

DRAFT COPY**STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL**
Minutes from the virtual meeting held on 18th June 2020

Present: Cllr Keith Holder (Chair), Cllrs. Amanda Taylor, Keith Hambly, Kim Gibson, Matthew Rice, Nicholas Corbett and David Richardson-Aitken

Also, in attendance: Kate Egan (Clerk).

1 **Welcome by the Chairman**

2 **Apologies for Absence**

None received

3 **Absent**

Cllrs John McEntee

4 **Declarations of Interest**

None

5 **Public Session**

There were four members of the public in attendance plus District Councillor Alan Townsend and County Councillor Phillip Ham

(a) A short presentation was given by three members of the public regarding a potential new eco-house, they wish to build within the village. Questions were asked by the Council and responses were given. This will be discussed formally once the planning application is received from Mendip District Council.

(b) A request was received from a resident who wished to plant a memorial tree and place a plaque in Millennium Wood, in memory of a lifelong resident of Stoke St Michael. They also enquired about the possibility of placing a picnic bench close by. A short presentation was given by the resident and all costs would be covered by family members. Councillors thought this was a good idea but this will be discussed further under item 11e

(c) A resident has offered to take on the voluntary role of Parish Path Liaison Officer (PPLO). This is scheme run by Somerset County Council and involves light clearance work and reporting any blockages to Somerset.

6 **County and District Councillor Reports**

Reports were forwarded before the meeting, and has been included as Appendix A.

It was further noted that there was not a re-consultation process in relation to the Yellow Gate field planning application. The revised deadline for comments has arisen because of the delayed posting of the statutory notice at the site due to the restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 lockdown. The Public now have until 7th July to formally comment to the Planning Service.

Cllr Keith Holder will co-ordinate a list of road signs that need cleaning or clearing of vegetation.

7 **To confirm the minutes of the previous meetings held on 30th April 2020, 21st May 2020, 1st June 2020, previously circulated**

The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted as a true record and would be signed by the Chair once physical meetings are resumed.

8 **Matters arising from the minutes but not on the agenda**

There were no matters to be considered

9 **Grants**

No applications have been received

10 **Policies – To be approved and adopted by the Council**

(a) Public Participation Policy

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the policy, proposed by Cllr Keith Hambly and seconded by Cllr Nicholas Corbett, unanimously agreed.

(b) Freedom of Information Policy

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the policy, proposed by Cllr Kim Gibson, and seconded by Cllr Keith Hambly, unanimously agreed.

(c) Data Protection Policy

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the policy, proposed by Cllr Amanda Taylor and seconded by Cllr Matthew Rice, unanimously agreed.

11 **To Be Resolved**

(a) Proposal to investigate the finger posts within the parish and obtain quotes for repair.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Council to send the list and photographs of finger posts within the parish to obtain quotes for repainting. This was proposed by Cllr Keith Holder and seconded by Nicholas Corbett and unanimously agreed.

(b) A new council representative is required on the village hall committee.

There were no volunteers from the Council, this will be revisited in the Autumn.

Cllrs Nicholas Corbett and David Richardson-Aitken left the meeting at 8.27pm

(c) Whether the Council would be happy to respond to Cognisant Research on the proposal to develop a one council model for Somerset – information was forwarded on 6th June 2020

(d) Role of Parish Councils in the event of Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset – To consider a formal response to the consultation document circulated 8th June 2020.

This was discussed by the Councillors and an extra ordinary meeting will be called for **Thursday 9th July** to review the above two items, as further information is due to be published at the end of June.

(e) Request from a resident to plant a memorial tree and plaque in Millennium Wood in memory of a relative, plus a picnic bench.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Council to allow the request, this was proposed by Cllr Amanda Taylor and seconded by Cllr Kim Gibson, unanimously agreed. Co-ordination and final plans will be discussed by the Millennium Wood Working Party.

12 **Planning Applications** – If other planning applications are received between the date of this notice and the date of the meeting, they may be considered.
No Planning application were received for consideration

13 **Millennium Wood**

(a) Minutes from the virtual meeting held on 2nd June, copy of the minutes attached as Appendix B. It was **RESOLVED** by the Council to accept the quotation of £475.00 for removal of dying or Dead Ash Trees. This was proposed by Cllr Keith Holder and seconded by Cllr Matthew Rice.

(b) Adoption of the CIO – progress has been delayed due to COVID-19. The Millennium Wood Working Party are hoping to hold a meeting within the next couple of weeks to confirm final details before progressing.

14 **Clerk's Report**

(a) Abandoned cars within the village, no further information has been received.

Update – No further information has been received from the enforcement officer but a resident has sent several photographs which will be forwarded.

(b) A blocked footpath (installation of an electric fence) in the village has been reported to Somerset County Council on 26th May 2020, this issue was also reported in July 2016, reference number given is 32835.

(c) A resident in the village contacted the Council as they are concerned of possible accidents with pedestrians on Church Street and Tower Hill. Bottlenecks of vehicles are occurring and instead of driver pulling in and waiting until vehicles have gone past, they are mounting the pavements and passing each other that way. Mendip District Council was contacted who told them to ring Somerset Highways who then informed them to speak to his local Parish Council. The questions asked is what can be done to stop the cars mounting the pavements – can any bollards be installed?

(d) The uncut grass on the verges on the top of St Michaels Close may be covered by Mendip District Council, but they have ceased cutting during COVID-19 and hope to restart on 15th June, but it will take time to complete all the areas. Mendip District Council announced on 6th June that it is rewilding almost 17,000 square metres of land. Grass cutting will be resumed in smaller areas for safety purposes. The website states that grass cutting will be resumed on large public open spaces only.

Update – The grass has now been cut

(e) Mendip District Council have issued A5 leaflets on Mental Health “Wellbeing and Mental Health, A Guide to looking after yourself and others”; these are available for distribution around the village.

Update - They have been delivered via the village COVID group.

(f) There is still a vacancy on the Parish Council for a Councillor, please contact the Clerk if you are interested and further information will be sent out.

(g) The Parish Council are still looking for a Parish Path Liaison Officer to work with Mendip District Council on helping to maintain the Public Rights of Way within the Parish. If anyone is interested please contact the Clerk for further information.

Update – Alun Stewart has very kindly volunteered for the role; his contact details are on the Website if you discover any issues with the footpaths within the parish.

15 Finance

Bank Balances as at 4th June 2020: -

Business Account - £41,906.15

Reserve Account - £50.43

Payments

(a) Transfer of the pre-cept to the current account - £24,500

(b) Purchase of an ink cartridge – £20.99

(c) Clerks salary – May 2020 – £258.96

(d) McAfee antivirus software – £30

(e) Primrose Garden Maintenance, May invoice – £651.43

(f) Monthly payment for Zoom – £7.20

(g) Annual Subscription to SALC - £255.38

(h) Postage charges - £1.95

(i) Web hosting for May and June - £9.60

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the above payments. This was proposed by Cllr Amanda Taylor and seconded by Cllr Keith Hambly.

16 Correspondence

(a) Draft Walking and Cycling Manifesto for Somerset sent from Councillor James Hood (Bruton Town Council) – forwarded 29th May 2020

(b) Parish Briefing Issue 10 from Mendip District Council – forwarded 9th June 2020

17 Matters to report/items for next agenda

(a) Quarterly review of Annual Budget

Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 23rd July, Virtual Meeting via Zoom at 7.30pm

The meeting concluded at 9.10pm **Draft minutes subject to confirmation**

Appendix A

Mendip District Report from Phillip Ham

The last month has been busy with Covid 19 still being the biggest issue. The council offices are still closed with most employees working from home. All meetings are virtual, large or small.

CABINET included items on Footpaths and Cycleways to reduce car useage with some funding from central government. A paper ref the new clear air act and its implications to our district, and also an updating paper on progress and this years intended workload Regards equality. There were also actions agreed with the cabinet from the work done by the Scrutiny deprivation group. All these items I had a personal interest in as I had worked on all of them.

SCRUTINY we had verbal updates on how MDC had dealt with the pandemic from chief excutive Stuart Brown and financial 151 officer Paul Deal who spoke of the implications to 20/21 and 21/22 years financially.

PLANNING the May meeting was abandoned due IT failures to notify all parties involved and has been rescheduled for 10/6/2020 with the June meeting on 17/6/2020 ,on the later meeting the Eagle application will be discussed although the Eagle Inn was granted a asset of community value by MDC.

GRASS CUTTING This had been stood down due to Covid 19 , but after several phone calls I was promised it would be cut week commencing 18/5/2020 but then it was announced that rewilding of the grass would be done in Mendip inline with reducing carbon footprint. I then demanded a map showing where this was to happen, eventually I was told this did not include Coleford and cutting would start again very soon, this was 3/6/2020..... still waiting.

GREEN WASTE BINS. Firstly those who paid for there bins on time will get a refund next year due to them not being emptied during April and May. Secondly the emptying seems a bit erratic at the moment due to day changes and staff shortages.Please let me know if this continues so I can get it sorted.

PARKING. SCC have now got traffic wardens back working on the streets BUT MDC have decided not to charge for parking in the Car Parks until August when the decision will be reviewed, one must ask the question where is this lost revenue going to made up from? FOODBANK and DAGGARO hot foods. A big thanks must go to Amanda and Dagmar for these services, they have worked for weeks to help those in need in Coleford. I know there are many others that have helped and made a big difference to so many, it is a credit to everyone.

CAMPING. We had unofficial camping in the bottom playing field a couple of weeks ago, We had complaints and bad behaviour with the Police involved, but did very little the situation got worse and at this time understood they were homeless, young children involved and lockdown. Child social services, the police were called again. To make it even worse they were driving a SORN car, probably no insurance and false number plates. Glad to report All ended peacefully?

Mendip District Report from Alan Townsend

Planning - I'm sure we all share the frustration of the failure of Mendip to determine Yellow Gate Field by the target date of 12-6-20. Is the reason for reconsultation clear?

In Coleford the application for 63 houses in an identical planning context has just closed its reconsultation, largely for highways reasons, it is now nearly 6 months beyond its original target date.

Eagle Inn, Coleford - Mendip have agreed this is to be classified as an Asset of Community Value. In parallel a planning application was due to be heard at 17th June Board for its conversion into 6 flats. The owner has appealed against the ACV ruling and also withdrawn the planning application.

Markets - good to see Mendip are re-opening the street markets. Wells on Saturday was reasonably well disciplined!

Cabinet - the decision was made to press ahead ahead with detailed study of the main routes that could be upgraded to support the initiative to increase commuting by walking and cycling. Consultation with Parish Councils is planned. I feel a reality check coming on for our Ward!

Safeguarding - the Licensing Board agreed that Safeguarding training for Taxi is to be mandatory as they provide a unique perspective on possible vulnerable people.

Highways - Sara Davis from Somerset Highways is keen to carry out a programme of sign cleaning in the area. She has asked me to prepare a candidate list for the 4 parishes in the Ward so she can arrange a package of work with their contractor rather than a piecemeal approach. Could Stoke draw up a list please?

Appendix B

Minutes of Stoke Saint Michael Woodland Working Group Meeting: Tuesday 2nd June 2020 18.45pm to 19.25pm

Attendees via Zoom video conferencing: Amanda Clements, Keith Hambly, Paul Green, Simon Clarke.

Apologies received: John McEntee, Anna Mearns

Chaired by and minutes by Simon Clarke.

Items discussed

1. Organisation of CIO for Stoke St Michael Woodland

Unfortunately due to the current Covid19 pandemic progress on the CIO is slower than expected. **Action:** Keith Hambly to contact Keith Holder as soon as possible to get an update on progress.

2. Tree survey and safety check protocol

Paul Green and Simon Clarke monitoring tree conditions. Majority of site looking good. Two trees identified as possible risk. One on reservoir, and one outside our boundary. **Action:** Paul Green to contact local contractor Jim Murtur to look at dealing with Reservoir Tree alongside pricing for chipping brush material left from winter. **Action:** Simon and Paul to do alternate surveys, Paul June, Simon July and to continue pattern. E-mail report to be a record of this. **Action:** Need to find out who owns land with larger tree with Ash Dieback. Simon will follow up.

3. Bird box mapping and installation

All boxes showing sign of use or interest. **Actions:** Simon Clarke to mark all old and new boxes with an ID number, to take a GPS reading for all and to let those that made boxes know that they are in the wood. This is to be done over the coming week.

4. Grass cutting

Recognition the paths look good but now need a second cut. **Action:** Simon to chase up Gareth for second agreed cut and to take lace ASAP.

5. £750 Grant from Improving Lives

It was agreed that it wasn't a priority to spend the funds, until the new CIO has been formally launched (see Action 1) and current pandemic situation resolved.

6. 5 Year Management Plan

i) Maps for Appendix

We need to get access to these maps in order to put the management plan out for parish/public consultation. **Action:** John McEntee to contact Sebastian Wolf to try and get hold of the maps and data layers.

ii) Facebook page

Amanda setting up Facebook page over next week. **Action:** Amanda to set up e-mail and Facebook page and add others as admin on site.

7. Security for reservoirs – update

Paul has secured the reservoirs using chain and bar. To be checked regularly but now secure.

8. Replacement gate – update

The gate has been secured with a chain. **Action:** Amanda to source a thicker chain at home>

9. Wildflower Project:

Simon has given seed to several people who want to create wildflower areas this spring. Because of Corona 19 the project is on hold to the wider community and bigger grants cannot be sought until the CIO is formed.

10. Arrangement of next meeting date.

It was agreed that the date of next meeting should be arranged once we have clarity on Covid 19. Regular e-mail communication working to keep on top of jobs.

11. AOB

Poppies: The poppy area needs cutting, digging and re-seeding for next year. **Action:** Paul to arrange work when possible over the winter/spring.