

# STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES 2020/09

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
via Zoom – Covid 19**

Meeting commenced at 19:00

**Members present:** Cllr David Brown (Chair), Cllr David Baldwin, Cllr W Gould, Cllr Mick Heduan, Cllr Phil McArdeall, Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr Ian Hudspeth (OCC), Cllr Jim O'Brien

**Others present:** Karen East (Clerk), Helen Keen (TVP)

**Apologies:** Cllr Geraldine Lawrence, Cllr Richard Bishop (DC)

**Members of Public:** 4 members of the public (Jess Huband, Steve Callaghan, Peter Smyth, Brian Clarke)

**270. Declarations of pecuniary interest.** None

**271. The Minutes of the meeting** held on August 2020 were approved.

**272. Matters Arising from the minutes August 2020**

None

**273. Public Participation**

None

**274. White Horse Community Pub (Guests: Steve Callaghan and Peter Smyth)**

The Community Group has successfully raised £7,000 – this meets the parish council requirements for the second part of the grant. Evidence of this was circulated to the council ahead of the meeting.

The group have been working hard to raise funds.

The group are thinking about putting banners up at entrances to the village and potentially on the triangle opposite the White Horse. The clerk advised that Highways and WODC probably should be consulted before placing them. SAFER should also be advised. Jess Huband advised that for the village fete the WODC and Highways have allowed them in certain places for a short time.

Cllr M Heduan advised that Steve Callaghan performance on BBC South was great.

Cllr Hudspeth also wished the group good luck.

The community group asked if the council would consider applying for a Public Works Loan to assist with public funding. This will be discussed later in the meeting.

**275. Planning**

Applications received from WODC for this parish. Councillors considered these via email as responses were required ahead of the meeting.

Planning appeal received regarding Valhalla, Stonesfield\_20/00276/FUL – this was circulated via email and the Parish Council issued an objection.

Planning application received for Shiralee 20/02046 – this was circulated via email and there were no objections.

**276. Finance**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the cheque payments as presented below.

Knights PLC Solicitors and the grant to the White Horse Community Pub were written and issued following August approvals.

06/08/2020	Knights PLC solicitors	£ 1,800.00	102223	Stockey woods legal
06/08/2020	Grant to White Horse Community Pub	£ 2,000.00	102224	White Horse Comm pub grant - part 1
03/09/2020	Clerk – PAYE	£ 801.49	102225	
03/09/2020	clerk expenses	£ 44.40	102226	Home office Aug expenses, printing etc.
03/09/2020	Oxfordshire County Council Pensions	£ 302.15	102227	
03/09/2020	HMRC –PAYE	£ 248.26	102228	
03/09/2020	VOID	VOID	102229	VOID
03/09/2020	Cherwell Graphics	£ 13.50	102230	laminated cattle signs for common
03/09/2020	Came and Company	£ 473.52	102231	insurance renewal
03/09/2020	Vanbrugh Unit Trust	£ 150.00	102232	allotment rental in advance - Blenheim Estate
03/09/2020	Tudor Stone	£ 264.80	102233	Cut of burial ground, cut of path on to cricket pitch at Common and track alongside for fence etc.
09/09/2020	Clive Parsons	£ 125.25	102234	PAYE
09/09/2020	Cllr Mick Heduan	£ 96.97	102235	Councillor expenses - SAFER
09/09/2020	Cllr David Brown	£ 91.74	102236	Councillor expenses - gardening tools for Clive (maintenance)
09/09/2020	W Bachelor (Bill)	£ 680.00	102237	Common expenses - fencing
09/09/2020	Richard Morris	£ 15.00	102238	Common expenses - key for gate (Timpson's key cut)

### **Public Works Order Loan**

Councillors discussed the Public Works Order Loan option for the pub. The Council would have to survey the village independently, run our own viability survey on the pub, we would need to look at budgets and would need a business plan / case to consider this and meet the criteria for application. The parish council would be liable for the repayments and would have to increase the precept long term to cover it. Councillors need to look in to this in further detail.

The community groups have looked at other parishes that have done this.

The clerk reminded councillors that due diligence must be taken, this should be looked in to with far more detail before a decision is made. Cllr J O'Brien is wholly against any loan.

Cllr Baldwin expressed that the parish council should explore the possibility and expressed that the council should support this. He indicated that the pub group are possibly looking at £80,000 for the loan.

The clerk explained again that a lot of due diligence needs to be done ahead of anything including surveying the whole village from a parish council perspective.

Cllr McArdell expressed we also need a good business case but thinks this is a big undertaking for the parish council.

Cllr Gould and Cllr O'Brien expressed there is an awful lot of work to do to even consider this.

The community group added they were not expecting a loan, it was more a case of wanting to know if it was a possibility and would provide all information if needed.

They also added that they are looking at other loans and grants.

Cllr Mick Heduan supported doing research in to the loan but wanted to see a business plan (the group said this would be available w/c 16 Sept with a refined version around 28<sup>th</sup> September). Cllr Heduan also asked if a sensitivity study would be included and council were advised it would be.

The clerk will do some research with councillors in conjunction with the community group providing information to the council too.

At this point no decision or promise to support or not support a Public Works Loan has been made.

### **To consider the grant requests received:**

A grant form was previously received from the **White Horse Community Pub Group**. Councillors **RESOLVED** to grant the second tranche of £2,000 to the group. Instead of paying the full amount directly to the group it was agreed the council would pay for the survey that needs to be done on the pub and the remaining money up to the £2,000 grant will be paid across to the group. The clerk will liaise with the group to arrange cheques for this.

### **To consider spending more money on litter picking on the Playing Fields:**

Councillors discussed whether Clive Parsons can do additional litter picking on the Playing Field. It has been requested that more litter picking is required.

Over the year this would mount up. The Parish Council does not have the budget and has not budgeted for this therefore the parish council cannot put additional funds towards this at this time.

### **277. Anti-Social Behaviour**

Helen Keen from TVP attended the meeting for this discussion and confirmed that the police are aware of anti-social behavior. Helen advised we need to look at how to tackle problems outside the box. Community members are encouraged to report all anti-social behavior. Reports can be made anonymously via Crimestoppers. Reports can also be made online at TVP. The more reports provided, the more police presence will happen. Other villages and towns are installing CCTV which is effective because the CCTV can go to TVP. This is something that would cost quite a lot of money to undertake.

Jess Huband added that there is drug dealing in various areas of the village and that there are also issues with cars in the village. Jess asked if car registrations can be published on social media. TVP do not recommend putting registrations on social media and you must not name people on social media. Registration plates are also sometimes stolen so you could publish details of an innocent number plate in error so it is not something that should be done.

Cllr Baldwin noted that there has been a very specific report about young people being targeted directly regarding drugs particularly late on a Friday / Saturday evening. TVP are aware of this and have been over on a number of occasions. They will try and increase patrols.

The clerk asked if a community of parish representatives could meet with TVP for a more in depth brainstorm on what can be done. Helen Keen supported this and will look in to this.

The motorbikes in the wood are also being dealt with at the moment.

TVP recommended putting CCTV signage and dummy cameras up as a deterrent which is relatively inexpensive. The clerk will explore this.

### **278. Reports from Councillors**

Cllr Hudspeth report was circulated ahead of the meeting. There has been a revised budget which is difficult. No further questions regarding the report.

Cllr Heduan reported on SAFER ahead of the meeting – the report will be available on the website and is in the clerk's report.

Cllr Brown reported on Stockey Woods ahead of the meeting via email. A summarised copy is here as it came in after the clerks report was published.

The parish council has heard back from Roy Cox re Stockey Woods. Roy has stated that Blenheim have not changed their minds and are pursuing the Public Inquiry via Freeths their solicitors who have replied to Jim Astle (PC representation) at Knights.

Richard Morris has confirmed by Internet search that the application area of land is an SSS1; therefore it makes the commercialisation of Stockey Woods almost impossible.

Roy Cox did make the following suggestions

1. Formalising the defined paths by dedicating them and creating longer term partnerships with local groups who would like to use the woodland. With closer relations, we could look at improvements to the trails, more permanent homes for activities or enhanced paths, particularly where they lay wet in the winter. I know the Scouts have reached out before on these sorts of things and we have some excellent examples of this across the Estate. If of interest our annual community bursary would be a good vehicle for funding some of these areas and has been used in a number of communities already.

Whilst at first glance this looks a good way forward our legal representation agree this is really a second best solution i.e. What does Roy mean by formalising the defined paths, does he mean to permissive footpaths or to public rights of way? Also it would just be a permission for the Scouts and School to use certain areas of the woods which could be withdrawn at any time.

2. If longevity and community input was a priority, community woodland agreements would allow communities to take more of an interest in the management of a woodland. We have a very successful arrangement with Sustainable Woodstock and the terms of these arrangements, particularly liability and management which I appreciate could be a concern for the Parish Council over such a vast area, can often be tailored to suit individual woodland.

Any such agreement would be time limited and could incur costs and liabilities for the PC.

Our legal representation will write to Roy Cox and ask him for more information on his 2 proposals.

This is ongoing.

### **279. Burial Ground**

Cllr David Baldwin would like to delegate the contract to the Environmental Working Group.

Cllr O'Brien noted that there has been suggestion that there is asbestos in the ground but there has been reassurance from Empire Homes that that is not the case. Cllr Baldwin commented that there is possibility debris is still there.

Cllr Brown asked about the validity of the Environmental Workgroup as it has not achieved anything this year, has no minutes and has not produced any terms of reference. Cllr Baldwin challenged this and advised that Covid had caused a lull in this.

Cllr Baldwin advised that the 3 trees that were cut down by our contractor by mistake were planted 20 months ago. Cllr Gould expressed her concern that the trees planted were ornamental trees and are unsuitable. Cllr Baldwin advised that the trees were suitable and were agreed before the current clerk and chair were in role.

Cllr Brown expressed concern that our contractor had been contacted by one Councillor in an underhand manner. Our contractor was very upset by the conduct and emails sent to him as it was unjustified and was not something the parish council had discussed.

Cllr S Powell supports that the burial ground is a piece of land that could be made more interesting for the moment.

Councillors **RESOLVED** to keep the burial ground management within the parish council and not within a working group but the clerk will work with councillors to see if we can amend how it is managed to improve the site. This includes looking at all options including current contracting. It was noted that we wouldn't want trees planted within the ground (around it possibly) but we could also look at wildflowers.

*Cllr Ian Hudspeth and Helen Keen (TVP) left the meeting*

#### **280. Councillor Ground Rules**

Cllr Mick Heduan and the clerk sent some proposed ground rules to councillors ahead of the meeting for discussion.

Cllr W Gould expressed that politics should not be brought in to the meeting and asked members to calm down. There were heated exchanges amongst Cllr Baldwin and Cllr Brown with raised voices.

On the advice of the monitoring office the detail of the conversation has been retained but is not included in the minutes.

Cllr M Heduan expressed that we have to make some changes to move forward and shout not look back.

Cllr Brown added that in May, no other councillors asked to stand as Chair when he was re-elected. Cllr D Brown stood down as Chair. A new chair will need to be elected at the next meeting.

Cllr Baldwin wished to abstain from voting for the ground rules as he wished to have more time to consider them. All other councillors voted in favour of adopting them. The ground rules were **ADOPTED** by the parish council.

The clerk reminded councillors that these meetings are public meetings and are minuted and can be read by anyone. The clerk reminded the group that councillors represent the community and it is not a good representation of the council to have

heated discussions in a public meeting. Unfortunately, members of the public did witness the start of the heated discussions, this is not the first time this has been witnessed.

The clerk requested an interim closed council meeting to be held before 26<sup>th</sup> Sept. The meeting is so that councillors can discuss further how to move forward and to work on behavior at meetings. Councillors agreed to have this meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> Sept – 7pm (virtual). The clerk and Cllr Heduan will chair this interim (non-public meeting).

The clerk will also report to the monitoring officer at WODC about this meeting.

**28o. AOB**

None

**Date of next full council (public) meeting: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – 7pm – Zoom Virtual Meeting**

*Meeting ended at 21:10*

Karen East, Clerk to the Parish Council

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