

# STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Wednesday 5th October 2022**  
**Parish Council Meeting**  
**Village Hall ~ 7.00 pm**

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone ~ Chairman Cllr K. Copping  
Cllr K. Mansell Cllr P. Egan  
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: Four (4)

The Chair, Cllr B. Stone opened the meeting at 7.00pm and thanked both the Councillors and the members of the public for attending.

Being mindful that this was the first Parish Council meeting since the passing of her majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Chairman held a minute silence in commemoration of the Monarch.

Cllr B. Stone spoke further to inform the meeting that Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast had also passed away since the members last Parish Council meeting, where he asked everyone present to hold an additional one minute silence in commemoration of his life.

The meeting was then adjourned for public questions.

## **PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

### **Part A. Public Discussions**

One member of the public spoke to enquire if the Button Drive Recreation Ground was a 'dog friendly' park or not.

A discussion ensued in regards to making part of the park into a dog area zone with a fence, where Cllr K. Copping spoke to suggest this item should be added to the November agenda for consideration.

### **Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items**

None.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, reopened the meeting at 7.15pm.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Min 7329:22 Two apologies for absence were received.

The first was from Cllr J. Wallace, who had suffered a bereavement and the second was from Cllr G. Blackman, who had injured himself after a fall.

#### **2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

Min 7330:22 None.

#### **3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature**

Min 7331:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to request that a tribute be uploaded onto the members social media page, in memory of the late Ward Councillor, Mick Pendergast.

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## 4. Flood Report

### a). A report by Ms G. Bussley of Medway Council surrounding the flooding in Stoke.

**Min 7332:22** The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone invited Ms G. Bussley, from Medway Council's Flood Management team, to speak.

Ms G. Bussley spoke to thank the Parish Councillors for inviting her to attend and inform the meeting that her team had been working hard behind the scenes. She advised that not only had the Flood Management team been liaising with Southern Water to carry out the relevant repairs to the drainage systems but that they had also persuaded the Medway Council Highways Department to take over responsibility for the High Street in Lower Stoke.

She spoke further to advise that her team were still at the optioneering stage and owing to the unprecedented weather seen last winter, she understood the village had experienced a large number of issues with flooding not previously experienced.

She closed her reporting in advising that she was planning on holding an extraordinary meeting to discuss her team's proposed plans, where once the details had been finalised, she would provide the Clerk with advanced notice so that the Parish Council could promote this meeting long in advance, to encourage as many residents to attend as possible.

Cllr P. Egan spoke to ask Ms G. Bussley what parameters the information was based on and if an emergency action plan had been put in place? Ms G. Bussley responded to confirm that she would check what parameters were used and that she understood emergency pump tankers had been placed on standby this year.

Concerns regarding a broken drain elsewhere in the village were also raised.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen enquired if the issues with the leaking manhole cover on the A228 / Grain Road had now been resolved, where she raised concerns over the possible formation of black ice over the winter months.

Finally, it was understood that the Flood Management team were still pushing to have the fencing reinstated located adjacent to the public toilets, that it was reported that these were removed last year by the Fire Brigade, during the worst of the flooding.

## 5. Vacancies

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

**Min 7333:22** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke to inform the members that, despite the promotion of the one outstanding Parish Councillor vacancy on the member website and the noticeboards, that she had received no new applications.

## 6. Ward Councillor Report

### a). A report by Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast

**Min 7334:22** Owing to the passing of Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast, it was accepted that there would be no Ward Councillor report.

## 7. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting

### a). To receive and approve the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

**Min 7335:22** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022, were circulated.

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Subject to a couple of spelling errors, it was proposed by Cllr K. Copping and seconded by Cllr K. Mansell, that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was unanimously agreed.

## 8. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 7336:22 None.

## 9. Planning

### a). Applications

Min 7337:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to confirm receipt of four (4) new planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting, where he addressed each in turn.

- **MC/22/1840 – 1 Elm Tree Cottages, The Street, Upper Stoke**

Cllr K. Copping spoke to advise that having looked on the planning portal, he had noted several objections from neighbouring residents had been submitted.

Upon assessment of the proposed plans and having looked at the property from the outside, he advised that he could not follow the cause for their concerns in regards to possible restricted access to the rear of the cottages.

- **MC/22/2233 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street, Upper Stoke**

- **MC/22/2234 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street, Upper Stoke**

The members advised that they had no objections in regards to either of the above two (2) applications

- **MC/22/2161 - Land Adjacent To 1 Parsonage Cottages, Upper Stoke**

Cllr K. Copping spoke to advise that he understood that this application had been resubmitted with a minor amendment to reposition the proposed driveway. As this application had been accepted previously; he advised that he had no objections.

### b). Decisions

Min 7338:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to acknowledge that there had been no new planning decisions made since the last Parish Council meeting.

### c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 7339:22 None.

## 10. Finance

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

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

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

Min 7340:22 The members reviewed the budget reports provided in their meeting packs.

Upon closer inspection, Cllr P. Egan spoke to request that the Clerk included any future expenditure on the Excel spreadsheet in red, so he could identify any money that had already been earmarked to come out of the relevant subheadings, in advance of the end of the financial year.

A brief discussion ensued, where the documents supplied were eventually deemed as acceptable.

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d). **Accounts for payment.**

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

Min 7341:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke further to propose that points a, b,d & e be approved en bloc, this proposal was seconded by Cllr K. Copping and was unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£536.12	September 2022 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – September 2022
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£1.60	Payment of Tax & NI for September 2022 Payroll
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£36.61	Broadband & Telephone line rental for September 2022
Colin Davis	Min 1992:20	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£128.00	September 2022 Payment Inspections & Cleaning INV:3600
PKF Littlejohn LLP	<b>TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY</b>	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£240.00	External Audit 2021/2022 INV: SB20223257
Mrs J. Allen	<b>TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY</b>	PAID BY BACS	£50.00	Reimbursement for additional noticeboard keys.
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£43.16	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for September 2022
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£1070.49</b>	

f). **Update on 21/22 Audit**

Min 7342:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen referred the members to their meeting packs where she had included a report from the external auditor, following the assessment of their accounts for the financial year ending 2021/2022.

It was acknowledged that whilst the accounts had been signed off, that PKF Littlejohn LLP had observed that the village noticeboards had not been included on the asset register and as such this document was incorrect.

A brief discussion ensued, where the members agreed to comb through their asset register in finer detail and to ensure every item was listed for the next external audit.

## 11. **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

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

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**Min 7343:22** Cllr P. Egan spoke to talk the members through the play park inspection sheets he had composed and included in their meeting packs.

He confirmed that the play inspections in all three (3) playparks had been carried out twice during the month of September, where he had identified a lot of rust, minor maintenance issues and various safety mats that would need replacing.

He also made recommendations for the members to consider painting the play equipment to aid with its life expectancy and to preserve it.

Cllr K. Mansell also spoke to confirm that whilst she had been assisting Cllr P. Egan in carrying out the inspections in the Heron Way play park, she had observed that some of the notices in the play park were really out of date. For example, she made comment that the notice located next to the skate park made reference the use of the public phone box in the High Street, however it was understood that this phone box had been removed some time ago. She also made recommendations that further signs to encourage residents to pick up after their dogs were required.

Cllr P. Egan spoke further to ask the members to consider providing him with a budget of £50 per month to help maintain the play equipment and for any expenses incurred in purchasing tools and nuts & bolts etc. A short discussion ensued.

Whilst everyone was in agreement of providing a £50 monthly budget, Cllr K. Copping spoke to ask the Clerk to check with their insurance providers if volunteers were covered for carrying out work to the play equipment.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, was also asked to speak to Mr C. Davies of Colyn Property Services to enquire if he was able to clean the moss off of the mats in the play parks, where it was identified that the plant could pose a slip or trip hazard.

## **c). To receive an update on the repairs to the fencing at the Button Drive Playpark.**

**Min 7344:22** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that the repairs to the fencing at the Button Drive Playpark had been completed, however upon inspection of the work she was disappointed that the ground where the tree trunk had been removed, had not been properly levelled out and that the soil was not sown with new grass seeds.

A discussion ensued, where the members spoke to acknowledge the height difference in the fencing, which they had already agreed. They spoke of the unlevelled ground and the lack of an additional gate into the park. They referred to the contractor's quote, upon closer inspection of this document, it was accepted that none of this additional work had been included in the correspondence and as such the works to the park had been completed, as agreed.

**Min 7345:22** Cllr P. Egan spoke to suggest that the members considered installing a separate dog zone, along the side of the new fencing, following the completion of the agreed works.

Bearing in mind the discussion held during the public session, it was acknowledged that this point would be added to the next agenda for further discussion.

## **d). To discuss possible engagement with the Parish youths.**

**Min 7346:22** The Clerk, Mrs J, Allen spoke to present the members with a choice of two dates she had been provided to hire the Village Hall on a Saturday afternoon during the month of October.

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After careful consideration the members decided to go ahead with a Youth Engagement meeting on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, where they agreed that the meeting would start at 2.00pm and last for approximately one hour.

Accordingly, the Clerk was asked to promote this meeting on the members social media page, their website and on the village notice boards.

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

**Min 7347:22** Cllr B. Stone spoke to inform the members that the three (3) Platinum Jubilee trees were still on order; however, he was unsure of their exact delivery date.

**12. Highways & Transportation**

**a). Footpaths**

**Min 7348:22** No report.

**b). Lighting**

**Min 7349:22** No report.

**c). Highways and verges**

**Min 7350:22** No report.

**d). Pot holes**

**Min 7351:22** The Clerk spoke to advise that she had observed that the potholes in the High Street had now been marked, presumably to be repaired.

**e). Fly tipping**

**Min 7352:22** No report.

**f). Grass cutting**

**Min 7353:22** Cllr K. Copping spoke to report that he felt the grass had been kept an acceptable level so far this year

**13. Communication**

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

**b). Parish Council owned tablets**

**Min 7354:22** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, advised the members that she was updating the Parish Council's webpage regularly, however she had not had time to look further at their email addresses this month.

**14. Village Hall**

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

**Min 7355:22** The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to inform the members that he had no further update on the Village Hall since his last report, ref: **Min 7315:22**. He advised however that the Doctors Surgery had begun paying rent on their adjoining premises again.

**Min 7356:22** Cllr P. Egan also spoke to express his concerns surrounding the future of the Village Hall. Especially if the British Legion decided to sell it at a later date. A discussion ensued, where Cllr B. Stone spoke to advise that he understood there was a covenant on the Village Hall to prevent them from doing this.

Cllr P. Egan spoke further to highlight various plans and proposals that were being complied for the unused Stoke Primary Academy site, where he suggested that the members might want to consider meeting in the 'school hall' should these plans come to fruition and if the future of the Village Hall was yet to be determined.

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## 15. External Contractors

### a). J R Brickwork

Min 7357:22 None.

### b). Eastborough Landscapes

Min 7358:22 Cllr B. Stone spoke to advise the members that Eastborough Landscapers were assisting him with the three (3) Platinum Jubilee trees.

### c). Colyn Property Services

Min 7359:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, was reminded to ask Colyn Property Services if they were able to remove the moss off of the safety surfacing in the play parks ref: Min 7343:22 .

She was also asked to update the agenda in future to exclude the list of external contractors, but to keep the subheading.

## 16. Feedback to Public Questions

### a). To receive a response/update on the last public questions raised, following the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Min 7360:22 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to inform the members that upon speaking with UK Power Networks, she understood there had been no rescheduled date yet to carry out the proposed new upgrades to the village.

She closed her report in advising that she hoped to be able to provide a further update in the November meeting, where she had now developed a contact within the Customer Services department.

## 17. Lower Stoke Car Park Layout

### a). To receive an update on the new layout of the Lower Stoke Car Park and to discuss an email sent by Cllr P. Egan concerning his visions for its long-term presentation.

Min 7361:22 Cllr P. Egan advised the members that he was still in the process of sourcing quotes for the required works to the car park as discussed at the last meeting ref: Min 7320:22 .

## 18. Village Events

### a). Christmas 2022.

Min 7362:22 Cllr K. Copping spoke to inform the members, that having looked further at sourcing a quote for some solar powered Christmas tree lights, that he felt he could purchase some good quality set for approximately £50.

Following on from this quote, the members discussed what size Christmas tree they should purchase, where it was mutually agreed that the tree should range from between 8 to 10 foot in height.

Accordingly, it was agreed that a price for the tree should be source in time for their next meeting, where they would formally vote to accept the quote received and to purchase both the tree and the relevant solar powered lights.

Min 7363:22 Cllr P. Egan also spoke to ask if the 'Car Park Wall fund' on the members budget planner could be renamed as the 'Village Car Park' fund.

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## 19. Emergency Plan

**a). To discuss further the idea of arranging for an emergency plan and to set a date for a meeting with the community concerning its contents.**

**Min 7364:22** Cllr P. Egan spoke to recommend that the members discussed further the idea of an emergency plan, where he recommended that they set a date and invited all of the local healthcare organisations, including wHoo Cares and Medway Council to attend.

He spoke of various concerns regarding the colder weather, the increase in cost of energy prices and possible flooding issues.

Cllr K. Copping spoke in support of Cllr P. Egan's recommendation, where he advised that he to was concerned that the members had not seen sight of any of the emergency plans put in place by the various energy plants situated in the adjoining village of Grain. He felt that the members should at least have a copy of their plans.

A further discussion ensued, where Cllr B. Stone advised that the Parish Council should speak to the relevant organisations first to check their availability and then move forward from there with a date.

## 20. Policies – Appendix E

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

### • Risk Management Policy

**Min 7365:22** Cllr P. Egan presented the members with a copy of his 'Risk Management Policy', where he proposed that the members adopt this policy. After careful consideration, Cllr K. Mansell spoke to second Cllr P. Egan's proposal, which was subsequently unanimously agreed.

## 21. Village Voice Publication

**Min 7366:22** The members discussed their article for the next edition of the Village Voices publication. The Clerk was asked to include an editorial surrounding the passing of Ward Councillor Mick Pendergast. Before sending this item in however, the Clerk was asked to run her piece past the Vice-Chair Cllr J. Wallace first.

## 22. Correspondence

**Min 7367:22** None.

## 23. Reports and Circulars

**Min 7368:22** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to express her concerns over the lack of the Parish Council's involvement with the HIF Bid and Local Plan. She made recommendations for the members to make reference to these items on their webpage, to promote the various ongoing consultations online and on their noticeboards and to invite Ward Cllr Ron Sands to a future meeting to speak further concerning both the HIF and Local Plan

The members unanimously agreed with the Clerk's suggestions, where they asked her to look further into these points.

## 24. Any other business

**Min 7369:22** None.

## 22. Date of next meeting

**Min 7370:22** The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the main Village Hall on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022.

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23. **Close of meeting**

Min 7371:22 The Chairman, closed the meeting at 8.37pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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