

STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

CLERKS REPORT 2019/April

Clerks report to support the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10th April 2019 in Stonesfield Village Hall.

1. **Parish Matters**

The drain at the Tap at the junction of Laughton Hill and Boot Street still needs attention. The clerk has reported this to Highways again.

2. **Town & Parish Council Elections**

Councillors David Brown, Dave Baldwin and Simon Powell confirmed to the clerk that they were standing again as Councillors and have submitted paperwork. Wendy Gould and G Lawrence confirmed they will be stepping down at the end of this term.

The clerk has also requested a copy of the electoral register which there is now access to. The clerk asked Paul Bates to post details of the election on the website and a notice was also placed on the parish noticeboard.

Stonesfield & Tackley District candidates are also announced and the clerk has asked Paul Bates to add these to the website.

3. **SAFER Working Group**

Paul Bates confirmed that the Speedwatch System which has been ordered and will be delivered after Easter.

The clerk is arranging for the equipment to be added to the parish insurance so that it is insured. The clerk is also seeking written assurance that the SAFER working group is covered by the parish insurance.

4. **SCT**

There is no update regarding completion of the sale of the land by SCT to Oxfordshire Community Land Trust.

5. **Sustainable Stonesfield / CALA Appeal**

The CALA Appeal has been taking place from 2nd April. Cllr D Brown attended on behalf of Stonesfield Parish Council alongside Jim Astle. Cllr D Brown will provide an update in the council meeting and updates to the Parish will be made as we receive them.

The clerk arranged printing at a local printer of several documents for Jim Astle for the appeal hearing. It was quite a substantial amount of paperwork. Costs for this will be claimed via Cllr D Brown who paid and collected the printing.

6. **Village Tidy Up Working Group**

Jess Huband led this on Sunday 24 March.

The clerk is seeking written assurance from the insurers that the Tidy Up working group is covered by the parish insurance.

7. **Planning**

Applications received from WODC:

19/00275/S73 Prospect Cottage, Church Street. Variation of condition 2 to allow removal of external stair and dormer door, change velux to dormer window.

The response for this was needed ahead of the parish meeting so it was sent via email to councillors. There were NO objections. The clerk submitted this notification to WODC.

Alterations to include garage conversion & insertion of bay window.

19/00818/HHD Well Cottage, Well Lane, Stonesfield. Demolish and replace conservatory with flat roof single storey and rear extension. Removal of cat slide roof, replace with gable end block. To be considered at the April 10th meeting.

Applications approved by WODC: None advised

8. **Recruitment**

Karen East is standing in as interim clerk & RFO following Gill Hill resignation. Karen also works with another parish council as clerk. Karen has completed a handover with Gill and is dealing with the payroll, cheques and emails to bring us up to date. The official closing date for the clerk vacancy was 31st March 2019. Cllr David Brown can provide an update on this in the meeting.

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The interim clerk has had a short walkaround of the village to familiarise herself with the area. The interim clerk has notified WODC and associated key contacts of the change of contact and this has been acknowledged.

9. Financial Matters:

The clerk has asked Cllr D Brown and Cllr W Gould to proceed with amending the bank mandates for a changeover of signatories to ensure enough signatories remain after elections. This is still in progress and Cllr W Gould has requested the required forms.

The following payments required signature between the March and April meeting:

HMRC March 2019 – Clerk tax – cheque no. 102041 - £161.60

The following payments require cheque signatories and approval in the April full council meeting:

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| C No 102042 | Castle Water (cemetery tap) | £4.04 | Invoice 1797809 |
| C No 102043 | Traffic Technology Ltd (Speedwatch) | £2394.00 | Invoice DT5322 |
| C No 102044 | Ubico Ltd (dog waste bin) | £248.96 | Invoice 60015023 |
| C No 102045 | HMRC clerk tax & NI | £272.17 | |
| C No 102046 | Clerk salary | £848.22 | |
| C No 1020 | David Brown Expenses | £tbc | |
| C No 1020 | SAFER – Mirror, Hi vis jackets etc | £tbc | |

The clerk has circulated an expenses form to Councillors to be used when claiming expenses to keep everything transparent for audit..

The clerk is preparing for the end of year audit. End of year was 31st March 2019. Phillip Hood was appointed as internal auditor by the previous clerk. The clerk is working with Phillip to get this done and all paperwork completed by the due dates.

10. Risk Assessment

The clerk has updated the risk assessment for the parish for council approval. This will be circulated with papers ahead of the meeting and needs to be approved as a minute in the April minute to satisfy audit requirements.

11. Asset Register

The clerk has updated the asset register for the parish council for council approval. This will be circulated with papers ahead of the meeting and needs to be approved as a minute in the April meeting to satisfy audit requirements.

12. Financial Regulations for the Council

The clerk has updated the financial regulations for the parish council approval. This will be circulated with papers ahead of the meeting and needs to be approved as a minute in the April meeting to satisfy audit requirements.

13. Statement of Internal Control

The clerk has updated the Statement of Internal Control for the parish council approval. This will be circulated with papers ahead of the meeting and needs to be approved as a minute in the April meeting to satisfy audit requirements.

14. Dog waste bins / waste bin

There is a very old Ubico bill that is unpaid – it is for a dog waste bin installed on 4th July 2017 at the junction of Combe Road and Woodstock Road. This is in with the cheques to be paid at this meeting.

The clerk is also looking at whether the new waste bin and dog waste bin was installed on the corner of Longore and Pond Hill and also at the entrance to Charity Farm on Buckland Drive as there does not seem to be confirmation of this since it was approved in previous minutes. An update will follow in due course.

15. Standing Orders

The clerk is unable to locate a current set of Standing Orders for the council. The clerk will update a set and bring to the May meeting for Councillor review and adoption.

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16. Register of Members Interests

Councillors, once re-elected, need to complete registers of members interest forms to satisfy audit requirements. The clerk will circulate forms for completion when they are due.

17. Highways

The clerk has reported to Highways the kerb at the war memorial which is damaged regularly by the buses and large vehicles mounting the pavement. This has been acknowledged by OCC. Further issues can be reported by the clerk but also it is good to use the Fixmystreet website as well. <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

18. Parish Post

The clerk has asked if there is a possibility of having post for the parish delivered to the Village Hall. At the moment there are some queries regarding this so for now post will be directed to the clerks private home address but this address cannot be published.

Post going to the previous clerk will be forward to the interim clerk.

19. Email / Website

The clerk has noted that most councillors and the clerk are using very generic emails not specific for council use (Hotmail, gmail etc.). It is strongly recommended that the councillors and the clerk have dedicated secure email addresses. It is possible for parish councils to have government email Ids (.gov.uk) but in order to comply to this you have to have a website address ending .gov.uk as well (SPC currently does not have this).

The alternative is an email ID for each councillor and clerk ending .org.uk – this would be suitable to work alongside the current website. Based on costs it may be more suitable to go for the email ending .org.uk but the council would need to ensure the website held all the information required.

Either option of new email should come with cloud storage with full back up and security for documents. The clerk would retain master access to the storage of documents.

The clerk however would like to note that the current website does not comply with full disclosure of information required by parish councils and content is not currently held and managed by the council. There are dedicated providers who can set a new website up which the clerk can then ensure is up to date and fully compliant. They are fully backed up and documents are kept securely. Kidlington Parish Council and Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Councils are good examples to look at.

The clerk has obtained costs (net) from a reputable and well used council provider Microshade who work with Vision ICT to produce together for the councils consideration:

Mailboxes: £25 set up and £18 per annum thereafter (per mailbox)

Domain registration: £125 per 2 years (reduced to £105 if also having a website)

Website building including all the legally required pages and including support & hosting £650 in year one (support and hosting thereafter £175 per year)

Virtual server environment (data backup and configuration) £100.00

Annual server hosted application service with support £349.80 – it should be noted this is a fully secure data environment.

Total cost for set up (based on 5 email addresses) £1,349.80 plus VAT.

The clerk would like to highlight that the benefit of the above means data is secure, its transparent, its compliant, councillors are not mixing personal and council email, the council maintains control of its own information. However, it is possible just to have the email and server and use alongside the existing website (but we need to bring the website up to date to become compliant).

20. Annual Parish Meeting

A confirmed date and agenda needs to be set for the annual parish meeting. The clerk will advertise once this is set.

21. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 8th May 2019

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Calendar

Council Meetings – Stonesfield Village Hall – Wednesdays 7.30pm

10th April 2019

8th May 2019

12th June 2019

10th July 2019

No August meeting?

11th September 2019

9th October 2019

13th November 2019

11th December 2019

Annual Parish Meeting - tbc

Karen East, Interim Clerk to the Parish Council
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