

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 11th May 2022 at 6.15pm

PRESENT:

Parish Councillors: Joan Bird, Simon Moon, Ian Talbot (Chair), Michael Clark, Alan Debenham, Di Glover (co-opted at item 2) Clerk Janet Coates

District Councillor Ed Firmin (left at 7.30pm); Unitary Councillors Dixie Darch (left at 8pm), Derek Perry (6.45pm to 7.30pm)
One member of the public present

Before the meeting began each Parish Councillor signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form in front of the clerk.

Minutes

- 1. Election of Chair and Vice- Chair for 2022-23; Chair and vice-chair to sign declaration of acceptance of office** Cllr Clark spoke to the meeting to state that after many years of service as chair and vice-chair he feels that now is the time for other councillors to have those roles and therefore he proposed that Cllr Talbot should continue as Chair and that Cllr Moon should be vice chair. Cllr Debenham seconded the proposal for Cllr Talbot as chair and Cllr Bird seconded the proposal for Cllr Moon to be vice-chair. Cllr Talbot led a chorus of thanks from those present to Cllr Clark for his years of service not just for the time given but the considerable amount of work he has done. Cllr Bird also wanted to recognise the work that Lesley Clark has done over the years to support the parish council especially at short notice. Cllr. Talbot and Cllr. Moon were elected unanimously and signed their respective declaration of acceptance of office forms (chair and vice chair) in front of the clerk.
- 2. Co-option of new member to the Parish Council** - Cllr Talbot introduced Di Glover who has been persuaded to consider co-option to the Parish Council. Di told the meeting a little about herself including that she has been a Parish Councillor at Norton Fitzwarren in the past. Cllr Talbot proposed that Di is co-opted on to the Parish Council and this was voted in unanimously by the rest of the Councillors. Cllr Glover was welcomed to the team and signed her declaration of acceptance of office form in front of the clerk.
- 3. To receive apologies for absence** – Apologies received from Cllr Sully
- 4. Proposal that the clerk contacts any absent councillors before June to sign ‘Declaration of Acceptance of Office’** The clerk stated that as all the councillors were present at the meeting this proposal was not required.

5. **To note information required by Somerset West and Taunton following election of councillors: Register of Declarations of Interest forms; Declaration of expenses forms , List of Councillor Details** - the clerk clarified the forms that all the councillors need to complete. Any queries should be made to the Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) monitoring officer.
6. **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2022** - the minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair Cllr Talbot
7. **Questions from members of the public** - No questions from the public
8. **Clerk's report to include correspondence and actions from last meeting**
 - i. **Police Report** – the clerk reported that no recent newsletter has been received. Cllr Darch reported that she understands from the local police that 'county lines' activity is suspected in the Showell Park area.
 - ii. **Somerset Playing Fields Association Annual awards** - Cllr Moon agreed to send in our nomination.
 - iii. **Finger post** - the clerk reported that West Country Blacksmiths have stated that the work will be done by the end of May
 - iv. **Annual Insurance** - the clerk reported that the annual renewal has been received and the speed indicator device has been included. The amount for the year is £805.37 which is within the range (£800-£850) agreed at the meeting on 23 March 2022
 - v. **Bindon Road** - SCC Highways will be issuing the Traffic Regulation Order by the end of the month for the proposed work on increasing the no waiting areas.
 - vi. **Correspondence** – the clerk reported that an email has been received from Nether Stowey PC asking us to join a forum about affordable housing in new development plans. Cllr. Talbot proposed that we join the forum especially as the North Taunton development is at the planning stage. This was agreed.

9. Update – North Taunton Development - Cllr. Talbot reported that he had attended an on-line meeting with Simon Fox the SWT planning officer and the updates from that meeting are; the wetlands application is unlikely to be decided until August/September, the delay is due to answers to questions have not been provided yet eg who will maintain the wetlands after its creation. The wetlands application and the green buffer application have been made on behalf of the land agent, there is currently no building company involved. If the wetlands application is approved then it has to be linked to a calculated number of houses for the offset against the phosphates. Cllr Darch also explained that a review of stewardship is taking place as there are different management companies for different aspects of the overall development eg attenuation ponds, the green buffer zones, playgrounds etc which also impacts on the decision making.

10. Update on Community Governance Review – Cllr Perry reported that phase 2 of the consultation will start very soon. Phase 2 is the consultation on the proposed boundary of the new Taunton Town Council which includes Staplegrove Parish and Comeytrove Parish in their entirety. There should be a leaflet drop to all residents by SWT and all residents will be able to ‘have their say’. The decision on Taunton Town Council and its area will be taken in the Autumn. Cllr Clark suggested that Bindon Road could be a dividing line between the town and the village but it was acknowledged that although the Parish Councillors want Staplegrove Parish Council to continue the views of Staplegrove residents is largely unknown. Cllr. Talbot said that the parish council will need to decide how it might garner support from residents.

Cllrs Perry and Firmin left the meeting

11. Somerset Unitary – update - the unitary elections took place on 5th May 2022. The new county council starts now and Somerset West and Taunton District Council will continue until April 2023 when the new unitary council is invested. Cllrs. Darch and Perry will represent Staplegrove on the new County Council. Cllrs Darch, Firmin and Sully will represent Staplegrove at District level. Cllr Darch reported that the first full county council meeting will take place on May 24th. District and County council staff are already working closer together and there is a lot to do in the next twelve months.

12. Adoption of new Code of Conduct - the clerk had circulated the full version of the new code of conduct which included sections that the monitoring officer of Somerset West and Taunton suggested could be omitted. It was agreed that the councillors would read the code in full and decide at the next meeting on its adoption and which paragraphs to include.

13. Queen's Platinum Jubilee

- i. **Picnic in the Park** - Cllr Bird reported that the picnic will go ahead as over 50 people had signed up to support it. Cllr Bird is leading on preparations with other members on the planning committee. The Parish Council has agreed funds of £250/£300 for the picnic. Cllr Bird has had posters printed and the clerk will display them on the village noticeboards.
- ii. **Jubilee Parish Portrait for SW Heritage** - Clerk reported that SW Heritage has requested from all Parishes in Somerset a 'portrait' of the Parish at this time to mark the Platinum Jubilee. It was decided that the clerk could send a Parish Journal with permission from the editor and the PCC and the annual reports submitted at the annual meeting today.
- iii. **Clock on church tower – update** -Cllr Clark agreed to check the progress on this.

14. Waste Bins and Littering -Cllr. Talbot reported that the bin in the wooded area near Showell Park is almost permanently full to over-flowing, and this is also the case with the bins in the children's playground and at the shop. The clerk reported that a larger bin is due to be installed June/July in the children's playground. The clerk will report to the litter enforcement team the issue with the bin in Showell Park.

15. Planning Applications – to note that the following application has been commented on by the Parish Council and details are on Somerset West and Taunton website - this was noted and that the application is likely to be decided in August/ September

- i. 34/22/0011 : Application for Approval of Reserved Matters for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale following outline approval 34/16/0007 for the northern ecological buffer, public open space, drainage and landscaping for Staplegrove West Phase 1

16. Financial Matters

- i. **Bank Reconciliations – March 2022** - the clerk reported that she had not been able to provide this separately as the Internal Auditor had the bank statements but it does form part of the accounts that the Internal Auditor has verified.
- ii. **To note and approve the 2021-22 payments and receipts account and asset register** - these were noted and approved. Cllr Bird raised the issue of the problems that the clerk had had earlier in the year with Santander. The clerk reported that she had discussed this issue with Cllr Talbot (chair) and they had agreed that when the future of the Parish Council is known, they would review what bank accounts the council should have and with who.

- iii. **To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report** – the annual internal report was received and noted. There were no compliance issues. The Internal Audit report that is produced for the Parish Council was also received and noted and there were no issues that need further action.
- iv. **To approve the Annual Governance Statement (section 1)** – this was approved and signed by the clerk and the chair.
- v. **To approve the Accounting Statements (section 2)** - this was approved and signed by the chair.
- vi. **To approve the Certificate of Exemption for External Audit** – this was approved and signed by the clerk and the chair. The clerk will send to the external auditor by the deadline required.
- vii. **Receipts and Payments since last meeting see table below** It was noted that the first half of the annual precept has been received and the VAT refund.

17. Dates of next two meetings

Wednesday 13th July 2022 – 5pm

Wednesday 14th September 2022 – 5pm

Receipts and payments for approval since the last meeting

| Receipts | | £ | |
|-----------------|---|----------|--------------------------|
| | VAT refund | 605.00 | |
| | Santander – bank interest – April | 0.11 | |
| | Precept | 6455.00 | |
| Payments | Payee | | Signatories |
| | Clerk's salary – March plus backdated payrise from 01/04/2021 | 556.56 | Ian Talbot, Joan Bird |
| | Clerk's salary - April | 410.45 | Ian Talbot, Joan Bird |
| | Howard SW Ltd – April | 96.00 | Ian Talbot, Joan Bird |
| | Training Course with SALC | 20.00 | Ian Talbot, Joan Bird |
| | Charlie Saville – footpath maintenance April | 195.00 | Joan Bird, Michael Clark |