

Minutes of the meeting of STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 23rd March 2022 at 5pm

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Simon Moon, Ian Talbot (Chair), Clerk Janet Coates

District Councillor Dixie Darch; Andy Sully Ed Firmin; County Councillor Rod Williams

MINUTES

1. **To receive apologies for absence** – apologies received from Cllrs. Clark, Debenham and Went. The chair confirmed that with three parish councillors present the meeting was quorate.
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 20th January 2022**– the minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, Cllr Talbot.
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 she had circulated the latest newsletter.
 - ii. **Footpath T 24/4** - clerk reported that SCC has carried out some patch reports to the footpath but have left some of the worst area behind the shop. She will follow up with SCC and copy Cllr Williams into the email
 - iii. **Litter Enforcement – Somerset West and Taunton (SWT)** - clerk reported that a trial starts on 1st April to target some of the 'hot-spot' problem areas for littering. The clerk will email the team with the parish's 'hot-spots'.
 - iv. **Finger-post maintenance.** This has not been started yet, the clerk will follow up with the contractor.

- v. **Connecting our Garden Communities.** The clerk had circulated an email from Graeme Thompson of SWT following a recent workshop on proposals for better connections using cycleways and footpaths between Staplegrove, Ford Farm the town and local services. The clerk will feedback that French Weir Health Centre is not shown on the map and that the existing footpath /cycleway from Tesco, through Longrun to Silk Mills could be improved to encourage more usage of this route.
- vi. **West Monkton proposal – Community Transport** - clerk reported that West Monkton Parish Council are considering setting up a Community Transport scheme similar to Wivey link and have asked if Staplegrove is interested in joining. Agreed that more information was needed on level and type of commitment and that clerk will email to find out more and be the point of contact.
- vii. **Correspondence** – clerk reported that no further correspondence had been received between the agenda being set and the meeting.

6. Community Governance Review - Taunton Town Council – update – Cllr Talbot reported that following the first consultation; a proposal has been made and approved at an SWT full council meeting on 3rd March 2022 that a town council for Taunton should be set up and its boundary should take in most of Staplegrove Parish. This will result in Staplegrove Parish Council in effect ceasing to exist from May 2023. Cllr Talbot attended the meeting on 3rd March to express the view of the Parish Council that it wished to remain as a separate council and not be included within the new town council for Taunton. The consultation on this proposal will take place after the elections in May. After discussion on the process to date and what action the Parish Council could take; it was agreed that Cllr Talbot and the clerk would attend a meeting arranged by the Comeytrowe PC clerk and chair with Cllr Perry who is leading on the proposal to understand more about the reasoning behind the proposal. Comeytrowe PC is also included within the proposed boundary for the new town council for Taunton.

7. Somerset Unitary – update - Cllr Williams gave an update, work is progressing and the detail on the Local Community Networks is being worked on and more will be known in the summer.

8. North Taunton Development – update – Cllr. Talbot reported that the ‘reserved matters’ applications (first tranche of houses and spine road) from Redrow has been withdrawn. The outline planning permission expires on 15 April 2022, so it is expected that a planning application for ‘greenery’ or something similar will be made by 15 April 2022 to keep the outline planning permission ‘live’. No further news on the wetlands application.

9. Highways

- i. **Update on Bindon Road** - the clerk circulated the proposal from SCC Highways on extending current double yellow lines and painting new ones on Staplegrove Road. The proposal does not include all that the Parish Council had requested but SCC has drawn this up following further consultation with residents and businesses and expects this proposal to **not** meet with opposition when it is advertised as part of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Cllr Williams has requested that the TRO is processed as a matter of urgency as this issue has been 'live' for over four years.
- ii. **Speed Indicator Device** - Cllr Talbot reported that this is now in place and is already having a positive effect on speed. The device will be moved between 5 points around the parish.
- iii. **Additional lamp-post Rectory Road** - Cllr Talbot reported that a resident of Rectory Road has requested that an additional street light is installed near her home as she considers the area is not lit well enough. Cllr Talbot has obtained a costing from Western Power of £1800 and this cost will have to be met by the Parish Council. Cllr Talbot has sought the views of Rectory Road residents and received 15 replies. The resident has also submitted support letters from residents in Rectory Road, Lawn Road and Stoneleigh Close. Cllr Talbot proposed that only the views of the residents that had been canvassed in Rectory Road should be considered and this was agreed by the Parish Council. Of the 15 household replies, 3 were in favour, 9 were against and 3 had to be rejected. After considering the cost and the replies received, the Parish Councillors decided against the installation of an additional street light.
- iv. **Lawn Road – hedge-cutting** - Following a complaint from a resident, the clerk contacted SCC to attend to an area of overgrown shrubbery and the work has been carried out to a high standard. Concern over a hedge of a private property that overhangs the pavement was raised, it was agreed that the clerk will speak to the home owner.

10. The Grove

- i. **Fallen Tree** - clerk reported that a tree fell during Storm Eunice onto the garage of Staplegrove House. The clerk informed our insurance company who advised that a claim against the council was unlikely due to the very high winds. The clerk has not heard anything further. Cllrs Talbot and Moon have looked at the tree's location and question if it is in the boundary of the grove and if a claim is forthcoming that point will be made.

- ii. **Scout Hut trees** - an email has been received from Martin Allen of Staplegrove Scouts. He has asked if the Parish Council can help with the screening of the scout hut following the removal of the trees from the bank in front of the scout hut due to ash dieback. It was agreed by the Parish Council that the council could not help with this, the Council has already paid for the removal of the trees and has replaced the trees cut down with new saplings planted within the grove.

11. Parish Council Elections 5 May 2022 - the clerk advised that the nomination papers have to be submitted by hand to Deane House by 5th April. The clerk advised that the nomination papers are available at the end of the meeting.

12. Local Heritage Listing - SW Heritage Project - the clerk reported that SW Heritage has started a project to encourage the listing of local landmarks by residents. The clerk will display a poster and will forward the email to the Local History Society

13. Queen's Platinum Jubilee - update Cllr Bird reported on the latest meeting of the working party set up to organise an event to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The working party has decided to focus on planning a 'bring and share' picnic lunch on Sunday 5th June to be held in the Children's Playground in Manor Road. A timetable for the event has been drawn up to include the playing of the National Anthem. The Parish Council agreed at its last meeting to fund an ice-cream van. An advert for the event will be in the next parish journal to garner support and interest in the event.

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

i) Report on applications considered by planning committee since last meeting: 34/22/ 0002 (Westerkirk); 34/21/0028/LB (Cloisters) and 34/22/0004/LB (Steading Hay) - 34/22/002 was considered at a planning committee meeting on 9/2/2022 and the clerk submitted the Parish Council's objections following the meeting (these can be viewed on the SWT website). An amendment to this application has been subsequently submitted by the applicant. The Parish Council considered this amendment and concluded that it did not address any of the objections made by the Parish Council in February. Therefore, the clerk will respond accordingly. Applications 34/21/0028/LB and 34/22/0004/LB were looked at by the chair of the planning committee and as these were mainly internal alterations, it was decided to make no comment.

ii) Post Office storage container - the clerk reported that she has received notification that an application will be made shortly in respect of additional storage space at the Co-op stores.

15. Financial Matters

- i. **Amendment to financial regulations paragraphs 5.7 and 6.6** - in response to a recommendation in the Internal Auditor's report, the clerk as RFO and Cllr. Talbot have reviewed the financial regulations to reflect how cheques are prepared, presented and authorised. To reflect the council's actual practice, they propose that paragraph 5.7 is deleted and paragraph 6.6 is amended to allow cheques to be presented for payment between meetings. These amendments were agreed.
- ii. **Authorisation of regular payments during 2022/23 – see schedule –** as per paragraph 5.6 of the financial regulations, the clerk as RFO has prepared a schedule of regular payments for authorisation in the next financial year. The schedule was agreed and approved.
- iii. **Appointment of Internal Auditor for 21-22 accounts –** The clerk proposed that Jill Larcombe carries out an internal audit on the year 21-22 and this was agreed and approved.
- iv. **Approval of 2021/22 pay increase from 1/4/2021 to clerk and increase in increment from SCP 12 to SCP 13 from 1/4/2022** - the clerk reported that the pay rise for 2021/22 had now been agreed and she requested that it was applied to her from 1st April 2021. Cllr Talbot proposed that the clerk also has an increase in increment from SCP 12 to 13 from 1st April 2022. These proposals were both agreed and approved.
- v. **Bank Reconciliations – December 2021, January 2022 , February 2022** - clerk reported that Cllr Moon in the absence of Cllr Clark has checked and counter-signed the bank reconciliations for December, January and February. Cllrs Talbot and Bird requested copies of the signed forms.
- vi. **Budget – February 2022** - clerk reported that the council's expenditure for the year will be within budget; and a VAT refund of £605 is due this month.
- vii. **Receipts and Payments since last meeting see table below –** the clerk explained the payments and receipts, the village hall hire costs are more than budgeted as we now use the Mary Mercer room and have had more meetings in the year. Cllr Bird said that she would enquire if, as the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall committee, the Parish Council is entitled to three free hires. The payments were approved. The clerk has included the signatories against the payments to evidence the audit trail.

16. Dates of Annual Parish Meeting, Annual Meeting of the Council and 2022/23 ordinary council meetings

Wednesday 11th May 2022 – Annual Parish meeting and Annual meeting of the Council at **6pm**

Proposed Dates for 2022/23 council meetings - the clerk proposed the following dates for council meetings during 2022/23, these were agreed.

Wednesday July 13th 2022 at 5pm
 Wednesday 14th September 2022 at 5pm
 Wednesday 23rd November 2022 at 5pm
 Wednesday 18th January 2023 at 5pm
 Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 5pm

Receipts and payments for approval since the last meeting

Receipts		£	
	Santander – bank interest – February	0.13	
	Santander bank interest - March	0.11	
	Western Power Wayleaves payment	3.48	
Payments	Payee		Signatories
	Clerk’s salary and expenses – January	490.12	Ian Talbot, Joan Bird
	Clerk’s salary and expenses – February	400.15	Ian Talbot, Joan Bird
	Coram Construction – Training course – speed camera	588.00	Ian Talbot, Joan Bird
	Village Hall - 2021/22 bookings	159.00	Ian Talbot, Joan Bird
	Coram Construction - Cost of test	60.00	Ian Talbot, Joan Bird