

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Monday 10th August 2020

Virtual Meeting ~ 7.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone (Chairman) Cllr G. Blackman ~ Vice-chair
Cllr G. Barron Cllr J. Wallace
Cllr R. Morrad Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: 0

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone opened the meeting and thanked the members for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 1909:20 An apology for absence was received from Cllr R. Bridge, who had prior commitments.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 1910:20 None.

3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 1911:20 None.

4. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting - Appendix A

Min 1912:20 The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting, held on Friday 3rd July 2020, already circulated via the Clerk, were submitted.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackman, that they be approved as a correct record and signed. This motion was unanimously agreed.

5. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 1913:20 None.

6. Planning

a). Applications

Min 1914:20 The members discussed the one (1) new planning application received since the last meeting:

- **MC/20/1327 – Land Adjacent to 1 Parsonage Cottage**

It was acknowledged that the above application related to non-material amendments, following the approval with conditions of the previous planning application MC/20/1246.

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b). Decisions

Min 1915:20 The members acknowledged that there had been two (2) new planning applications acceptances with conditions since the last meeting.

- MC/20/0931 – 5 Anchorage Close
- MC/20/0796 – Court Lodge Farm

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 1916:20 None.

7. Finance – Appendix B

a). To agree financial performance against the budget for July 2020

Min 1917:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, presented the members with the financial performance figures (that included the budgets set at the beginning of the year as a comparison) ranging from April 2020 through to July 2020. The Councillors evaluated these figures and after careful consideration they were deemed acceptable.

b). Update of account(s) for 2020/21 including payments received.

Min 1918:20 The Councillors carefully reviewed the bank balances provided in Appendix B and they deemed the figures as acceptable.

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

d). Accounts for payment.

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

Min 1919:20 It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackham that the tables below, as previously circulated, be noted and the payments confirmed. This motion was unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£772.21	July 2020 wages (inc tax rebate)
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – July 2020
HMRC	-	BACS	£180.20	Payment of Tax & NI
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	-	DIRECT DEBIT	£38.66	Broadband & Phone line rental for July 2020
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£41.63	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for July 2020
Martin Fielder-White	Min 1890:20	BACS	£80.00	Internal Auditor Fees for the 2019/2020 Audit
Colin Davis	-	BACS	£181.00	INV 3011 (Play park inspections, removal of weeds to aid the reopening of the play parks, cleaning of equipment and the addition of COVID-19 signage).
Mr T. Wickham	-	BACS	£360.00	INV 4958 (COVID-19 Play Park Risk Assessments x 3)

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Zoom Video Communications	-	CARD	£115.10	Purchase of the Parish Council's new Zoom Account (to aid with Electronic Meetings).
KALC	-	BACS	£60.00	1 x ticket for the 'Web Accessibility Regulations Workshop'
TOTAL			£1,863.80	

Creditor	Reference	Payment Method Rec'd	Amount	Notes
July 2020				
Natwest	-	Credit – BACS	£0.09	Interest – July 2020 (Business Reserve)
Natwest	-	Credit – BACS	£0.09	Interest – June 2020 (Business Reserve)
High Halstow Parish Council	-	Credit - BACS	£16.34	50% contribution from High Halstow PC towards the Vodafone Communications package
TOTAL			£16.52	

f). To approve the 2019/2020 AGAR

Min 1920:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, made reference to the completed 2019/2020 AGAR forms that she had received back from the internal auditor, Mr M. Fielder-White.

Cllr R. Morrad asked for further clarification as to why the figure on the current draft budget tracker showed the last year's roll forward balance of £33,972 but the AGAR document section 2, box 1 showed a balance at the 31 March 2020 of £33,956. The Clerk spoke in response to advise she would double check the formula on the budget tracker, she acknowledged the details should be the same and apologised that she had not seen there was £16 discrepancy until now.

Cllr J. Wallace also spoke to advise that she had calculated the balance carried forward figures to be £1 different. She advised however that she had realised that the discrepancy could have been caused by either rounding the figures up or down. The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke in response to advise that she would confirm the details with the internal auditor.

It was proposed by the Chairman Cllr B. Stone and seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackman that the 2019/2020 AGAR forms be accepted, providing the above queries were answered before hand. This motion was unanimously agreed.

g). To review Mr M. Fielder-White (the Internal Auditor's) Report

Min 1921:20 The members read through the internal auditor's report where they acknowledged Mr M. Fielder-White's comments. It was noted that the auditor had asked the members to move some of the Parishes' funds into the deposit account, to the incorporate their working papers on how the Precept and Expenditure were calculated in the minutes and to remind the Parish Council to carry out a 2020/2021 Risk Assessment, with the appropriate amendments, in advance of the next year's audit.

Cllr R. Morrad also spoke to request that a final copy of the AGAR forms for the previous audit 2018/19, be sent to him, as his copies he had did not show the authorising minute number recorded.

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8. Management of the Council's land and property – Appendix C

a). Playparks

i Allhallows Road Playpark

ii Heron Way Playpark

iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 1922:20 The members read through the COVID-19 Risk Assessments, as prepared by TWS Consultancy Ltd, in regards to the reopening of the play parks following their mandatory closure by Government legislation.

A discussion ensued in relation to the identified risks and the measures that were recommended to be implemented.

Cllr R. Morrad spoke against the reopening the playparks, where he advised that he felt there were too many risks that could not be met by the Parish Council. He also enquired if the members were planning on implementing any additional cleaning.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke to propose the of the playparks reopen, where she advised that she understood the Parish Council could choose what they thought were the appropriate actions, based on the guidance provided in the contractor's reports.

The Clerk. Mrs J. Allen, also spoke air her concerns if the playparks remained closed, where she advised the members that the playparks were regularly being broken into and where the fencing and locks were being vandalised. She advised that she had received various reports of children climbing over the fencing to use the equipment, which she then felt this matter aroused other concerns for health and safety and possibly even claims of personal injury.

The members agreed that based on the information provided by the Clerk that the parks should re-open and that the onus of the use of the play equipment should be placed on the user. They discussed the use of clearer signage to confirm as per the guidance received, where Cllr J. Wallace spoke to commend the signs being used by Shorne Country Park and suggested that Stoke Parish Council should adopt a similar system. It was also agreed that the signs should indicate the equipment would need to be cleaned by the user both before and after use, to prevent additional cleaning costs to by incurred by the Parish Council.

Min 1923:20 The Clerk, Mrs J Allen, referred the members to an email sent by Cllr R. Bridge on Saturday 1st August, where he recommended a COVID-19 exclusion liability notice be displayed in all three of the playparks.

After careful consideration it was deemed by the majority of the members present that this notice was too over the top.

Min 1924:20 The members also discussed the Annual Play Inspection Report, as carried out in May 2020.t was acknowledged that access had been granted by the Parish Council, during the mandatory closure of the Play Parks.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke in response to advise that he felt that the Parish Council should update the play equipment and suggested the members should consider replacing one item of equipment a year, and recommended using the surplus funds left over from that years Precept.

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It was agreed that the members would look at the costs for new play equipment and that they would arrange for a working party to assess the parks every year, in order to help identify the equipment that most needing updating and the condition of the park itself.

The Clerk advised that she was going to continue to apply for any grants available, in the hope of securing any additional funding to aid with this project.

Min 1925:20 Finally the Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to address his concerns over the condition of the Upper Stoke Playpark, where he advised that the vegetation had grown out of control.

He reported that there were trees growing through the fencing and that there were brambles obstructing the entry point. He referred the members to a quote he had obtained from Eastborough Landscapes Ltd, to tidy all three (3) play areas, to cut back the foliage and to dispose of the trimmings, which equated to £1,184.40 (including VAT).

Concerns were raised by Cllr R. Morrad that the contractor was unable to carry out the works until after the play parks had been reopened. It was recognised however that the playparks needed to be reopened as soon as possible to prevent further damage to the fencing, locks or claims of injury. It was also acknowledged that some of the children had been using the equipment illegally regardless of the parks present condition.

After careful consideration it was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace to accept the quote and to instruct the contractor and to carry out the works as soon as possible, this proposal was seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackman and unanimously agreed.

9. **Highways & Transportation**

a). Footpaths

Min 1926:20 Nothing to report.

b). Lighting

Min 1927:20 Nothing to report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 1928:20 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to report a water leak on Allhallows Road, on the corner by the garage.

Cllr G. Barron also reported a water leak at North Corner, outside the cottages.

d). Pot holes

Min 1929:20 Nothing to report.

e). Fly tipping

Min 1930:20 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone also spoke to air concerns over the amount of fly tipping there had been along the country lanes. He sited at least two areas of concern that included Hoppers Lane and New Hall Farm Lane.

f). School Warning Signs

Min 1931:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that she had heard nothing from either Medway Council or the Leigh Academies Trust throughout the COVID-19 pandemic surrounding the school warning signs. She advised that she was considering writing a formal letter of complaint, where she intended to raise concerns the Parish Council's concern for the student's safety, especially with the winter months now fast approaching.

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The members discussed this matter in further detail, where Cllr R. Morrad spoke to suggest the Parish Council considered writing directly to the manufacturers. The members unanimously agreed that this was a good idea and confirmed that they were happy to fund any associated costs for extra keys to be cut. The Clerk advised the members that she would implement this idea and out of courtesy she would write to both Medway Council and the Leigh Academies trust to notify them of the Parish Council's intentions.

10. **Communications**

a). Update on the operation and usage of the Parish Council's existing website.

Min 1932:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise that as per her previous update, ref **Min 1900:20**, that she had had no communications from the Medway Council team that managed the Parish Council's website.

b). Update on the construction of the Parish Council's new webpage

Min 1933:20 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to inform the members that she had taken a day's annual leave to attend a 'Web Accessibility Regulations Workshop', that was booked to take place virtually, on Wednesday 12th August 2020.

Cllr R. Morrad spoke to advise that he understood the Parish Council needed to have an agreed and authorised Accessibility Statement available for the public, before Wednesday 23 September 2020, in order to comply with the new Accessibility Regulations that came were due to come into force on 23rd September 2020. He recommended that the members instructed Vision ICT Ltd to carry out an assessment and advised of other various regulations that needed to be implement (that included but was not limited to) speech recognition and screen colour amongst other things. He also stated that he had read 4 out of 5 Parish Councils had currently failed to comply with these new conditions.

c). Update on the creation of new Clerk and Parish Councillor email addresses

Min 1934:20 Cllr J. Wallace advised that she was experiencing issues in setting up the new Parish Councillor email addresses and that she was currently speaking to the provider in regards to this.

She advised that once the new inboxes were properly set up that she would email the details to the members individually to allow them to take over control and for them to change their passwords etc.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to issue a vote of thanks to Cllr J. Wallace on behalf of all the members present for her hard work to date.

11. **External Contractors**

a). J R Brickwork

Min 1935:20 No further requests for works were discussed.

b). Eastborough Landscapes

Min 1936:20 It was acknowledged that as per minute record **Min 1925:20**, that the members had agreed for the works be carried out by Eastborough Landscapes, to cut back the foliage at all three (3) playparks, at a cost of £987.00 plus VAT.

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12. Village Voice Publication

Min 1937:20 It was agreed that should the next edition of the Village Voices magazine be published (as it was established that owing to the COVID-19 outbreak that the tabloid had been temporarily stopped) that the Clerk should write a short article in regards to the members new website and the use of the Stoke play parks, with the aid of the new signs and guidance which would be displayed.

13. Correspondence

Min 1938:20 None.

14. Reports and Circulars

Min 1939:20 None.

15. Date of next meeting

Min 1908:20 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to confirm that the next meeting would be held via a virtual forum on Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 7.00pm.

He thanked the members for attending and closed the meeting at 08.11 pm