

STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes from the virtual meeting held on 26th November 2020

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

Also, in attendance: Kate Egan (Clerk).

1 Welcome by the Chairman

2 Apologies for Absence

None Received

3 Absent

Cllr Matthew Rice

4 Declarations of Interest

None

5 Public Session

There was one member of the public in attendance and they requested to speak in relation to item 10a. The application was briefly discussed, questions were raised and replies were given.

The next item was taken out of order from the agenda

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) 2020/2176/FUL – Full Planning Application for change of use from a barn to a dwelling House. Location – Barn Farm, Tadhill Lane, Stoke St Michael.

The Council recommended approval but there were concerns expressed about the changed visual appearance of the building due to the cladding. The cladding does not fit in with the landscape, and doesn't fit with the village design statement.

1 (a) Virtual Planning Training – Feedback from the Chair

Cllr Keith Holder recently attended a virtual training session run by Mendip District Council. Copies of the updated planning guide for Parish Councils and the slides used in the presentation were previously forwarded to Councillors. There was concern at the session about protecting the Somerset levels and Ramsar Site in order to maintain the integrity of the Ecological Habitat that it provides and the excess phosphates and nitrates. Natural England had advised Mendip District Council that there is a temporary ban on the granting of planning consents on land that drains onto the levels. The practical effect would impact on applications in all main towns in the district with the exception of Frome. Mendip District Council also has a shortfall of land for its 5-year housing supply following a change in the method of calculation. There were concerns expressed that the combination of these two issues would put Mendip District Council under pressure to grant consents without any strategic plan identifying locations for such development and with emphasis on the north of the district. It was noted that the agents

who submitted the major application for housing within the village were attempting to exploit these circumstances. Questions were raised as to when the Local Plan II would be approved.

6 County and District Councillor Reports

District Cllr Alan Townsend and County Cllr Phillip Ham sent their apologies, but sent a short report which is attached as appendix A

7 To confirm the minutes of the previous meetings held on 16th October, previously circulated

The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes for 16th October be accepted as a true record with the following amendment and would be signed by the Chair once physical meetings are resumed.

Item 9d 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.

Item 14a Park House should be Ark House.

To confirm the minutes of the previous meetings held on 29th October, previously circulated.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes for 29th October 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

(a) Somerset Highways will be contacted again for confirmation that they installed the bollards outside Ark House.

9 To Be Resolved

(a) Lychgate Cleaning.

Further details require to be formalised and this will be brought back to the next meeting

(b) Consideration of the quote from Somerset Forge to carry out repairs to the damaged Finger Post.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the quote be accepted and the company will be contacted to start the works. To be noted that only one quote was obtained due to the specialised nature instead of three as stated in the Standing Orders

(c) Fly Tipping at the Fairy Caves

District Cllr Alan Townsend has referred this to the Group Manager for Neighbourhood Services, who will undertake a site visit.

(d) Consideration to join with the Playing Field Management Committee to compile a leaflet poll asking residents about proposals for the field and traffic Issues throughout the village.

This was discussed and the Council **RESOLVED** that the two leaflets would be printed separately but perhaps the distribution could be shared. Councillors will send the Clerk questions and ideas to include in the questionnaire.

(c) Update on CIO status for the Millennium Wood

There were some queries with the objectives of the Millennium Wood Committee but they decided to stay with the objectives that were discussed by the Committee in March. The application is expected to be submitted shortly.

(d) Clash of school buses from Whitstone School and Norton Hill

This was referred to the next meeting as awaiting contact details in order to send a response on behalf of the Parish Council

(e) Donation of £50 to the Royal British Legion for a Memorial Wreath

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to the donation. Proposed by Cllr Keith Holder and seconded by Cllr Nicholas Corbett.

(f) Acceptance of the Quote from Primrose Garden Maintenance for the renewal of the grass cutting contract for next year.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept a three-year contract with Primrose Garden Maintenance. Proposed by Cllr Nicholas Corbett and seconded by Cllr David Richardson-Aitken

(g) Stoke St Michael Hardship Fund

There were various discussions on how the Parish Council can help residents during the current crisis. It was **RESOLVED** to earmark £300 towards a grant for the Stoke St Michael Covid 19 Mutual Aid Group. The clerk was delegated power to raise a cheque once the application form has been received.

(h) Attendance by the Clerk at the Practitioners Virtual Conference in February 2021 £90

The Council **RESOLVED** to pay for the Clerks attendance. Proposed by Cllr Keith Holder and seconded by Kim Gibson.

11 Clerk's Report

(a) Abandoned cars within the village – The Enforcement Officer has been continually chased, the lack of response has also been reported to Mendip District Council and no response to that either, will keep chasing

(b) Traffic Regulation Order for Mill Lane – Have chased again regarding the progress and still awaiting a reply.

Update – White marker paint has appeared in Mill Lane to indicate the potential locations for the installation of bollards.

(c) Stoke Lane Slocker – The course of the stream has altered direction and now travels underground via a new sink hole; this has been enclosed with wire fencing for safety.

(d) Somerset County Council Surviving Winter Campaign – the Memorial Hall were contacted to see whether they could help with storing food.

(e) Climate Change Presentation – A resident is trying to organise an evening on Climate Change, this will be done virtually via Zoom. Once a date has been confirmed I will forward details to the Council.

12 Finance

Bank Balances as at: - Current Account - 3.11.2020 £9,318.45
Reserve Account - 9.10.2020 £29,879.58

(a) Report from External Auditor 2019/2020

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

(b) Setting of Parish Council Budget for 2021/2022**(c) Calculation of Pre-cept Amount for 2021**

After some discussion and amending figures Cllr Keith Holder proposed Stoke St Michael Parish Council agree the budget for 2021/2022 and an increase of 3.44% in the precept to £25,170.00, this was seconded by Cllr Keith Hambly and the council, this was unanimously **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Nicholas Corbett left the meeting at 9.16pm

Receipts

(d) Bank Interest - £0.25

Payments

(e) Postage - £2.60

(f) Clerks Salary – October and November £517.92

(g) Ionos invoice – October and November – £24

(h) Zoom Invoice - £12.49

(i) Royal British Legion - £50

(j) Chris Ingrem - £1055.00

(k) PKF Littlejohn - £240.00

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the above payments apart from (h) which was incorrect and will be submitted at the next meeting.

13 Correspondence

(a) Improvisation of road safety on the Old Frome Road and Old Wells Road, preparations are being finalised with the works aiming to start on 30th November.

(b) Training on Risk Assessment – forwarded 25.10.2020

(c) Mendip District Council Community Briefing Issue 12 – forwarded 27.10.2020

(d) One Somerset – together we work as a united team – forwarded 27.10.2020

(e) SAVE Climate – Group application for the county’s climate emergency community fund - forwarded 11.11.2020

(f) Alliance with St Cuthbert’s Out regarding One / Stronger Somerset – forwarded 14.11.2020. The Clerk will contact the Clerk of St Cuthbert’s Out expressing the Parish Councils’ interest in being part of the alliance. If the council receives a positive response then the Chair would be the nominated representative.

- 14 Matters to report/items for next agenda**
(a) Mendip District Council Councillor Database
- 15 Date and time of next meeting:** Thursday 7th January at 7.30pm via Zoom

Meeting Closed at 9.40pm

Appendix A

District Council Report from Alan Townsend

I'm afraid I will have to give our apologies for tonight's meeting as we have a conflict with a hastily arranged Mendip Cabinet meeting. This has been called to debate the Council's proposed Affordable and Social Housing Delivery Programme - this involves the selling off to Aster of 4 Council owned sites to develop social housing. The sites are in Frome, Glastonbury and Street. Cabinet initially approved the proposal on 2nd November but it was subject to Call In to Scrutiny because a. Umber of Councillors expressed concern over the suitability of the locations, the choice of Aster and lack of visibility of value for money. The Easthill site by the cemetery in Frome has caused a major reaction because of the threat to the green space and its ecology, the disturbance to the cemetery and the concentration of some 77 social houses on a site well away from the town centre.

Debate at Scrutiny was curtailed but a reference back to Cabinet to re-examine the issues was agreed. Cllr Ham as Chairman resigned because for the third time the role of Scrutiny had been inhibited by the inability to fully scrutinise and affect decisions.

On 3rd December we have a special Full Council Meeting to endorse the Stronger Somerset Business Case for submission to DHCLG. This will be a rubber stamping exercise of the Proposal for 2 separate unitaries in the county - East and West Somerset.