

STRATTON PARISH COUNCIL

Official Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of
Stratton Parish Council
held on 16th March 2017 at Stratton Village Hall

UNADOPTED - DRAFT ONLY

Present:

Cllr A Aylott, Cllr C Hobbs, Cllr P Hallett, Cllr H Richardson, Cllr A Wheeler
C/Cllr J. Haynes, D/Cllr T Yarker, D/Cllr F. Horsington and 9 members of the Public.

Welcome

The Chair welcomed all attendees and confirmed as explained at the January meeting that the Council was still short of one Councillor, and that the Parish Clerk who had been ill had recently passed away. As a mark of respect and as a tribute for the services provided by Keith a minutes silence was held.

92/16. Public Participation

C/Cllr J Haynes reported on the Local Government review occurring in Dorset, and that a move to two Unitary Authorities had been voted on, although three of the nine Authorities had not backed this move. Now awaiting a decision from the Secretary of State. County Council elections were due in May 2017. The NHS Clinical Services Review was coming to a clearer conclusion on future service delivery and details had been shown to the DCC Cabinet. Detail is however still being worked on. Primary Care strategy is looking to make the service more sustainable in the future through merging of surgeries. D/Cllr T Yarker reported that WDDC are meeting shortly to agree a new constitution, following the referendum last year to change the leadership style within the authority. Local Plan consultation ends on the 3 April. A second consultation will be made on Housing allocations and where expansion will be sited once the local Plan is completed. WDDC has now passed a budget for 2017/18 which includes a £5 per annum increase (for Band D houses). Some £633,000 from accrued interest has been put into the budget from managed reserves.

Mr M Jury referred to comment at the previous meeting (Minute 86/16c) about the setting up of an Allotment Society. He confirmed that several meetings had been held, and that a Stratton (Dorset) Allotment Society now existed, and that a Committee with Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer had been formed together with a bank account being set up. These comments were gratefully received by the Council.

93/16. Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded the Council of its agreed Code of Conduct and the need for Councillors to declare if they had any interest in any of the items to be discussed in the agenda which had not already been entered in the members' Register of Interests. No declarations made.

94/16. Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Peter Jackson.

95/16. Minutes of last Parish Council meeting held on 12th January 2017

The Chairman asked if there were any reasons why the minutes of the meeting of 12th January 2017 should not be signed as a true record. No matters raised, Chairman duly signed and dated the minutes.

96/16. Matters Arising

- a.) Item 80/16a, 61/16a & 9/16. Administration of Grants – Confirmed that letters of thanks had been received for all organisations who had received a Grant.
- b.) Item 80/16b, 61/16d & 44/16f. Wrackleford Auxiliaries – Confirmed that a letter of thanks had been received from the Auxiliaries Group. Although a cheque had had to be reissued and a bank charge incurred by the Council.
- c.) Item 80/16c, 63/16. Red Telephone Box. No decision yet by BT on the removal of the box. W.D.D.C. Planning had turned down the application for the box to be removed as a general principal and the position will continue to be monitored. Comment was made about the lack of use of rural public phones, and that this was not helped as only a Phone Card could be used to make a call with no other method of payment available.

97/16. Finance

- a) Income and Expenditure. Details of recent income received and expenditure made was reported.

Accounts to 16th March 2017

Monies in the Village Green account cannot be used for any other purpose

Account	Parish £	V/Green £	Parish Plan £	VAT £	Balance £
Balance b/f	7,747.07	34,407.66	-70.81	2,818.17	39,265.75
Receipts	700.00				700.00
Payments	73.08	253.60		56.32	383.00
Balance c/f	8,373.99	34,154.06	-70.81	2,874.49	39,582.75

PAYMENTS IN

DAPTC – Website Grant	690.00
Donation – Use of Gazebo	10.00
TOTAL	£ 700.00

PAYMENTS OUT

DCC Waste - November	8.86
DCC Waste - December	8.77
Wrackleford Auxiliaries – Cancelled	-100.00
Auxiliaries Memorial - Replacement	100.00
Bank Cancellation charge	10.00
DCC Waste - January	8.86
Harrison's Packaging	33.59
Wessex Grounds Services - January	152.16
Wessex Grounds Services - February	152.16
DCC Waste - February	8.60
TOTAL	£ 383.00

- a) Budget Position. Current budget position reported. A number of small savings were likely to occur within the Parish account, these together with unexpected income could be used to meet the two areas previously highlighted as being over budget – External Audit fee and compulsory Tree work. It is also, expected that the

National Savings interest is likely to be lower than budgeted. To ensure that the Village Green account did not face a further deficit it was agreed for virement of £500 from the Parish account to the Village Green account.

98/16. Vacancy for Parish Clerk

- a) Chairman confirmed that following the last meeting a letter had been sent to the Clerk accepting his offer of termination of his position due to ill health as from the 31 March 2017. This position obviously changed following the unfortunate death of the Clerk in late January.
- b) Cllr. Hobbs confirmed the action taken since then to seek a new Parish Clerk. An advert had been placed with a closing date now passed. Candidate's references have been requested prior to interviews taking place and the interview date will be arranged very shortly.
- c) Discussion held on how many Councillors should carry out the interview. Agreed that Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Cllr. H. Richardson would form the interview panel.
- d) C/Cllr J Haynes had confirmed that she knew of an existing Parish Clerk who was willing to assist the Council in the short term and possibly act as mentor to any new clerk.

99/16. Speed of Traffic Update

- a) Road Speed Survey. The road speed survey was carried out in February; details of the results have now been received. The data would be passed to the Working Group to be looked at and reported back to the Council at its next meeting, with any conclusions.
- b) Cllr. Hobbs reported on the posters part of the 'Road Safety' campaign. A poster had been selected and a small cash prize presented to the winner. The Working Group would discuss how best to use and incorporate the poster into any future action.

100/16. General Maintenance

- a) Confirmed that an exchange of e-mails had taken place with Mr T. Pope, Wrackleford Farms on the dead trees south of the playing field. Actions was planned by the Farm, but not yet fully organised. This would be followed up, to confirm when action was likely to be carried out, especially as there was a potential danger to users of the playing field.
- b) Cllr. Hallett confirmed that one of the main notice boards had been removed, but had now been cleaned and repaired; the other two notice boards had also been cleaned, sanded down and coated with preservative. Similar work on the bus shelter next to Manor Close would take place shortly subject to weather. Materials for repairs to the bus shelter by the old alms-houses would be purchased early in the next financial year.
- c) Village Green Hedges. Cllr. Wheeler raised comment regarding the hedgerow leading from The Green down to the Village Hall. He felt that the condition of the hedgerow and recent cutting of the hedgerow had not been beneficial, and asked what remedial action could be taken. Cllr. Hallett forcibly expressed his opinion on the quality of the workforce which currently holds the Council's maintenance contract. Chairman outlined some of the history behind why a maintenance contract had been put in place by the previous Parish Council, and that control of maintenance was now held as part of the brief of a specific Councillor, which at present was the Chairman himself. It was explained that a 'tighter control' over the contractor has been in place since the autumn of last year to ensure that the terms of the contract were carried out. This fact however, does not mean that the work stipulated in the contract is always the most beneficial. But it is being taken that adherence to the contract is a start point, from which the Council can then adjust, review or request additional or different work. The cutting of the hedges around the village green had in most areas not been carried

out for a considerable number of years. It was appreciated therefore that the initial cutback would be drastic. After discussion it was felt that spring growth of the hedges should be awaited, before the position was reviewed with regard to this specific hedge, and an opportunity taken to consider logical action that might be deemed necessary, and how best to then carry that out.

101/16. Allotments

Report given on progress since the last meeting. A list of the Heads of Terms of a contract had now been received from Savills, and a Stratton (Dorset) Allotment Society had been formed. Chairman confirmed that he had asked Savills for confirmation on what one-off fees were expected, and whether the previous mention of a £750, and a £500 surveyors fee mentioned in the Heads of Terms were in fact the same or two different fees. A discussion was held on the Heads of Terms and the general position of the Council in trying to achieve this parish plan objective. Unanimous agreement by Councillors that the Council would proceed with trying to obtain allotments for the Parish. Chairman to contact Savills to confirm this fact. Representatives from the Allotment Society asked from what date any agreement might start, especially bearing in mind the imminent start of the growing season. Chairman confirmed he would ask this question, and also ask for permission for early access to at least plan and peg out the layout of allotments.

102/16. Notice Boards

Cllr. Hobbs gave the background to a request from a resident for the Parish Council to remove its three notice boards from outside of the old Police House. Information from DCC Highways contradicted the information held by the owners in the deeds to the house, and this required formal clarification. A history of the notice boards was explained and that they had existed for over 50 years as a central part of the village's heritage and scenery. A meeting had been held by Cllr. Hobbs and Cllr. Wheeler with the owners of the property and they were still adamant that the notice boards be removed, citing safety to children, people attempting to peer through the hedge-line into their property, illegal parking, and people talking outside of their property. After discussion Councillors felt that although the Council held no clear legal right to have its notice boards in this location, that it did have a right under 'convention' as the notice boards had been there for 50 years plus with no objection from any previous occupant of the property. An attempt would be made to get absolute clarity on the boundaries of ownership, before a discussion on removal of the notice boards, and any discussion taken on where they might be moved to.

103/16 LED Street Lights

A request had been made prior to the last meeting for this matter to be discussed. Since then nobody has made any representations or contacted the Council on this matter. Some details have however, been found out and a brief history was provided to the meeting on the County Council's position and what it was trying to achieve in the use of LED lamps. This was mainly an efficiency saving made by its contractor SEC to put in LED lamps when the older 'yellow' lamps became broken or required replacement under maintenance terms and conditions. The new lights emitted the same overall amount of light as the old ones, but use considerably less electricity. The position with regard to the removal of street light columns as it was understood was explained, if this was to occur it would require 100% approval by any group of householders and require the backing of the Parish Council. If such a request was then eventually approved by the County Council, it is most likely that the cost of the removal would fall on the Parish Council. It should also be borne in mind that if columns were removed, that they would almost certainly never be replaced in the future.

104/16. Planning Matters

- 1) Application No: **WD/D/16/002262** – Development for 5 Dwellings and garages at land adjacent to 72 Dorchester Road. Now confirmed that this planning application has been approved by W.D.D.C.
- 2) Cllr. Richardson has attended a training session held by WDDC Planning on the new on-line process shortly to be introduced for Parish Council to use. A new .gov e-mail address has been set up, and a

password access received from WDDC. Cllr. Richardson agreed to prepare a short process chart so that the Council is fully aware of who does what, and how Councillors are involved in the process.

105/16. Parish Plan - Initiatives Review

Cllr. Wheeler confirmed that he has not yet finished his review of the Parish Plan actions, and that this would not be available until the next meeting.

106/16. Highways

Programme has been received from the County Council on next financial year's programme of highway works. There appears to be no works being carried out within the Parish.

107/16. Correspondence

Cllr. Hobbs reported that an e-mail has been received from the Youth Club, saying that they were planning for some youth club meetings to be held on the playing field during the summer months, and whether the Parish Council had any objections to this. Confirmed that there were no objections and that the Youth Club had the same rights as any resident to use the playing field. If damage however, occurred to Council play equipment, then it would expect the Youth Club to pay for repairs. The request to have access for a vehicle on the playing field was not however accepted.

108/16. Items for next Agenda

Parish Plan – Actions review.
Play area Equipment – final financial position.

109/16. Public Participation

- 1) Thanks made by Allotment Society for Council confirming commitment to progress agreement with Wrackleford Estates. Question raised with regard to access to the allotments, the background of potential options previously discussed was provided.
- 2) Cycleway improvement works, question as to how pedestrians would be able to use footways under Railway bridge. No answer is known at present, but explained that general Chapter 8 Road Safety conditions would apply and contractor would have to ensure that a safe and usable route was available.
- 3) Comment made by resident with regard to notice boards. Felt that road safety for his family members was a factor in the request to remove the notice boards, citing two close encounters for a young member of his family. Also, cited that excess goods and items were being left underneath the notice boards for other to take or use. This quickly became an unsightly factor.

110/16. Date of next Meeting

There had not been time to confirm the date for the next meeting - the Annual Parish Meeting. But it was likely to be Tuesday 16th May 2017 at 7:00pm. But a date will be confirmed as soon as possible, together with all other meeting dates throughout the 2017/2018 financial year.

The meeting closed at 21.00pm.