

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Wednesday 6th September 2023

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllr P. Dumke ~ Chair Cllr K. Mansell
Cllr N. Blown Cllr S. Back
Cllr J. Chisnall (by co-option) Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: Five (5)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The Chairman, Cllr P. Dumke opened the public session at 7.00pm and thanked the Councillors, the five (5) members of the public and the two (2) local Police Officers for attending.

Part A. Public Discussions

None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

A resident spoke to ask if the Parish Council could chase Medway Council to pollard the large tree located outside Windmill Cottages, on Allhallows Road.

A discussion also ensued as to who was responsible for the land located next to the allotments, where several complaints on social media concerning vegetation that was growing around the utility poles was aired.

Finally, PC David Brett spoke to introduce himself as the new Community Police Officer for the Peninsula. He advised that owing to a restructure within the Police, there were no longer any PSCO's assigned to the area and instead he would be Policing the villages, alongside his colleague PC Richard Jones. PC Richard Jones, who was sat next to PC David Brett, also spoke to provide a brief synopsis about his career with Kent Police, which included how long both he and his colleague had been in post.

Both officers then proceeded to provide a brief report on their recent work around the Peninsula, which included, but was not limited to, a large proportion of time spent assisting with the search for missing resident Liam Graham, issues with nuisance & speeding cars and motorbikes, drugs use and illegal parking.

PC David Brett closed his report in enquiring if the Parish Council could promote his contact details on the village noticeboards but urged residents to still call 101 if they needed assistance or to dial 999 in the event of an emergency. Following the closure of their report the Police Officers received an emergency call on their intercom, where they then made a swift exit from the meeting.

In response to the report on illegal parking, a member of the public spoke to circulate Medway Council's Traffic Enforcement's contact details, which included a note of the following telephone numbers which were apparently monitored from 7.00am – 1.00am daily:

01634 331760

07718 130962

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The Chairman, Cllr P. Dumke thanked the public for their comments and closed the public session.

He further spoke to advise that the family of missing resident Liam Graham, were in everyone's thoughts. He also asked everyone present to participate in one (1) minute's silence for Cllr N. Blown's wife, Anita, who had sadly passed away following a short illness.

The main meeting officially opened 7.20pm.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 7690:23 An apology for absence was received from Cllr J. Wallace, who was on annual leave.

The members also acknowledged that Cllr J. Van Niekerk had resigned since their last meeting, owing to work commitments.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 7691:23 None.

3. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5th July 2023

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 5th July 2023.

Min 7692:23 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 5th July 2023, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr N. Blown and seconded by Cllr K. Mansell that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 7693:23 None.

4. Vacancies

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

Min 7694:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen advised that she had received an application from an interested resident however, upon inviting him to attend the meeting, she had not heard any further from him.

No sooner had she advised the members of above, then the aforementioned the resident (who was sat in the public gallery!) spoke to introduce himself and to express his interest in joining the Parish Council.

Mr J. Chisnall was invited to speak where he gave a brief synopsis about himself.

A vote took place and Cllr K. Mansell spoke to propose the members co-opt Mr J. Chisnall onto the Parish Council, this proposal was seconded by Cllr S. Back and was unanimously agreed.

5. Ward Councillor report

a). A report by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding

Min 7695:23 It was noted that Ward Councillor Chris Spalding had accepted the Clerk's invitation to attend the meeting, however he sadly had been detained elsewhere on urgent business.

Owing to his absence the members acknowledged that he had not sent a copy of his report.

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7. Planning

a). Applications

Min 7696:23 The Chair, Cllr P. Dumke spoke to confirm receipt of two (2) new planning applications, which been submitted since the last meeting.

- **MC/23/1814 – The Former White Horse Public House Site, The Street, Upper Stoke**
- **MC/23/1435 – Land at Walnut Tree Farm, Grain Road, Lower Stoke**

b). Decisions

Min 7697:23 The members also acknowledged that there had been no new planning decisions made since the last meeting.

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 7698:23 Finally, the members asked the Clerk to chase for an update on the retrospective planning application for the brick-built building that was being constructed within the grounds of 'Sturch Field', ref: **Min 7593:23** and **Min 7645:23**.

They also asked the Clerk to enquire if the owners had permission to place two additional mobile homes on the site.

8. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 7699:23 The Chair, Cllr P. Dumke referred the members to the bank statements provided in their meeting packs and he talked them through the balances. After careful consideration the bank balances were deemed as acceptable.

b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for July & August 2023.

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 7700:23 It was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell and seconded by Cllr S. Back, that points b, c, d, & e be approved en bloc, this motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£607.71	July 2023 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – July 2023
HMRC	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£18.40	Tax & NI charges (July 2023)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£605.21	August 2023 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – August 2023
HMRC	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£18.20	Tax & NI charges (August 2023)
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£41.16	Broadband & Telephone line rental for July 2023

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Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£41.16	Broadband & Telephone line rental for August 2023
Medway Council	Min 5077:21	DIRECT DEBIT	£212.50	Lower Stoke Car Park Lease Payment INV: (TO FOLLOW)
AED Donate	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£81.53	Defibrillator Pads INV: 3340
AED Donate	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£81.53	Defibrillator Pads INV: 3340 DUPLICATE PAYMENT
KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£22.17	50% costs towards paper, envelopes & hole punch INV:48504
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£51.13	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for August 2023
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£51.13	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for July 2023
TOTAL			£1,901.83	

9. Management of the Council's land and property

a). To review the play park inspections for:

i Button Drive Playparks Road Playpark

Min 7701:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to advise that there was no change to the condition of the Button Drive Playpark, since the verbal report she provided last month.

ii Heron Way Playpark

iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 7702:23 Cllr K. Mansell provided a verbal report on the most recent play inspections of the Heron Way & Upper Stoke playparks.

She advised that following the retirement of Mr C. Davies, she had sourced a quote with another contractor to have the play equipment in all three (3) playparks deep cleaned.

Cllr K. Mansell spoke further to advise that she had also identified that the bins were overflowing in the playparks and upon speaking with the other Councillors she understood they were happy to assist in emptying them, once they were able to source some keys to open the locks.

Accordingly, the Clerk was deployed to order some additional bin bags, where Cllr P. Dumke agreed to email her the dimensions required.

Finally, the Clerk was asked to liaise with former Parish Councillor Peter Egan, who had offered to assist with the inspections of the play parks and to replace the bird deterrents (cable ties) that were currently mounted to the top of the play equipment.

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b). Cleaning of play equipment.

Min 7703:23 Cllr K. Mansell referred the members to a copy of the aforementioned quote she had circulated before the meeting, to deep clean the play equipment (including the removal of any bird droppings) in all three (3) play parks at a cost of £130.

Accordingly, she spoke to propose the members accepted the quote, which was seconded by Cllr N. Blown and was unanimously agreed.

c). Defibrillator

Min 7704:23 Cllr S. Back spoke to inform the members that he was still waiting to hear from the St John Ambulance to verify if the village's application for a decommissioned defibrillator had been successful.

He spoke further however to inform the meeting that he had recently discovered the 'Defibrillator Warehouse' now offered a monthly payment scheme, which he thought might be a more immediate solution, should an additional device be required beforehand.

10. Rivermead School (previously item 15)

a). To receive an update on the progress of the expansion of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust into the old Stoke Primary Academy building.

Min 7705:23 The Chairman, Cllr P. Dumke asked the Clerk to bring item 15 forward to item 10, where he invited Mr P. Dadson from the Rivermead trust to speak.

Mr P. Dadson thanked the Parish Council for inviting him and provided a brief update on the progress of the expansion of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust into the old Stoke Primary Academy building.

He advised that following his report at the Annual Parish meeting there had not been a huge amount of progress with the project however, he stressed that the school were still fully committed in expanding into the village.

It was understood that the Rivermead Trust had sent their bid for essential works into Medway Council, where the building works alone exceeded over 130% of their proposed budget. Owing to the overspend, the Unitary Authority disclosed that they would need to formally review these figures at their next full council meeting, which would obviously take additional time.

Mr P. Dadson spoke further to provide a brief list of some of the works that would need to be carried out, in order to make the building suitable for their needs. These items included, but were not limited to:

- Full internal renovations.
- The construction of a two (2) storey high extension to the back of the building.
- Amendments to the front of the property in order to accommodate side access for mini buses.
- The installation of additional parking to the side of the building, following the aforementioned changes to the hardstanding at the front.
- The installation of astro-turf to part of the field (in order to make the area useable all year round).
- Various amendments to internal walls to allow all classrooms to accommodate 10 pupils per class and a maximum of 90 students throughout the school.

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Mr P. Dadson also disclosed that the 'Trust' were aware the building contained asbestos and that feasibility, backlog and maintenance surveys still needed to be carried out.

He warned the residents that they were likely to see some activity happening later this week, as he was due to meet the architect the next day.

11. **Highways & Transportation** (previously item 10)

a). **Footpaths**

Min 7706:23 No report.

b). **Lighting**

Min 7707:23 No report.

c). **Highways and verges**

Min 7708:23 No report.

d). **Pot holes**

Min 7709:23 It was recorded that the large pothole located in Mallard Way had finally been filled in.

e). **Fly tipping**

Min 7710:23 Cllr K. Mansell reported the headboard, that had been fly tipped in the Heron Way playpark, was still there although it frequently moved around the recreation ground.

f). **Grass cutting**

Min 7711:23 No report.

g). **Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road**

Min 7712:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen reported that the engineer who had been investigating the leaking manhole cover on the A228 / Grain Road had now left, however she was still chasing Medway Council for an update on the status of its repair.

12. **Communications** (previously item 11)

To receive an update on the following methods of communication:

a). **Website**

Min 7713:23 No report.

b). **Social Media Page**

Min 7714:23 No report.

c). **Parish Council owned tablets**

Min 7715:23 It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting to utilise the Parish Council's owned tablets and direct email addresses would be arranged, once Cllr J. Wallace had returned from annual leave.

13. **Village Hall** (previously item 12)

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

Min 7716:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to report that she was in the process of completing a grant application for Veolia on behalf of the Village Hall, in order to apply for additional funds to replace the roof.

She closed her report in informing the members that NeuConnect had still not opened their grant application funding.

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14. **External Contractors** (previously item 13)

Min 7717:23 No report.

15. **Stoke Community Project** (previously item 14)

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

Min 7718:23 With permission from the Chairman, a member of the public spoke to update the meeting on the activities of the Stoke Community Project.

It was reported that Stoke Community project had come first place in the float decorating competition at the Isle of Grain Carnival, that was held on Saturday 22nd July.

The members also learnt that the Stoke Community project might be forced to cancel their next quiz night event, because their caterer had recently suffered a broken arm.

16. **Electricity Supplies in Stoke**

a). **To discuss the situation with the intermittent electricity supplies in Stoke.**

Min 7719:23 The members collectively discussed the situation with the intermittent electricity supplies in the village, where they also referred to a log that had been recorded on social media by previous Parish Councillor, Richard Bridge.

Following reports from the utility company that some of the issues might have been caused by vegetation growing around the electricity poles in Lower Stoke, the Parish Councillors understood that arrangements were in hand to have the greenery removed.

17. **Flood Update**

a). **To receive a written report by Ms G. Bussley of Medway Council, surrounding the proposed flooding prevention solutions for the Village and surrounding area.**

Min 7720:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen referred the members to an email she had received from Ms G. Bussley of Medway Council, concerning the proposed flooding prevention solutions for the village.

In this email it was reported that Ms G. Bussley was in the process of finalising the details and was hoping to provide a report at either the October or November Parish Council meeting.

18. **External Committee Updates**

a). **KALC**

Min 7721:23 No report.

b). **Rural Liaison.**

Min 7722:23 No report.

19. **Correspondence**

Min 7723:23 The Clerk Mrs J. Allen spoke to report that she had received no further correspondence since the last meeting.

20. **Any other business**

Min 7724:23 Cllr J. Chisnall spoke to express his concerns that the Doctors Surgery premises were still vacant and that as a result of the lack of infrastructure on the Peninsula he was still forced to remain registered with his previous practice, outside of the area.

A discussion ensued, where it was acknowledged that although the doctor's surgery was vacant, yet the practice was still paying their rent and hoped to return to the village.

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21. Date of next meeting

Min 7725:23 The Chair, Cllr P. Dumke spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 4th October

Min 7726:23 Cllr K. Mansell also spoke to advise that there appeared to be a breakdown in communication between the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council, as she had the Committee's next meeting scheduled to take place on the same day, time and location.

Accordingly, she agreed to have a word with the committee and ask them to either bring the date of their next meeting forward or to push it back until after the next Parish Council meeting.

22. Section 100A(4)

Min 7727:23 The Chair, Cllr P. Dumke read out loud the statement listed on the agenda in relation to Section 100A(4).

Accordingly, it was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell that the public be excluded from the next item, which was seconded by Cllr J. Chisnall and was unanimously agreed.

The five (5) members of the public left at 9.00pm.

23. Grant Application for Veolia

Min 7728:23 A grant application for Veolia discussed in closed session.

The members also touched upon the new quote the Village Hall had received for their insurance renewal.

24. Close of meeting

Min 7729:23 The Chair, Cllr P. Dumke closed the meeting at 9.15pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 4th October	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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