

# STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

## MINUTES

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019

The Village Hall ~ 7.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr G. Blackman ~ Vice-chair Cllr J. Wallace  
Cllr G. Barron Cllr R. Bridge  
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 and the Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

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

**Min 1707:19** An apology for absence was received from the Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, who had prior work commitments. It was also acknowledged that Cllr J. Cole was missing for the fourth consecutive meeting.

Mrs J. Allen confirmed that she had written a letter to Cllr J. Cole, as discussed at the last meeting **Min 1684:19**, to establish if he still wished to remain in post. However to date, the Clerk reported that she had not received a response.

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

**Min 1708:19** Cllr R. Morrad spoke to share his findings in connection to declarations of 'Interest and Dispensations'.

He advised that having looked further into this matter using the Medway Council website he understood that all members still needed to declare any declarations or dispensations at every meeting (despite any being listed on an individual Councillors DPI).

He urged the members to declare their interests at all meetings, unless Medway Council had issued a dispensation agreement, and recommended that Cllr B. Stone also record a declaration of interest in connection to the agreed £1,000 donation to be paid to the Village Hall, being both the Chairman to Stoke Parish Council and the Village Hall committee.

#### **3. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting - Appendix A**

**Min 1709:19** The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019, already circulated via the Clerk, were submitted.

It was proposed by Cllr R. Morrad and seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackman, that they be approved as a correct record and signed. This motion was agreed with four Councillors voting in favour and one abstaining, due to absence.

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## 4. **Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

**Min 1710:19** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise that following an email sent on 2<sup>nd</sup> December that it was understood that after the meeting had ended, Cllr J. Wallace learnt that she should not have been to participate in the vote concerning planning application MC/19/2831, due to a conflict of interest where her property boundary backed onto 2-3 Dennison Mews.

Cllr R. Morrad also spoke to advise that upon further inspection of the Lower Stoke car park that this area did not need cleaning, however it was noted that there were a few weeds starting to grow out from the wall, which might require further treatment later next year.

## 5. **Disclosure of other business**

**Min 1711:19** None.

## 6. **Planning**

### **a). Applications**

**Min 1712:19** None.

### **b). Decisions**

**Min 1713:19** None.

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

**Min 1714:19** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred the members to an email she had sent on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November, concerning planning application MC/19/1246 (land adjacent to Parsonage Cottages), where Medway Council had responded to the members concerns asking for the conditions to be upheld surrounding possible contamination of land on the site.

She presented the members with an intrusive investigational environmental report the vendors had conducted and asked the Council to reconsider their original decision.

A short discussion ensued between the members in regards to the land's previous use, where it the members unanimously concluded to accept the findings and to discharge the conditions.

## 7. **Finance – Appendix B**

### **a). To agree financial performance against the budget for November 2019**

**Min 1715:19** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, presented the members with the financial performance figures (that included the budgets set at the beginning of the year as a comparison) ranging from April 2019 through to November 2019. The Councillors evaluated these figures and after careful consideration they were deemed acceptable.

Cllr R. Morrad and Cllr J. Wallace spoke to remind the members that any contractors used should have the correct personal, accident and liability insurance and that the Clerk should highlight the expenses she is claiming for on any receipts used to purchase multiple goods.

### **b). Update of account(s) for 2019/20 including payments received.**

**Min 1716:19** The Councillors carefully reviewed the bank balances provided in Appendix B and deemed the figures acceptable.

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

### **d). Accounts for payment.**

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

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Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£34.99	Stationery from Wilkos and Ebay <b>Payment to be approved</b>
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£520.43	October 2019 wages
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – October 2019
Mr P. Sowter	Min 1679:19	BACS	£310.73	Repairs to notice boards
Colyn Property Services	Min 1673:19 Min 1675:19	BACS	£101.00	Fibreglass repairs to toddler tunnel & weed control at rear of 22 Heron Way INV 2769
Colyn Property Services	Min 1449:18	BACS	£88.00	November 2019 Payment INV 2782
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	-	DIRECT DEBIT	£34.00	Broadband & Phone line rental for November 2019
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£1124.15</b>	
Natwest	-	Credit - BACS	£1.65	Interest on savings account
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£1.65</b>	

**Min 1717:19** It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace 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.

**f). To set a date for an extraordinary meeting to discuss the 2020/2021 Precept.**

**Min 1718:19** The members unanimously agreed to incorporate the 2020/2021 Precept Figures into the next meeting instead of arranging for an additional extraordinary meeting.

**8. Grant Applications**

**Min 1719:19** The members acknowledged that there had been no new grant applications received over the month of November, where it was also noted that wHoo Cares had not written to either to request any funds.

**9. Management of the Council's land and property – Appendix C**

**a). Playparks**

**i Allhallows Road Playpark**

**Min 1720:19** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, highlighted the comments made on the report by Colyn Property Services, to advise that the plastic bolt covers on the spring seat had been vandalised (with evidence that someone had tried to melt them). Fortunately, however the equipment remained unaffected and intact.

**ii Heron Way Playpark**

**Min 1721:19** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred the members to the notes to advise a fire had taken place in the bin and a large amount of gas cannisters were found by the skateboard area on more than one occasion.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke to request an update following her enquiry to install a baby swing at the Heron Way Play park at the October meeting, **Min 1673:19**.

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A short discussion ensued, where Cllr R. Morrad informed Cllr J. Wallace that a previous appeal to install a baby swing in this park had been turned down a few years prior (whilst he was in post as Clerk) as it was established there was not enough room to install an additional swing frame safely.

## iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 1722:19 The Play Parks inspection from the month of November confirmed that the equipment appeared to be in good order.

Despite the comments in relation Allhallows Road and Heron Way, all three reports were unanimously approved as the equipment was deemed to be in an acceptable condition.

## 10. Highways & Transportation

### a). Footpaths

Min 1723:19 Cllr G. Barron spoke to advise that he had been in receipt of further complaints in relation to the poor condition of the RS36 footpath, as discussed at the last meeting Min 1696:19.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, reassured the members that she would chase the footpaths officer, Adam Taylor, for an update following her original request that the footpath be restored after it was churned up by farming machinery.

A discussion also ensued in relation to how many entrances/exits a play park should have and that it had been identified there was a right of way, which was frequently used by heavy duty farming equipment, in front of the children's play park.

### b). Lighting

Min 1724:19 The Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman spoke to ask if a request could be raised to install a street light at the end of the Grain Road in Lower Stoke. The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, advised the Vice-Chair that she would raise this enquiry via the Highways Inspector.

### c). Highways and verges

Min 1725:19 The Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman spoke to advise that the shrubbery and the brambles were still overhanging the road at the exit out of Middle Stoke.

### d). Pot holes

Min 1726:19 The Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman reported that he believed there were several pot holes located near to the entrance at Middle Stoke, however the current parked cars obscured their view.

### e). Fly tipping

Min 1727:19 Cllr G. Barron reported that the old discarded fridge and green tyre still remained in situ at New Hall Farm Lane. The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, advised she would log the complaint of fly tipping again via the Medway Council website.

### f). Litter Signs

Min 1728:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred to an email she sent on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, in relation to the 'no litter' signs, asking the members to decide how many signs they wanted, where these signs were to be placed and their approximate measurements. Relaying the message from Medway Council that these signs would be chargeable (at a cost which was currently unknown).

A discussion between the members ensued where they all debated the points raised, including if the village would take note of these signs. A decision was eventually agreed, that if these signs

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were not free of charge (where installation fees were originally only thought to have been chargeable) then they would not pursue this option presently. The members asked the Clerk to go back to Medway Council to advise them of this and to thank them for their time.

## 11. Representatives Reports

### a). KALC

Min 1729:19 Both Cllr G. Blackman and Cllr G. Barron spoke to confirm that they had attended KALC's AGM, held on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November at the Ditton Community Centre.

They provided a report to advise that there had been two very informative presentations, one from the South East Coast Ambulance Service and the other from IMAGO (a social action organisation). They advised that there had been five proposed motions, four of which had been passed without conflict but one that had caused a lot of animosity, which was eventually passed.

Cllr G. Barron reported that the members had agreed the nomination election process pack needed to be made much simpler and that the Kent Housing targets were too high. The members also discussed concerns that the current targets could be detrimental to public health and that the Government/Local Authorities needed to do more to ensure the correct planning application procedures were being carried out including air quality assessments and particle matter assessments on the roads.

Cllr G. Blackman and Cllr G. Barron ended their report in advising that KALC were encouraging member Councils to set up a faster response with their local authority in relation to welfare checks and traveller activities, and that they were also approaching NALC to ask them to review their legislations surrounding the rights of residents, private landowners, local councils and existing protections for travellers.

### b). Police Liaison

Min 1730:19 The Vice-chair, Cllr G. Blackman, spoke to advise that he had resigned from the Police Liaison committee due to lack of support from both Medway Council and the Police.

### c). Rural Liaison

Min 1731:19 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to report that the next Rural Liaison committee meeting was scheduled to take place in January 2020.

### d). Village Hall Committee

Min 1732:19 Cllr R. Bridge reported that he had attended the last Village Hall Committee meeting and that a discussion had taken place surrounding the poor condition of the utilities cabinet (located next to the Village Hall), which he offered to look at. He also reported that the Village Hall Committee Secretary, was meant to be making contact with the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, to provide her with the Village Hall Committee account details in order for the Parish Council to make the £1,000 donation as agreed.

## 12. Communications – Appendix D

### a). Update on the operation and usage of the Parish Council's existing website

Min 1733:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to confirm receipt of the November 2019 website usage report, which she had circulated to all members prior to the meeting. This report was evaluated by the members and deemed acceptable.

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## **b). Update on the construction of the Parish Council's new webpage**

### **c). Update on the creation of new Clerk and Parish Councillor email addresses**

Min 1734:19 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to inform the members that she had been liaising with Linda Atkinson, Clerk at St Mary Hoo Parish Council and Councillor at High Halstow Parish Council (who set up and now operates both the St Mary Hoo and the High Halstow Parish Council webpages).

She advised Ms Atkinson had kindly offered her expertise surrounding the construction and administration of the new Stoke Parish Council webpage and associated email addresses, however following a serious horse-riding accident Ms Atkinson had now sadly been taken ill and that she was now waiting for her to fully recover before revisiting this matter.

Once back on track Cllr J. Wallace advised that she hoped she would be able to come back to Council to advise of any associated costs and a possible timeframe in the New Year.

### **d). To review items that could be used in the next edition of the Village Voices publication**

Min 1735:19 The members deliberated over the items that could be used in the next edition of the Village Voices publication, where it was unanimously agreed to include an article in relation to litter, vandalism to cars and a link sent by the Chairman to the members surrounding the misuse of nitrous oxide, with evidence of small gas canisters scattered all around the village.

## **13. External Contractors**

### **a). J R Brickwork**

Min 1736:19 No further requests for works were discussed or requested.

### **b). Eastborough Landscapes**

Min 1737:19 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred the members to the quotation received from Eastborough Landscapes to clear and cut the brambles at Button Drive, to trim all overhanging branches from the surrounding area, to remove the cuttings and to retreat the brambles with herbicide in Spring 2020 at a cost of £476.00 + VAT.

After careful consideration Cllr G. Barron proposed to accept the quotation which was seconded by Cllr R. Bridge and unanimously agreed

## **14. Standing Orders**

### **a). To receive and approve the Parish Council's Standing Orders for the year commencing 2019 2020.**

Min 1737:19 Cllr R. Bridge spoke to advise that due to his present work commitments he had been unable to revisit the Parish Council's standing orders, to provide a direct comparison of the proposed amendments against the current standing orders. He reported that he hoped he would be able to revisit this matter after February 2020 and asked the Clerk to ensure this item was included in the March 2020 agenda.

Cllr R. Morrad also spoke to remind the members that they needed to adopt an updated set of Financial regulations before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, to comply with the 2019/2020 Audit.

## **15. Disabled Parking**

Min 1738:19 Due to Cllr J. Cole's absence it was noted that there was no report in relation to Disabled Parking in the village.

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## 16. Pension Scheme

**Min 1739:19** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to refer the members to the paperwork she had enclosed within the meeting packs concerning becoming a member of the People's Pension, which she was advised would be at a cost of £350 (inc VAT).

The members evaluated the paperwork received where it was noted by Cllr R. Bridge that the paperwork supplied actually showed a fee of £500 plus VAT.

Due to variation in price the members asked Mrs J. Allen to re-approach the People's Pension and to ask them to confirm the exact joining fee for reconsideration at the January meeting upon the Chairman's return.

## 17. Correspondence

**Min 1740:19** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to report that she had received very little postal correspondence in the Parish Office. Items she had received included a copy of the most recent bank statement(s), a couple of Viking Direct stationery flyers and a hard copy of Medway Council's invoice for the quarterly rent (paid via direct debit) for the Lower Stoke public car park.

## 18. Reports and Circulars

**Min 1741:19** None.

## 19. Date of next meeting

**Min 1742:19** The Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackman, spoke to confirm the date of the next meeting to be held at Stoke Village Hall on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 7.00pm.

**He thanked the members again for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25pm.**