

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



50 Pepys Way, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3LL

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 6th October 2021

Face to Face Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.20 pm

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone ~ Chairman Cllr J. Wallace ~ Vice-chair
Cllr K. Copping Cllr R. Bridge
Cllr G. Blackman Cllr P Egan
Cllr K. Mansell Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: 6 (Six)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

Several of enquiries were raised by members of the public, which were as follows:

- An update on the cropping back of the the hedge, located outside the allotments on Allhallows Road. Where the same Parishioner also asked if the road could be cleaned afterwards.
- An update from Medway Council on the installation of a more permanent fence, to be re-erected outside the public toilets on Grain Road, where it was removed earlier in the year owing to issues with flooding.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, also asked the Clerk to chase Medway Council for an update on the blocked pipe located outside Bernie's Cottages.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, opened the meeting at 7.20pm and thanked the Councillors and the members of the public for attending.

He apologised for the 20 minute delay and introduced the two new members of the Council, where he confirmed that the new Councillors had been co-opted onto the Parish Council earlier that evening following one to one interviews with all the candidates and an extraordinary meeting held a few minutes before hand.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 5095:21 None.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 5096:21 None.

3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 5097:21 None.

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4. Ward Councillor Report

a). A report by Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast

Min 5098:21 The Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise that Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast had no report this month and accordingly he was not in attendance.

5. Minutes from previous Parish Council Meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 1st September 2021

Min 5099:21 The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting, held on Wednesday 1st September 2021, as already circulated by the Clerk, were submitted.

It was proposed by the Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by Cllr K. Copping, that they be approved as a correct record. This motion was unanimously agreed.

6. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 6000:21 None.

7. Planning

a). Applications

Min 6001:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to confirm that there had only been one new planning application submitted since the last meeting, where the members discussed the application in finer detail.

- **MC/21/2526 – Coningsby, 15 Grain Road**

After careful consideration it was unanimously agreed that the members would not submit an objection.

b). Decisions

Min 6002:21 It was also acknowledged that there had been no new planning decisions made since the last meeting.

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 6003:21 None.

8. Finance

a). To agree financial performance against the budget for the month of October 2021.

b). Update of account(s) for 2021/22 including payments received.

c). Accounts paid since the last meeting to be ratified.

d). Accounts for payment.

e). Payment requests to be discussed for approval and payment.

Min 6004:21 Cllr K. Copping spoke to enquire why the Clerk had included a repayment schedule for her pension in the members' meeting packs.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke in response to confirm that following a meeting held in January 2020, ref: **Min 1775:20**, that she and the members had agreed that she would repay the balance the Parish Council had made on her behalf at £20 per month, owing to the late introduction of her pension plan.

Min 6005:21 A discussion also ensued surrounding the invoice for the newly installed play equipment, where it was noted that the contractor had not withheld a small retention amount and where it was recognised that this was normal practice.

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The members agreed that in order to protect their investment that the Clerk should withhold 20% of the final balance, until the results of the post installation inspection had been received and the results determined that the equipment had been correctly installed.

Min 6006:21 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, also spoke to confirm that she had applied to the HMRC for Stoke Parish Council's tax refund, where she confirmed that the tax office had already paid the balance to the Parish Council, after the publication of the members meeting packs.

Min 6007:21 Finally, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to propose that points a,b,c, d & e be approved en bloc, this proposal was seconded by Cllr G. Blackman and unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£501.68	August 2021 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – September 2021
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£33.92	Broadband & Telephone line rental for September 2021
Colin Davis	Min 1992:20	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£168.00	September 2021 Payment Inspections & Cleaning INV: 3304
Safeplay Playground Services Ltd	Min 4078:21	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£573.60	2 x Toddler Swings (for Heron Way Play Park) INV: 19352
Safeplay Playground Services Ltd	Min 3093:21 Min 4077:21	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£27,830.40	2 x Toddler Climbing Frames, installation and playground surfacing (for the Heron Way & Button Drive Play Parks) INV: 19118
Webb Flint Ltd	Min 5032:21	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£740.00	Installation of new notice board in Lower Stoke, including removal and disposal of old notice board INV: 24092021-06
PKF Littlejohn	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£240.00	External Audit 2020/2021 INV: SB20213516
Keith Copping	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£45.95	Repairs to Middle Stoke Notice-board INV: (Not available)
Village Hall	Min 5041:21	PAID BY BACS	£1,000.00	Annual Donation
Post Office	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£2.25	Postage for Recorded Delivery Letter (to apply for tax refund)
Post Office	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£41.54	Purchase of 1 st & 2 nd Class Stamps
HMRC	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£7.00	Employers Tax & NI Payment

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HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£1.80	Tax & NI Payment
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£42.43	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for August 2021
TOTAL			£31,571.37	

e). Update on the 2020/2021 Audit.

Min 6008:21 The members carefully reviewed Section 3 of the 2020/2021 AGAR report, as returned by PKF Littlejohn.

It was acknowledged that the Clerk had accidentally forgotten to tick either of the three (3) boxes for question 9, Section 1 and to tick either of the two boxes for question 11, Section 2.

They also learnt that the internal auditor needed to provide a more in-depth response, to his answer of 'no' in objective d, on his internal auditor's report.

9. Management of the Council's land and property

a). Playparks

i Allhallows Road Playpark

ii Heron Way Playpark

iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 6009:21 The Play Park inspections from the month of September were accepted. The reports received confirmed that the play equipment in all 3 play parks appeared to be in good order and that all the touch points were being regularly disinfected.

The members also acknowledged that the contractor had gathered the discarded toys in the Heron Way play park and had disposed of them in the skip located in the Chairman's yard, as discussed at the last meeting, ref **Min 5067:21**.

b). Toddler Swings in the Heron Way play park.

Min 6010:21 The members discussed the quote received for £222.50, for four replacement swing chains, to hang the two newly installed toddler seats on for the Heron Way play park.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke to confirm that having compared the price of swing chains online, that she had been unable to find a more competitive alternative. The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, also spoke to remind the members that the contractors would be installing the chains and disposing of the old ones.

After careful consideration it was proposed by Cllr K. Copping to proceed with the quote this proposal was seconded by the Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace and was unanimously agreed.

c). Cleansing of all 3 playparks (not just touch points)

Min 6011:21 The members spoke collectively of the two quotes received to thoroughly clean the play equipment in all three play parks.

Upon receipt of the details, they mooted the idea of arranging for a light clean in time for winter and a full deep clean ahead of Spring next year.

It was acknowledged that the two quotes received were very similar, where one firm had quoted £1,015.00 for a light thorough clean and the other had quoted £750.00 (possibly including VAT on top).

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It was proposed by Cllr K. Copping, to instruct the services of Medway Wash and Go, at the price of £750.00, with the proviso that the Clerk was able to confirm if the quote included VAT on top and to ensure the company had all the relevant insurance cover and paperwork in place. This proposal was seconded by Cllr G. Blackman and was unanimously agreed.

10. Highways & Transportation

a). Footpaths

Min 6012:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to advise that he was still waiting to receive a copy of the footpath report, as instructed by Medway Council. He confirmed however that he had seen a gentleman walking along the footpaths with a measuring wheel, so he assumed they were both connected.

Min 6013:21 Cllr P. Egan, also spoke to enquire who was responsible for the overgrown footpath located in Middle Stoke, close to the speed camera, that contained a small bridge.

Cllr K. Copping spoke in response to confirm that the footpaths were the responsibility of Medway Council, where he recommended that Cllr P. Egan reported the overgrown path to Medway Council using their website, where he could also look up the footpath's identity number.

b). Lighting

Min 6014:21 No report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 6015:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke of the issues with flooding to the rear of Kasmira House, where he advised that he had previously sought the advice of a contractor in regards to the installation of a french drain. He confirmed that upon receipt of the quote, which had been very expensive, that he wondered if the installation of a drain on the other side of the park would help reduce the surface water run-off, or if the use of kerb stones would hold the water in place.

A discussion ensued, where Cllr P. Egan spoke to air his concerns over the use of a french drain owing to the clay-based soil. He made alternative recommendations to use either an aqua drain or a shallow 'v ditch' instead.

The members collectively spoke of additional pressure from the rainwater running off the hard skate park surface in addition to the whole recreation ground, which they felt it was contributing to the flooding.

Cllr P. Egan spoke to offer his expertise, following his background in engineering, where it was unanimously agreed that he and the Chairman should re-visit the site to determine the best solution.

Min 6016:21 Cllr B. Blackman also spoke to confirm that the verge, located next to the A228 coming out from Grain Road in Middle Stoke, needed to be cut back further as the sight line was not visible.

Min 6017:21 Finally, Cllr K. Copping spoke to enquire if the Clerk could obtain an update in regards to the poor condition of the bank, located in front of Kitchener's Cottages, where the members had received a report of loose stones and a dangerous top step.

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d). Pot holes

Min 6016:21 No report.

e). Fly tipping

Min 6018:21 No report.

11. Communication

a). Update on the Parish Council's new webpage and associated email addresses

b). Parish Council owned tablets

Min 6019:21 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise that following the co-option of the two new members earlier that evening that she was going to generate two new personalised, Parish Council email addresses to enable them to use their Parish Council owned tablets.

She also confirmed that following discussions with the IT Technician that she was trying to get the members emails set up on their Parish Council owned tablets, but from the screen shots she had been sent this was so far without success.

Finally, she reported that following complaints that the email addresses were not working, that the IT Technician was certain that the sender had not including the hyphen between 'stokekent' and 'pc'.

Min 6020:21 Finally, the Clerk Mrs J. Allen, spoke to prewarn the Vice-Chair that she had heard Hugo Fox (the website providers) were going to start charging for their services. The Clerk confirmed however that she was unsure when this would happen or how much their charges would be.

12. Village Hall

a). To receive an update on the status of the Village Hall

Min 6021:21 Cllr R. Bridge spoke to confirm that he had attended the last Village Hall Committee meeting, where he had already circulated a copy of the minutes to the members.

Please refer to Annex A for a copy of this document.

13. Lower Stoke Car Park Lease

a). Update on the new lease for Medway Council's Lower Stoke Car Park.

Min 6022:21 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise that upon chasing the Medway Council for a formal signed copy of the member's Lower Stoke Car Park lease, that she had established Medway Council had not provided her with a 'Security of Tenure' document, which was apparently crucial in securing the Parish Council's tenancy.

She therefore presented the members with a copy of this correspondence, where upon careful consideration the members gave their consent for her to sign it and return it to Medway Council.

14. External Contractors

a). J R Brickwork

Min 6023:21 None.

b). Eastborough Landscapes

Min 6024:21 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to inform the members that she had chased Eastborough Landscapes for their quote for the non-essential works to trees, following the 15 monthly tree report.

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She advised that the contractors had confirmed receipt of her request, which had unfortunately been filtered into their 'junk mail' and that they would be sending back their itemised quote in due course.

c). Colyn Property Services

Min 6024:21 None.

15. Christmas Celebrations

a). To discuss the final arrangements for Christmas lights competition in ALL of Stoke for the month of December 2021.

Min 6025:21 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise the members that 'Christmas Lights Competition' poster had now been published, where so far, the members had received lots of positive feedback.

Following the publication of the competition she asked the members to agree the final arrangements, where after a long discussion the following decisions were made:

- All Parishioners competing in the 'Christmas Lights' competition would need to put their names forward to be considered. Anyone who has not submitted their credentials, regardless if they have decorated their property, would not be included in the judging.
- There would be three prizes available, where a prize from each ward (Lower, Middle and Upper Stoke) would be awarded.
- Prizes would consist of a £50 'All in One' shopping voucher and a small token trophy for the winners to keep.
- The winners of the competition would be decided by the children of the village and would be determined based on the number of votes received.
- Children would not be allowed to vote for their own house/property.
- Voting forms would be made available from all the shops and local amenities within the village a week before the ballots open.
- Only one completed voting form per child would be counted and votes would only apply from those under the age of 18 years of age.
- There would be two collection boxes made available for returned voting forms, with one situated in the Village Stores shop and the other in the Nags Head Public House.
- Voting would take place between Friday 17th December and Sunday 19th December. All completed forms would need to be returned by 5.00pm on Sunday 19th December to be counted, completed ballot forms returned after this date and time would not be considered.
- The advertisement of this event shall be made by social media and the village notice boards only. There will be no banners promoting the event in order to reduce the amount of commercial advertisement in the village.

16. Feedback to Public Questions

a). To receive a response/update on the last public questions raised, following the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 1st September.

Min 6026:21 Following the members last meeting, held on Wednesday 1st September, it was acknowledged that the Parish Council were still looking into the following points raised:

- An update on the escape of the raw sewage at Mallard Way.
- An update on the removal of a dead tree located along Allhallows Road.

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- An update on the pollarding of the tree on Allhallows Road, by Medway Council, located close to Windmill Cottages.

17. Village Voice Publication

Min 6027:21 The Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace asked the Clerk to place notification of the village Christmas light competition rules and regulations in the next Village Voices publication.

18. Vote of no confidence in Medway Council

a). To discuss the points to be included in the members vote of no confidence letter to send to Medway Council.

Min 6028:21 The members spoke of the letters of no confidence they had been provided, from both Hoo Parish Council and High Halstow Parish Council, where they acknowledged that most of the detailed contents did not apply to the village of Stoke.

They spoke individually of their concerns surrounding road capacities, the lack of amenities, the absence of any future development plans, issues with escape of water and raw sewage, problems with electricity supplies, flooding and insufficient pumping stations to name a few! Where it was also established that none of the members had any confidence in Medway Council.

The conversation evolved to the contents of the members' own letter, where it was felt that Stoke Parish Council needed to have their say to but to keep their letter short and to the point.

It was pointed out by Cllr K. Copping and Cllr P. Egan, that the village of Stoke had not been included in any of Medway Council's consultation procedures and the opinions of its residents had not been sought either.

It was proposed by Cllr R. Bridge to ask Cllr K. Copping and Cllr P. Egan to draw up a draft letter of no confidence to present to the members at their next meeting for approval. This proposal was seconded by the Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace and was unanimously agreed.

19. JMV Cars Ltd

a). To receive an update on the members response to Lawgistics Ltd, received on behalf of JMV Cars Ltd / Lower Stoke Garage.

Min 6028:21 The members spoke of the issues the village were experiencing with JMV Cars Ltd, where it was recognised that the garage were still parking their vehicles up from the corner/ bend of Allhallows Road and Cuckolds Green Road, where it was also acknowledged that they frequently caused an obstruction either on the road, or of the view of the road itself.

The Councillors spoke of reports of untaxed cars parked on the road but accepted that the garage had pulled their cars back to within the white lines on their forecourt, following the members letter sent a few weeks prior.

The social media photo album was discussed, where Cllr R. Bridge urged anyone adding to the album to confirm who took the photo, where it was taken and at what time. In order to provide a fully comprehensive record of the garage's misdemeanours.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke too to confirm that the photos would only be able to show unlawful behaviour, as he did not think parking up from a bend in the road was breaking the law, unless the garage were actually parked on it.

A discussion surrounding the use of the car park at the Village Hall and the unused school grounds during the evening, in order to ease pressure on the roads, was also mooted. Concerns regarding the abandonment of cars and the responsibility of risk were aired. Eventually it was universally

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agreed that this was not a good idea, especially as the vehicles would be hidden from view within the Village Hall grounds and could be potential be sitting targets for thieves.

Finally, it was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council needed to continue monitoring the situation with JMV Cars Ltd and to compile a photographic record to use, if required, to challenge Lawgisitics response.

Cllr K. Copping closed the report in stressing that Stoke Parish Council should not become vexatious towards JMV Cars Ltd, but to be seen as working within the best interests of the village.

20. **Raw Sewage Drainage Issues**

a). To discuss the issue of the escape of raw sewage into a garden in Heron Way.

Min 6029:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the Clerk that the issues with raw sewage had been experienced in a garden in Mallard Way, not Heron Way. Details of which had already been discussed, where it was understood that both Medway Council and Southern Water was dealing with this point.

21. **Correspondence**

Min 6030:21 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, read a letter she had received from 'Stoke Safaris' thanking the Parish Council for their sponsorship towards the 'Big Lunch' event.

22. **Reports and Circulars**

Min 6031:21 The Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, spoke to confirm that she had attended the last Rural Liaison meeting where the members had discussed a proposed new wine vault to be constructed in Cuxton, along with a corresponding electronic shuttle bus.

She also confirmed that a large proportion of the meeting had been taken up speaking about the Local Plan and the members had received a consultation surrounding the Lower Thames Crossing.

23. **Any other business**

Min 6032:21 None.

24. **Date of next meeting**

Min 6033:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the main Village Hall on Wednesday 3rd November.

25. **Close of meeting**

Min 6034:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone closed the meeting at 8.57pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 3rd November 2021	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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ANNEX A

12. Village Hall

a). To receive an update on the status of the Village Hall Min 6021:21

STOKE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE STOKE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE MEETING 21st September 2021 ~ 6.30pm

PRESENT: Brian Stone (BS), Kate Good (KG), Marion Stone (MS), Janet Turner (JT),
Richard Bridge (RB)

1. APOLOGIES: received from Christine Gurr (CG) and Pat Wade (PW)
2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING were read, agreed and signed by the Chairman.
3. MATTERS ARISING: BS to contact CG to ask what the Charity Commission had answered regarding Trustees.
4. TREASURER'S REPORT: KG circulated a balance sheet emailed from CG and reported that the bank balance at a healthier £12,346.54, after a Discretionary Business Grant and a Restart Grant were received from the government. RB suggested a couple of names to approach who might take on the role of Treasurer; and BS said he would ask CG for more information on how much time the role takes.
5. COVID 19 IMPACT: JT reported regular bookings as being Bingo on a Friday. Unfortunately, the Wednesday evening private exercise class had finished and the other class which had hoped to hire had gone elsewhere. Honk Cars were back once a month and the over 55's hoped to start within the next two weeks. Brownies had moved to Cross Park but Guides were still at Stoke.
6. DOCTORS SURGERY UPDATE: The Doctors Surgery had been emailed regarding payment of their outstanding rent. BS confirmed he had been informed that they would pay but this was progressing slowly. JT had been to a Practice meeting for patients, which inferred that they were hoping to keep the surgery at Stoke open, once they had enough Doctors, and the Nurse Practitioner would be coming back, so the situation was looking more hopeful.
7. MEMBERSHIP: As always, it is proving hard to recruit members. KG would approach Stoke Community Project Committee to ask if they would be interested in joining.
8. 200 CLUB: This is hoped to resume once the over 55's club begins again.
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: JT pointed out that the gas meter box had a temporary repair, and that the skylight had been nailed down after it was discovered that children had been climbing on the roof and into the hall. The roof was also leaking by the ladies' toilet and JT recommended that the Doctor's surgery was also checked for leaks. BS would contact someone to look at the roof.

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JT also stated the boiler was being serviced on Saturday 25th and that the Fire extinguishers need to be inspected. KG asked about PAT testing (the fridge) and would try and find someone to do this.

Thanks was expressed by the Committee to Liz and Alan Palmer who had recently cut the grass around the hall.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: AGM Tuesday 18th January 2022 at 7pm.

Meeting ended 7.05pm

DRAFT