

STRATTON PARISH COUNCIL

Official Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of
Stratton Parish Council
held on 15th November 2016 at Stratton Village Hall

UNADOPTED

Present:

Cllr A Aylott, Cllr C Hobbs, Cllr P Jackson, Cllr H Richardson,
D/Cllr T Harker, D/Cllr F Horsington. C/Cllr J Haynes.
Alan Wheeler and 8 members of the Public.

Welcome.

The Chair welcomed all attendees and introduced the Public Participation item on the agenda.

56/16. Public Participation.

C/Cllr Jill Haynes addressed the meeting updating the situation regarding traveller sites in Frampton. Due to cut backs in social care budget, the County Council is at the limit of what it can provide. She suggested that we could do more to help, by being more aware of people in the Parish who might be overlooked or who are isolated in an emergency situation. There will be a County Council election next year, although this will only be for a two year period.

D/Cllr T Yarker stated that the public consultation on the revised structure for Dorset local government had finished, and results being counted. These would be passed to County and District Councillors shortly. The West Dorset D.C. Local Plan has to be revised by 2021 and that process has already started. Proposed housing development of 2000 to 2500 houses in the immediate Dorchester area, but as yet no definite plan.

57/16. Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interest.

The Chair 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. Cllr Richardson declared a specific interest as she would be applying for a grant to help fund the Children's Christmas Party.

58/16. Apologies.

Cllr Peter Hallett

59/16. Co-option.

Mr Alan Wheeler has offered himself for co-option. Details circulated by email on 1st October 2016 Proposed that Mr Alan Wheeler be co-opted. All Councillors in favour. Mr Wheeler duly co-opted. Clerk to arrange paperwork and to inform Electoral Services Officer of Cllr Wheeler's co-option. The Parish Council still have a vacancy for one more Parish Councillor.

60/16. Minutes of last Parish Council meeting held on 20th Sept 2016.

The Chair asked if there were any reasons why the minutes of meeting of 19th July 2016 should not be signed as a true record. None stated and the Chairman duly signed and dated the minutes.

61/16. Matters Arising

- a.) Administration of Grants – A grants policy was agreed at the last Parish Council meeting 3 applications received. 1 from Stratton Website for funding and an application for grant towards the children’s Christmas Party.
A request for a donation to the Royal British Legion towards the cost of a wreath. This to be considered as part of the grant allocation.
A grant for St Johns Ambulance to also be considered for attending the Queen’s 90th Birthday Beacon Lighting.
Decisions on the awarding of grants to be decided after the “cut off” date for grant applications.
The “cut off” date to be taken as 30 November 2016.
Chairman and Vice Chairman and Cllr P Jackson to meet and select the grant distribution
- b.) Activities Fair – 14 organisations attended and 40 – 50 people attended. Chairman thanked Cllr Richardson and her ladies plus Cllr Jackson for the organisation.
- c.) Wheelchair access – Chairman reports that a wheelchair access ramp has now been installed after discussions with the Highways Authority.
- d.) Mr Downton’s application for a memorial. Chairman read a letter from the Downton family outlining the proposed installation. A request to help fund the memorial was discussed and it was agreed to grant £100.
- e.) Japanese knotweed – It has now been reported that the offending plant was not Japanese knotweed.

62/16. Adventure Play area.

- a. Update on installation. The installation is now complete and the Grand opening scheduled for 3 o’clock on Saturday 19th November 2016.
- b. Vandalism. It would appear that although the original thought was that the damage was wilful vandalism, it is now thought that the damage could be due to dogs. Cllr Hobbs suggested that we should consider DNA marking. To hold any action at present but position to be reviewed if felt necessary.
- c. Funding. – Cllr Jackson reported that we have raised a large portion of the final cost but that there was still a shortfall. He circulated an updated budget report. The final amount required to complete the project will become clear when we receive the final bill from the installers. Chairman enquired what arrangements were on going to help reduce the shortfall. Several further small fund raising events were planned and are still to occur.

63/16. Red Telephone Box.

BT are proposing to remove the red telephone box as they say that it is not economical to continue the service.

The Parish Council does not accept the proposal and after reading Cllr Hobbs report several options were considered as follows: (Cllr Hobbs full report can be found as an annex to the minutes on the website.

Options

Option 1.

Do nothing – Telephone Box is removed.

Option 2.

Object to the removal of the working telephone box - giving reasons.

Option 3.

‘Adopt’ the box - without the working telephone.

Option 4.

An amalgam of option 2 and 3. Object to the removal of the working telephone but should this be refused, state that SPC would wish to ‘adopt’ it.

All the Council members wish to pursue option 2. The clerk was instructed to contact West Dorset District Council and inform them of our decision.

64/16. Co-operation with other Parish Councils

Cllr Aylott reported that although a number of councillors from other Parishes could not attend due to prior commitments, the meeting on 10th November, with the others proved fruitful. Topics discussed included how we could work together in future. It is proposed to have a further meeting in the New Year.

65/16. Speed of Traffic

- a. Update – Cllr Hobbs reported that she had been in contact with Sarah Pilcher PCSO who was prepared to approach Charminster School to ask the pupils to design a road safety poster.
- b. Speed Survey 2017. Re-approach the survey team for another survey in the New Year at an approx. cost of £250. Chairman will organise.

66/16. General Maintenance.

Report on recent work around the Village. New posts for the green purchased and to be installed. The Chairman will check on the position of the wood for repairs to the bus shelter with Cllr Hallett who was arranging the supply and purchase of the materials. Cllr Jackson raised a question about ownership of the railings and fences in the Penn Hill area. Cllr Jackson to find out who is responsible for them.

67/16. Planning matters

Application No: **WD/D/16/002262** – Development for 5 Dwellings and garages at land adjacent to 72 Dorchester Road.

Cllr Jackson was concerned that there was no provision for social housing in this development. The clerk explained that any submission to the Planning Department had to be a corporate decision. The clerk agreed to include in the submission an observation as to the lack of social housing.

68/16. Allotments.

Update. – The Chair reported that he had no recent communication, and the documentation for the lease was still awaited. The Parish Council was continually looking for options to providing allotments and to inform all who are interested, of progress.

69/16. Highways

Two kerbstones which were damaged have been repaired and a gully at Ash Hill has been rodded. The pothole damage on Dorchester Road was discussed. Highways Authority promised action shortly but are waiting for a small planer to become available. There are several instances of signs on the A37 being blocked from view by overgrown trees. Clerk to report them to the Highways Authority.

70/16. Finance and Precept.

Accounts to 15th November 2016

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

Account	Parish	V/Green	Parish Plan	VAT	Balance
Balance b/f	6628.74	33757.94	5756.56	295.77	45847.47
Receipts	2380.00	1190.00	5555.00		9125.00
Payments	126.16	286.68		65.47	-478.31
Balance c/f	8882.58	34661.26	11311.56	361.24	54494.16

PAYMENTS IN

Cheque (Hallett) Donation	55.00
Precept 2 nd Tranche	3570.00
Donation – Stratton Summer Fayre	500.00
Grant WDDC	<u>5000.00</u>
TOTAL	<u>9125.00</u>

PAYMENTS OUT

Cheque 847 (Cancelled)	- 55.00
Cuprinol & Posts	60.00
Viking Direct – Stationery	28.51
Zurich Insurance – Adventure Play area	54.75
Wessex Ground Services	152.16
DAPTC – Training	65.00
DCC – Removal of Dog Waste	11.87
Wessex Ground Services	152.16
DCC – Removal of Dog Waste	<u>8.86</u>
TOTAL	<u>478.31</u>

BUDGET. Cllr Aylott reported that the budget spend was broadly in line with forecast.

PRECEPT

The Chairman outlined the possible requirements for the forthcoming year and recommended that the Parish Precept for the year 2017-2018 be set at £8600.00. The Council accepted the recommendation and the sum of £8600.00 was agreed.

Report in Appendix at end of minutes for full details of factors likely to affect the Parish Council in 2017/18.

71/16. Correspondence.

Mrs Sheila Every has informed the Parish Council that, she is unable to continue looking after the flower tubs at either end of the village. She has arranged for Mrs Julie Adams to take over and maintain the tubs. A letter of thanks to be sent to Mrs Every, and all Councillors gave their thanks for her help over the past years.

72/16. Christmas Arrangements.

All arrangements are complete. Friday December 16th at the Saxon arms. The Village Hall is booked if the weather is bad. Hymn sheets to be collected from Tracy Hughes. Poster to be displayed with full information.

73/16. Items for next agenda

None stated

74/16. Public Participation

The Chairman asked if there was any item that the general public wished to raise. None stated

75/16. Date of next meeting.

January meeting is to be moved to Thursday 12th January and the March meeting moved to Thursday 16th March 2017.

The meeting closed at 21.25 pm

Appendix

Finance and Precept Increase - Background information

At all meetings attended by Councillors over the past 12 months, we are being told to increase our Precept substantially in 2017/18, as funding of services by WDDC and DCC is falling dramatically.

We have seen that the current re-organisation by all DC's & DCC is as a result of these financial challenges.

The meetings attended have been with many other local Parishes, advice direct from our County Councillor, attending various road-shows on changes to specific services, advice from DAPTC, and indeed advice from NALC at a national level. The Chief Executive of DAPTC, Hilary Trevorah circulated an advice note at last week's DAPTC AGM, which told us to increase precepts ready to take up on reductions in highway services.

At a number of meetings, we have been told that some 80 odd services currently provided by DC's/DCC are likely to cease altogether, or be severely reduced. IF, we as a Parish want those services to continue to some degree, then we will have to pay for them. Unfortunately, a composite list of which services or reductions are involved is still awaited. So it is not clearly known what effect there will be on Stratton.

Indeed, this is why we have already started talking and having discussions with neighbouring Parishes to see what can be done if we combine forces. Or agree areas where we can work together.

There is further pressure to increase the 2017/18 precept as Central Government is considering putting a financial cap on how much Parish Councils can increase the precept. Talk is of a limit of 2%, or £5 per household. Or else a local referendum will have to be held to agree any proposed increase. As you can guess the cost of having to hold a local referendum in a small parish like ourselves is likely to cost more than any proposed precept increase.

Stratton budgets have always been tight, and therefore do not have much flexibility. That in itself is fine and you could say we have been proud to keep our precept so low. But it does cause problems, and does not allow us any opportunity to move quickly or easily cover matters that come along unexpectedly.

We have now got the older children's play area. Obviously we now have to consider and bear the potential of increased maintenance costs and higher insurance premiums. So an increase in costs for us. Equally we have to consider the fact that grants, fund raising and local support has not been able to fully finance the project. It has already been discussed what likely level of deficit will occur once the project is fully completed. That deficit has to be paid for. We do not want to reduce the capital held in the Village Green Account as that has been held over the past 30 years to provide income to cover maintenance. We have however, agreed to use Council funds to pay up front for the play-area, but for any deficit to be repaid from the Precept over the coming few years. So, again another new cost which has to be budgeted and dealt with.

Based on the above factors, I personally feel that the level of precept needs to be increased substantially. That comment in its self I know sounds very dramatic, but what I am talking about is a figure of 10p, yes, just 10p per household per week.

Based on current figures, we have some 280 properties in the Parish. So an increase of 10p per week for 280 properties would mean an increase in precept of £1,456. Let's say £1,460.

The current precept is £7,140, so with £1,460, that will make a total precept of £8,600 for 2017/18

It is recommended by the Chairman that the Parish Council accepts this proposed increase in Parish Rates for the Year 2017/18 and that a Precept of £8,600 be set.

AJA – 8 November 2016