

## Stonesfield Parish Council

### Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at Stonesfield Primary School on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7pm

*Meeting starts at 7pm*

*The meeting was chaired by Cllr Phi McArdell*

**Attendees:** Cllr Simon Powell, Cllr P McArdell (Chair), Cllr Simon Warr, Cllr David Brown, Cllr Tim Sumner, Cllr Andy Graham, Cllr Genny Early (DC)

**Other present:** the clerk and 14 members of public

**24/726 Election of Chair:** Cllr Phil McArdell was elected as Chair of Stonesfield Parish Council.

*(Vice Chair is deferred until council vacancies have been filled post-election)*

**24/727 To receive and accept apologies for absence:** Cllr Andy Graham, Cllr Mick Heduan

**24/728 Declarations of interest:** Cllr Phil McArdell declared he is trustee of the SCT. Note: There is no item on the agenda relating to this.

**24/729 Public Participation:**

None

**24/730 To approve the minutes of the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**24/731 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**  
*Matter arising:* None

**24/732 To receive reports from District, Parish, County Councillors and clerks report.**

- a) Cllr Genny Early (DC) – Genny introduced herself and gave some background on the DC. There is a home upgrade grant which is funding to help low-income residents access funding. This will be shared to the clerk who will add it to the website. Genny asked the council to consider a biodiversity policy. Genny also welcomed the news that the White Horse pub opens this week. Genny will share her full report to the clerk to share on the web. Cllr Brown asked Cllr Early about what is happening regarding river quality in the area. Genny will take this away for further updates.

It was asked if the District Councillors could check if any S106 money might be available for the pre-school at all.

Cllr Simon Powell – NP meeting – discussions went well and are ongoing. 24<sup>th</sup> June there is general public information evening on the NP.

Cllr Brown – noted he keeps getting concerns about the potential of a development at Manor Farm. The clerk confirmed there is no planning application at the moment but if an application comes in this information will be shared

b) Questions arising from the clerk's report:

Cllr Brown asked councillors what the decision is on whether the Children's play area should

come under SPC control – the clerk advised that this would need to be discussed as a specific item on a future agenda. It can be added to the next agenda.

Cllr Brown asked about the fact that WODC asked SPC to be satisfied that councillors ensure they believe the neutrality (without bias) of the HNA created by NP. Cllr Warr and McArdell clarified that this is due process before going to a consultation. Our understanding is that NP steering group have been using wide sources of data. (Jess Huband from the steering group was at the meeting as a member of public and clarified that It was difficult to get someone independent to write it. An expert volunteer in the village has written it and Community First has checked it). The NPSG representative for the council and Jess Huband at the meeting will take this back to the group for discussion ahead of the next council meeting.

Council discussed that the HNA is not a policy to adopt but the council can note if it supports it (although it does not have to be bound by it). The council may wish that the HNA is independently verified or it may be challenged at public consultation. This will be discussed as a specific agenda item at the next council meeting.

### **24/733 Financial Matters**

To approve financial payments.

The council *RESOLVED* to approve the finance report circulated by the clerk.

West Oxfordshire DC – election fee for 2023/24 year – £200 (check wasn't paid in May)

Vision ICT – hosted email accounts x2 May 24- April 2025 - £43.20

St James centre – NP meetings to Dec 2024 - £126

ENTC Ltd – Muga – tennis court rejuvenation - £3,234 inc VAT – from MUGA fund

Internal auditor – Kirsty Buttle - £200

WODC – grass cutting - £372.08

Clerk April expenses office: £42.60

Clerk May expenses office: £42.40

War memorial summer planting - £35.01

Clive Parsons PAYE (confidential – figure shared with councillors)

*£confidential relates to PAYE figures – the councillors have visibility of these.*

*The budget for PAYE has already been approved.*

a) Audit – to consider the Annual Governance statement and respond accordingly

The council *RESOLVED* to Annual Governance statements and responded accordingly.

b) Audit – to confirm the figures in the AGAR and sign.

The council *RESOLVED* to approve the figures in the AGAR and sign.

c) Audit – to consider the internal auditor comments.

The council considered the internal auditor comments and acknowledged.

d) To consider grant requests received in advance of the meeting.

A grant request was received from Playing Fields Association for £1,000. This was circulated in advance. Council *RESOLVED* to approve this grant request for the full sum of £1,000 towards Playground costs.

e) To confirm and appoint the Responsible Financial Officer.

The council *RESOLVED* to approve the payment of £150 per calendar month to cover 4 hours work for a Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). The appointed RFO is Cherie Carruthers and she will commence July 1<sup>st</sup>. This will form part of the recruitment. New clerk

hours will be reduced accordingly.

f) To confirm that the clerk can advertise the clerk vacancy and confirm salary scale to advertise for the clerk vacancy.

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve that the clerk can advertise the clerk vacancy for an experienced clerk. The clerk will reach out to OALC for support and they will assist in setting the incoming clerk salary which will be *no higher* than the scale for the outgoing clerk as that is budgeted. We require the new clerk to start from August 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 if possible. The existing clerk ceases work end July. The new clerk will be asked to work 14 hours per week (a reduction of 1 hour a week from the current clerk hours to reflect the appointment of the RFO).

g) To confirm that the new clerk can purchase and re-expense a new laptop if required for the new clerk – up to a maximum budget of £500.

The council **RESOLVED** to approve a budget of £500 so that the new clerk can purchase a laptop for council work (if required). The current clerk laptop is old and not functional (cannot have updates or anti-virus software and is being removed from the asset list). The new laptop if purchased should be added to the asset list.

#### **24/734 Planning Applications To consider all recent planning applications received from West Oxfordshire District Council.**

Councillors discussed the current planning applications

24/01357/HHD extension – Deeplands, The Ridings, Jordan Blair – No objections from the council.

24/01299/HHD extension – Dene View, Roslyn Holmes – No objections from the council.

We can confirm that we **do not** have a planning application from Manor Road, Combe Road proposed development at this stage.

#### **24/735 Recruitment of clerk – to confirm who will interview for the new clerk**

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Warr and Cllr McArdell will handle new clerk interviewing.

#### **24/736 Parish Matters**

Hedge at Field Close and up to WODC car park needs cutting back. Member of public emailed. Councillors asked the clerk to ask WODC to cut this.

#### **24/737 Items for information or next agenda only**

- Consideration of the Children's play area coming back to the SPC should be on the agenda.
- Neighbourhood Plan consideration of the HNA policy and whether council supports it should be on the next agenda.

#### **24/738 Date of next council meeting**

August meeting – provisional 14<sup>th</sup> August – 7pm (Stonesfield Primary School)

*Meeting closes 8.25pm*