

STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes from the virtual meeting held on 18th February 2021

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

Also, in attendance: Kate Egan (Clerk).

1. Welcome by the Chairman

- (a) Report from the Chair on the virtual meeting held 27th January on collaboration by parish councils on the proposed unitary status application and a virtual MDC Parish Forum meeting on 4th February “Saving Lives, Delivering Statutory Services and Economic Recovery”

The report from the virtual meeting held on 27th January is covered under item 9d.

Mendip District Council are changing the focus of their delivery to “Saving Lives, Delivering Statutory Services and Economic Recovery”, the Parish Council will wait to see the outcomes

2. Apologies for absence

None Received

3. Absent

Cllr Matthew Rice

4. Declarations of Interest

None Received

5. Public session

There were no members of the public in attendance, although the Council had received a statement in regard to item 10c, this was forwarded to Councillors prior to the meeting.

6. County and District Councillor Reports

County Councillor Phillip Ham nor District Councillor Alan Townsend were in attendance. They sent reports prior to the meeting which are included in appendix A and B.

The next item was taken out of order from the agenda

9. (e) The Local Plan II is now subject of additional consultation following the publication of the Further Main Modifications on 8th February, following the public examination in November and December 2020, the Parish Council should consider whether an additional response is appropriate.

It should be noted that responses will be limited by the Planning Inspector to those matters raised in the additional hearings together with the phosphate issue and the deletion of a specific housing development in Rode. As a result, the five-year housing land supply will be recalculated, but it doesn't affect Stoke St Michael. The final report should be issued at the end of March.

7. To confirm the minutes of the previous meetings held on 7th January 2021 and 4th February 2021, previously circulated

The Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes for 4th February be accepted as a true record and would be signed by the Chair.

After some discussion item 13(f) was amended to replace “inert rubbish” with building spoil, include that this was being deposited outside the limits of the planning permission for Cooks Wood and the update had been received from County Councillor Phillip Ham.

Following these amendments, the Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes for 7th January be accepted as a true record and would be signed by the Chair.

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

There were no matters arising from the minutes but not on the agenda

9. To Be Resolved

(a) Approval of the quote from Roman Glass to replace the glass pane in the Bus Shelter on the corner of The Bridge and Mendip Road.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the quote of £227.66 including VAT for the replacement of the glass pane in the Bus Shelter. Roman Glass will be contacted to proceed with the works.

(b) Proposal to hold the Annual Parish Meeting before 7th May in order for it to be held online.

The Council **RESOLVED** to hold the Annual Parish Meeting via Zoom on Thursday 6th May, invitations to community groups will be issued nearer the time.

Cllr Keith Holder left the meeting due to internet problems so the following items was taken out of order from the agenda.

11. Clerk's Report

(a) The Parish Council would like to express condolences to the family on the passing of Malcolm who cleaned the Lychgate on a regular basis.

(b) A report was received regarding standing water outside Phippens Farm due to the possibility of a blocked drain. This is a hazard to road users and pedestrians and could become dangerous during icy weather. It was reported to Somerset County Council.

Update. The area was cleared within a week of being reported.

(c) There was a misunderstanding regarding correspondence from Primrose Garden Services, they were not looking for a yearly payment at the beginning of the growing season but to issue a payment schedule for the year.

(d) Update from Cllr Keith Hambly on the CIO status for Millennium Wood

Update. The application has been sent to the Charities Commission and the Council is awaiting a response.

(e) A request has been received from the Village Hall Committee to seek clarity on the ownership of the hall boundaries and walls to carry out maintenance work.

(f) The Mill Lane, Stoke St Michael (Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) Experimental Order 2021 was published in the Mid Somerset series on 11th February 2021

(g) Online Banking with Lloyds has been approved, the welcome pack has yet to arrive but hopefully bacs payments will be implemented by the next financial year (April 2021).

9. To Be Resolved Continued

Cllr Keith Holder re-joined the meeting

The following item 9 (c) may be subject to a motion to exclude the press and public because it may contain information relating to a specific person or proposed contract terms or both.

The Council **RESOLVED** to move: that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

This refers to item 9c only

(c) To consider options for the continued cleaning/maintenance of the Lychgate and Bus Shelter

Various options were discussed, a specification for the works will be prepared and hopefully it will be in place by the end of March.

(d) To consider a formal response to the meeting of Parish Councils on the question “Which services provided by your Parish Council could be improved upon? (How, with what resources, etc)”

Cllr Keith Holder attended a virtual meeting with other Parish Councils to discuss the proposed Unitary Council and the possible works to be passed to Parish Councils. Examples from other PC's were discussed and could include sharing a Lengthsman, sharing Dog Wardens, taking over Car Parks currently managed by Mendip District Council or Somerset County Council. The council discussed this and it was **RESOLVED** that due to the rural location the Parish Council didn't have any services that could be improved upon within the village that were currently provided by Mendip District Council or Somerset County Council.

(e) The Local Plan II is now subject of further consultation following the publication of the Main Modifications on 8th February. Following further examination in November and December 2020, the Parish Council should consider whether an additional response is appropriate.

The Council **RESOLVED** not to submit an additional response as nothing arose from the latest set of main modifications.

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) 2021/0145/REM Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval 2019/0652/OTS for the erection of a dwelling. Matters of appearance/landscaping/layout/scale to be determined. Location – Fair View, Stoke Hill, Stoke St Michael.

The Council recommended refusal due to the proposed building being two storeys instead of one, has a much larger footprint and is inconsistent with the indicative drawings that the Inspector looked at during the appeal process.

- (b) **2021/0146/FUL** Erection of outdoor horse exercise arena. Location – The Cottage, Fosse Road, Stoke St Michael

The Council recommended approval

- (c) **2020/2600/FUL** Construction of stoned farm tracks across 35 hectares of agricultural farm land, to also be used for walking, cycling and bridal ways. Location Cooks Wood Quarry, Bector Lane, Stoke St Michael

The Council recommended refusal the application is not supported by the Design and Access Statement, it also states that they would be available to members of the public but there is no entrance for the public to gain access.

- (d) **2020/2176.FUL** Change of use from a barn to a dwelling house Location Barn Farm, Tadhill Lane, Stoke St Michael. This application is to be considered by the Planning Board at its meeting on 17th February 2021.

12. Finance

Bank Balances: -

Current Account as at 29.12.2020 - £7,754.93

Reserve Account as at 11.01.2021 - £29,880.35

Quarterly Review and Bank Reconciliation

The Bank Reconciliation was signed by Cllr Keith Hambly

Receipts

(a) Cheque – burial fees - £429.00 – two cheques

(b) Burial fees £142.00 – bacs payment

Payments

(c) Clerks Salary – January 2021 - £258.96

(d) Zoom Invoice - £14.39

(e) Ionos Invoice £12.00

(f) Purchase of ink cartridge - £23.99

(g) Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall - £3156.00

(h) Stoke St Michael Parochial Church Council - £13.00

(i) ICO Renewal - £40.00

(j) Mrs Maureen Butcher £750.00

(k) Burial Fees - £129 – this was entered twice in the cash book as the Council had been notified of a payment of £129, in last month's minutes, the payment received was £142 (as above) so the overpayment of £13 is being reimbursed, and the original £129 has been cancelled.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the above payments and receipts

13. Correspondence

(a) Planning review consultation has been extended to 5th February – forwarded 15.01.2021

(b) Mendip District Council Covid News Bulletin, saving lives, delivering statutory services and economic recovery – forwarded 18.1.2021

(c) Invitation to the Parish Forum on resetting our priorities to save lives – forwarded 22.01.21

(d) February training event run by SALC – forwarded 26.01.21

(e) Mendip District Council – Health and Wellbeing Briefing – forwarded 01.02.21

(f) Mendip District Council – Planning Bulletin – forwarded 02.02.21

(g) Slides from the Parish Forum held on 26th January and 4th February – forwarded 05.02.21

(h) Mendip Local Plan Part II: Sites and Policies consultation on additional main modifications – forwarded 10.02.21

14. Matters to report/items for next agenda

(a) Update from the Millennium Wood Working Party

(b) Proposal for the Council to pay for Cllr Amanda Taylor to attend a webinar run by SALC at a cost of £20

15. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 1st April at 7.30pm via Zoom

Meeting closed 9.24pm

Appendix A

STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FEB 2021

PLANNING

The 6-week Consultation was launched on 9th Feb on the Amended Main Modifications to the Local Plan Part 2. These cover two issues only, the requirement to take mitigation measures on developments likely to release Phosphates onto the Levels, and the removal of one proposed site in Rode. This further progress on LPP2 gives grounds for optimism that the current applications outside the newly defined development limits could be refused on planning policy grounds alone. However last night's Planning Board did approve an application for 6 dwellings at Writhlington outside development limits and the Board, encouraged by Mendip's lawyer, did not take on board that significant weighting may now be given to the Emerging LPP2 because of its advanced progress.

The January Planning Board gave approval for the controversial outline application for the Saxonvale site in Frome. This will include up to 300 dwellings, probably flats, retail, light industrial and live/ work units, with a green open space by the river with a new bridge.

You will have seen the statement released by Mendip about the reduced planning services now in place. This results from the pressures of Covid 19 and the setting of new priorities – saving lives, delivering statutory services and economic recovery. The reduced Enforcement service is a particular concern.

FINANCE

Mendip's year end budget deficit was forecast at £2.4M at the end of Q2, this came down to £1.4M at the end of Q3 and the end of Q4 is now forecast to be in balance with some careful management. Similarly, the Finance Officer has produced a balanced budget next year which would result in a £5 or 3.16% rise for the Band D property. This will be presented to Full Council on 22nd Feb and subject to detailed scrutiny.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Mendip's target of Carbon Neutral by 2030 was reported to Cabinet as being unachievable in the real world, with a 40 to 47% reduction being more possible. A massive consultant's report produced 2 years after the Climate Emergency was declared has concluded that we have generation opportunities with solar PV, and potential emission reductions from road transport, domestic heating and agriculture. The latter is highly controversial with the farming community.

MARKETS

Good to see Mendip succumb to the massive pressure from Frome Town Council in particular to open the Frome and Wells markets on Saturdays. The press release talks about Monday markets, we have yet to track these down.

HIGHWAYS

A Zoom meeting was held with Sara Davis of Somerset Highways to progress issues in Coleford, Holcombe, Leigh on Mendip and Stoke St Michael. The issue of HGVs on Whitehole Hill was raised, particularly the hazards for leisure users. Horse warning signs require evidence of significant usage. SLOW and Road Narrows signs at the bridge are a possible option. In line with our discussions with neighbouring parish councils last year, the option of closing the Hill to HGVs would only result in more traffic through Coleford, Holcombe, Leigh and Stoke. We also expressed our concern at the Clean Air restrictions imminent in Bath and Bristol. This is likely to increase pollution in our area as HGVs in particular look for alternative routes to the M4 for example. Separately we have raised concern again with Highways about the poor state of the Stoke Bottom lane, including potholes and flooding.

Appendix B

17th February 2021

Today was Full Council for SCC by Microsoft Teams.

Covid 19 update.

There was a minute's silence in memory of the 682 deaths to Covid to 10/2/21. It is now 12 months since Covid became news in Somerset.

The R number is now 0.7 to 0.9.

11 million pieces of PPE have now been purchased.

SCC is top of the vaccination league with 28% already vaccinated.

A congratulation letter from the Prime Minister on the vaccination programme and how well SCC has administered the Covid funding and controlled the disease.

David Fothergill SCC leader thank all the staff for the outstanding efforts over the last 12 months, especially all social care workers.

The Budget was balanced and voted for by 45 for, 0 against and 4 Abstentions.

Highlights include,

No cuts to services, 9.5 million extras for Children services, 10.5 million extra for Adult social care, 1.5 million for Climate change emergency and 400k for CAB in Somerset.

Precept increases to Council Tax 1.9% general and 3% adult social care. Total 4.9%.

Unitary update.

Expecting letter from Secretary state in the next week, this will decide consultation period, a delayed SCC council election in May or not. With Covid, Purdah and Consultation on Unitary, it's all getting very complicated...but all will be revealed in the next few days.