate property from the main house.
- iii. **Application 34/21/0020/T**: - agreed; no comment to submit
- iv. **Application 34/21/0021/T**: agreed; no comment to submit

14. Financial Matters

- i. Internal Audit Report 2020-21 review recommendations** – this report had been circulated with the agenda. The clerk reported that she had actioned some of the points eg review of standing orders and that she will review the financial regulations 5.6,5.7 and 6.6 with Cllr. Talbot. Cllr Bird asked what councillor responsibilities/representation should be on the website, clerk will ask Internal Auditor for advice on that. Cllr. Moon stated that as the Internal Auditor has reported no areas of non-compliance then he was happy that there were no areas of concern that the Parish Council need to address. The other councillors agreed with this.
- ii. Review Effectiveness of Internal Audit** – the clerk stated that the Parish Council has Financial Regulations, a set of internal financial controls; finance on every agenda and an annual internal audit, it was agreed that this meets the needs of the Parish Council.
- iii. Bank Reconciliations – June 2021 and July 2021** these had been circulated with the minutes and Cllr. Clark had carried out the independent check.
- iv. Budget – August 31st 2021** - budget position to the end of August was reported on.
- v. Receipts and Payments since last meeting see table below** - these were noted and approved.

15. Date of next two meetings

Thursday 18th November 2021– 5pm

Thursday 20th January 2022 – 5pm

16. Exempt Session – exclusion of the Public and Press

To resolve that under section 1. Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (admission to meeting) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:

Quotes for tree work in the Grove

The Parish Council has received three quotes for the work that needs to be carried out in the Grove. The Parish Council considered all three quotes and it was decided to award the contract to SW StumpGrinders. Cllr. Moon suggested that the clerk should write to house-holders of the properties that border the Grove to advise them of the work. Cllr. Moon will send the clerk the list of properties.

Receipts and payments for approval since the last meeting

Receipts		£
	Santander – bank interest – July	0.13
	Santander bank interest - August	0.14
Payments		
	Clerk’s salary and expenses – July	407.15
	Clerks’s salary and expenses – August	399.65
	Howard SW Ltd – Grass-cutting – July	96.00
	Howard SW Ltd – Grass-cutting - August	96.00
	Howard SW Ltd – Grass-cutting – August	48.00
	Howard SW Ltd – Grass-cutting - Grove	216.00
	Annual membership Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)	544.33
	Charlie Saville – footpath maintenance August	250.00
	Training Course GDPR - SALC	25.00
	M Mitchell T/A Gatekeeper Marketing Ltd	70.00

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