

# STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

## MINUTES

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Face to Face Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00 pm

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

Members of the public: Two (2)

### **PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

#### **Part A. Public Discussions**

A letter was handed to the Chairman by one of the Parishioners present, where an appeal for additional information surrounding the use of the old Stoke Primary Academy building by the Maritime Trust was requested by another member of the public, following a complaint of parking across her driveway.

Additional concerns were also raised regarding the Maritime Trust take over, which included :

- Confirmation where the prospective parents would park ?
- Confirmation where the children would be dropped off by the school buses ?
- Confirmation if the children would be expected to walk along Allhallows Road, where concerns over the lack of pavement space was aired.

A discussion ensued surrounding the installation of double yellow lines, where Cllr P. Egan spoke to question what impact additional parking restrictions would have on the village. The members also questioned how the new parking restrictions would be policed, the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to moot the idea of a temporary parking wardens, which was recognised as the method used for other schools.

A further complaint concerning a car parked on the pavement of the corner of Button Drive was heard, alongside a request for an update on speeding cars through the village and if the marshes could be sprayed again this year, to reduce the amount of mosquito larvae from hatching.

#### **Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items**

None.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, opened the meeting at 7.15pm and thanked the Councillors and the members of the public for attending.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Min 7128:22 An apology for absence was received from Cllr K. Mansell, who had been taken ill on the day of the meeting.

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2. **To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

Min 7129:22 None.

3. **Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature**

Min 7130:22 None.

4. **Ward Councillor Report**

**a). A report by Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast**

Min 7131:22 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise the members that she had received no report from Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast this month.

5. **Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting**

**a). To receive and approve the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

Min 7132:22 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting, held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022, were submitted.

Subject to the amendment of a spelling error it was proposed by the Vice Chair, Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by Cllr P. Egan, that the minutes be approved as a correct record. The motion was carried, with four (4) Councillors voting in agreement and Cllr K. Copping abstaining, owing to his absence at the last meeting.

6. **Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

Min 7133:22 None.

7. **Planning**

**a). Applications**

Min 7134:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to confirm that there had been no new planning applications received since the last meeting.

**b). Decisions**

Min 7135:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke again to acknowledge that there had been no new planning decisions reached since the last meeting.

**c). Appeals and Other Matters.**

Min 7136:22 None.

8. **Finance**

**a). To agree financial performance against the budget for the month of March 2022.**

**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 7137:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to raise a couple of queries surrounding payments showing on the members budget planner towards the upkeep and maintenance of their play parks, he also queried if the members had budgeted for the Clerk's living wage increase, as agreed at the last meeting, ref: Min 7126:22.

Min 7138:22 Cllr K. Copping spoke to propose that points a,b,c, d & e be approved en bloc, this proposal was seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr J. Wallace and was unanimously agreed.

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Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£605.32	March 2022 Wages plus back pay
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – March 2022
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£33.92	Broadband & Telephone line rental for March 2022
Colin Davis	Min 1992:20	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£168.00	March 2022 Payment Inspections & Cleaning INV:3426
ICO	<b>TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY</b>	DIRECT DEBIT	£35.00	Data Protection Fee
Mortley Landscapes Services Ltd	<b>TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY</b>	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£450.00	Labour for removal of bent and twisted fence at Button Drive INV:14
KPS Office Supplies	<b>TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY</b>	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£20.31	50% of costs towards stationery White paper & archive folders INV: 22974
KPS Office Supplies	<b>TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY</b>	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£8.93	50% of costs towards stationery Paper Fasteners INV: 23003
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£48.42	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for March 2022
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£1,404.90</b>	

## f). To appoint an Internal Auditor for the end of the financial year 2021/2022

Min 7139:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, presented the Parish Council with a list of recommended internal auditors, as supplied by KALC. She asked the members to consider instructing local contractor Mr M. Fielder-White, to carry out the Parish Council's audit for the financial year 2021/2022.

A short discussion ensued, where after careful consideration the members unanimously agreed to proceed with the Clerk's recommendation and to instruct Mr M. Fielder-White.

## 9. Management of the Council's land and property

### a). Playparks

#### i Allhallows Road Playpark

#### ii Heron Way Playpark

#### iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 7140:22 The Play Park inspections from the month of March were evaluated. The reports received confirmed that the play equipment in Upper Stoke appeared to be in good order and that all the touch points were being regularly disinfected.

The report for the Button Drive play park confirmed that there was limited access to the park as the gate had been cable tied shut owing to the storm damage to the fencing, however the site had been litter picked and the external seats disinfected.

Finally, the report for the Heron Way play park confirmed that the two curved blue timber

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barriers were still loose and that brambles were now growing into the park.

A discussion ensued where the Clerk was asked to instruct Eastborough Landscapes to provide a quote to cut back the brambles at Heron Way and to treat the moss in all three play parks, where it was noted that this point still remained outstanding.

**Min 7141:22** The members also discussed the quote received for a new fence at Button Drive from Mortley Landscapes, where they acknowledged that the contractor had quoted £8,250 to replace the whole fence and £4,125 to replace the damaged side. The Clerk was asked to submit the quotes to the insurance company for consideration and to obtain a second quote from Webb Flint Ltd as a comparison.

## **b). To receive an update on the remedial work to the two newly installed toddler units following the post installation inspection reports.**

**Min 7142:22** Cllr K. Copping spoke to refer the members to an email handed out by the Clerk prior to the meeting, where she had printed a response from the 'Independent Play Inspection Company' concerning their 2<sup>nd</sup> post installation inspection.

He advised that whilst the contractors claimed to have installed the new play equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, the Parish Council had subsequently been made aware that the installation was in contravention of British Standards.

Cllr K. Copping spoke further to advise that he would have liked to have seen the manufacturer's instructions, however he was aware that the additional comments made by the inspector that indicated the play equipment was classed as low risk, where he understood that no play equipment was 'risk free'.

Taking into account the above, Cllr K. Copping proposed that based on the low-risk status, the members considered placing the new play equipment back into use, that they released the retention and under the terms of their warranty they ask the contractors to come back to tighten the two loose curved blue timber barriers on the apparatus. This proposal was seconded by Cllr P. Egan and was unanimously agreed.

Accordingly, the Clerk was instructed to write to Safeplay to confirm that the retention would be released but only based on the risk assessment provided by the Play Inspection Company, and that despite the slides being in contravention of British Safety Standards, they posed a sufficiently low risk.

**Min 7143:22** Cllr K. Copping spoke further to inform the members that he had been flagged down by the owners of the property adjacent to the playpark at Button Drive, who were concerned about one of the bows of the recently pollarded trees, which appeared to have now died off after it appeared to have been attacked by a woodpecker.

A discussion ensued in regards to the possible removal of the trees, where it was acknowledged that the trees had been previously diagnosed with 'Dutch Elm disease' and were likely to die in the not-too-distant future.

Cllr P. Egan spoke to air his concerns in regards to heave on the owners' property if the trees were removed artificially and that he felt it would be better if the trees were to eventually die of their own accord.

A quick discussion ensued, where the Clerk was asked to instruct a tree surgeon to inspect the damaged arm and to advise on the best course of action.

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## 10. Highways & Transportation

### a). Footpaths

Min 7144:22 No report.

### b). Lighting

Min 7145:22 No report.

### c). Highways and verges

Min 7146:22 No report.

### d). Pot holes

Min 7147:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that she had been in receipt of a telephone call from Medway Council confirming that the repairs to the previously reported pot hole on the A228 / Grain Road were going to be undertaken.

### e). Fly tipping

Min 7148:22 No report.

### f). Grass cutting

Min 7149:22 The members acknowledged receipt of an email from Medway Norse which confirmed that the reaction ground and highway verges were scheduled to be cut every 3 weeks from April to November and that on average they estimated that they would carry out between 10-15 cuts every year.

When asked to confirm which areas of Stoke Medway Norse were responsible for cutting, the contractors confirmed none, but that they were responsible for cutting grass 5 minutes down the road (??).

Bemused by the contractor's response, the Clerk was instructed to go back to Medway Norse to ask them to specify what areas of grass they cut in Upper Stoke, Lower Stoke and Middle Stoke.

## 11. Communication

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

#### b). Parish Council owned tablets

Min 7150:22 Cllr J. Wallace spoke inform the members that as per her last report that she had archived Cllr R. Bridge's email address from the server.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, also reported that she would be updating the webpage shortly to include the finalised minutes and new notices.

## 12. Village Hall

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

Min 7151:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone reported that the Village Hall had been in receipt of an additional 'Small Business' grant from the Government for £2,600.

## 13. External Contractors

### a). J R Brickwork

Min 7152:22 None.

### b). Eastborough Landscapes

Min 7153:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, was instructed to chase Eastborough Landscapes for an update on the treatment of the moss growing on the playpark surfacing, to ask them to assess the

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possible dead bow of the tree at Button Drive and for a quote for removal of the brambles at the Heron Way play park.

## **c). Colyn Property Services**

Min 7154:22 None.

## **14. Feedback to Public Questions**

**a). To receive a response/update on the last public questions raised, following the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022.**

Min 7155:22 In response to the last Parish Council meeting, the Chairman Cllr B. Stone spoke to confirm that there was no further update in regards to speeding cars through the village or the random attack on a car windscreen with a hand tool.

Cllr B. Stone expressed again the importance of reporting any crime to the Police, in order to build up a true record of the felonies being committed within the village of Stoke.

## **15. Disabled Parking in Lower Stoke**

**a). To receive an update on the new layout of the Lower Stoke Car Park, including the repositioning of the disabled parking bay.**

Min 7156:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to inform the members that during the next dry spell of weather that he hoped to be able to mark out the temporary lines in the car park to coincide with the details listed within the QR code. In the meantime, however he confirmed that he would circulate the QR code to all the take aways and the shops within the village, where the survey would run for approximately 8 weeks.

Cllr P. Egan closed his report in advising that he was still waiting for MHS Homes to confirm exactly what part of the land in the Lower Stoke they owned and asked the Clerk, Mrs J Allen, to chase the repairs to the pot hole in the car park.

## **16. Flooded Manhole cover on A228 Grain Road**

**a). To receive an update on the flooded manhole cover located on the A228 Grain Road.**

Min 7157:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred the members to an email she had received from Medway Council regarding the flooded manhole covers on the A228 / Grain Road.

This email confirmed that Medway Council were waiting to hear from Southern Water concerning their recent investigations in order to determine the source of the leak. **Please see Annex A for a copy of this email.**

The members also spoke of their recent observations of the manhole cover, where they agreed that the escape of water on the road did not seem as severe as it had.

Min 7158:22 Cllr K. Copping spoke to inform the members of an additional leak that had occurred in the High Street, located close to the public toilets. He advised that soon after this leak had been reported, that the matter had been resolved quickly by the water board, where he perceived the leak was related to a blockage within the sewage system.

## **17. Platinum Jubilee Event**

**a). To plan and discuss ideas to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.**

Min 7159:22 The Vice-Chair Cllr J. Wallace reported that following the last Ward Councillor's report ref: Min 7089:22, that she had ordered two new benches for the village, both with an engraved plaque to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Additionally with the full £2,000 grant available to spend, she advised that she had also been

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able to source a quote for the associated costs in installing the two benches with local contractor Webb Flint, which had also been passed to Medway Council to fund.

A vote of thanks was passed to both Cllr J. Wallace for all her help in organising the benches and to Cllr B. Stone for offering to store them in his outhouses, until such point as they were ready to be installed.

**Min 7160:22** The members spoke collectively in regards to the new Jubilee trees, where it was understood the Cllr K. Mansell had offered to look into potential suppliers and the associated costs at the last meeting. In advance of the May meeting however, the Clerk was asked to chase Cllr K. Mansell for a further response.

## 18. **Policies**

### **a). To review the following two Parish Council's policies for re-adoption**

#### **The All-Risks Management Policy**

**Min 7161:22** The members evaluated the 'All-Risks Management Policy' where a discussion ensued concerning the appropriate 'Health and Safety Regulations' of either 1992 or 1996. Various notes on a printed copy of the policy were made, where the Clerk was asked to make the relevant amendments and to bring the revised policy back for re-adoption at the next meeting.

#### **The Audit Regime**

**Min 7162:22** The members evaluated 'The Audit Regime' policy where they identified that the document needed to be brought up to date with the 'Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015'.

It was felt that Regulations 4 & 6 had been muddled up on the member's previous policy and that the internal auditor's requirements needed to include a review of the Parish Council's 'Financial Risk Assessment. It was also noted that the requirement for the auditor to be 'professionally qualified' should be added as a footnote, rather than a bullet point.

Based on the above findings, it was agreed that both Councillors K. Copping and P. Egan would look further into the required regulations to make the appropriate amendments. Once actioned the policy would be updated and brought back to the Parish Council for adoption.

## 19. **Village Voice Publication**

**Min 7163:22** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to inform the members that she understood the next edition of the Village Voices publication was centred around the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Accordingly, the Clerk was asked to chase the 'Stoke Community Project' for a copy of their poster to promote the village event and to place an article in the next edition to confirm that momentous occasion.

## 20. **Correspondence**

**Min 7164:22** None.

## 21. **Reports and Circulars**

**Min 7165:22** None.

## 22. **Any other business**

**Min 7166:22** None.

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23. **Date of next meeting**

Min 7167:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the main Village Hall on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

24. **Close of meeting**

Min 7166:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone closed the meeting at 8.55pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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## **ANNEX A**

16). **Flooded Manhole cover on A228 Grain Road** Min 7157:22

a). To receive an update on the flooded manhole cover located on the A228 Grain Road.

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**From:** Atkinson, Daniel  
**Sent:** 04 April 2022 12:47  
**To:** Stoke Parish Council

Hi Jenny,

Not much more has happened. Southern Water have been undertaking further investigations/tests for the last 2-3 weeks. I've asked for an update but not heard anything back yet. Unfortunately, that's all I can update at the moment.

Kind regards,

**Dan Atkinson** | Engineer (Drainage) | Highways | Medway Council