

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Wednesday 6th November 2019

The Village Hall ~ 7.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone ~ Chairman Cllr G. Blackman ~ Vice-chair
Cllr J. Wallace Cllr G. Barron
Cllr R. Morrad Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: 0

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 1684:19 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R. Bridge and Cllr J. Cole, who both had prior commitments.

It was noted however that Cllr J. Cole had been absent from the last three meetings, the members therefore unanimously agreed that the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, should write a letter to Cllr J. Cole to remind him of this and to ensure he still wanted to remain in post as a Parish Councillor.

2. Declarations of any Pecuniary or Personal Interests

Min 1685:19 None.

3. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting

Min 1686:19 The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd October 2019, already circulated via the Clerk, were submitted. It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by the Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, that they be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. This motion was unanimously agreed.

4. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 1687:19 None.

5. Disclosure of other business

Min 1688:19 Cllr R. Morrad spoke to confirm receipt of a letter he had received from a concerned member of the public earlier that evening in regards to the poor condition of the public footpath that ran from Upper Stoke to Middle Stoke, that was thought to have been damaged by farming equipment.

6. Planning Applications

Min 1689:19 It was noted that there had been two new planning applications and two new tree preservation order amendments received since the last meeting.

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The members therefore discussed all four new applications individually and in turn.

- **MC/19/2831 - 2 & 3 Denison Mews**
The members unanimously agreed to submit an objection regarding this application having discussed concerns that the reduction of the width of the garage would eradicate a much-needed parking space on this road.
- **TPA/19/2655 - The Cottage, Vicarage Lane**
The members agreed not to lodge any objections.
- **TPA/19/2656 - The Cottage, Vicarage Lane**
The members agreed not to lodge any objections.
- **MC/19/2506 - Spring Cottage Vicarage Lane**
The members agreed not to lodge any objections.

7. Clerks Report (including correspondence)

Min 1690:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise that she was due to meet Mr P. Sowter, the following day, to inspect the repairs already carried out to the notice boards.

She also informed the members that she had instructed Colin Davis of Colyn Property Services to conduct the fibreglass repairs to the toddler tunnel and to treat the weeds growing against Ms Gatling-Wylie's fence at Heron Way, both of which she understood had already been undertaken.

Mrs J. Allen reported that Mr C. Davis had been in touch prior to the meeting to advise that following his fortnightly visit to the playpark earlier he had noted the following four points of concern:

- A fire had been started in the metal litter bin at Heron Way.
- A large amount of small silver gas cannisters were found strewn on the floor within the skate park at Heron Way.
- The spring chair at Button Drive had been vandalised, where someone had tried to burn one of the plastic bolts covers. (Despite this antisocial behaviour however it would appear that the equipment lucky remained unaffected and intact).
- A considerable amount of dog faeces was seen within the recreation park at Heron Way, despite signage to advise this park was meant to be a dog free zone.

Mrs J. Allen advised the members that following the October meeting that she had informed Medway Council of the fly tipping and the large pothole, located on the A228. She referred to an email received from Medway Council, enclosed within the members meeting packs, to advise the repairs to the pothole had already taken place.

She ended her report in commenting on the very few items of post received in the Parish office that had included a hard copy Stoke Parish Council's latest bank statement, a hard copy of the meeting pack for the KALC AGM, the latest copy of the Village Voices magazine and a promotional flyer from Viking Direct.

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8. Finance

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£82.80	Filing Cabinet Payment to be approved
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£13.50	Stationery from Wilkos and Poundland Payment to be approved
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£520.43	October 2019 wages
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – October 2019
Colyn Property Services	Min 1449:18	BACS	£88.00	October 2019 Payment INV 2737
Medway Council	-	DIRECT DEBIT	£225.00	Car Park Rent
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	-	DIRECT DEBIT	£34.00	Broadband & Phone line rental for October 2019
Timpson	-	DEBIT CARD	£7.00	New key cut for village hall car park
TOTAL			£1005.73	
Natwest	-	Credit - BACS	£1.77	Interest on savings account
Natwest	-	Credit - BACS	£1.77	Interest on savings account
TOTAL			£3.54	

Min 1691:19 It was proposed by the Vice-chair, Cllr G. Blackman, and seconded by Cllr G. Barron that the tables above, as previously circulated, be noted, the payments confirmed and any outstanding payments authorised and issued. This motion was unanimously agreed.

9. Representative Reports on outside bodies

Min 1692:19 The Vice-chair, Cllr G. Blackman, spoke to advise that he had attended a KALC meeting the week before and had informed the members of the ongoing issues with the Stoke and Allhallows School merger.

Cllr J. Wallace also spoke to advise that she had attended the latest Rural Liaison meeting. She reported that the attendees had been shown a presentation in relation to the Blue and Green Spaces Infrastructure and Strategy Plans and that there had been a long discussion surrounding the road closure to Cooling Road, following necessary repairs due to subsidence.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke in response to Cllr J. Wallace to express his concerns that the roads in Medway were not being properly maintained by the Highways Authority. He also advised that he now assumed the plans to purchase a small section of the farmers field in Cooling to bypass the subsiding road had failed, hence its proposed closure.

10. Play Parks Contract

Min 1693:19 Following the Clerks report ref: **Min 1690:19**, the Chairman Cllr B. Stone, asked the Clerk to write to the Police to inform them of misuse of nitrous oxide with evidence of small gas cannisters scattered around the village.

It was acknowledged however that this issue was a nationwide epidemic, with reports of similar experiences within the local tabloids.

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11. Cleaning

Min 1694:19 Cllr R. Morrad spoke to advise that he understood the Parish Council would be discussing the next precept budget shortly and as such he asked the members to consider incorporating a provision for street cleaning, following complaints from various Parishioners on Facebook.

He advised that many of the villagers had commented that they had not seen the streets cleaned by Medway Council on a regular basis and that it had been noted that other surrounding villages employed their own street cleaners.

Based on these comments Cllr R. Morrad advised that he had already investigated this matter via Medway Council, where he had been informed that most of the village was cleaned on a fortnightly basis (with a broom and a sweeper vehicle) however remaining parts of the village were only cleaned on a 4-weekly basis.

A discussion ensued between the members in regards to street cleaning, where it was felt the villagers should be responsible for disposing of their own rubbish, which would also help to keep the next precept to a minimum.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, advised however that he would be happy to revisit this matter should a formal complaint from a Parishioner arise.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise that other villages had signs scattered around the main roads to remind the residents to take their litter home. She wondered if the Parish Council were to adopt similar strategy if this might help.

It was agreed that the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, would investigate the cost for signage, and where applicable speak to Medway Council to ask permission to mount these signs to the lampposts etc.

Mr R. Morrad also arranged to contact Mrs J. Allen in the event that the public car park in Lower Stoke needed cleaning to arrange for Mr C. Davis of Colyn Property Services to carry out the relevant works.

12. Website & IT

Min 1695:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to confirm receipt of the October website usage report, which she had circulated to the members prior to the meeting. This report was evaluated and was deemed acceptable.

Following on from the last meeting ref: **Min 1674:19**, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to ask the members for their views in relation to asking Mrs L. Atkinson to set up a new Parish Council website and associated email addresses. She and Cllr R. Morrad both shared their concerns that the current set up was not only non GDPR compliant but also was not working very well since the new Medway Council IT infrastructure amendments had taken place.

A short discussion ensued in relation to the associated email addresses. Cllr R. Morrad proposed the members accept Mrs L. Atkinson's kind offer to assist in setting up a new webpage, alongside at least one associated email address. This proposal was seconded by Cllr J. Wallace and unanimously agreed.

13. Highways & Transportation

Min 1696:19 The Chairman Cllr B. Stone spoke to ask the Clerk, Mrs J Allen, to report the untidy vegetation in Middle Street to Medway Council and to ask their team to cut back the brambles

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on the bank. He also reported further episodes of fly tipping within the village, which included an old fridge and an abandoned tyre in New Hall Farm Lane, a couple of bed bases and some black bin bags in Cuckolds Green Road and several full black plastic sacks in Hoopers Lane.

Cllr R. Morrad also spoke to address the letter he had been handed in relation to the poor condition of the public footpath in Upper Stoke. It was identified that this footpath was the RS36, where it would appear that the footpath and surrounding ground had been churned up by farming machinery.

It was agreed that Cllr J. Wallace would take some photos of the affected path in the daylight, email these photos over to the Clerk, who in turn would pass these onto the Footpaths office at Medway Council (Mr Adam Taylor) to ask him to address this matter with the local farmer.

14. J R Brickwork

Min 1697:19 The Chairman, Cllr B Stone, spoke to confirm that he was meeting Mr M. Bucknall of Eastborough Landscapes, at Button Drive the next morning to discuss the removal of the brambles opposite the school.

15. Village Hall report

Min 1698:19 The Chairman, Cllr B Stone, spoke to confirm that there was a hole in the village hall roof, which meant that the ladies' toilets were currently out of action for the foreseeable future or until the repairs had taken place.

Following a discussion at the end of last year surrounding the Parish Council's annual donation of £1,000 to aid with the maintenance of the Village Hall, the Chairman asked the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, to get in touch with the treasurer, Ms C. Gurr to arrange for payment as soon as possible.

16. Standing Orders

Min 1699:19 Due to Cllr R. Bridge's absence it was noted that there would be no report in relation to the revised Standing Orders that evening.

The members discussed accepting the amendments Cllr R. Bridge had previously mentioned, where he had made reference to several small points in making the Standing Orders gender neutral.

It was acknowledged that the Council did need to adopt a set of Standing Orders this financial year therefore it was proposed by the Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, to accept Cllr R. Bridge's revised Standing Orders, which was seconded by Cllr G. Barron and unanimously agreed.

17. Upper and Middle Stoke Notice Boards

Min 1700:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, reported that she was meeting with Mr P. Sowter in the morning to go over the repairs he had kindly already undertaken.

18. Disabled Parking

Min 1701:19 Due to Cllr J. Cole's absence it was noted that there would be no report in relation to Disabled Parking in the village that evening.

19. Pension Scheme

Min 1702:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to report her findings in connection to a 'company' pension scheme.

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She advised that having spoken to KALC that she understood that the recommended pension scheme for Parish Clerks was the 'Local Government pension'. From speaking to the new Business Manager (Steven Tagg) at LGPS she had been informed that the Parish Council would need to arrange for an 'Atterbury report' to in order to join which would cost in excess of £2,000 to arrange.

Mrs J. Allen reported that due to the amount of money this scheme would cost to join that she had investigated alternative pension options. She passed the Chairman details of the People's pension agreement, which would cost in excess of £360 (including VAT) to join.

The Chairman agreed to look further into the People's Pension terms and conditions and report back to the Clerk with his findings in due course.

20. Weed Control at Heron Way

Min 1703:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to report that the weeds growing against Ms Gatling-Wylie's fence had been treated. She also informed the members that upon speaking to Ms Gatling-Wylie to update her that she was now complaining of a hole that had appeared under the mesh wire fence into her back garden.

Mrs J. Allen advised that she had asked Mrs Gatling-Wylie to formally write to complain about the hole if she wanted the Parish Council to consider repairs. Mrs J. Allen advised the members that to date she had not heard from the Parishioner in question.

21. Village Voice article

Min 1704:19 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to ask the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, to place an article in the next edition of the Village Voices publication to remind the Parishioners to clear up after their pets and to take their rubbish home.

A further recommendation was made by Cllr R. Morrad to inform the villagers that any rubbish bin within the village can be used to dispose of bagged dog faeces and not just the designated red bins.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, also suggested placing a message in the Village Voices publication in relation to the small silver nitrous oxide gas canisters found lying around the village.

22. Any other business (no votes may be taken)

Min 1705:19 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, advised the members that he would be submitting an invoice for reimbursement of funds, following the purchase of a poppy wreath from the Parish Council for Armistice Day in time for the next meeting.

23. Date of next meeting

Min 1706:19 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to confirm the date of the next meeting to be held at Stoke Village Hall on Wednesday 4th December 2019 at 7.00pm.

He also advised the members that he would be absent from this meeting, due to prior commitments.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.