

STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes from the virtual meeting held on 16th October 2020

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

Also, in attendance: Kate Egan (Clerk).

It was **RESOLVED** to change the order of business; these minutes have been written in the order items were discussed.

1 **Welcome by the Chairman**

2 **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Kim Gibson

3 **Absent**

Cllr Kim Gibson

4 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Keith Holder registered an interest in item 10 (b)

5 **Public Session**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

6 **County and District Councillor Reports**

The District and County Reports have been included in Appendix A.

Cllr Keith Holder attended the Mendip District Council Parish Forum via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 13th October in regard to the White Paper on the proposed changes to the current planning system. It was suggested that all Parish Councils put a response in before the deadline of 29th October especially referring to the dilution of local input of public opinion on planning decisions. Cllr Keith Holder will submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council.

7 **To confirm the minutes of the previous meetings held on 3rd September, previously circulated**

The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes for 3rd September 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 arising

9 **To Be Resolved**

(b) Lychgate Cleaning.

The Lychgate has been cleaned on a regular basis. Telephone messages have been left with the person employed but no response has been received, further enquiries will be made and this will be brought back to the next meeting.

(c) Consider the appointment of a Lengthsman for the Parish

The matter was discussed the Council **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council will continue to use outside companies for maintenance and repairs around the parish and that the Council did want to engage a Lengthsman at this time. This was proposed by Cllr Keith Holder and seconded by Cllr Matthew Rice

(a) Consider the report from MBC Traffic Consultation on the Planning Application for Yellow-Gate Field

Mark Baker from MBC Traffic Consultation was due to join the meeting at 8.00pm to discuss the report but was running late. The Council discussed the report and concluded that an executive summary at the beginning would be helpful.

11 **Clerk's Report**

(a) Combined Village Speed Watch Group – The Council was contacted at the end of last year to see whether they would be interested in a combined village Speed Watch Group, at the time the response was positive. A couple of emails has been sent to chase this up, but no response has been given.

(b) The faulty gate post on the pathway off Stoke Hill leading to the Community Field has been replaced.

(c) Abandoned cars within the village. The Enforcement Officer has been chased, but as yet no response has been received.

Update – This will be brought back to the next meeting for discussion

(d) A request was received to follow up the progress of the Traffic Regulation Order for Mill Lane as vehicles are becoming stuck again, an email was sent of 2nd October asking on the progress.

Update – An email has been received stating that they will chase it up and report back to us, this will be brought back to the next meeting.

(e) Further to the meeting held on 23rd July and the Council approved a quote to repaint Finger posts within the parish. There were five that required repainting, three have been completed, one is currently in the process and the final one requires repairing first. The Council are currently looking for a company to carry out the required repairs.

(f) An email has been received from a resident concerned about Fly Tipping adjacent to the Fairy Caves, requesting whether the Parish Council might be able to get Somerset Waste Partnership to waiver charges for the rubbish that is being removed or ask the owners of the quarry to help keep the area tidy. Keith Holder will respond.

Update – Somerset Waste Partnership have responded saying that no waiver of the fees is possible as the incident occurred on private land and they would expect the landowner to deal with the matter. The Owner will try to be located.

(g) Traffic Issues within the village. The Parish Council had been contacted about lorries passing through the village. A post was placed on the Parish Council Facebook page asking residents for examples and to contact the Clerk via email. No emails have been received although a couple of examples were posted on another page

9 To Be Resolved

(d) Issue of Lorries passing through the village

The matter was discussed and a case study will be compiled with evidence before raising the matter with Somerset Highways. At the moment there is shared access between pedestrians, lorries and cars and the surface does not meet the statutory requirements for shared surfaces. A 20 mile an hour zone was suggested considering in many places there are no pavements so the safety of pedestrians is a concern. ~~There is also confliction over the use of the lanes by HGV's as Wainwrights are not allowed through the village yet others are.~~ Due to a restriction of planning conditions, Wainwright lorries if they exit the quarry are not allowed to turn right on leaving the quarry and drive down Mendip Road. It was decided to compile a questionnaire to be distributed throughout the village asking for evidence, this will be drafted over the next few weeks and will be brought back to the next meeting.

(a) Consider the report from MBC Traffic Consultation on the Planning Application for Yellow-Gate Field

Mark Baker from MBC Traffic Consultation joined the meeting at 8.27pm

Cllr David Richardson-Aitken left the meeting at 8.30pm

Mark Baker run through the salient points and agreed to put an executive summary with conclusions at the beginning of the report. It was discussed by the Council and it was **RESOLVED** by the Council to accept the report and hold the report until the case officers report on the application was known. This was proposed by Cllr Keith Holder and seconded by Cllr Nick Corbett.

10. Planning Applications – If other planning applications are received between the date of this notice and the date of the meeting, they may be considered.

(a) **20203822** – Street Trading Pitch Outside the Knatchbull Arms. Due to the short time consideration the clerk was delegated power to respond on behalf of the Council once responses had been received. The general consensus from Councillors was approval.

(b) **2020/1685/HSE** Side and rear extension with replacement access steps.
Location 7 St Michaels Close, Stoke St Michael

This application was discussed by the Council it was agreed to recommend that the decision be left to the Planning Officer following consultation responses. This was proposed by Cllr Amanda Taylor and seconded by Cllr Keith Hambly. The reason was due to concerns about the garage arrangements and under-pinning of the property as they had not been mentioned in the Design Statement so became hard to judge for the application. The Councillors agreed with the recommendation but with one abstention.

12 Finance

Bank Balances: - Current Account as at 03.09.2020 - £13,304.30
Reserve Account as at 10.08.2020 - £29,879.08

Quarterly Review of Budget

The budget was briefly discussed and Cllr Keith Hambly agreed and signed the quarterly Bank Reconciliation.

Receipts**(a) Bank Interest - £1.30****(b) Wayleave Payment - £91.45****Payments****(c) Zoom invoices - £28.78****(d) Ionos Invoice - £12.00****(e) Clerks Salary – September - £258.96****(f) Primrose Garden Maintenance - £1302.86****(g) EDF Invoice - £109.86****(h) Mark Baker Consulting Ltd - £2394.00****(i) Deeper Green Services Ltd - £120.00**

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the above payments.

13 Correspondence**(a) Bag yourself a Bright Blue Bag – forwarded 09.09.2020****(b) Mendip District Council – Parish Briefing Issue 16 – forwarded 12.09.2020****(c) One Somerset – Autumn Consultation – forwarded 25.09.2020****(d) Road Closure – Limekiln Lane, expected start date 12th October – forwarded 23.09.2020****(e) Somerset Waste Partnership – Roll-out of new recycle more service starting Monday 26th October****(f) Somerset Climate Emergency Relief Fund – forwarded 25.09.2020****(g) Temporary closure of footpaths due to the felling of trees suffering from advanced Ash dieback – forwarded 2nd October 2018.****14 Matters to report/items for next agenda****(a) Bollards have appeared outside Park Ark House on Mendip Road****(b) Stoke Lane Slocker – Reports were received from several residents concerning the amount of water running down into Stoke Lane Slocker. A local caving group have been contacted, they will have a look and report back as to what can be carried out to make it secure.****(c) CIO for Millennium Wood, this seems to have stalled with the solicitors creating the paperwork. Cllr Keith Holder will chase once again****(d) The School coaches for Norton Hill and Whitstone School are arriving in the village together.****15 Date and time of next meeting:**

Planning Meeting Thursday 29th October at 7.30pm, via Zoom

Ordinary Meeting Thursday 26th November at 7.30pm, via Zoom

The meeting concluded at 9.58pm

Appendix A

District Council Report from Alan Townsend

Full Council - my appointment as full-time member of the Planning Board was extended, and I am now a full time Audit Committee member

Mendip Budget - at a Training session on 12th October we were advised that Mendip have a projected shortfall of £2.4M at Year End. Costs have increased, revenue decreased or deferred. Some of the shortfall due to COVID issues will be repaid by HMG but an exposure of c£1.3M remains, to be funded by Reserves. The budget problem for next year is no better. There was a very strong hint that some responsibilities would be passed down to Parish Councils to fund, especially as there is no cap on the increase in Precept they can obtain.

Highways - complaints were raised with Leigh Parish Council about the increased use of Whitehole Lane by HGVs. As we concluded last year this is the least of the evils with the alternative routes through Leigh or Stoke or Coleford being even more dangerous. Coleford has had 2 incidents of HGVs being stuck in the last two weeks having ignored the obvious signs. Do we need to put more pressure on Highways re Mill Lane with the approach of Christmas deliveries?

Climate Change - I have learned that a Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal is to be carried out by Mendip to assess suitable locations in Mendip for solar farms or wind turbines. As this is part of the County wide programme, I plan to ask that it be expanded to include sites for offshore wind in line with government policy

Unitary - The LibDem majority on Full Council ensured that Mendip voted for the Stronger Somerset approach with East and West Somerset as the two Unitaries.

Planning - Prompted by the recent experiences with the 11 months' timescale for the 63 dwellings at Coleford and now the 51-week resolution period for a single house at Budds Croft, Holcombe and Yellowgate Field already 7 months old I am carrying out a review of Mendip's recent turnaround times for applications. Please let us know of any other applications that appear to have taken an unreasonably long time. Also, we have been informed that the Planning Inspector will restart his examination of the Local Plan Part 2 on 24th November. We need to check the new Examination Document to assess the threat posed to our villages by the need for the additional 505 dwellings in the north east of the District. Mendip have just been advised by Natural England that levels of phosphates in the protected parts of the Levels are in breach of international conventions. This could mean a halt to all new planning applications for housing and agricultural development on all land that drains down to the levels. The full implications are being carefully studied.

Somerset County Report from Phillip Ham

Mendip District Council

Full council, I have been re-elected to continue as Chair of Scrutiny, Equalities group, Access group. To join the Community Asset value panel and also the Covid 19 Town and Parish Emergency funding panel.

Cabinet,

There were several papers at this month's meeting of interest, I will just list them and if any are of interest further details are available on line at MDC.

- 1) Safe and Healthy homes policy
- 2)MDC response to the planning white paper
- 3) Council tax Covid 19 hardship fund.
- 4) Social depreciation programme developed by Scrutiny
- 5) Communities Climate and Ecological emergency fund.
- 6) Funding Options for future corporate projects
- 7)Tourism strategy and plans.
- 8) Commercial energy contracts and movement towards renewable green energy contracts.
- 9) Financial future forecasts i.e. Budget shortfalls.

Scrutiny.

Has been very busy recently with items such as Unitary proposals of Stronger Somerset. Removing elements of the 5-council contract back in house, Deprivation and Fuel poverty, Bus usage and routes, cycling access routes, access to Doctors surgeries

Planning.

Local plan part 11 now scheduled for end Nov early Dec online. The stopping of All planning in the water catchment area of the Somerset levels (i.e. West of Shepton Mallet) by Natural England due to High Phosphate levels mainly coming from water sewage treatment plants.

MDC lack of a five-year housing supply.

East Mendip will now be under further pressure for housing development!

Finance.

MDC finances are diminishing fast with reserves being used up, whereas SCC are increasing reserves from an all-time low in 2017 of 17 m to looking at around 80 m in 2020. There is thought as parish councils will need to do more thinking about their precepts and budgets going forward which will not be straight forward.

Climate Change.

This morning SCC Scrutiny Policy and Place recommended the new Strategy to Full council for approval, this is a huge document, but there is a 20+ page summary document on MDC and SCC websites. It will affect everyone in Somerset and hopefully in the long-term generations in the future.