

Stogumber Parish Council

Annual Parish Council Meeting

held on Thursday 10th May 2018

at Deane Close Common Room, commencing at 19.47

(in the format to be presented to the next meeting for approval)

Present:

Cllrs C. Bramall (Chair), M. Symes, V. Sellick, G. Tuckfield, T. Vesey, T Brick, G Rexworthy and A White

C Morrison-Jones (Clerk)

SCC Cllr C Lawrence, WSDC Cllrs A Trollope-Bellew

1) Election of Chairman and receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The appointment of C Bramall was proposed by VS and seconded by GT. There were no other nominations. All were in favour and the Chairman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2) To receive any apologies of absence

Apologies received from C Matravers

3) Election of Vice Chairman and receive the Vice Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

M Symes was proposed as Vice-Chair by GT and seconded by TB. There were no other nominations. All were in favour and the Vice-Chairman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4) Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

CB and AW-Beacon Field, as neighbours

5) Public comments, questions or suggestions

None

6) District and County Councillor reports

SCC Cllr C Lawrence report highlighted the following key areas

The Unitary Conversation: SCC have invited partners including District Councils to enter into a conversation looking at options for introducing a Unitary model of local government into Somerset. Whilst this is the very start of discussions it could see the abolition of the six current councils including the County Council and the establishment of one, two or some other configuration of single-tier authorities. Initial estimates show that savings of between £18 and £28 million could be achieved.

Primary School Places for Sept 2018: 93.8% of children starting school in 2018 have been allocated places at their first-choice primary school, a slight increase on previous years

Regional adoption agency: Somerset currently has over 500 Children in Care and although the County's adoption services are recognised as good by Ofsted, the Government now requires wider regional arrangements to be set up. Later this year therefore, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Somerset's adoption services will join together to become a single service called Adopt South West

Smoke free babies: It was recently celebrated that over 1000 babies have now been born from smoke free mums (mothers that have given up at the beginning of pregnancy)

Questions - TV reported that he has read that the Church of England are considering the continued funding of small church schools (less than 100 pupils). This is worrying. CL responded that she wasn't sure how it could be done but assumes that that the county would have to pick up the slack as it is a statutory duty. TV agreed to investigate the rumours further. CB noted that the neighbourhood plan is trying to protect the school & village hall site. ATB noted that case law has previously determined that if land was donated to the church for the purpose of running a school and the school closes, the ownership of the land reverts back to the original owner

WSDC Cllr A Trollope-Bellew

Unitary discussions: AT-B reported that he thought that the present county is too big for a single unitary authority, but too small for two unitary authorities (each needs a population of 300,000 to function efficiently). All Local Authorities in Somerset have to make savings but SCC's problems are the most acute and ATB stated that he can see why the conversation has to be had. SCC have a statutory duty to provide social care & highways, which is in effect an open cheque book as they cannot cap the spend.

New council: This now has the go ahead from the Secretary of State. It is expected that the order will pass through parliament by the end of June. Elections for the new council will be held on the 1st Thurs in May 2019.

Warding for the new council: The boundary commission can only start work when the order comes out of parliament but has received suggestion from both districts and will put forward the definitive proposals on 3rd July, with the consultation open for July & August. Ward sizes are to be strictly monitored and the Boundary Commission will only accept an electorate of 2063 (+ or - 10%) for the new wards. Crowcombe and Stogumber are provisionally going to be in two different wards. Stogumber it expected to be proposed to be in a ward that includes, amongst others, Dunster Carhampton, Old Cleeve and Elworthy. However, the Boundary Commission will consider any other suggestions that have the evidence to prove that the numbers meet the criteria. The final ward boundaries will be decided by December 2018

7) Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 8/3/18 and planning meetings held on 10/3/18, 24/3/18 & 28/4/18

The minutes for the PC meeting held on 8th of March 2018, and the planning meetings held on 10/3/18, 24/3/18 and 28/4/18 were approved by councillors and signed by the Chairman as a true record

M Symes noted that his question to ATB from the meeting held on 8th March were not included in the minutes, so for reference it is included below:

MS "what relevance do local and neighbourhood plans have if national planning policy takes precedence?" ATB "none, but it highlighted the need to change the no build policy in the hamlets. I and others are trying to change the policy"

8) Matters arising from the minutes

a) Speeding along Station Road

CB reported that he had attended a Speed Indicator Device (SID) meeting on 14th March. Station Road does not look to be a possible location for a SID as there is no speed limit, but he suggested that maybe Brook Street could be as it has a 30mph? It was observed that, at present, it is not against the law to drive through Stogumber village at 60mph.

The possibility of funding the installing a WIG-WAG sign on Station Road has been investigated and the estimated cost from SCC Highways is in the region of £4,600 but this cannot be absolutely

confirmed by SCC as it would require a survey, which they will not carry out until a definite commitment has been entered into by the PC. The clerk was requested to investigate funding streams. TV wondered if the school/PTA be able to help with fundraising? He also noted that it is not an impossible amount to be raised and that it should be publicised in the village. GT agreed to put an article in the Stogumber Standard to raise awareness of the proposal

As an interim measure, MS suggested that the PC could ask Highways if painted markings on the road could be re-enforced each side of the school

It was questioned whether there shouldn't it be a 20mph outside a school, but it was noted that there would have to be a 30mph already in existence in order to gain a reduction to 20mph.

SCC Cllr CL & WSDC Cllr ATB left the meeting at this point

b) matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda items below
None

9) Playground – consider the PC fundraising for new play equipment

The clerk had previously circulated website details of three play equipment manufacturers.

To gain a quote the clerk needs an idea of what equipment is wanted by councillors. Councillors agreed that the PC needed to look to the future and new equipment needed to last, so should consider metal constructions, rather than wood.

GT noted that the most popular request was a zip wire when children were surveyed at the open day last year. However, what has been purchased so far has been popular and has low maintenance costs. In future there may not be a volunteer who will do the grass cutting and maintenance and someone will have to be paid so this cost will need to be prepared for.

Councillors requested the clerk to arrange for a play equipment representative to visit the site and meet with a group of councillors to discuss suggest ideas / solutions that would suit the topography of the area, and subsequently prepare an estimate of potential costs involved. Clerk to liaise with GT regarding dates

10) To Receive Reports from Members of Meetings attended as representatives of the Parish Council.

14.3.18 CB attended a SID meeting (reported in minute 8a)

11) Dog Fouling in the parish

a) Updates on previously reported locations

A number of no fouling signs have been put up since the last meeting: One each end of footpath through Daphne Lewis's ground, one by the Beacon Field entrance, and a few others on posts around the village

b) Consider parishioners' request for no fouling signs along path from Slade Close to the cricket club

The clerk reported that she had been contacted by an elderly resident in Slade Close reporting that the large quantities of dog mess along the footpath from Slade Close to the cricket club was making the walk difficult. Would it be possible for the PC to erect no fouling signs at each end of the path?

CB offered to ask the owner of the fence by the path if the PC can put signs up on the fence at each end of the path

12) The Beacon Field

a) Finance / Fundraising update

The clerk reported that unfortunately the three of the grant applications had been turned down – the Somerset Community Foundation, the People's Postcode Trust and the Greggs Foundation. Still awaiting a decision regarding the other grant submissions. It was planned to submit further requests to other grant giving authorities. Mr Criddle is on 'stand by' to start work in mid-September (once the PC has received the 2nd part of precept from WSDC) if no grants are awarded prior to this

b) Consider 'NGS' use of Beacon Field for parking on 17th June and wedding parking on 16th June and 12th October, and the Stogumber Festival 7-9th September

Councillors approved all of these requests

c) Grazing lease for 2018

The clerk reported that Paul Tapp has again taken on the grazing let for 2018. Payment has been received for the 2017 and 2018 rent, together with the water charges for 2017

d) Any other matters concerning the Beacon Field

It was noted that two of the apple trees have died in the community orchard area but this is not the responsibility of the PC, but of the orchard committee

The copse in far corner is really growing on well

13) Highways

a) Updates on previously reported issues

i) Reported 17.4.18 between meetings- a number of drains and grips in the Stogumber end of Combe Cross Lane are blocked. There is a very deep puddle covering the whole lane about 50 metres long. Highways placed signs up warning of flooding, but not done anything to rectify the issue. It was noted by councillors there is a culvert that is not working correctly across the field, forcing water over the gateway onto the road. Two drains are blocked from the copse down directing the water away from the culvert

ii) Reported 17.3.18 between meetings -the grips / ditches and gullies between Higher Preston Farm and Lower Preston Farm Cottages are blocked. The owners of the cottages are concerned about the volume of water on the road.

Highways are to investigate who owns the ditch but the problem is probably being handled by the environment agency together with the land owners.

The grips are still blocked

iii) Mud on road in Wood Lane- nothing has been done yet. Clerk to re-report to Highways that lane needs cleaning as mud is built up in centre of the road and vehicles are grounding on it

iv) a new post has been put in for the sign by the Post Office

b) Any issues to report

i) County Council of Somerset has made an order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along Water Lane from 25m either side of Water Bridge a total distance of 50 metres, to enable contractors to carry out repair works to an unstable wall in this road. The order becomes effective on 14 May 2018 and works are expected to last for 12 days. While the closure is in operation an alternative route will be signed.

ii) Pot holes were noted by Boars Head, in Combe Cross Lane, in Escott Lane, on the Lower Monksilver to Stogumber road, and on Vellow Road (before Escott Lane) the road side is giving way. Clerk to report to Highways

iii) Shrubs are now overgrowing the wall by Pixies Laughter onto the road and are a hazard to road users. CB offered to approach the owners to request they are cut back

14) Proposed new ward boundaries following the formation of a new council

This matter was covered by ATB in his report. Councillors agreed to wait until the official consultation comes out in early July before considering the matter further

15) Consider Insurance renewal 1st June 2018

The clerk reminded councillors that in in May 2017 they had resolved to accept the invitation from AON quote to enter into a three-year long-term agreement.

AON have now removed themselves from the parish council insurance field and their business has been taken over by BHIB Ltd Brokers who have arranged continuity of cover from 1st June 2018, underwritten by Aviva Insurance Ltd, honouring the three-year fixed rate agreement entered into last year by the parish council. The renewal premium is £229.47 and councillors resolved to accept the renewal premium.

16) Finance

a) Consider fundraising appeal for a new MRI scanner at Musgrove Hospital

The parish council had received a letter requesting that it consider awarding a grant towards the purchase costs of a new MRI scanner at Musgrove Park hospital, Taunton Previously the PC has agreed that it will not give money to charity. Councillors resolved that parish's money should be spent within the parish. If individuals chose to donate and fundraise as individuals they are free to do so

b) To approve Year End Accounts – 2017/18

Councillors approved the end of year bank reconciliation, dated 31.3.18, of £18,282.95. This consists of £14,908.98 in the current account and £3,374.48 in the deposit account. £3,568.25 of this balance is held in reserved funds

c) Payments to approve

Clerks Salary	(April & May 2018)	£552.20
HMRC	PAYE	£22.60
Clerk's expenses		£43.62
BHIB Ltd	insurance renewal	£229.47
Mrs K Smith	internal auditor	£30.00

SALC	membership renewal	£181.68	
PWLB	loan repayment	£3,223.02	Paid by direct debit 10.5.18
Water2 business	Beacon field	£15.53	Paid between meetings on 21.3.18

d) Amounts received

26.4.18	WSDC, first half of precept	£9,500.00	
1.5.18	P Tapp, Beacon Field rental 2017 & 2018, plus water charges 2017	£541.15	

e) Request to update bank account signatories – update

GT reported more problems. When he took the paperwork to the bank the fact that MS & GT were existing customers was queried. The cashier declined the request from GT to telephone the customer complaint team (as specified in the letter from NatWest outlining how the issue was to be resolved) while GT was in branch. MS has subsequently been contacted by NatWest Clerk to follow up with NatWest as to progress

f) Any other financial matters

None

17) Consider Internal Auditor’s Report

The Internal Auditor, Mrs K Smith, had carried out the internal audit and found the internal audit control arrangements to be satisfactory. Accordingly, the Internal Auditor had signed-off Page 5 of the Annual Return without qualification

18) Annual Return – approve Section 1, the Annual Governance Statement

Members agreed that replies to Questions 1 to 9 be “Yes”. The page was then signed by the Chairman and the clerk.

19) Annual Return – approve Section 2, the Accounting Statement

The Council considered the information prepared and signed by the Clerk that had been previously circulated. The statement was approved, and signed by the Chairman

20) Planning: Any planning matters reported to the clerk before the meeting

An extra ordinary meeting has been scheduled for 17th May at 7.30pm at the Cricket Club to consider application 3/31/18/005; erection of single storey extension to the south elevation of the pavilion plus alterations and re-grading of land to create a new seating area

21) General Data Protection Regulation

The clerk reminded councillors the General Data Protection Regulation comes into force in May. The ICO has said previously that “the GDPR is a journey rather than a destination and will be looking to councils to demonstrate that they are committed to making progress towards embedding the right processes and procedures.” SALC advice has been for parish councils not to take action until they have received official guidance and the clerk is to attend a training event on 22nd May, to learn what steps the parish council needs to take and will report back to councillors regarding actions that need to be taken.

22) Employment matters

It was noted that the clerks work over the past year was appreciated by all present and CM was nominated to carry out the clerk’s annual review on behalf of the council

23) Any other business by permission of the Chairman

None

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.40