

**STOKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD ON 21ST JANUARY 2016 IN THE
STOKENHAM PARISH HALL**

PRESENT:**COUNCILLORS:****P. SPENCE (Chairman)****A. GOODMAN****T. HOEKSMAN****C. ROGERS****J. ANSELL****J. BRAZIL (District and County Councillor)****T. LYNN****L. COWLEY****MRS P. DOUST****J. GARDNER****MRS C. PACK****Also in attendance:****Clerk – Mrs G. Claydon****APOLOGIES:****COUNCILLORS****MS. S. BLADON****MRS S. O'DWYER**

John Baverstock had tendered his resignation just before Christmas due to his health and the relevant notifications had been posted advising of this vacancy. The Chairman thanked him for his years of service and advised he has offered to help in a voluntary capacity with the Emergency Committee.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were invited to declare any disclosable interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they had in any items to be considered at this meeting. They were also reminded to consider whether in the light of recent activities any items within their Register of Interests should be updated. It was advised that any unforeseen request for a Dispensation would be considered by the Clerk at this point only if there was no way a councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting.

2. OPEN FORUM

No member of the public being present this was dispensed with.

DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Brazil noted that both District and County Councils were considering their budgets. District Council would have a surplus due to the income from New Homes Bonus of about £1million and additional revenue income of £250,000. As a result of this income and many savings due to T18 and management changes there would be no visible service cuts. However Government had announced that the New Homes Bonus would start to be cut back so the monies received would be short lived. He acknowledged that there had been massive issues with the Planning Department and had been assured, yet again, that they would be sorted and that most of the problems were due to backlog of applications. Each officer had recently been dealing with approximately 150 applications when the recommended level was 30. They were down now to about 45 each. Hopefully they would soon be a properly functioning department. Cllr Brazil continued that the District IT system did not work and Scrutiny Committee had asked to what the Risk Assessment was for such an outcome and the plan B. He had nothing further to report than that so apologised for how long it had gone on as District had failed to sort it out. His view was that as long as dustbin rubbish was collected and the planning department was good most residents were content and this

was not the case. All that District appeared to focus on was their identity which they had taken all last Friday to discuss at the Woolwell Centre!

Cllr Brazil noted that Cllrs Lynn and Hoeksma had attending the development control meeting in relation to the proposal at Seagulls, Hallsands and that although they had all spoken against it, it went through. Planning Committee understood that 'locals' and he believed that due to coastal erosion this site would not be there in a few years. The Environment Agency had not objected and therefore District officers did not and those present were advised by the legal officer that there was no liability on the Planning Committee as this was a replacement and not a new dwelling.

With regard to the coastal erosion along Torcross, Beesands and Hallsands the Environment Agency had visited the areas last week and Chris Brook, District Assets, was awaiting a report. Neither District nor County Council had funding or the capacity to cope with such investment to 'hold the line' so they would be relying on the EA. The Parish Clerk provided the report that she had obtained from the Environment Agency.

There had been a few issues with the call centre at South Hams and their delay in responding. Cllr Brazil felt that District did not seem to understand that people/customers did not want to wait 5 - 20 minutes and get their problem solved rather than not get their called picked up immediately. Scrutiny Committee had requested proper performance indicators but he felt if all was not right by March they must make serious changes.

County Council financially were totally different from District and were expecting with inflation pressures and cuts from Central Government Grant that they must look for a further in house cut of £35million from a budget of £420million. Added to this cut was extra pressure being imposed from the vulnerable children services. Generally the council tax would go up by approximately 1.99% with an extra 2% towards adult care so it would probably mean a 4% increase and he felt in all honesty that County did not have a choice but to make this increase. The money needed to be spent on the state of the roads was reckoned to be £60million per year to keep to keep even. Recently County had only been spending £40million so with the current weather conditions this would deteriorate. Parish council enquired what happened about the proposal by County to downgrade roads and Cllr Brazil noted this was happening by default. By illustration he noted that the road down to Fuge had gone already and County would not be able do anything to repair it. From recent meetings local authorities were being made to cut and cut and in the end something else would have to happen.

He noted that the mast at Start Point was taken down due a stay that had snapped and was probably due to lack of maintenance. This he felt was the way with most organisations in the current economic climate and Parish Councils would no doubt in future be looked to pick up many of these jobs like parish maintenance and lengths men and ultimately it would come out of their precept. The Road Warden Scheme did not appear to be working and works were most successful if people or parishes contracted the works out with the external contractor having all liability and insurance. Government had now set a four year term for finance but by 2019 there would be no Government monetary assistance at all for local authorities. Personally he did not think County was being innovative enough to self-finance but undoubtedly one tier of local government would go. Devolution might provide legislation for councils to charge for other services but at present they were hampered with what they had to provide and what they were allowed to do.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the:

- (a) Full council meeting dated 10th December 2015 was approved by all present and duly signed as a true and correct record.

(b) Planning Committee meeting none held January 2016.

4. PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS

- DEFERRED due to no plans provided by District : 3040/15/HHO Householder application for front dormer and balcony Cartref, Kiln Lane Stokenham

WORKS TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER TREES

- 3094/16/TPO (No. 894) Site: Stokeley Lodge, Kiln Lane, Stokenham. Proposal crown reduction by 10 feet and removal of lateral limbs to two Horse Chestnuts. No objection. These were well grown mature Chestnuts with one very close to the house and the other close to additional trees, works looked reasonable and sensible.

Cllr Rogers arrived at the meeting.

PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

- Dunstone old water tower and caravan and hard standing there and should be brought to attention of the Enforcement. Duly reported 25th January 2016.
- Clare Pawley had contacted Steve Church of the Secretary of the South West Coast Path with regard to her concerns on coastal development. He acknowledged that a recent application had been granted permission so South West Coast Path could not now comment but as they are informed during the planning process urged parish councils to contact them if they felt any applications would have an impact on the coastal path. Email secretary@southwestcoastpath.org.uk

5. PRECEPT 2016/2017

It was noted that Stokenham Parish Hall were ordering further tables and that for the annual payment made by Parish Council the tables would not be removed from the meeting room in future when parish council was held. Also the hall committee wished to put a new roof on and were applying to many funding opportunities so requested the support of parish council and questioned and available Section 106 monies. It was not felt these monies were available towards halls but this question would be raised during the creation of the OSSR Plan.

John Baverstock also had emailed and advised grant funding would be needed for the graveyard. It was felt that at present a funding pot could be added to with a view to the need to purchase additional land in the future.

Cllr Cowley outlined the figures proposed for the precept and noted that there was no way anyone could predict what ongoing costs would be required for footpath maintenance and Helmers play area. Therefore there needed to be sufficient money to cover all eventualities rather than reduce the precept and then be short of money as no doubt there would be more efficiencies required in future. Cllr Hoeksma questioned whether there was actually enough money to cover clearance of buddle holes and highway maintenance.

Following the figures being presented it was AGREED to approve the final figure of £34,203 for submission to District Council with the Government grant added of £1257.

6. COASTAL EROSION

A report was received from the Environment Agency who confirmed that the gate closure arrangements with volunteers Richard Foss, Anita Hutchings, Nigel Heath and Michael Chapman were still in place for Beesands Flood gate. The closure criteria however were quite detailed, a combination of absolute tide height with predicted surge and wind direction/strength. They were only aware of closure meeting the criteria once in recent years, during the St. Jude's storm.

An EA colleague had visited the coastline last Monday to inspect the defences at both Torcross and Beesands at low tide. At Torcross comparison photographs taken during previous inspections showed that the cracks were largely as previously, i.e. they were not a new feature caused as a result of sand loss or recent storms. Cracks in concrete were not uncommon and did not necessarily affect the strength of the structure. They were seeking to undertake further assessments to check for voids behind the wall (in the light of the void that appeared behind the Teignmouth wall) with a structural engineer completing a more detailed review to see if the beach was fundamental to the integrity of the hard defence wall. Steps to be taken would then be considered on a basis of whether they were economically viable. This would take some time but EA will report back to parish council.

Parish Council felt that realistically they could only do as they had done and draw attention to the concerns. A major review of the coastal area was due to take place and once this was completed parish council would need to at least have their say. Coastal protection appeared to only be financially considered in relation to the amount of protection for housing.

Cllr Hoeksma noted he had met with two residents at Torcross and viewed the 2.9m of metal exposed and water coming through at low tide from the metal post and thus must be within the wall. He also noted the booming noise of the sea hitting the wall was disturbing. This wall was built in the 1980s and opened by the Queen but did not now appear to have such high priority. He then met with Paul McFadden at Beesands and then went on to Hallsands and Paul McFadden noted that the beach had receded 1.5 metres in 7 days. When the new properties were built in 2002 they had a structural surveyor in who noted there was a 9metre gap from foundations to bedrock and Cllr Hoeksma suggested these could become sink holes. In view of the fact that most of the current had occurred and yet there had been no spectacular storm all parish council could do was note, record and warn.

Cllr Hoeksma had suggested applying for the County grant to install flood gates at the end of the Slapton ley outfall pipe. Currently this matter lay with District due to coastal and land drainage responsibilities and with County for the pipe under the highway.

The original flap on the outlet came off within the first year of installation. It was felt that this flap was installed more to stop children going up the tunnel as once the shingle moves in front of the tunnel the flap would be of no use although it might stop some shingle going up, it can get under. Historically the ley was only let by a machine pushing shingle up the beach once there was enough pressure behind for it to let. Therefore it was questioned whether it needed digging out when residents were currently doing so. If parish council were to place a flap in situ it could be seen that they were accepting ongoing responsibility for the outlet, letting and flap which no other authority or organisation had to date accepted. It was also noted that the gate was not a benefit and in some cases more trouble as it created a formative barrier for shingle to form against. It was suggested that historically a digger removed the flap to clear it! The only time the tunnel blocked was when there was an amount of shingle against the outlet.

At Beesands Village Green the County footpath had to go around on the inside due to erosion and therefore the Footpath Officer would put up beware of cliff fall signs.

Cllr Lynn had spoken on a new programme on Monday evening with regard to the erosion concerns and noted there could be funding from Europe and that the only thing that would save the villages was shingle not rock armour. There were talks within this article an artificial reef just out from Torcross being suggested by Oliver Letwin MP and Dr Sarah Woolaston MP. Cllr Lynn went on to suggest that dredgers could suck shingle up and move it from one end of the bay and place it in front of Hallsands, Beesands and Torcross and if an easterly wind took it in to the coast the problem

would be sorted. He also noted that Channel Fishermen could not work at the moment due to the weather conditions but there were only a small number of them, about 10 or 12. Another suggestion considered was gates to close the A379 road from Torcross to Stete when it became impassable weather conditions. This would be raised with the EA with early warning being given to volunteers or the coastguard team with keys and a protocol for closure.

It was AGREED that all of the above points be noted and where possible passed to or raised with the relevant coastal protection agencies.

7. EMERGENCY PLAN

It was noted that the Coastguard telephone number was still correct and some councillor contact details needed updating. All appendices were to bring together useful information that would remain held confidentially until required.

The updated Emergency plan had been forwarded to parish council and it was AGREED to amend the document as directed in the meeting.

8. HELMERS FIELD, CHILLINGTON

The parish council and District solicitors had continued to feedback information with regard to the Transfer of Land and currently details of a plan were being explained. Further confirmation with regard to the repair of the existing gate and fence were awaited and a new matter with regard to adjacent gardening of the boundary had been raised. Therefore this item was DEFERRED.

9. PERIODIC HEDGE AND GRASS CUTS

The Torcross residents had been requested to detail works they would wish carried out and these were provided as follows:

- Keep the smaller of the two willows down so that people waiting for the bus can, see it approaching on the other side of the Ley instead of standing out in the road to see if it is coming around the corner.
- Cut back the black thorn and Russian vine down between the bus stop and the start of the "pay and display" Ley side parking. This area gets very overgrown in the summer months.
- Cut back new growth on the willows in front of Ley View terrace down - these were cut back three years ago to enable the residents to see the open water and the wild life and to keep drainage channels open.

Cllr Rogers also asked if the Field Centre would consider allowing weed spraying once per year against path the path. He was congratulated by other councillors that even during the recent inclement weather the path had withstood the flooding even when the road was affected.

It was AGREED to request approval for the works from the Field Centre and if this request was allowed then works be carried in the next month along;

- (a) the Stokenham to Torcross permissive path
- (b) Chillington roadside hedge.

Cllr Brazil arrived back to the meeting and noted the following item.

The Road Closure should be reopened by 10a.m. the following day. He noted that there had been a lack of information and diversion signage which was unacceptable. If any driver came from Totnes there had been no warning and from Kingsbridge it did not indicate closure until Charleton. Thus lorries arriving at the closure were caught and had to either turn back or wrongly traversed the narrow back lanes. An officer from County had spoken to South West Water and the person who called back did not know anything about the problem. Utilities had rights to close roads but County

had to ensure matters such as two utilities not closing the A379 and A381 at same time, but other than that County had few powers. However if there was a breach in conditions they could fine them and he was pushing for that this time.

Cllr Brazil was advised of earlier discussions and the suggestion of gates for the Torcross to Stretegate A379 from the county funding but he was concerned about closing an A road.

Cllr Brazil left the meeting.

10. SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FUNDING

It was AGREED to consider projects for participants' aged 14 years or over in order that possible grant funding could be applied for. However after due consideration no suggestions were forthcoming.

11. QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Kellaton were to celebrate the Queen's official birthday in June. Parish council were unsure whether a Beacon should be lit in celebration of this event at this time of year on a week day (Thursday) and it was AGREED to await to hear if community groups were to hold any functions.

12. RURAL SERVICES NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

It was AGREED that parish councillors wished the Parish Clerk to continue to only send Sounding Board updates with relevance to the parish and the questionnaire would be completed accordingly.

13. REPORTS

Various matters around the parish:

- Cllr Mrs Doust advised that she had been contacted and would be attending the Stokenham Parish Hall Committee. She attended the Development Control meeting with Clare Pawley and parish clerk to speak to the Cove Hotel application. Clare Pawley took photos to illustrate the situation and access to site, along with pictures of her small car parked in the locality and sea hitting against the site on a non-stormy day but was not allowed to show these as they had not been sent ahead of time. Clare Pawley and Cllr Mrs Doust spoke well but the officers felt in the light of the earlier approval this should be recommended approval.
- Cllr Mrs Doust had also been contacted by Stokenham Guides as they wished to go on a trip to Foxlese in Hampshire for the Wellies and Wristbands Festival to abseiling, rock climbing and meeting other young teenage girls from all over the country. They were fundraising through bag packing and the Leader wanted guides to give back something to the community as part of their citizenship in return for a grant.
- It was requested that a hedge cutting notice be sent to Simla, Kellaton and that an earlier hedging complaint in Coombe Meadows, Chillington be checked. On Oddicombe Corner the white line was not visible and this hedge needed attention. At Seaway, Beeson there was an overgrown bush which was beginning to protrude into the highway.
- Cllrs Spence and Rogers noted that Helmers Meadow football pitch ground was totally waterlogged and unusable for anything. Cllr Mrs Doust was concerned that the Chillington Community Association had already applied for a grant to astro turf. It was felt that Parish Council should send a letter to the CCA outlining their intentions for their field with regard to sewerage/drainage of the field and once this was done at that point they could review the request to install a MUGA or other alternative usage as a playing field. Also they would note that they were concerned about electric works being carried out before the drainage of the field and any possible light pollution from the CCA proposed external lighting. From a meeting with Greg Chambers the councillors were advised that gas to the hall was currently supplied in bottles and they wanted to change to a tank from Calor Gas saving 20p per litre. Cllr Rogers

had helped identified where the pipeline was in the car park and parish council were content for this to go ahead, subject to planning and would mention it to the solicitors. .

- Cllr Rogers noted that Cty Cllr Brazil would be providing funding towards the Beeson Orchard fence. He was concerned with regard to the Permissive Path as some gates seemed to be being vandalised. At the car park the gate latch bolt had been removed. Lots of the gates were being left open and the edges were busted not worn. All parish council agreed to monitor the gates. It was suggested that signs could be placed stating ‘Permissive path, please keep the gates closed’ and advise the police to also keep an eye on the area.
- Cllr Spence advised that there had been a meeting with the Community Orchard Group, Orchard Link/AONB representatives to update on the promotion of community orchards. The Stokenham Cluster included Beeson, Stokenham Village Green and Little Orchard at Great Hill, Chillington and Orchard line were very keen for Stokenham to organise an apple pressing day and help persuade community use of these assets. There was training in pruning, grafting, managing etc. Martin and Christine Nuttall-Smith had managed the Stokenham Orchard for some time but were wishing to step away and now was a good time for new volunteers to get involved. The Apple Pressing Day was provisionally earmarked for 15th October – a week before half term with an invitation to bring along apples have them pressed and take home juice. Residents would be encouraged to pick up apples from Chillington, Beeson and Stokenham and Martin suggested including Ann Bowyer to ask if she would arrange the day as she had done before. It was hoped to provide free refreshments, apple cake etc. Cllr Mrs Doust was asked to liaise with Ann on this to be the link to report back to parish council. She suggested also that this would be a good venture for the guides to be involved in. Consideration needed to be given to the dates when South Milton, Avon Mill and Sharpham were to hold their days in 2016 and parish council had joined Orchard Link for a subscription of £12.00p.a.
- Cllr Spence had been updating profiles, biographies and various topical information on the website and advised he would keep this up to date. He wished to receive bits of local news as otherwise the site would become a static advert. Cllr Gardner was updating the church pages.
- Cllr Gardner noted a traffic counter in Mill Lane, Frogmore as there was a planning appeal on some land in this area. Turning into Beeson at Beeson Pool there was flooding.
- Cllr Lynn noted he attended the Development Control Committee which he found very interesting and was glad he went. He did not feel they were given enough time to state parish concerns for the Seagulls, Hallsands application whereas architect gets quarter of an hour so there was an imbalanced. An interesting point was that the District Chairman said this application could not be rejected as there was already a property on this plot but if it had been a new build in a flood risk area they would have turned it down. Graham Tolchard went up to Buckwell waters on David Fraser’s side and dealt with the flooding but there was a pipe that goes across the road that went from 9 in to 6 in and back to 9in and he felt this was the cause of the problem. Parish Clerk to advise County of this problem. Hallsands had eroded even more but Cllr Lynn felt most in the area appeared to have accepted this. Some beach had come back in last few days. There had been sheep worrying over Christmas at Middlecombe by dogs but the owner had been found and warned but the farmer wished this problem highlighted.
- Cllr Hoeksma had attended the Development Control Committee too but also felt 3 mins was too short. He also attended the CVS Facing Forward 2020 meeting with Cllr Mrs Bladon as they were doing a launch for celebrating 20 years of CVS and wanted to get more resilience into community groups. Cllr Richard Hosking mentioned about Road Wardens and someone up country dealing with such matters.

CLERK’S REPORT

- Various emails from the County Footpath Warden with regard to coastal erosion and the need for safety of walkers were noted. It was understood that some stretches of the coastal path

required walkers to deviate onto private property and thus formal diversions may be required in the near future.

- A resident from Coleridge had reported the poor condition of the road up from the A379 to the 25 or so properties in this location. County had been advised and the Highway Engineer agreed to put in a request for these potholes to be dealt with. An approach to the local farmer would be made to assist with the work by clearing the road of surplus mud.
- As part of the Orchards Project parish council had been required to join Orchard Link and this had been actioned at an annual subscription of £12. Further workshops were being held that participants could attend and a plan for the parish orchards was to be drawn up.
- The lack of signage by South West Water at Kingsbridge and Dartmouth advising of the closure in Chillington had been raised with Devon County Road Closures. A call had been made to the contractor on Wednesday and this should have been rectified.
- Paul McFadden had visited Footpath 12 Chillington twice and was now satisfied that the signage was acceptable and the path passable.
- An emergency closure was issued today from Hollowcombe Cross along the private road to Start Point car park, which was also a Public Footpath. This was because one of the radio masts there had broken - one of its stays broke and it has fractured towards the top. The company responsible for the mast needed to do a controlled demolition immediately, as in high winds it could come down of its own accord. The footpath would be closed from Wednesday 20th January evening with the intention to undertake the demolition the following morning between 10 – 11 a.m.. Assuming all went well the footpath would be re-opened later in the day.
- A resident had reported that there were large potholes, grass and mud up Coleridge Lane. The Highways Officer had visited and confirmed that the potholes would be included for patching and a request for the road to be cleared of mud made to the landowner.
- During the diversion around the back lane on the Coleridge side there had been flooding further along from works carried out earlier in the year. This was significant and would be raised with the highway officer.
- Request received from Chillington Community Association with regard to gas tank, outdoor lighting on timer and support for a MUGA project acknowledged and dealt with in earlier reports at this meeting.
- First Aid Kit received with membership for Devon Communities Together.
- Met with Andy Pratt of Slapton Field Centre to discuss issues affecting them and parish council. Discussed the coastal erosion and Andy provided contacts at the Environment Agency with regard to the cracks in the Torcross wall. Noted the tunnel and need to keep it clear but was advised that it did not affect anything within the ley too much and they were only interested if it could harm nesting birds or the strapwort. The gate on the end of the tunnel had gone soon after it was extended. Advised that parish council wished to complete the annual works to the Permissive Path and was asked to obtain a list of what the Torcross Group wished.
- The Torcross Group were approached with regard to the annual cut back works around Slapton Ley. They had suggested keeping the smaller of the two willows down so that people waiting for the bus could see it approaching on the other side of the Ley instead of standing out in the road to see if it was coming around the corner. Also cut back the black thorn and Russian vine down between the bus stop and the start of the "pay and display" Ley side parking. This area tends to get very overgrown in the summer months. Finally again cut back new growth and lower the willows in front of Ley View terrace as these were cut back three years ago to enable the residents to see the open water and the wild life and to keep drainage channels open. They hoped the Field Centre would accommodate this particularly as they felt they were now custodians of keeping the tunnel unblocked with their manual labour force and caring for the "Duckery"
- Contact had been made with the Environment Agency to question their ongoing need for volunteer wardens to hold locally keys to the Beesands flood gate. Awareness was also raised

of comments from residents at Torcross being concerned with regard to the promenade flood defence wall. An engineer from District had surveyed the coastal areas of Torcross, Beesands and Hallsands and was putting a report together and the Environment Agency was also considering the wall cracks.

- Letter advising of the move by Kingsbridge Foodbank to Horizons, Fore Street, Kingsbridge and the criteria for referrals to be assisted.

14. FINANCE AND CHEQUES

Balances were provided:

Current £1656.17

Savings (1) £50,402.50

Savings (2) £4926.36

Transferred £1000.00

Payments below were considered and approved to be remitted electronically or by cheque, if applicable:

HMRC – Tax & NI £158.42

Wages – 1072.93

Devon County Council – Peninsula Pension £330.81

15. NEXT MEETING

Planning Committee would be held the first Thursday in February if applications are received that would not wait until full council. The next full parish council meeting would be held on the 18th February 2016. Both meetings to commence at 7.30p.m. in the Wesley Smith Room at Stokenham Parish Hall.

Meeting finished: 11.00pm.

Signed Chairman Dated: 18th February 2016.