

STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES 2020/10

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14th October 2020 via Zoom – Covid 19

Meeting commenced at 19:00

Members present: Cllr David Brown (Vice Chair), Cllr David Baldwin, Cllr W Gould, Cllr Mick Heduan, Cllr Phil McArdell (Chair), Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr Ian Hudspeth (OCC), Cllr Jim O'Brien, Cllr Geraldine Lawrence, Cllr Richard Bishop (DC)

Others present: Karen East (Clerk), Richard Morris, Jim Astle

Apologies: None

Members of Public: 3 members of the public (Steve Callaghan, Peter Smyth, Paul Barrett)

281. Declarations of pecuniary interest. None

282. Election of Chair and Vice Chair – Cllr P McArdell was unanimously voted in as Chair taking over from Cllr D Brown. Proposed: Wendy Gould, Seconded: Simon Powell. It was **resolved** that Cllr P McArdell is Chair.

Election of Vice Chair. Cllr M Heduan and Cllr D Brown stood for the role as vice chair. It was **resolved** that Cllr D Brown is Vice Chair, Proposed Cllr J O'Brien and seconded Cllr W Gould. (voted by Cllr G Lawrence, Cllr P McArdell, C W Gould and Cllr J O'Brien). Cllr Heduan was received and seconded by by Cllr Powell and Cllr Baldwin and received votes from Cllr S Powell and Cllr D Baldwin. Cllr Brown received the majority vote.

283. The Minutes of the meeting held on September 2020 were approved.

284. Matters Arising from the minutes September 2020

Cllr Bishop asked if there is a report from the meeting on 16th Sept. The clerk confirmed that was a closed meeting regarding the councillors code of conduct. Note for clarification: Jim Astle is acting on behalf of the applicant for the village Green not directly for the parish council. (Stockey Woods)

285. Public Participation

None

286. Stockey Woods

Richard Morris provided an update and Cllr Brown circulated a report ahead. Richard Morris explained that they will need financial support and they have had pledges from members of the community which they are now following up. The money will go to Sustainable Stonesfield to fund this. Richard Morris is not anticipating asking the parish council for further funding. The clerk is still waiting to hear back from Roy Cox at Blenheim.

Cllr D Brown shared a report ahead of the meeting and advised that a case for the inquiry is still being put together. The clerk is able to assist with preparation for the case when required.

Cllr Gould, Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Brown, Cllr Powell, Cllr Powell and Cllr O'Brien support the village green status for Stockey Woods. It was considered too much of an important asset to lose.

It was **resolved** that SUSTO proceed with pursuing Stockey Woods for village green status (all in favour except Cllr D Baldwin).

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

Cllr Hudspeth explained that Bladon Parish Council did not financially support the pub at Bladon. He did not recommend that the parish council subsidised the pub in Stonesfield on the basis that it would be tax payers money and not all those paying tax would necessarily want it. The responsibility should be on the community to support and fund it. They would then have to use it.

Cllr Bishop supports the pub but does not support the parish subsidizing the pub as it is tax payer's money.

Steve Callaghan updated the parish council confirming they are now a community benefits society which enables the group to sell shares. The business plan and prospectus is almost complete and they hope to start to sell shares by 23rd October. The business plan is work in progress but has been shared with the parish council. The owner of the pub invited the community group to the pub, the other bidder for the pub was always there, he is a property developer following further research. It is unclear whether the other bidder is still keen. Access to the pub was restricted but the owner is now assisting. The group acknowledge the council need to do their own work for the survey and offered to support but it is confirmed that any survey of residents has to be completely independent.

Peter Smyth confirmed they should have an almost final version Friday 16th and will share this with the clerk to circulate to councillors.

The group thinks that non pub goers would support the pub. 75 emails were sent to councillors asking them to support it but for clarity all of the emails contained the same text and gave the impression of a round robin.

Cllr McArdell stated that 2 months ago when this was first discussed (at the time of grants) it was made clear by the group that it was a grant only. The grant was given on this basis. We were advised that no further funding investments from the parish council would be requested. Last month the public works order loan was floated.

This is a concern of Cllr P McArdell.

Peter Smyth added that the public works order loan is something they wish to consider as it is a tool that could be utilized. He added there are a number of options they are looking at.

Cllr McArdell has concerns about potentially taxing members of the public to fund the pub. He added that the share offer allows members of the public to contribute if they wish. He noted we may have to increase the precept to fund a loan if it went ahead.

Cllr Brown raised concerns regarding the business case of the pub (these concerns were also sent to councilors ahead of the meeting). He cannot see how the parish council can go in to this at such a risk.

Cllr O'Brien is against the loan and financial options from the parish council.

Cllr Powell is in support of the pub but does not think we should have anything to do with financing it.

Cllr Baldwin is in support of financing the pub. He added that the group have not yet been able to have a structural survey. He feels we should help keep it going.

Cllr Gould is concerned about raising the possibility of having to raise the precept for the loan now or in the future as we have a lot of call on our funds. We do not know how much money the loan would be or the share uptake. There is a lot of work to do. The application work is also expensive. Cllr Gould does not think the parish council can finance this.

Cllr Heduan would like the project to succeed but Cllr Hudspeth indicated we should not be financing this and this is of concern.

Cllr Lawrence does not think we should be involved financially as a parish council.

Cllr P McArdell reiterated, based on those comments, that we can support but not financially.

Councillors **RESOLVED** not to pursue looking in to ways of financially supporting the pub further. Cllr David Baldwin was in favour of supporting the finance but all other councillors were against pursuing this further from a financial point of view. All councillors wished the pub group great success and look forward to updates and to seeing the share offer.

288. Questions arising from the clerk's report

Cllr Gould advised that the grass cutting is not happening regularly. The clerk will follow up with this.

Land at North Farm and Playing Fields Transfer is in progress. Potential legal costs to come. The clerk as asked the solicitors for cost estimates.

289. Planning applications

None

290. Finance

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

Councillors additionally **RESOLVED** to approve the 50% charge of the church clock bi annual service which is £139.20 and a £200 contribution to the church towards cutting of the grass at the churchyard.

MJD Hughes	£ 1,200.00	102239	Grant to white horse community pub - direct to surveyor
White Horse Community pub	£ 800.00	102240	balance of grant to white horse community pub group
West Oxfordshire District Council	£ 98.32	102241	grass cutting
Prysebros Ltd - weed control	£ 309.60	102242	weed control
Oxfordshire County Council Pensions	£ 302.15	102243	pensions paye

Clerk paye	£ 801.49	102244	paye clerk
HMRC -PAYE	£ 248.26	102245	hmrc paye
Clive Parsons paye	£ 90.18	102246	Clive paye
Cllr David Brown	£ 16.00	102247	timpsons receipt provided, key cutting glebe gate
Smiths of Derby Ltd	£ 139.20	102248	50% cost of servicing church clock
Tudor Stone	£ 707.75	102249	2 x invoices glebe and common works
clerk expenses	£ 35.20	102250	Home office sept expenses, printing etc.
Stonesfield PCC	£ 200.00	102251	grass cutting church yard contribution

291. Reports from Councillors

Cllr Hudspeth circulated his report ahead of the meeting and discussed his report. Cllr Brown asked Cllr Hudspeth if there are any proposals to look at the A40 following the terrible accident this week on the A40. Cllr Hudspeth explained there is funding for a bus lane on the A40 but not for dueling the road. The District awaits the report following the accident, safety can then be considered once the cause is known, if appropriate.

Cllr Bishop circulated his report and discussed this. WODC have been looking at the housing and infrastructure review, this is in addition to the normal DC work. He complemented the work of those working throughout Covid.

Cllr M Heduan mentioned 1 Farley Lane planning applications which was discussed at a previous meeting with Cllr Bishop. This property received approval for planning (6 dwellings in the office building) despite numerous objections, concerns regarding the build and asked for feedback on this regarding the decision at WODC. Cllr Bishop said that people can write to the district but members of the public cannot appeal the decision. The vote at WODC was unanimous in favour of the build.

Cllr Baldwin asked Cllr Bishop about how many emails he received in support of the community pub. Cllr Bishop added 75 had written to him but none expressing support of the parish council funding the pub.

280. Councillor Ground Rules

Cllr Mick Heduan noted that it had been a very good, civilized meeting and the ground rules seemed to have been taken in to account by all.

280. AOB

- Cllr G Lawrence confirmed that the defibrillator has been checked and the batteries are working. It is positioned just outside the Village Hall.

- Cllr McArdell thanked Cllr Heduan for his SAFER report.
- Cllr D Brown advised that Phil Martin is stepping down from the scouts but Ben is taking over. They have plans for the build of the new hut and are out to tender. Costs expected around £150-£200k. The fundraising is not as active at the moment while the community pub is fundraising.
- The clerk confirmed that Ben Tomalin had asked about the village hall car park ownership. The main car park is under village hall jurisdiction and the small car park is parish councils. Ben Tomalin has been emailed directly with this information.
- Cllr McArdell asked if Stonesfield Mutual Aid was still active in light of a possible further lockdown. Cllr D Baldwin explained that Stonesfield Mutual Aid still has some funds and that goodwill in the community is still there. If anyone is in real hardship the fund will assist them. Cllr Baldwin thanked those that helped previously for all of their support and councilors echoed this and also thanked Cllr Baldwin for his work with Stonesfield Mutual Aid.
- Cllr Gould noted that the flu clinics at the village hall went well.

**Date of next full council (public) meeting: Wednesday 11th November 2020 – 7pm
– Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Meeting ended at 20.49

Karen East, Clerk to the Parish Council

Email: clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk