

MINUTES, ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

STOGUMBER PARISH

Thursday 6th May 2021, via the zoom virtual platform, commencing at 7.30pm

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

Present:

Cllrs C Bramall (Chair), M Symes (Vice-Chair), V Sellick, A White, T Vesey, T Brick, R Foster

C Morrison-Jones (clerk)

SCC Cllr C Lawrence

1) Apologies of Absence

None

2) Acceptance of minutes from Annual Parish Meeting 9th May 2019

The minutes for the meeting were approved by those present and signed by the Chairman as a true record

3) Report by the Chairman of Stogumber Parish Council

The Parish Council has managed to operate fairly normally over the last 12 months despite the Pandemic, making it impossible for the PC to meet in person. This has been largely due to a government rule change which made it possible for us to hold meeting online (by Zoom) The rule change finishes this week and there appears to be no inclination to re-instate it, which is the reason for this Annual Parish Meeting being held a week earlier.

The regular PC meetings and the Playground meetings have worked quite well online (though I do find that I seem to have spoken more than other PC members!)

There will be a huge backlog of minutes to sign physically when we do next meet in person!

There have been a few minor technical problems but most of us have been able to take part even if some hate the concept.

Members of the public who wished to speak to the meetings have been able to, and I have not had any complaints that anyone was unable to.

Planning:

Planning has been managed well even though we have been officially unable to hold site meetings. We have had a lot of applications to pass comment about to the District Planning department. Fortunately, between the PC members there is a lot of local knowledge of the sites that came up. In a couple of cases individual PC members have looked quietly at unfamiliar sites to gain insight before passing comment. On the whole I think that the PC has coped very well.

We have been reasonably happy with SW&T planners decisions on applications that we have looked at with the exception of the application for an Agricultural Workers Dwelling at Higher Preston Farm which they have turned down twice for reasons that the PC find incomprehensible.

Grant Funding:

The Climate Change and Biodiversity Grant scheme which the County Council introduced last autumn, resulted in three applications for funding by SPC. Two of them

were successful, namely the Educational shelter and the Environmental planting scheme for the Beacon Field. Work on these will commence as soon as funding comes to the PC's bank account, subcontractors can start, and the weather is suitable (wet enough and autumnal) for the plantings to be carried out.

The application which failed to get funding for was for an Electric vehicle Charging point for the Beacon Field Car Park which the CC said could probably get funding from other sources – this is currently being pursued by local contacts within Forum 21, an environmental group.

Local EV owners will largely charge their own cars at home. This facility is intended to make it possible for EV drivers from out of area to charge their car.

The PC was awarded £700 covid support grant by Western Power on behalf of the Stogumber Lunch Club to allow provision of meals and essential transport

The PC also renewed a 4 yr lease and community support package on defibrillator part funded by grant of £835 from Somerset Community Foundation

Highways:

The PC has reported issues with roads and signage to CC Highways which has mostly resulted in action.

Since Wig Wag flashing signs were installed on Station Road on both approaches to the School, we seem to have had less complaints about speeding along that road. School Mums (and Dads) have been parking in the Beacon Field Car Park, instead of the roadside at the school, and walking with their children the short distance down to the school. It has been heartening to see groups chatting as they walk down, and then later in the car park continuing their conversations, socially distanced in a Covid safe manner, in the safety of the car park!

Finance:

This year the PC has paid back £5000.00 which had been borrowed on a short term basis from CRASH to help put the finishing touches to the Beacon Field Car Park.

Looking at the longer term, the large mortgage taken up from the public finance company to buy the Beacon Field is now more than half way through the 15 year repayment period. Thanks must go to our Parish Councillors who have worked so hard this year and a huge thank you to Claire our Clerk who continues to work tirelessly for us, keeping us on the straight and narrow, conversant with all the legislation and outside information that continue to bombard us.

Thanks also must go to our County Councillor, Christine Lawrence who works so hard on our behalf and Marcus Kravis and Peter Pilkington our District Councillors who share responsibility for us.

I look forward to the Parish Council being able to meet in person again soon and village life gradually getting back to normal!

4) Questions and Comments from Parishioners

None

5) Any other business

None

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.45