

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 25th January 2023

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 P. Egan Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: Three (3)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

The three (3) members of the public spoke to ask the Parish Council to divulge their plans to mark the King's Coronation.

A discussion ensued and the Councillors spoke collectively about using the Lower Stoke Car Park as their main base again and re-applying to Medway Council to close the road outside.

They spoke of incorporating the 'Big Lunch' event into the celebrations and possibly applying for a grant to hire a large screen, which would enable residents to watch the momentous occasion live.

Cllr J. Wallace also spoke to offer the use of the Nags Head Public House car park to cook Hot food on a barbeque.

The three members of the public left the meeting.

The Chair, Cllr B. Stone opened the meeting at 7.07pm and thanked the Councillors for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 7449:22 An apology for absence was received from Cllr K. Copping, who had prior commitments.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 7450:22 None.

3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 7451:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to enquire if the Clerk had included all the items on the agenda he had requested, to which the Clerk answered she thought she had.

4. Vacancies

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

Min 7452:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen reported that she had received no new interest concerning the Parish Council's outstanding vacancy.

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Being an elective year, she also recommended that the members did not consider any further applications, should any individuals come forward before the local elections later this year.

5. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 7th December 2022.

Min 7453:22 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 7th December 2022, were circulated.

It was proposed by the Vice-Chair Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by Cllr P. Egan, that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion carried after it was unanimously agreed.

6. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 7454:22 None.

7. Planning

a). Applications

Min 7455:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to recognise there had been one (1) new planning application submitted since the last meeting, where he read the details out loud.

- **MC/22/2888 – Land Adjacent To 1 Parsonage Cottages**

b). Decisions

Min 7456:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to confirm receipt of three (3) new planning decisions, where he read each in turn.

- **MC/21/3587 – 16 Burrows Lane, Middle Stoke**
- **MC/22/1840 - 1 Elm Tree Cottages, The Street**
- **MC/22/2888 - Land Adjacent To 1 Parsonage Cottages**

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 7457:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to raise his concerns an illegal property that was being built in the adjoining village, which he could not find listed on Medway Council's planning portal. It was agreed that the Clerk would raise Cllr P. Egan's concerns with the neighbouring Council, where their Parish Councillors could then decide how to proceed.

8. Finance

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

b). Update of account(s) for 2021/22 including payments received.

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 7458:22 It was proposed by Cllr P. Egan and seconded by Cllr J. Wallace, that points a, b, c d & e be approved en bloc, this motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

The Vice-chair Cllr J. Wallace spoke about the donation from the Nags Head Public House Meat Raffle towards the cost of the additional Christmas lights, as discussed at the last meeting ref:

Min 7439:22 where she asked the Clerk to formally write to her with a note of the exact fees incurred.

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Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£554.98	December 2022 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – December 2022
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£39.83	Broadband & Telephone line rental for December 2022
Colin Davis	Min 1992:20	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£69.00	Litter picking and Cleaning INV:3656
Mrs J. Allen	Min 7439:22	PAID BY BACS	£3.98	Batteries for Xmas Lights
Mrs J. Allen	Min 7439:22	PAID BY BACS	£33.98	2 x Battery Operated Xmas Lights
Cartridge People	-	PAID BY CARD	£353.89	4 X Ink Cartridges for Office Printer INV: GB221207-LA5145255-1
ICO	-	TO BE PAID BY DIRECT DEBIT	£40.00	Data Protection Renewal INV: 00012159831
KPS Office Supplies	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£91.21	Stationery Costs (50% split) INV: 37259
KPS Office Supplies	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£21.44	Stationery Costs (50% split) INV: 37608
Mr K. Copping	Min 7439:22	PAID BY BACS	£10.47	Batteries for White Xmas Lights
Mr K. Copping	Min 7439:22	PAID BY BACS	£13.78	Battery Box for White Xmas Lights INV: 1009883379
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£574.04	January 2023 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – January 2023
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£45.15	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for December 2022
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£47.14	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for January 2023
TOTAL			£1,968.89	

g). 2023 / 2024 proposed budgets

Min 7459:22 The members reviewed the budget reports provided in their meeting packs, including a spreadsheet prepared by Cllr P. Egan indicating the Parish Council's projected income and expenditure for 2023/2024. Upon closer inspection, the members identified that Cllr P. Egan had accidentally included the £2,000 Ward Grant as guaranteed income, where the Clerk was asked to correct this.

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A discussion also ensued concerning the Parish Councils assets register, which was recognised to be part of the external auditor's requirements. Cllr P. Egan spoke to air his concerns that the asset register was not depleted in value regularly. The Clerk Mrs J. Allen spoke in response to advise that she understood the assets register needed to list each item for their original purchase value, owing to that fact the items were brought with funds from the public purse. The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone spoke to agree with Mrs J. Allen's thoughts but, as a safety precaution, the Clerk was deployed to contact the external auditors for written clarification.

h). 2023 / 2024 Precept

Min 7460:22 The 2023/2024 Precept was discussed.

Owing to the abolishment of the 'Tax Grant' and the Rural Liaison Grant' by Medway Council in 2022 and increased costs being passed onto the Parish Council by various suppliers, the members reluctantly discussed increasing their precept for the financial year 2023/2024.

Consequently, it was proposed by Cllr P. Egan that the members increased their precept from £23,000 to £25,000, this proposal was seconded by the Vice Chair Cllr J. Wallace and was unanimously agreed.

Accordingly, the precept form was completed by the Clerk and signed by Cllr B. Stone, Cllr J. Wallace and Cllr P. Egan.

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 7461:22 A verbal report from Cllr P. Egan confirmed that the play equipment was being regularly inspected and not much had changed since his report the last month.

He confirmed that in accordance with his previous findings that he had tried to beat down some of the metal work on the half pipe, however he was aware that the apparatus still required additional restoration.

He closed his report in asking the Clerk to order him some new spray paint as part of his monthly maintenance allowance.

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

Min 7462:22 The long-term upkeep of the playparks was discussed and Cllr P. Egan suggested the members drew up a timeline for each park.

Cllr K. Mansell also spoke to inform the members that she had been in receipt of complaint concerning the new dog signs, which were found to be unclear. A discussion ensued and Cllr P. Egan was asked to source alternative signs, or change the existing ones to advertise the fact that no dogs were allowed in the recreation park as a whole, as opposed to just the play park.

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

Min 7463:22 Cllr B. Stone spoke to inform the members that he was still waiting on the three new oak trees to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

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10. Highways & Transportation

a). Footpaths

Min 7464:22 No report.

b). Lighting

Min 7465:22 No report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 7466:22 No report.

d). Pot holes

Min 7467:22 The members discussed the various potholes in the village. The Clerk was asked to specifically inform Medway Council of the large pot hole that had appeared on the A228 / Grain Road, turning left from merging out of the High Street.

e). Fly tipping

Min 7468:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to report a large amount of rubbish that had been fly tipped behind a resident's fence located along Allhallows Road. Cllr B. Stone also spoke to acknowledge this heap, where he informed the members that he was already investigating who it potentially belonged to.

Cllr K. Mansell also spoke to inform the members of a discarded mattress, that had been left by the garages in Lower Stoke, using the Country Eye app she advised that she had been pleasantly surprised that this item had been collected relatively promptly.

Finally, the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke to raise her concerns that there appeared to be an abandoned car on the corner of Mallards Way / Cuckolds Green Road. Cllr K. Mansell spoke in response to confirm that she had informed both Medway Council and Kent Police of this vehicle on two separate occasions.

f). Grass cutting

Min 7469:22 No report.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 7470:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred the members to an email she had received from Medway Council concerning the leaking manhole cover on the A228/Grain Road. This message informed the Parish Council that Medway Council had exhausted all their avenues of investigation and that they deemed this matter to be the responsibility of BT Openreach, who owned the manhole cover.

In response to this email the Clerk then circulated a letter she had drafted to Kelly Tolhurst, to ask the Local MP for her assistance.

Following previous conversations, the Clerk understood that the members were very concerned that the manhole cover had been left to spill onto the road so long, which potentially posed a risk to motorists especially during the during the cold winter months on a main arterial road.

The members discussed the Clerk's drafted letter in finer detail where they asked her to circulate it electronically for feedback from all members, before sending it to the Local MP.

Finally, the members asked the Clerk to chase the results of the local flood survey that had been conducted during the 2022, from which they still had not received the final response.

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h). Button Drive recreation ground outer fencing

Min 7472:22 The members referred to an email sent by Cllr K. Copping concerning the complaint he had received the month before regarding the outer fencing at the Button Drive recreation ground. It was acknowledged that in this email, Cllr K. Copping had asked the members to consider extending the existing play area boundary fence to the front of the adjoining resident's property, if not the edge of the road.

A discussion ensued and Cllr P. Egan suggested the Clerk arranged for a land registry deed, at a cost of £17.50, to determine who the boundary belonged to. The members unanimously agreed with this idea and the Clerk was given permission to proceed.

It was also acknowledged that the resident had asked for the bench, situated behind his garden, to be moved following reports of unpleasant consumables being smoked on it, which were then being carried into his property by the wind.

11. Communication

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

b). Parish Council owned tablets

Min 7473:22 The Vice-chair Cllr J. Wallace advised she had no further report.

12. Village Hall

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

Min 7474:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to report the Village Hall still had a hole in its roof, where the committee had experienced delays in getting it repaired.

He also reported that the electrical improvements were still ongoing following the Village Hall's recent inspection.

Cllr P. Egan spoke in response to enquire who was responsible for the maintenance of the Village Hall and to ask about their reserves. He expressed concern about the long-term future of the building and how it the property was going to be upkept.

Finally, the members referred back to their asset register, where the Clerk was asked to confirm if the Doctors surgery had been listed, after it was established that the Parish Council owned that part of the building.

13. External Contractors

Min 7475:22 None.

14. Stoke Community Project - Annex A

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

Min 7476:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen referred the members to a report she had received from the Stoke Community Project, please refer to Annex A for a copy of this report.

15. Feedback to Public Questions

a). To receive a response/update on the last public questions raised, following the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 7th December 2022.

Min 7477:22 It was accepted that there were no questions raised at the members last meeting held on Wednesday 7th December.

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16. Lower Stoke Car Park Layout

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

Min 7478:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to inform the members that MHS Homes had relinquished their parking spaces in the Lower Stoke Car Park.

However, despite chasing Medway Norse for a quote to paint the white lines in the car park, he reported that he had not heard back from them.

He closed his report in advising that he was keen to proceed with the improvements as soon as possible, and should Medway Norse not come back, then he would paint the lines himself.

As a compromise he suggested the members could consider employing a couple of contractors to assist him, where he hoped he would be able to complete the works in time for the Coronation celebrations in May.

17. Village Events

a). Kings Coronation May 2023.

Min 7479:22 (Please refer to the public session, where this matter was discussed earlier in the meeting).

18. Policies

a). To review the Cllr P. Egan's list of governance policy documents.

Min 7480:22 The members discussed the revised standing orders, where Cllr K. Mansell spoke to enquire why the members couldn't accept their existing documentation.

Cllr P. Egan spoke in response to advise that the existing standing orders had not been properly completed. He referred to several sections that had been left blank and items with options the Parish Council needed to change to suit their needs, that had been left untouched.

He referred to his list of required policies and asked for volunteers to come forward to amend the last three (3) policies for formal adoption at the next meeting. (Details of these three (3) policies are show below):

7. Freedom of Information requests.

8. Election Practises.

9. Protocol for Complaints, Bullying, Harassment and Whistle-Blowing.

The Clerk Mrs J. Allen spoke to offer her assistance. Cllr P. Egan confirmed that the amendments should be fairly minor, where he referred to making the polices gender neutral.

19. Correspondence

Min 7481:22 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke to confirm receipt of an advertisement from KALC promoting three (3) complementary one (1) hour training sessions, for members of the public interested in becoming a Local Councillors.

In view of the impending elections, she reported that she had already placed these notices on the Parish Council's noticeboards to entice any interested parties to participate.

20. Reports and Circulars

Min 7482:22 Cllr P. Egan spoke to advise the Emergency Plan meeting, that had taken place on Saturday 10th December, had been well attended. He advised that the main focus of this gathering was to establish which residents required the most assistance and how the Parish Council could best help them.

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He confirmed St Peter & St Paul's Church had recently agreed to hold a coffee morning each Thursday, where he felt this event was a good starting point to bring the community together.

He spoke of an idea he had had of asking Medway Norse to provide a mini bus, to aid with the transport of the residents to this event and closed his report in acknowledging that Medway Council had their own Emergency Plan in place.

21. Any other business

Min 7483:22 The Vice-Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to inform the members that she understood the unused Stoke Primary Academy School was going to be repurposed as a school for children with special needs. The members all agreed that it would be great to see the premises used, where Cllr P. Egan also spoke of his disappointment that the Stoke Community Project's business proposal for the building, had not been seriously considered.

22. Date of next meeting

Min 7484:22 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 1st March.

23. Close of meeting

Min 7485:22 The Chairman, closed the meeting at 9.00pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 1 st March 2023	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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ANNEXES

ANNEX A

14a). Stoke Community Project

REF: Min 7476:22

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

Hi all,

Stoke Community Project had a busy time last year and we all enjoyed every minute of it.

We held children's discos, won the best float competition at the Grain carnival with our Bee Kind theme and had a wonderful time at the Jubilee Street Party. We tested our knowledge at our quiz nights, loved every minute of our Seniors Afternoon Tea and finished off the year with our Santa delivery then drank hot chocolate and mulled wine at the turning on of the Christmas tree lights.

This year we are planning to hold all these events again. We have a new theme for our float at the carnival, anyone with children contact us so we can let you in on the secret so you can plan costumes and make decorations. The children all looked incredible last year.

We plan to hold a street party for the King's Coronation on the 6th May, please join us with your friends and families and pray for a sunny day.

If anyone has any other ideas for events, please let us know we are always looking for new suggestions.

A list of dates will be put up on our face book page as soon as they are all booked. We are looking forward to sharing another year of fun with our wonderful village.

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As always, our thanks go to the Parish Council, Nags Head, Roses Tea Rooms, AJ and everyone else who help us. We are so grateful to our local businesses and Community who are always so generous and donate every time we ask, we couldn't do any of these events without you.

THANK YOU x

DRAFT