

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Wednesday 22nd May 2019

The Village Hall ~ 7.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone (Chairman) Cllr G. Blackman
Cllr G. Barron Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: 26

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

1. Welcome by the Chairman

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting 2018

The minutes from the Annual Parish Council meeting, held on Wednesday 2nd May 2018, were submitted by the Clerk.

It was unanimously agreed that the previous minutes were a true record and accordingly they were approved.

3. The Parish Council

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to give the following report :

The past year has been one of change for the parish council. Our long-time clerk Mr Rod Morrad decided to retire after many years of keeping us all in order. We were very sorry to see him go and wished him well in his retirement. We welcomed the new clerk Mrs Jenny Allen at the beginning of the year and I'm sure that she will be a great asset to the council.

The local parish elections took place earlier this month but as several of our councillors had decided against standing again and no other names were put forward there was no election of parish councillors in Stoke. The present council now has only three members but it is hoped to co-opt further members in the near future, so if anyone is interested please contact Jenny for information.

The council continues to maintain the three playparks, with regular inspections taking place and any damages repaired as soon as possible. It also helps with the upkeep of the Village Hall wherever possible, as this is a much-needed amenity in the village. At the present time it is under-used, so please consider it when planning a social event.

The last twelve months have seen Upper Stoke plagued with lorries, trying to make deliveries to the new Amazon warehouse at Kingsnorth. Despite repeated complaints to Amazon and Medway Council it took many months for the situation to improve. New signage was eventually erected resulting in a significant reduction in "lost" drivers using the road through Upper Stoke, to the relief of the residents.

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There are the usual concerns in the village regarding fly-tipping, general litter and dog mess. If it belongs to you or your pet, bag it and bin it at your home or in the bins provided by the council, NOT on other peoples' property.

Parking is another issue that causes problems in the village. Unfortunately some of the houses were built before the rise in car ownership and some of the new builds do not have sufficient parking. Be a considerate neighbour, if you have a garage and/or drive, please use it for your own vehicles and leave the car park and streets for those who have no-where else to park. Also double yellow lines are there for a reason and vehicles should not be parked over them.

Thank you to my fellow councillors, both present and newly retired, for giving up their time to attend meetings both in the village and outside. I would also like to thank the members of the public who have attended the meetings. The Parish Council is for the village and its residents, so please come along to the meetings and see what we do. Your input is always welcome.

4. Financial Situation

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone advised that after much deliberation the members had reluctantly decided to increase the 2019/2020 Precept to £21,000, to incorporate the rise in cost of living.

With this increase he informed everyone present that the total balance of both accounts (including the reserves) equated to over £30,000.

5. Village Voices

The Chairman, handed the floor over to Mr M. Pearce from the Village Voices publication who provided an excellent, in-depth presentation into the publishing and production of the monthly Magazine and the quarterly Strood & Hoo Peninsula Times publication.

Mr M. Pearce advised the meeting of the fantastic work the Village Voices team undertook within the community from donating raffle prizes to funding trophies for voluntary groups.

He advised his organisation were strong supporters of renewable energy resources and only used suppliers that replaced the trees used in the production of paper. He also advised that due to the fluctuating costs of printing that these publications were produced via various suppliers throughout the country.

He also spoke of how many of his delivery team were volunteers and how the publication was targeted at the local community, mainly within the villages of Allhallows, Chattenden, Cliffe, Cliffe Woods, Cobham, Cooling, Cuxton, Frindsbury, Halling, High Halstow, Higham, Hoo, Hoo Marina Park, Isle of Grain, Kingsnorth, Lower Higham, Lower Shorne, Lower Upnor, Medway City Estate, Shorne, Shorne Ridgeway, Sole Street (part of), Spendiff, St. Mary Hoo, Stoke, Strood, Upper Bush, Upper Halling, Upper Upnor & Wainscott.

6. Community Reports

The members received two Community reports from the Peninsular Methodist Church and wHoo Cares:

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Peninsula Methodist Church – Stoke Centre

Report to Stoke Parish Council AGM

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The chapel unfortunately still only has worship/fellowship on the first Sunday of the month and while it would be lovely to have more people wish to participate in collective worship, we are aware this is unlikely to happen any time soon.

We continue to host on a Wednesday morning toddler group which has a group of regulars but is for all to come and join an and we would love to see some new faces, we often have a few who come with no children.

Foodbank continues to be open every Thursday and we have had several clients in the past year. Companion Café takes place alongside the Foodbank on the fourth Thursday of the month the popularity seems to happen in waves but it would be nice to offer support to others who may need it.

We continue to pray for our community and continue to explore ways of how we can be the church in the village. Our minister the Rev Kan Yu is keen for the chapel to be visible and active in the community and we are open to suggestions as to how that may be facilitated.

Last year Khan was the initial driver of the Big Lunch that took place in the park opposite the school last year and alongside some of the parents from the school has arranged for Carol Singing and a Quiz Night.

The Big Lunch will take place again on the 9th June and we would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone this is a community event not a church or school event and it would be lovely to have businesses and other community members and residents on board driving this forward and to perhaps create successive people who can participate in the organising and bringing the community events to the calendar not just for next year but for years to come.

We thank God for his blessings and are encouraged by all that he continues to do in our community. We pray in love for the village of Stoke and the Parish Council.

wHoo Cares Report

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wHoo Cares has now been in operation for 2 ½ years and we are growing from strength to strength each year. We are currently supporting almost 100 Partners (clients) with 3 in Stoke, and have 37 Community Supporters (volunteers). As a reminder, we support people who are socially isolated or vulnerable and live on the Hoo Peninsula (ME3 postcode).

We work with our Partners (clients) to identify activities that will make a difference in their lives and promote independence. This could be something like having one of our volunteers pop in for a coffee and a chat once a week, help to do a fortnightly shop or accompany them to a medical

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appointment. Or, it might be something as simple as introducing a person to the local coffee morning or bowls group to meet like-minded friends and neighbours.

We work closely with local communities, groups and organisations as well as other local and national organisations in order to achieve the best results for our Partners so if there is another organisation out there that we think could help someone, we will sign post them to it but, importantly, we will follow up with the signposting to make sure it's what the Partner needs/wants.

This last financial year, we provided 3777 hours of support to our Partners including over 1600 hours of befriending support and almost 1,100 transport visits to a range of locations including doctors & hospital appointments, shopping, support groups and community activities.

In December, we had our second Christmas Meal in High Halstow with twice as many attendees as the first year. The feedback was very positive and there are plans to do it again this year. Funding is always a challenge and so the Parish Council's grant was very much appreciated this year.

We continue to look at ways to increase our income without having to depend on grants. We are still working on our plans for a community transport service – unfortunately, this has taken longer than expected but it is still being progressed.

We are also working in partnership with a local recruitment agency to support people on the Peninsula and Medway to be registered and employed as Personal Care Assistants. Fundraising events this year:

- Indoor Car Boot in Grain
- Friends of wHoo Cares: Runner in the London Marathon
- Sponsored walk, 1st September. More details will follow closer to the time.
- Friends of wHoo Cares: Co-Op community fund, Amazon Smile, easy fundraising.

Finally, just to say, if anyone is interested in volunteering, becoming a shareholder or knows someone that could use our support, please get in touch. I also have some flyers with me with our contact details. Thank you for your time.

7. Conclusion

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.44pm.