

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Tuesday 29th June 2021

Face to Face Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 8.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone (Chairman) Cllr J. Wallace ~ Vice-chair
Cllr G. Blackman Cllr K. Copping
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: 0 (None)

Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, opened the meeting at 8.03pm and thanked the Councillors present for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 5005:21 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R. Morrad and Cllr R. Bridge.

It was understood that as per the last meeting, ref Min 4064:21, Cllr R. Morrad was uncomfortable in attending face to face meetings presently owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Cllr R. Bridge had also given his apologies owing to prior commitments.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 5006:21 None.

3. Internal Auditor's report for year ending 2020/21

To review the internal auditors report for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Min 5007:21 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that she had not received the internal auditors report as she had hoped. She reassured them however that she would forward a copy of this report onto them as soon as it had come through.

The Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace also spoke to advise that she had identified the figures on the reports had been either wound up or down. The Clerk spoke in response to advise the Vice-Chair that this was an automated feature on the members' financial software package.

Finally, Cllr K. Copping spoke to raise a query over the members budgets, where he questioned what the subtitle 'Forward Planning' was for. A discussion ensued where the Clerk arranged to email Cllr K. Copping a copy of both the members original budget planner and their asset register.

4. Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021

To approve the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Min 5008:21 The members reviewed the accounts for the year ending March 2021, where they deemed the figures as acceptable.

5. Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21

To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020-21, Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2020.

Min 5009:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, read in turn each of the points from the Annual Governance Statement as per shown below.

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1.	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.
2.	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
3.	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.
4.	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
5.	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.
6.	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.
7.	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.
8.	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.

After various discussions and careful consideration, the members answered 'Yes' to each section.

The Vice-Chair Cllr J. Wallace spoke to propose the Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, sign Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2020. This proposal was seconded by Cllr G. Blackman and unanimously agreed.

Accordingly, the Chairman Cllr B. Stone signed Section 1, in front of both the members of the Parish Council and the Clerk/ RFO.

6. **Accounting Statements for 2020-21**

a). To approve the Accounting Statements for 2020-21, Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2021 and the supporting Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2021 plus the explanation of the significant variations from last year (2019-20) to this year (2020-21) and the explanation of any differences to be sent to the External Auditor.

Min 5010:21 The members carefully evaluated the figures provided in Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending March 2021, where they deemed the Accounting Statement as acceptable.

The Vice-Chair Cllr J. Wallace spoke to propose the Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, sign Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2020. This proposal was seconded by Cllr K. Copping and unanimously agreed.

Accordingly, the Chairman Cllr B. Stone signed Section 2 in front of both the members of the Parish Council and the Clerk/RFO.

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7. Lower Stoke Car Park Lease

To discuss the proposed conditions for the new Medway Council Lower Stoke Car Park lease

Min 5011:21 A discussion ensued surrounding the 'new' car park lease, following receipt of the correspondence from Medway Council.

Cllr K. Copping spoke to refer to the members to the comments he had made by email, which read as follows:

1.19 states that the area of the carpark will be shown in red on the plan. To answer Rod's query about the bollarded area. I think the area shaded in grey is the 'No parking' area, in front of the bollards, which is part of the car park. It was shown exactly the same on the previous agreement which was accepted by the PC.

3.3.1 As I see it, we are being required to maintain the 'no parking' signage in front of the MHS parking bays, not enforce no parking. This was in the previous lease agreement. We will be required to maintain, repair and make good any damage caused by vehicles using the car park, to the wall etc. Again, this was in the previous agreements.

3.3.4.7 Makes it our responsibility to mark out park bays subject to the consent of the landlord. This would only come into play if we ask permission to mark out parking bays.

3.16 states, 'The tenant must FIVE full particulars' This should read 'FILE all particulars'.

6.6.1 States 'Either the landlord NOR the tenant' this should be 'landlord OR the tenant'

1.1 States that the lease starts on 17th September 2020.

6.9 suggests that the agreement will be signed in October of this year!

The agreement to exclude security of tenure, refers to TOKE Parish Council and has Cllr R. Morrad's address listed (as the previous Clerk).

Cllr K. Copping spoke further to remind the members that if the Parish Council paid to mark out the car park with white lines and then subsequently went on to relinquish their lease, that they would still be liable for any charges associated in removing the parking bays.

Following this point an in-depth discussion ensued surrounding the terms and conditions of the lease, where reference to comments made by Cllr R. Morrad were also mooted.

After careful consideration the members unanimously agreed, that subject to the points listed above being amended, that they would sign the proposed 'new' lease. Accordingly, the Clerk was instructed to get back in touch with Medway Council to arrange for the revised lease, before presenting the documentation to the Parish Council for signature.

8. Any other business

Min 5012:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, asked in member in turn if they had any other business.

The Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, spoke to advise that she had received a complaint concerning an overgrown alleyway, which she would be discussing further with the members. She also advised that she was hoping to attend the next virtual Rural Liaison meeting, planned to take place virtually the next evening.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone also spoke to ask if the Clerk could if she could include a request to provide the Village Hall with a donation of £1,000 on the next month's agenda.

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9. **Date of next meeting**

Min 5013:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the main Village Hall on Wednesday 7th July 2021.

He also spoke to remind the Councillors that the number of villagers allowed to attend the next meeting would be limited, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and to allow for social distancing.

10. **Close of meeting**

Min 5014:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, closed the meeting at 20.45pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 7th July 2021	7.00pm	Village Hall
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