

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Wednesday 2nd December 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 Cllr R. Bridge
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: One (1)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

The one parishioner present spoke to inform the Parish Council that she had been regularly checking the village's defibrillator, she advised that she had noted that the security box that housed the device now appeared to be accumulating condensation inside where she queried if an internal seal had blown. She reassured the members that upon thoroughly inspecting the defibrillator that the device itself appeared to be in good working order, as it had been well protected by its plastic wrap covering and silica gel sachets that had been installed by the manufacturers.

She confirmed that inline with the receipt of the new battery that she had changed the power pack and queried if one of the new sets of pads could be returned, owing to the fact that she now held more than one set with the same expiration date. She closed her report in asking the Clerk to speak to the suppliers to provide further information in regards to the recycling of the old pads and the expired battery, as she advised that she was concerned of disposing of these items via the normal refuse system.

A discussion ensued between the members in regards to the condition of the security box, where Cllr R. Morrad asked if the transformer held within the Village Hall had been checked. It was understood that this transformer had been installed to assist with the regulation of the temperature inside the security box, where it was thought that owing to the state of recent power cuts that the electricity supply could have been affected. It was agreed that the Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, would check the transformer and report back to the Clerk with his findings in due course.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The one member of the public was invited, but she declined and left after her report. Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, opened the meeting at 07.23pm and thanked all the members for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 2016:20 None.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 2017:20 None.

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3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 2018:20 None.

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

Min 2019:20 The minutes of the previous Parish Council meetings held on both Wednesday 7th October 2020 and Wednesday 4th November, as already circulated by the Clerk were submitted.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by Cllr R. Morrad, that they be approved as a correct record. This motion was unanimously agreed.

5. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 2020:20 None.

6. Planning- Appendix B

a). Applications

Min 2021:20 The members acknowledged receipt of one (1) new planning application, where having discussed the details in great context they decided not to submit an objection.

- **MC/20/2771 - Sycamore House, Allhallows Road**
Construction of single storey side extension over existing swimming pool

b). Decisions

Min 2022:20 The members also acknowledged receipt of two (2) new planning decisions since the where it was recognised that both of the decisions were for the same property, but concerned different subjects:

- **MC/20/2340 - Coningsby, 15 Grain Road, Middle Stoke, ME3 9RS**
Construction of single storey side extension over existing swimming pool
- **MC/20/2341 - Coningsby, 15 Grain Road, Middle Stoke, ME3 9RS**
Neighbourhood consultation application for the construction of a single storey extension to rear

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 2023:20 None.

7. Finance – Appendix C

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

Min 2024:20 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 November 2020. The Councillors evaluated these figures and after careful consideration the details were deemed as acceptable.

Cllr R. Morrad also spoke to provide feedback of further information he would like included in the members meeting packs, that included a role forward figure and totals listed on the budget forecasts.

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

Min 2025:20 The Councillors carefully reviewed the bank balances provided in Appendix C and they deemed the figures as acceptable.

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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 2026:20 It was proposed by Cllr R. Morrad and seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackman 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	£266.01	November 2020 wages
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – November 2020
HMRC	-	BACS	£208.40	Payment of Tax & NI
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	-	DIRECT DEBIT	£37.05	Broadband & Phone line rental for November 2020
Colin Davis	-	BACS	£168.00	November 2020 Payment Inspections. Cleaning & removal of swings - INV 3111
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£41.63	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for October 2020
KPS Office Supplies	-	BACS	£32.98	50% contribution to Stationery Costs
RBL	-	BACS	£50.00	Annual Contribution
TOTAL			£839.07	
Natwest	-	Interest	£0.37	Interest from NatWest reserves account
High Halstow Parish Council	-	Credit - BACS	£16.80	50% contribution from High Halstow PC towards the Vodafone Communications package
TOTAL			£17.17	

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

a). Playparks

i Allhallows Road Playpark

ii Heron Way Playpark

iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 2027:20 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to discuss the quote received from Playsafe Playground Services Ltd, for £1,480 to remove the toddler tunnels contained within both the Heron Way & Button Drive playparks. Where it had been identified previously that the condition of both of the tunnels had deteriorated beyond repair ref **Min 1994:20**.

A discussion ensued, where the members spoke the contents of the quote received in greater detail and where they identified that the contractors were going to make the area good when the play tunnels were removed. The scrap value of the tunnels was also discussed.

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After careful consideration it was proposed by Cllr R. Morrad to accept the quote received from Playsafe Playground Services Ltd for £1,480. This proposal was seconded by Cllr G. Blackman and was agreed with five (5) members voting in favour and one (1) abstaining.

Min 2028:20 The Play Park inspection from the month of November was accepted, where the report received confirmed that the play equipment appeared to be in good order, that every other swing had been removed, that all touch points were being regularly disinfected and that the relevant COVID-19 advice signs remained in place.

b). Notice board in Lower Stoke

Min 2029:20 The members evaluated a report prepared by the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, where she had identified three potential manufacturers to supply a replacement notice board for Lower Stoke, where it had sadly identified that the existing notice board had been badly vandalised beyond repair.

A discussion ensued in regards to a possibility of changing the boards location, where it was also acknowledged that any change to within the confines of the Lower Stoke car park would need to be approved by Medway Council beforehand.

The Clerk was provided with the exact dimension of the existing notice board by Cllr J. Wallace, where it was agreed that she would speak further to the preferred supplier to confirm the exact prices for a new board to be made with the same dimensions and to be made from recycled plastic, which was listed as vandal-proof.

9. Highways & Transportation

a). Footpaths

Min 2030:20 No report.

b). Lighting

Min 2031:20 No report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 2032:20 No report.

d). Pot holes

Min 2033:20 No report.

e). Fly tipping

Min 2034:20 Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, spoke to report that there had been further fly tipping along Hoppers Lane.

f). School Warning Signs

Min 2035:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to that she the third sign was still undergoing repairs by 'Solagen', as arranged by Medway Council ref **Min 2004:20**.

g). Christmas Tree in Lower Stoke Car Park

Min 2036:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that following requests from members of the public to place a Christmas Tree in the car park at Lower Stoke as discussed at the last meeting, that she had contacted the Customer Service department twice at Medway Council via telephone and that she had also emailed the car parking enquiries team and the parking team at Medway Council to ask, but no one had come back to her.

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She advised therefore that without permission from the relevant authority that she had not been able to progress the request for a Christmas Tree.

10. **Communication**

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

Min 2037:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to confirm that following her request to remove the members old webpage, that Medway Council had now actioned this and the page had been demobilised.

Min 2038:20 Cllr R. Morrad also spoke to advise that the Medway Council website still referred to the members old webpage, he asked the Clerk to ensure this was amended to reflect the new website. Cllr J. Wallace spoke in response to Cllr R. Morrad advise that she would also ensure this point was raised at the next Medway Council Rural Liaison meeting.

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

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

Min 2039:20 Cllr J Wallace spoke to provide a report on the construction of the members new webpage, where she advised that she had been in touch with the contact provided by KALC. It was understood that this gentleman had been the same tutor who had conducted the online training session that Cllr J. Wallace had attended virtually earlier in the year, and where her new mentor was a university lead. It was reported that he had offered the Parish Council three (3) free coaching sessions, which would be an hour long each and would be based on the following syllabus:

- Week 1 – Guided Tour
- Week 2 – Help to resolve issues
- Week 3 – Road Mapping

Min 2040:20 Cllr J Wallace advised that in line with the new website that her mentor was also assisting her in regards to the issues with the new email addresses, which she hoped would be directly resolved through the suppliers.

Min 2041:20 In recognition of Cllr J. Wallace's work regarding the construction of the Parish Council's new webpage and the associated email addresses, the Clerk was instructed to arrange for a thank you gift in order to express their sincere gratitude.

d). Purchase of Parish Council owned tablets

Min 2042:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that following the last meeting that she had enquired with the suppliers in regards to the purchase of 10-inch android tablets at a cost of £106 each. Ref **Min 2007:20**.

She advised that she understood that she could only order five (5) of these devices at one time and asked the members to confirm how many tablets they wished her to purchase.

A discussion ensued where it was agreed that the Parish Council should purchase seven (7) tablets, which would be enough for each member of the Council.

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11. Lower Stoke Car Park Lease – Appendix E

a). To discuss the proposed conditions for the new Medway Council Lower Stoke Car Park lease

Min 2042:20 Cllr R. Bridge spoke to refer the members to an email he had sent prior to the meeting, raising various points he felt should be urgently addressed with Medway Council concerning their proposed lease agreement, where it was understood that the new agreement would be based on the same terms and conditions as the last. He urged the members to thoroughly read through the points he had raised and to seek official legal advice.

An in-depth discussion ensued where it was established that not all the members agreed in seeking legal advice. It was eventually agreed that Cllr R. Bridge would email the Clerk with a summary of the main points he would like raised with Medway Council in order for the Clerk to formally write to them to establish where they stood in regards to these points or if further legal advice should be sought. Cllr J. Wallace also spoke to suggest the Mr Perry Holmes of Medway Council should be copied in.

Please refer to index A for the details of the the email sent by Cllr R. Bridge to the members.

12. External Contractors

a). J R Brickwork

Min 2043:20 No further requests for works were discussed.

b). Eastborough Landscapes

Min 2044:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise that following a discussion held at the last meeting surrounding a wild limb that was protruding over into a neighbouring garden at Heron Way ref: **Min 2009:20**, that she had approached a company called BLM Grounds Maintenance based in Upper Stoke. She advised that this company was known to her through High Halstow Parish Council where she understood that the proprietor of this company was actually a cousin of the owner of Eastborough Landscapes, who promoted tree surgery services.

She reported that having asked BLM Grounds Maintenance to assess the limb, that she understood that the tree would need to be reduced by approximately 50% and re-balanced, which would cost approximately £500.

Based on the above quote the members asked the Clerk to seek two alternative quotes to be brought inline with their standing orders.

c). Colyn Property Services

Min 2045:20 The Clerk Mrs J. Allen, advised the members that Colin Davis of Colyn Property Services had sadly been too booked up to carry out the works to treat the moss on the playground surfacing. She advised that with the Chairman's permission that had therefore spoken to BLM Grounds Maintenance and arranged for these works to be carried out as soon as possible.

13. Village Voice Publication

Min 2046:20 Cllr R. Bridge spoke to request that an article be included in the next Village Voices publication to advise of the issues in obtaining contact with Medway Council concerning the Parishioners request to erect a Christmas tree in the Lower Stoke Car Park. This idea was unanimously agreed.

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14. Correspondence

a). HIF Consultation

Min 2047:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, advised the members that she had been approached by Medway Council to enquire if the Parish Council were interested in attending a consultation concerning the HIF Consultation, where Medway Council had indicated that they could hold this consultation prior to the members next meeting.

After careful consideration it was agreed that the members were not drawn to this idea as it was recognised that Cllr J. Wallace was due to be attending the next Rural Liaison meeting, where she was sure this subject would be discussed in further context.

15. Reports and Circulars

Min 2048:20 None.

16. Date of next meeting

Min 2049:20 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would be held via a virtual forum on Wednesday 6th January 2021 at 7.00pm.

He thanked the members for attending, wished everyone a Happy Christmas and closed the meeting at 09.24 pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 6th January 2021	7.00pm	Virtual Forum
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Index A

Lower Stoke Car Park Lease – Appendix E **Min 2042:20**

1. Have we had the exact words of the draft new carpark lease yet?
2. I have heard nothing from the Patrick Lawrence Partnership yet.
3. I suggest that we chase Medway about properly marking out the car park. I had something approaching an altercation earlier this week with a woman with a large Mercedes who parked it so as to obstruct getting a vehicle into the disabled space – and she said she could not see the markings! I did wonder if she should have been driving at all with eyesight like that. She also said that we should put signs on the walls reminding people not to obstruct access to the disabled space, and maybe ex abundante cautela we should consider that, but would we need permission from the takeaway to attach to their boundary or from Medway to attach to the stone wall?
4. I have flicked through the old lease. A solicitor with relevant experience may see more problems but these are the ones that leap out at me:
 - a. The plan: the unkempt patch of grass and weeds with a tree, on the right past the lockable posts as you drive in appears to be ours. First we have a maintenance obligation under clause 3.3.1 (opening words) but more excitingly if it is ours maybe we could clear it level it and tarmac it and create two more parking spaces – if we got the necessary permission in the light of clause 3.5.1.

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- b. Obviously our address should change
- c. Given current interest rates, is the interest rate per clause 1.6 of 4% over base appropriate?
- d. Clause 2 – In most cases I would expect to have seen “absolute title guarantee” rather than “limited title guarantee” – a solicitor with relevant expertise could advise further.
- e. We are in breach of clauses 3.3.2 (c) and 3.3.4.1.
- f. Clause 3.3.4.2 (and maybe 3.3.4.3): by operation of clause 1.16 we are liable if a user leaves scrap car(s) on site. This needs fixing.
- g. Clause 3.3.1 (iii) – the manhole cover is looking distinctly iffy and is (mostly) our responsibility.
- h. Clause 3.4 impedes out putting up notices about the disabled parking bay and also any general terms and conditions (which I think we DEFINITELY need.
- i. Clause 3.6.2.1 is a dog’s breakfast – it enables Medway to make up new rules and impose them on us!
- j. Clause 3.7.1 appears to prohibit private vans and surely many local users would feel aggrieved by that. Worse, if any local user does put a van in there we are liable because of clause 1.16. It would also appear to stop us putting up an Xmas tree.
- k. Clause 3.7.2 also makes dumped and disintegrating vehicles our problem.
- l. Clause 3.12. Does our insurance COMPLETELY cover this? Note we indemnify against the acts etc of any person expressly or impliedly allowed in the carpark – which is everybody!
- m. Clause 3.14. Subject to suitable legal advice maybe we need a sign up to prevent rights of way being acquired through use.
- n. There is a mis-type in the opening words of clause 3.17
- o. Clause 5.2 is very dangerous particularly since we are in breach of some covenants.
- p. Clause 6.1 is daft since Medway is the planning authority.
- q. Clause 6.6.1 – why on earth should Medway be able to kick us out on a whim on 6 months’ notice?
- r. Clause 6.7.1 – surely heavens to Betsy in this day and age notices should be able to be sent (subject to certain provisions) by email!
- s. Schedule Clause 3 – we want parking spaces not recycling bins so this needs changing.