

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL held on Thursday 6th January 2022 at 5pm

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Michael Clark (Acting Chair), Simon Moon, Ros Went, Alan Debenham (arrived at 5.55pm); Clerk Janet Coates

District Councillors Dixie Darch, Ed Firmin, Mike Rigby, Derek Perry (arrived at 6pm);
12 members of the Public

MINUTES

1. To receive apologies for absence – Cllr Clark gave apologies for Cllr. Talbot as he had to attend a meeting on the Community Governance Review being held by Somerset Association for Local Councils. Cllr Clark will act as chair for this meeting. Cllr Clark proposed that the agenda items 3 and 4 be swapped over as the majority of the those in attendance were here for the planning application agenda item.

2. Declarations of interest not already recorded – no additional declarations made.

3. Planning Applications (details on Somerset West and Taunton website)

i) Application: 34/21/0017

Proposal: Formation of 2 integrated constructed wetlands (ICW) including associated plant, infrastructure, landscaping and on-site redistribution of materials on land off Langford Lane, Longfield and land off Parsonage Lane, Nailsbourne (now amended to Nailsbourne Lane)

Cllr. Clark summarised the Parish Council's view which has been drafted by Cllr. Talbot and will be submitted with any additional relevant points that come from the meeting tonight. Cllr Clark noted that several objections/comments had already been logged on the planning website and he advised all those at the meeting to submit their comments if they had not done so. Cllr. Clark stated that one main objection is that there is no link established between this planning application and planning application 34/19/0036(the Redrow reserved matters) when there clearly is a link as 34/19/0036 cannot progress without a plan to mitigate for the increased amount of phosphates produced by the planned houses. A request has also been made through Cllr. Darch that the planning application is not considered at officer level but at committee level. This request has been accepted. Cllr Clark asked what views were in the room. The following views/concerns were raised

- Lack of ecology report and that trees have already been cut down in the area

- Lack of expertise on the planning committee to understand creation of wetlands and the flooding risk
- No mention of ownership and management of the wetlands
- Who will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance?
- What happens if wetlands 'block' and cause flooding to properties, who will be responsible - the developers/builders, planners, Environment Agency
- The creation of wetlands is not and cannot be the long-term solution to managing phosphates from urban developments; urban developments account for only 4% of phosphate production
- Wessex Water should be challenged on what they are doing/will do to combat the problem

District Cllrs Firmin and Rigby responded to some of these concerns. They confirmed that the planning application will be heard at committee level and anyone who had made an objection should be informed when that meeting will take place. The CEO of Somerset West and Taunton has been asked to challenge the CEO of Wessex Water on what they are doing to address the phosphates issue. The Environment Agency and Natural England will be consulted and asked for their opinion on the planning application. The grounds for objection to planning include; flood risk, increase in traffic and noise that generates sufficient harm to the area and its residents.

Cllr. Clark concluded that the Parish Council will submit their objections, taking into account any relevant extra points made at the meeting and he again asked that people submit their own objections and that more than one submission can be made if they have a subsequent point to make.

4. Community Governance Review for TAUNTON – to hear views from residents and agree the Parish Council response to the Somerset West and Taunton stage 1 consultation 'A Town/Parish Council for TAUNTON'

Cllr. Clark summarised the Community Governance Review(CGR) and how it impacts on Staplegrove. He advised that the view of the Parish Council is that there should be a town/parish council for Taunton that covers the unparished area and that Staplegrove Parish Council at this stage wished to remain as it is. However, in a couple of years' time with the Taunton council established it might wish to join then if that is beneficial to Staplegrove. District Cllrs Rigby and Perry who are on the working party for the CGR, gave further explanation on why the CGR was taking place, the historic nature of current parish boundaries and how they compare to the development of Taunton, the importance of Taunton having a council and why the review was expanded to cover not just the current unparished area of Taunton but the surrounding parishes north of the M5. The stage 1 consultation is to seek views from anyone on the 'parishing' of Taunton and what area it should cover. Stage 2

would set out the proposed boundary of the Taunton council and this would be consulted on. They challenged the Parish Council's view about joining the Taunton council at a later date stating that this would be highly unlikely to be an option because although it would be a relatively small change, it would still require another CGR which takes a significant amount of resource and it would be under the jurisdiction of the new Somerset Council and their view is that it would not be considered a high enough priority for the Somerset council to carry out. Cllr. Clark said he didn't accept that view as it would be a relatively small change. Cllr. Debenham stated that a council for Taunton was long overdue and it was about time that one was established and he supported it. Discussion took place on the role of the proposed Local Community Networks and the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the effect on Staplegrove and the proposed new Taunton town council. A member of the public suggested that the Parish Council should state what boundary they wanted and not wait to see what was proposed in the stage 2 consultation. Cllr Clark stated that the Parish Council's view is to retain its current boundary and that would be in their response to the consultation.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm