

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



50 Pepys Way, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3LL

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 7th December 2022

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone ~ Chairman Cllr J. Wallace ~ Vice-Chair
Cllr G. Blackman Cllr K. Mansell
Cllr K. Copping Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: One (1)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

Although there was one member of the public present, he / she did not wish to discuss any matters with the Parish Council.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The Chair, Cllr B. Stone opened the meeting at 7.02pm and thanked both the Councillors and the one member of the public for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 7410:22 An apology for absence was received from Cllr P. Egan, who had prior work commitments.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 7411:22 None.

3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 7412:22 None.

4. Vacancies

a). To discuss any applications received relating to the Parish Council's outstanding vacancy.

Min 7413:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen reported that she had received no new interest concerning the Parish Council's one (1) outstanding vacancy.

5. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November 2022.

Min 7414:22 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November 2022, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell and seconded by Cllr G. Blackman, that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was agreed, with three (3) of five (5) Parish Councillors voting in favour and the remaining two (2) abstained, owing to their absence at the last meeting.

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6. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 7415:22 None.

7. Planning

a). Applications

Min 7416:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to recognise there had been no new planning applications received since the last meeting.

b). Decisions

Min 7417:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to confirm receipt of four (4) new planning decisions, where he read each in turn.

- **MC/22/2233 – Court Lodge Farm, The Street**
- **MC/22/2234 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street**
- **MC/22/2161 - Land Adjacent To 1 Parsonage Cottages, The Street**
- **MC/22/1639 - Land To The North Of The Bridge At Grain Road (A228), To The West Of National Grid, South Of Binney Farm And To The East Of Lower Stoke**

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 7418:22 None.

8. Finance

a). To agree financial performance against the budget for the month November 2022.

b). Update of account(s) for 2022/23 including payments received.

c). Accounts paid since the last meeting to be ratified.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 7419:22 The members reviewed the budget reports provided in their meeting packs. A few questions were raised surrounding payments showing on the Parish Council's bank statements, which included deductions for the Clerk's pension and expenses incurred from the Christmas lights switch on.

Cllr K. Copping spoke to propose that points a, b,c & d be approved en bloc, this proposal was seconded by Cllr J. Wallace and was unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£554.98	November 2022 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – November 2022
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£6.40	Payment of Tax & NI for November 2022 Payroll
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£36.61	Broadband & Telephone line rental for November 2022
Colin Davis	Min 1992:20	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£69.00	Litter picking and Cleaning INV:3631
Medway Council	Min 5077:21	DIRECT DEBIT	£212.50	Rent for Lower Stoke Car Park INV: TO FOLLOW
Mrs J. Allen	Min 7406:22	PAID BY BACS	£40.00	4 x RBL Poppies for Platinum Jubilee Benches

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KALC	Min 7405:22	PAID BY CARD	£5.00	Payment for Geoff Blackman's lunch at KALC's AGM INV: 5080041999
RBL	-	PAID BY BACS	£50.00	Donation to Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and purchase of wreath.
Festive Lights Ltd	Min 7401:22	PAID BY CARD	£99.96	Solar powered lights for Village Christmas Tree INV:
Safety Signs4Less (Value Products Ltd)		PAID BY CARD	£39.01	4 X No Dogs in the Playground Signs INV: 3584175
Marks & Spencer	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£26.25	Thank you present
Avast	-	DIRECT DEBIT	£64.99	Antivirus Software Update for Parish Clerk Laptop INV: 117390315400
Rialtas	Min 1829:20	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£412.50	Software and Annual Support Licence INV: SM26568
Jenolite		PAID BY CARD	£26.98	Anti-rust primer & multi surface spray paint INV: 026-3592823-7454756
Mrs J. Allen	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£4.00	Chocolate Coins for Christmas Tree Light Turn on event
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£45.15	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for November 2022
TOTAL			£1,728.33	

e). Payment requests to be discussed for approval and payment.

i). To consider providing the Stoke Community Project with a £100 grant towards their Seniors Afternoon Tea event

Min 7420:22 The members spoke in detail about the Seniors Afternoon tea event, that had taken place on Sunday 20th November. They understood that this event had gone smoothly and that it had been very well supported by the residents from the village and the surrounding area.

In response to the feedback, Cllr K. Copping spoke to propose that the Parish Council provide the Stoke Community Project with a grant of £100 towards the running costs for this event. This proposal was seconded by Cllr J. Wallace and was unanimously agreed.

f). To review the suggested amendments to the budgets, as recommended by Cllr P. Egan.

Min 7421:22 A report was read on behalf of Cllr P. Egan, where he requested the Clerk deduct the cost of the repairs to the fencing at the Button Drive playpark from the 'ear marked reserves' and not from the 'contractors' budget.

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9. Management of the Council's land and property

a). To review the play park inspections for:

- i Allhallows Playparks Road Playpark
- ii Heron Way Playpark
- iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 7422:22 A report from Cllr P. Egan confirmed the play equipment was being regularly inspected.

b). To receive an update on the long-term upkeep of the Button Drive, Heron Way & Upper Stoke Playparks.

Min 7423:22 It was acknowledged that owing to Cllr P. Egan's absence there was no further update.

c). To receive an update on the installation of three Platinum Jubilee trees.

Min 7424:22 Cllr B. Stone spoke to inform the members that he had no further report surrounding the three (3) Platinum Jubilee trees that were on order.

10. Highways & Transportation

a). Footpaths

Min 7425:22 No report.

b). Lighting

Min 7426:22 No report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 7427:22 The Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise that prior to Ward Cllr Mick Pendergast's death, that she understood he had liaised with a local contractor regarding the repair of the bench seat located outside of the Village Hall.

A discussion ensued in regards to adding a plaque to the bench seat to incorporate it into the village's Jubilee celebrations from June. Other ideas were also aired and suggestion was made that a new plaque should be added in recognition of the late Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast instead.

d). Pot holes

Min 7428:22 No report.

e). Fly tipping

Min 7429:22 No report.

f). Grass cutting

Min 7430:22 No report.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 7431:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, addressed the leaking manhole cover on the A228/Grain Road, which she noted had started to overflow with water again.

The members discussed the matter in finer detail, where it was recognised that this issue had been ongoing via Medway Council for over two years.

Cllr B. Stone spoke to advise that he felt a pipe to divert the water to a nearby ditch would resolve the issue, where it was recognised that Medway Council were now waiting on a response from BT Openreach.

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Accordingly, the Clerk was asked to write directly to BT Openreach to ask them to inspect the area and for an update on their proposed resolution(s). It was also agreed that should the Clerk not hear back from BT within 15 working days that she should write to Local MP Kelly Tolhurst to ask for her support.

The Clerk also asked the members to consider asking Medway Council to install a temporary warning sign to advise of the risk of ice and the large pothole that surrounds the manhole cover, which the members agreed sounded like a sensible idea.

h). Button Drive recreation ground outer fencing

Min 7432:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, informed the members that she had received a telephone call from a resident, whose property backed onto the Button Drive recreation ground. This resident advised a bush, situated on the boundary of his garden onto the Recreation Ground, had died and accordingly he was making plans to have it removed in spring next year. He raised concerns that in removing this bush that there would be a large gap in the boundary line into his garden, where he spoke of a wire boundary fence that spanned partly around the recreation ground and across the back of his neighbours' boundary. Accordingly, he asked the members could consider extending their fencing to span across the back of his garden too.

A discussion ensued, where Cllr K. Copping volunteered to meet with the resident on site to provide further report for the members next meeting.

11. Communication

a). Update on the Parish Council's new webpage and associated email addresses

b). Parish Council owned tablets

Min 7433:22 No report.

12. Village Hall

a). To receive an update on the status of the Village Hall

Min 7434:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the Village Hall's recent electricity inspection made reference to a few points that required further attention.

He closed his report in advising that the Village Hall still required maintenance, owing to a hole that had developed in the roof. The Doctors Surgery were now back paying their rent, despite not opening their premises to patients yet.

13. External Contractors

Min 7435:22 None.

14. Stoke Community Project

a). To receive a report from the Stoke Community Project concerning their latest projects.

Min 7436:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen read a report she had received from the Stoke Community Project to confirm that the quiz night they had held on Saturday 3rd December, had gone really well. She advised that she understood the Stoke Community Project made £200 at this event, which they intended to put towards several ideas for next year. She closed her report in advising that the Stoke Community Project were still planning to host their Santa present drop later this month and that they had donated any left-over food from their Quiz night to local a homeless charity.

A vote of thanks was issued by the Parish Council to the Stoke Community Project for all their assistance with the Christmas Tree light switch on ceremony, that had been held in the Lower Stoke Car Park on Sunday 4th December.

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15. **Feedback to Public Questions**

a). To receive a response/update on the last public questions raised, following the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 2nd November 2022.

Min 7437:22 The members acknowledged the complaints they had received at their last meeting concerning speeding cars and the vandalism that had taken place to several parked cars in the High Street. The members reminded everyone present to report any spates of crime to the Police, to ensure they can keep an accurate record of events and felonies taking place throughout the village.

16. **Lower Stoke Car Park Layout**

a). To receive an update on the new layout of the Lower Stoke Car Park

Min 7438:22 Following on from Cllr P. Egan's last report the members understood that he was still waiting for a quote from Medway Norse to mark out the white lines in the car park.

17. **Village Events**

a). Christmas 2022.

Min 7439:22 Cllr K. Copping spoke to provide a report, where he confirmed that the first Christmas tree light switching on ceremony had gone well. Sadly, owing to the lack of UV light during the winter months it was understood that the solar powered Christmas tree lights purchased would only stay lit for a period of up to three (3) hours and not the eight (8) hours the members were originally led to believe. As a contingency measure therefore, Cllr K. Copping advised that he had purchased two battery packs to operate the lights as well.

Concerns were raised that the tree had been placed in the wrong location in the car park and that the 'warm white' solar powered lights did not illuminate the tree enough.

A discussion ensued concerning the re-siting of the Christmas tree, where after a new location had been agreed, Councillors B. Stone and K. Copping agreed a mutually convenient date to meet in order to move it.

The members also discussed the purchase of two additional sets of coloured, battery (timer) operated lights, where Cllr J. Wallace offered funds from 'The Nags Head' meat raffle towards the costs their funding. Accordingly, the Clerk was deployed to purchase the two additional sets of lights to help ensure the tree could be easily seen in its new location.

b). Kings Coronation May 2023.

Min 7440:22 Ahead of the Kings Coronation in May next year, the Clerk was asked to get in touch with the Stoke Community Project to enquire if they were interested in assisting the Parish Council in organising a village event.

18. **Emergency Plan**

a). To finalise the arrangements for the emergency plan meeting, due to be held on Saturday 10th December from midday in the Stoke Village Hall.

Min 7441:22 In the absence of Cllr P. Egan, the members spoke to finalise the arrangements for the emergency plan meeting that was due to take place on Saturday, 10th December, in the Stoke Village Hall.

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Concerns were raised that the event would not be that well supported owing to its close proximity to Christmas and that the date clashed with the Quarter Finals of the World Cup, of which England were playing.

Both Councillors B. Stone and G. Blackman spoke to enquire if the Clerk could find out if Medway Council already had an emergency plan in place, which Stoke Parish Council could base their plan on.

19. Policies

a). To review the following existing policy for adoption:

- **Standing orders**

Min 7442:22 The members spoke collectively about the revised standing orders.

Cllr B. Stone spoke to advise that he didn't agree the standing orders needed changing, apart from making them gender neutral and accordingly no further discussion took place.

20. Correspondence

Min 7443:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke to confirm receipt of a letter from her Pension provider asking for her to re-register the Parish Council as part of their compliance terms and conditions.

21. Reports and Circulars

Min 7444:22 Cllr G. Blackman spoke to inform the members that he had attended KALC's AGM, on Saturday 19th November, which he had found to be very informative.

He reported that a new vice president had been voted in and two (2) new motions had been passed.

- **The first, was to reintroduce the previously culled bus services around Kent.**
- **The second, to introduce a new policy to allow for a 100% water neutrality for all new build properties.**

Cllr G. Blackman also advised the Kent Police Crime Commissioner had spoke at the AGM and that a discussion had been held to formally adopt Medway as a part of Kent.

Min 7445:22 The Vice-Chair Cllr J. Wallace also spoke to inform the members that she had attended the last Rural Liaison meeting, where a large proportion of the meeting had been centred around the Hoo Development consultations. She advised that complaints were aired from the adjoining village of Grain, where the villagers were upset that Medway Council's consultations and their associated flyers did not extend past the Fenn Bell roundabout in St Marys Hoo.

Cllr J. Wallace closed her report in advising that she understood several other Parish Councils had complained to Medway Council that there was no formal application process in place to apply for part of the £40,000 funding set they had set aside for Parish Councils, following the abolishment of the Rural Liaison and Tax Grants.

She advised that that in response Medway Council has stipulated they would not consider any applications for funding, if the Parish Council applying held funds of over 5% of their annual turn over (not taking into account any reserves they had accumulated) owing to the large deficit in their budgets.

22. Any other business

Min 7446:22 None.

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23. **Date of next meeting**

Min 7447:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the main Village Hall on Wednesday 25th January and that the next meeting following, due to take place on Wednesday 1st February, would be cancelled.

23. **Close of meeting**

Min 7448:22 The Chairman, closed the meeting at 8.30pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 25 th January 2023	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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