

# STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES 2021/05

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021** via Zoom  
(due to Covid 19)

**Members present:** Cllrs David Brown (Chair), Dave Baldwin, Cllr Phil McArdell, Cllr Jim O'Brien, Cllr Geraldine Lawrence, Jim O'Brien

**Others present:** Karen East (Clerk) and members of the public: Paul and Diane, Simon Warr, Cllr Richard Bishop (District Councillor) Harry Holland, Mark, Ben Treval (pre-school), Rev Ralph Williamson, Frank Huddleston, Paul Barrett +1, Ben Whitworth (Scouts), Paul, Simon Warr, Steve Callaghan, Kim Lander, Richard Morris (SUSTO)

**Apologies:** Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Jess Huband, Simon Hopkins

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

21/01. The meeting **was recorded.**

21/02. **Introduction of the Councillors and the Chair**

Cllr Phil McArdell (Chairman) introduced the clerk and councillors and gave a Chairman's report.

21/03. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.**

There were none.

21/04 The **Minutes** of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were approved and signed.

Proposed Cllr David Brown, Seconded Cllr Jim O'Brien

21/05 **Matters of report arising from previous minutes.**

None

21/06 **Financial Report to year end 31 March 2021**

There is 64.5k in the bank, mainly because of receipt of art project S106 money and remaining s106 money from charity farm. Remaining funds are ring fenced, approx. 5k in unallocated funds in account. New financial year started 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

21/07. **Reports from District and County Councillors**

**Cllr Richard Bishop - DC** – this is last report as a District Councillor as he is retiring. For the last 7 years Cllr Bishop has provided us with reports. The last year has been constrained by Covid but DC has continued. Grants have been given during the year, strategies have still been focussed on (climate change, planning, electric car charger points). Much has been accomplished despite the virtual working. On a personal note Cllr Bishop thanked residents and the council for being so welcoming and making his time as a DC enjoyable. Councillors thanked Cllr Bishop for everything he has done over the years for the village.

**Cllr Ian Hudspeth - OCC** – report attached

21/08 **Report from Playing Field Representative (Frank Huddleston)**

The PFA continues strongly and has a multi-use games area, cricket pitches, tennis courts, MUGA and children's play area. The financial structure is based on relatively low subscriptions, grants, low rentals. Covid did crumble the financial structure. The cost is considerable for the playing fields. Regular donations and grants are required to keep things going. The new replacement tractor funded by crowd funding and grants arrives soon.

The PFA is looking at providing an outdoor gym and funding opportunities are being looked at.

The PFA look forward to the North Farm land but this will be challenging to get it ready for use.

The children's play area is in good shape but in a few years it may need renovation expenditure.

The PFA needs the support of the village practically and financially.

Cllr Brown asked about fundraising activities. Frank confirmed that where they can this is done. (Caravan club, dance, yoga etc.) but what the PFA really needs is a regular supplier.

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### 21/09 **Report from the church (*Rev Ralph Williamson*)**

Andy Tacon provided a report: Good financial state, renting out the MUGA is keeping things balanced. Good pool of volunteers. More volunteers needed for lawn mowing if anyone is available.

No planning in regards to the potential new pitch at the moment but this could be quite expensive. The parish noted we haven't had the land handed to us yet so reports will follow as it happens.

In the process of turning in to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) so it can be registered in playing fields name without parish council as a trustee.

### 21/10 **Report from Stonesfield Community Trust**

Written report to follow

### 21/11 **Report on the common and SUSTO (*Richard Morris*)**

**The Common:** New fencing was erected on the common at the end of last summer to separate the cricket pitch. The drinking bay was also made cattle friendly. Tudor Stone topped the area next to the fence (from the road entrance). We will review timing of cuts this year. 8 cattle in total were put on the common in September until beginning of January. There was major flooding in October and this continued until February. This did cause damage to the fence line. This will be repaired before stock arrives end summer. The willows along the riverbank need to be pollarded and it would be good to plant some older trees but we cannot plant them on the SSSI, we could plant them at the cricket pitch (we do not need permission from Natural England to plant there). Two or 3 trees on the riverbank would work well.

Official map from OCC showing Stonesfield Common was received, grassland near the bridge is part of the common which we did not realise.

**SUSTO (*Sustainable Stonesfield*):** Campaign to get Stockey Woods declared as Village Green. The campaign started in 2016! Blenheim Estate are the owners, they formally objected to the application which triggered an inquiry. The Parish Council paid £1,800 for an expert barrister, funds were also raised in the village. At the end of 2020 Blenheim withdrew their objection and the inquiry was stopped. All donations from the public are being refunded. Stockey Woods now has village green status. Tricia and Jim Astle are owed a debt of gratitude for their work on this.

SUSTO are very willing to be part of a neighbourhood plan for the village and helping in any way they can. The parish council confirmed neighbourhood plan discussions are about to resume.

Report attached

### 21/12 **Report from the Pre-school (*Simon Hopkins*)**

Report from Simon Hopkins read out by the clerk. (attached)

### 21/13 **Report from the school (*Ben Trevail (Headteacher) & Harry Holland*)**

Currently have 101 children across the school. Restructured in 2020 due to falling pupil numbers (5 classes down to 4). Numbers have risen as the school tries to appeal to children outside of the village (surrounding villages). OFTED grading is currently Good. The school is in a really good position, working really hard to improve the quality of teaching which is strong, positive reviews from OCC recognising the improvements. The data is positive with improving attainment across the school. Standards are good and rising throughout the school.

Governance has been strengthened over the last 12 months, monitoring more closely, governors scrutinising and new governors. They do need someone with financial expertise to assist with running the school. Children have been supported through Covid. Forest school is a recognised forest school provider for children of all ages. Thanks to the Community Trust to help finance the forest school. Emotional health is being supported, all children are accessing wellbeing lessons within the curriculum and targeted support where needed. Every pupil counts. Thanks to Friends of Stonesfield School who continue to look for revenues, currently fundraising for outdoor classroom.

The school has a good relationship with the pre-school.

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Thanks to Stonesfield Mutual Aid for supporting some of the school families. Gigaclear are offering one community building to be linked free of charge for super-fast broadband. The school would like to receive this. Councillors had no objection to this and the clerk will

### 21/14 **Report from the Village Hall (*Jacqueline*)**

Stonesfield Village Hall Annual Report read by the clerk.

As with everyone else affected, the disruptions caused by the Covid Lockdowns forced the village hall to close its doors to everyone for the majority of last year, so from the 19th March 2020 there were no regular bookings allowed.

Luckily, our treasurer was very proactive with securing the grants to cover the buildings running cost during the lockdown periods, so we have managed to keep on top of things.

We went ahead and ran the flu clinics on the 6th and 15th of October, and the Covid Safe Christmas Fayre on the 6th of December, both were free of charge for the community, although we did use the Fayre as a fundraising exercise.

The core group of trustees, have been in constant communication, and have met up on occasion, to review our terms and conditions for hire and create a covid safe policy for the safe reopening of the hall, as well as putting together a list of repairs and maintenance issues that we are working our way through.

Alongside government guidance, as it currently stands, we are optimistic that the majority of groups will be back in session as of 17th of May 21.

### 21/15 **Report from the Social Club**

None

### 21/16 **Report from SAFER Parish Council Working Group (Cllr *Mick Heduan*)**

This is a Parish Council funded working group. Report attached and was read out in the meeting.

### 21/17. **Report from the Village Tidy Up Parish Council Working Group (*Jess Huband*)**

The clerk read the report from Jess Huband.

Thank you, litter pickers! To all of the Stonesfield and surrounds litter picking heroes, thank you! The response to my piece in the March issue of the Slate has been fantastic with the new Parish Council litter pickers regularly being booked and taken on litter picking walks (even jogs!) There have been some interesting finds ....I also wanted to thank the litter pickers who habitually pick up litter every day, or every week, and have been doing so for months, even years. Thank you. With our combined efforts, a huge amount of rubbish has been removed (and hopefully recycled) from our pavements, verges and hedgerows, not only making Stonesfield and its surrounds look tidier but, more importantly, helping our environment and the wildlife within it.

If you would like to book a litter picker, do please get in touch on 07970 107805 or at [jesshuband@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jesshuband@hotmail.co.uk). And if you ever spot an area which needs litter picking, do please let me know so that we can focus our efforts where needed as required.

With thanks, of course, to the PC for funding and organising the equipment!

The clerk and the Parish Council thanked Jess for all of her work surrounding litter picking, it has made a huge difference.

### 21/18. **Report from the Scouts (*Ben Whitworth*)**

Ben Whitworth gave a report – copy attached

The big project is the scout hut. They have pre-application planning.

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The duck race is going ahead this summer.

Buy a brick scheme is going to come in to place to assist with the scout hut fundraising.

### 21/19. **Report from the Police**

None

### 21/20. **Report from the Community Pub Group (Steve Callaghan)**

It has been an incredible year, over 450k has been raised but disappointingly we didn't end up owing the pub. Final offer was £445k. The pub was sold for £385k – we did bid 60k more than it sold for so this is disappointing. We need to move on. We want to see the pub as a community pub – even with new owners. Cllr Brown is assisting with brokering a meeting between Jon Bowers and the pub group. The pub group have offered to share ideas with the new owners and will keep on trying with that. The group is concerned at the lack of advertising for a tenant for the pub. There were 4 other groups within a 10-mile radius advertising for a tenant but not the White Horse. It is also clear that parts of the building need repair. The community group are asked many questions about the pub but as a group we do not know. If people would like money for their shares back they can be refunded. Others are waiting to see if perhaps the pub may come again in the near future. Cllr Brown will continue to try and communicate between the pub group and the new owners to broker a meeting. The parish council commended the amazing work and impressive amount of money raised by this group.

### 21/21. **Report from Stonesfield Mutual Aid (Cllr David Baldwin)**

Stonesfield Mutual Aid – a year ago the group didn't exist but it was needed in the first lockdown. There are still active users. Very well supported group by individuals in the community and the parish council. The Chippy Larder is still supplying food which Stonesfield Mutual Aid are delivering. We are talking to support the carers café. There are also pockets of need which we have been able to help through the school, pre-school, Facebook groups for food, small monetary advice and Citizens advice.

Cllr Brown noted that without the help of Stonesfield Mutual Aid some people would have really struggled. He passed thanks to the work of Cllr Baldwin. The Parish Council echoed this thanks.

### 21/22. **Any other reports**

**Stonesfield Gardening Club** – report read by Cllr Wendy Gould – attached

### 21/23. **Public Participation**

None

### 21/24. **Any Other Matters**

The Parish Council was thanked for doing a great job by a member of the public.

*Meeting closed at 8.50pm*

Karen East, Clerk to Stonesfield Parish Council  
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