

STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

CLERKS REPORT 2021/April

Clerks report to support the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th April 2021 – Virtually due to Covid 19 restrictions

1. Parish Matters

- The clerk has requested replacement litter bins for Church Street and by the village shop. No date for replacement has been given yet. This is likely to be delayed due to Covid 19. Ongoing.

2. SAFER Working Group – Report from Cllr M Heduan

Update circulated by Cllr Heduan

3. Planning

Applications received from WODC for this parish. Councillors are asked to consider these at the meeting:

APPLICATION NO: 21/00860/HHD

PROPOSAL: Alterations to include the erection of a single storey side and rear infill extension and the replacement of the existing rear pitched roof with a new flat roof

Town and Country Planning Act

LOCATION: 9 Combe Road Stonesfield Witney

APPLICANT: Mr Gary Smith

REGISTERED: 17th February 2021

4. WODC Art / The Common

The clerk has instructed Genny Early to proceed with the bench projec.

Common

The clerk is completing paperwork for the Environmental Stewardship 2021 as we now have claim paperwork from Rural Payment Agency.

Complaint has been received from a member of the public re tree branches being left in the field to the left of and adjacent to the river bridge at the bottom of the steps as if going to the Roman Villa.

5. Financial Matters:

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

The below were issued after the last meeting but approved.

01/03/2021	Stacey and Mason Solicitors	£ 600.00	102349	PF transfer
17/03/2021	Impossible things - Genny Early	£ 3,840.00	102350	art project - 50% deposit

Newly issued:

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06/04/2021	Clerk paye	£	822.03	102351	
06/04/2021	HMRC -PAYE	£	313.11	102352	
06/04/2021	Oxfordshire County Council Pensions	£	310.63	102353	
06/04/2021	CLERK EXPENSES	£	181.28	102354	includes zoom renewal 143.88
06/04/2021	Scribe accounts	£	345.60	102355	
06/04/2021	Auditing Solutions Ltd	£	60.00	102356	admin audit
06/04/2021	Defib shop	£	150.00	102357	pre school defib service

The £confidential relates to PAYE. Councillors signing see these figures for approval during the meeting.

There may be further cheques to add at the meeting.

Phil McArdell has received the bank reconciliations and bank statements to consider and assist with budgeting. Councillors are also sent the bank reconciliation with this report.

A copy of the expenditure summary for the year to date is included with this report for councillor transparency.

Please note zoom renewal has happened. We hopefully will be able to have some face to face meetings covid permitting but must remember as public meetings it's hard to cap numbers / guarantee spacing.

Donation

Empire Homes has made a 15k donation to the council. As a successful local company with long established connections to Stonesfield they have made the donation to the Parish to be used for the local needs of the village. The clerk is arranging transfer of funds with them.

Audit

The clerk asks councillors to approve the internal audit costs for the year ending 31st March 2021. Total expected internal audit costs £200. This is reduced by switching to Jane Olds as auditor for small councils.

The clerk is starting to prepare audit paperwork.

Defibrillator

The clerk asks if the parish council can approve the maintenance costs ongoing of the defibrillator at the pre-school site as well as the village hall. This is an important asset and we now have them both registered with the ambulance service. The defibrillator does need new pads – cost to be confirmed but circa £100.

Grants

No forms received at time of writing but we expect a grant form from the Gardening club.

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6. Legal

Paperwork for PFA land transfer is all signed as is the North Farm transfer of land to us. We have received £1000 maintenance money from Empire Homes for the North Farm land and this will be transferred to the PFA once the additional land has been transferred to them. (This is a new additional agreement we have to get the solicitors to work on).

7. Burial Ground Site

Maintenance of the burial ground has been passed to Ubico. This would involve allowing wildflowers to grow in his dormant state. This is approved following precept approval and Ubico have been advised.

8. Allotments

Allotment invoices issued in December. Majority payments in. Few remaining have been chased. Ongoing chasing.

9. Gigaclear

The clerk has spoken to Gigaclear. A weekly schedule is being sent to the clerk and the clerk will ensure this goes on the web weekly. There have been lots of resident queries and the clerk is in regular dialogue with Gigaclear and OCC. It is noted that Paul Bates has also been talking to them but this is separate to the clerk.

Laughton Hill has been a sticking point. OCC have confirmed that all routes have also been consulted with Stagecoach and OCC have been asked by the clerk to visit the suggested closures and re-routes.

10. Neighbourhood plan

The clerk has ascertained contact at WODC for the neighbourhood plan and is looking at how to progress this / costs.

We do need public consultation for this. On that basis the clerk proposes that we ask at the APM if public support it, we can then minute it and start the ball rolling.

11. Rural Payments Agency

We now have claim forms from the RPA.

12. Defibrillator

The village hall defibrillator and the preschool defibrillator have been serviced and both are registered with the ambulance service for community use.

The clerk has checked and our village hall defibrillator is covered under the Parish Council insurance for vandalism / damage.

13. Stockey Woods (David Brown)

Oxfordshire County Council has finally granted Stockey Woods 'Village Green' status. In 2016 Tricia Astle and others collected voluminous evidence from village residents and groups, including the Scouts and Primary School, showing how they had enjoyed the woods 'as of right' for many decades. She submitted the evidence and application. Blenheim Estate, the landowner, objected to the application, triggering an 8-day public inquiry. Tricia sought legal advice. After substantial legal submissions Blenheim graciously withdrew

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their objection. Having considered yet further legal submissions and evidence, OCC approved the application on 24 February 2021.

Congratulations are due to Tricia in the first place and Jim Astle and many others for supporting the campaign through to a successful conclusion.

What does village green status mean? It could be said that everything has changed and nothing has changed. The woods are still the property of Blenheim Estate who will continue to be responsible for managing the trees. Stonesfield residents can continue to use the woods as they always have. The difference is that those rights have now been enshrined in law in perpetuity.

It is really important that villagers respect the woods, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) like the Common. To keep it beautiful, follow these simple rules: no camping, fires or BBQs. No unauthorized motor vehicles. Please take litter home. Don't damage trees or pick flowers. Keep dogs under control; pick up and take your dog poo home.

14. Climate Action Day - WODC

Invitation to Climate Action Day for Parish and Town Council Forum – Friday 23 April 2021

West Oxfordshire District Council would like to invite representatives from Parish and Town Councils, and Parish Meetings to participate in a Climate Action Day online conference (in order to be Covid secure) on Friday 23rd April. This is a free event and 100% funded by West Oxfordshire District Council. The Climate Action Day will be delivered by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) as part of their programme to support local councils.

The Climate Action Day will be held 9.30 to 16.00 on Friday 23rd April 2021. Each parish/town council or parish meeting will be allocated **one** delegate place initially which requires pre-booking as there is a limited

number of places available. If you would like additional delegates to attend, please email details and we will keep a reserve list and get in touch nearer the time if there is availability.

If you would like to attend please let the clerk know by 3rd April.

15. Elections

District and County elections are taking place. There are no Parish elections this year for Stonesfield. <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council/elections-and-voting/current-and-future-elections/>

13. Date of Next Meeting – 5th May 2021 – 7pm – Virtual Zoom meeting (Full Council) followed by Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm.

Karen East, Clerk to the Parish Council
Email: clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk