

**STOKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ONLINE MEETING
HELD 21ST JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT:**COUNCILLORS:****P. SPENCE (Chairman)****MRS P. DOUST****J. ANSELL****MISS G. ADDISON****D. COLLIVER****MS. L. MOONEY****J. BRAZIL (District and County Councillor)****C. ROGERS****A. GOODMAN****A. GHADIALI****R. PAIN****L. COWLEY****T. LYNN****APOLOGIES: G. WEBBER****Also in attendance:****Clerk – Mrs G. Claydon****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. Cllr Spence declared an interest in application 4126/20/FUL being a close neighbour.

2. MINUTES

The:

- (a) Minutes of full council meeting held 10th December 2020 were agreed ready for signature by the Chairman.
- (b) No delegated Planning responses made during January 2021.

3. OPEN FORUM

No members of the public present this was dispensed with.

DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Brazil noted County were dealing with ongoing Covid matters so there was little to discuss from there as County was the main partner for any outbreaks. Obviously the cases were higher but lower in this area than most. He would send a link to an interactive map showing exactly the number of cases in small areas. County was the first contact if it was felt there was an issue.

He referred to the major issue announced in Church Street, a minor explosion which had been found to be an underground electric cable.

The road closure was in place at Stokenham and he encouraged people to have a look at works and ask questions. A six week closure was a long time but the wall had collapsed more than original thought and included a foul drain.

Cllr Miss Mooney accessed the meeting.

The Road Closure at Frogmore should be completed by the forthcoming Tuesday and then the section of road from Frogmore to Sherford would be resurfaced.

Cllr Brazil noted the recycling bags were still not being collected from Kernborough. Cllr Spence noted others along that route were not being collected so was sympathetic but it was not happening. Cllr Brazil noted District was now starting to fine FCC over rubbish collection so it was important to get people to report more and he would keep up pressure. Also the new recycling regime with various box collections was commencing in March and he would be getting a briefing in February so things should get better.

There were a number of issues raised about planning around Muckwell and that valley. He agreed the decisions did seem to be in contradiction. The replacement dwelling as such was moved from its original site whereas the other application was for an ancillary building which would have made it domestic like a new build. Planning was not a perfect science and there would always be grey areas. Regarding the new build house recently approved Planning did remove the outside lighting as a condition. Cllr Brazil would raise the comments made with Pat Whymer to seek consistency of decisions between officers.

Cllr Rogers and Ghadali arrived.

With regard to business grants District Council had updated their website so it was easier to access so he encouraged people to use it and if there were problems he would assist.

Cllr Brazil left the meeting to go to Strete PC.

4. PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS

The below applications had been considered under Delegated Authority to the Clerk and these responses already submitted to District Planning;

- 3940/20/FUL Retrospective erection of timber storage shed and re-surfacing of existing small quarry rubble farm track (Resubmission of 2717/20/FUL) Land to the rear of Pebble Cottage, Bickerton – Response 14th January - Parish Council felt that there was little additional information provided on this resubmitted application. The shed and hardstanding, rather than being essential for the maintenance of the plot, were more accurately considered to be provision of off-road parking, and represented an unwarranted intrusion of a garden, not small holding, into an agricultural field allowing further urbanisation of this countryside setting within the AONB. Google maps and local knowledge advise that there was no original farm track or drive and turning circle in this location and in fact the accompanying access statement referred to creating not refurbishing such. An earlier officer's report for an application on this land stated such proposal was 'an inappropriate incursion into the countryside and the new layout proposed, apart from the inclusion of chickens, appeared the same as the drawings for the refused application 3460/19/FUL.
- 4061/20/HHO 4061/20/HHO Householder application for extension to replace conservatory 5 Longbrook, Chillington – No comment.

The applications below were considered at this meeting and the following observations submitted to District:

Cllr Spence left the meeting whilst the next application was considered.

- 4216/20/FUL New porch to holiday lodge Kittiwake, Old Cotmore Farm, Cotmore – Response 11th February. Objection as the original approval stated no external lighting was permitted and therefore a skylight would provide such, be detrimental and affect the natural dark landscape of this location. A condition provided that an application must be made for additional structures, possibly to control holiday usage, thus safeguarding the character and visual amenity of this area. The size of the four properties in situ dwarfed in size what most would reasonably consider a holiday lodge and therefore this addition was felt to be more an extension than porch.

Following the above decision further discussion took place because the original officer's report for approval to build on this particular application stated this was to be holiday cottages, for multiple lets during the year, thus bringing multiple people to the area for an extended period and increase the local income footfall. This application appeared to favour more permanent usage and it was highlighted that the address provided on the application referred to the holiday cottage.

It was felt that this proposal was more an extension as opposed to just a porch and a skylight was not essential. If these holiday cottages each became owned separately by people then it could be they would each expect to each be allowed a porch for their properties with skylights changing the look and setting. The possibility of being owned individually was more the concern and whether these chalets were now just holiday homes not sublet for increased use by multiple visitors.

The original planning gave approval for these to be holiday chalets to be sublet or used as a holiday complex. If they had changed and were individually owned for personal use then this was perceived to be back door building in this sensitive setting rather than, as stated at the outset and sold to the parish council, that this was an ideal way to upgrade from caravans and bring an increase in multiple visitors to the area for an extended season. If the caravan site over at Stokenham converted to lodges and had 10 - 20 people each owning one how could that be deemed to provide extra work opportunities for the area during the year. As these properties at Cotmore were built for multiple letting during a year there was a planning condition requirement that a register be maintained, up to date for each property on the site, as stated in condition 3 of the approval. Thereby a planning officer could investigate subletting and usage. If each chalet was used by only one couple/owner every few weeks was that the intended planning policy legal usage for permitting development in this sensitive rural environment. This raised the question of whether the final four chalets be allowed to go ahead if this was not the intended outcome for such policy.

It raised the question of why a porch was required on a significantly sized holiday accommodation. There were another four more cottages now ready to be built and then would that create a need for eight porches. Without a register clearly illustrating holiday use what would stop someone residing quietly at a property for a requisite period and then applying for a Certificate of Lawfulness that it should no longer be just a holiday let. There was a concern within this meeting that other barns and developments in this parish could follow this line to change use. Cllr Cowley explained that whilst a response as above would need to be submitted for this application the original application permitted 8 properties to be built. Now the other 4 were to be built District Planning should be questioned whether the developer had conformed to the original conditions for usage of the first four before building of the final four commenced.

Cllr Spence was asked to return to chair the meeting.

PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing further added.

Cllr Goodman seemed to lose internet connection.

5. PRECEPT 2021 - 22

It was explained that each outgoing requirement had been considered and some figures entered in draft for consideration. Parish council had earmarked and general reserves that would also contribute to the discussion. The reduction in the number of properties listed as rateable was 17.7 and it was suggested that these properties could have been moved into business rates.

Cllr Goodman reconnected and returned to the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Doust was aware of the difficulties faced by parishioners this year and whether general reserves could be used to keep the increase to 5% rather than 6.71% as calculations for outgoings indicated then next year when things were on a more even keel recouped. Cllr Cowley cautioned

that from attending the County finance meeting held by John Hart, as Leader, his message to parish councils was County would have less money to do parish things if it was required locally then it should be in the precept. A reduction to a 0% increase this year would mean less income when spread across fewer households and if parish were capped or prohibited in going to 5% next year and then it was not sound financial planning.

The Chairman was wary of reducing to 0% when parish council could be called to assist the community in many ways at present due to Covid affecting support from higher tier authorities. It was now a political decision as to what the community needed and could be explained. Various questions were raised on items funded, one such being an allocation to allow tech required now that paper plans were no longer sent by District, what was Helmers (a historic name for Chillington playing field along with Tanpits, etc). After much discussion it was proposed that the required precept should be raised as any reduction of £500 or £1000 were pennies on the rates to each household but could be the difference between doing a project or not.

The proposals circulated were AGREED with a 6.71% increase from last year due to the removal of the Government grant and less houses paying rates. The sum approved was £44650.00.

The Chairman requested that at the next meeting all councillors returned with thoughts and ideas for projects that parish council could take on during 2021. These could be funded from the general reserves. Once a list was created discussion could agree what could be achieved and go forward first.

6. CONSULTATION

The District Council draft Housing Strategy document to be responded to by 1st February had been circulated and it was NOTED that Cllrs Mrs Doust and Miss Addison had each completed the online consultation. The document was felt to be on the one hand wordy and repetitive with no blue sky thinking and on the other nicely laid out so that the document drew the reader in and explained itself. However most aspirations were difficult to achieve and thus pie in the sky which was not felt to be realistic.

Some of the data on public housing – baseline evidence numbers as to how this would inform future building proposals and the median age, most of the increase in South Hams was in the 70 plus age group was of interest. Housing waiting lists for social housing was for one and 2 bedroom properties, 81% so these were interesting facts. The need for housing in this area was for young families in smallish affordable housing.

7. BEESANDS

The Beesands public realm was discussed. The Village Green was all but disappeared into insignificance and so there was now nothing for this committee to meet and discuss. District Council had put signposts up all along stating no parking without consulting or considering parish council. Cllr Rogers felt there had been no definite answer with regard to car parking provision suggestions and again the additional coastal defences were being implemented but there had been no communication as to why. Other than certain locals inputting their thoughts regarding the Village Green there was nothing known. Parish Council were told a play park could not be placed on the lower ground of the council house area due to a septic tank and yet a lot of District money was being spent on putting in gabion baskets and rock armour to secure the houses at the end of the green.

It was AGREED the Chairman would approach Dist Cllr Brazil to ask what happened to the meetings as a Village Green Committee and suggest that District amend the Constitution to state it

must meet at least twice a year or dissolve the group. Also the Chairman should seek justification for District money being spent on coastal protection with an explanation being requested on the media notification on 15th December that 70 metres of coastal defence were being installed. Then he should question what was happening with regard to the park, toilets and District proposal for holiday units and ascertain reasons and time scales. It was believed it should be the Environment Agency not District who implemented flood defences if they were going to defend the area.

8. CHILLINGTON PLAYING FIELD

With regard to completion of the drainage works by rolling the playing field and installing the slide the contractor had checked the slide mound and was content that the ground had settled. They were about to come in to complete but the latest Government lockdown had meant they could not. As soon as it was possible to do these works they would but had enquired whether instead of rolling the grass should they spike it to allow filtration instead.

An approach had been made to Western Power with regard to removing the anchor cables for the pole at the entrance to the hall and playing field. As this was adjacent to the road and required anchors the pole would need to be moved and to carry out such work a quote was provided totalling £6343.64. It was suggested that a planter strategically placed would stop users tripping.

The contractor approached with regard to advice and installing outside lighting had advised that he was busy but could provide a quote for the various sorts of lighting and installation for February. He had advised he would need to check a few things in the hall first - power supplies, where the duct ends and where to switch the lights from. There would also be some ground works required like trenching and making concrete bases for the bollards so he asked if parish council had anyone who would normally do that work? The contractor was to be asked to split his quote with this element for trenching and parish council would see if this element of the work could be accommodated elsewhere.

A draft protocol with regard to usage of the car park and surrounding open space in the light of legal advice regarding covenants on the issue of commercial use had been drawn up but further points raised needed to be added so this would be REDRAFTED for the next full council meeting.

Cllr Rogers had visited the Chillington playing field and was satisfied and very pleased with the grass area which was not boggy or waterlogged so obviously working. He could see the water flowing out of the culvert. There was also a stream that ran along the side of the area which Cllr Rogers had previously ditched and suggested the contractor needed to re-ditch this to allow more water to easily run down and present a dry, clear better edge behind the slide.

9. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS AND CLERK

- Cllr Mrs Doust – Noted that Covid vaccinations for parish residents were now being administered. A couple of planning application decisions by District appeared at odds with each other so she had questioned with Dist Cllr Brazil why different officers were giving different responses as there appeared no joined up thinking. She had also forwarded her questions to Pat Whymer and awaited a response from both.
- Cllr Lynn – Agreed with Cllr Mrs Doust regarding the application that was approved which allowed a property to move along the plot intruding into a dark valley.
- Cllr Miss Mooney – Noted that the irrigation of the ley had worked so they were no longer flooded at Torcross with a specially made gate at the outlet of the ley into the sea to stop shingle back draught, however the hinges had already broken. Cllr Pearce responded that the County Engineer had taken this problem as a challenge and was currently developing a

replacement one. It was agreed that if a gate stayed in place it would be great. It illustrated that a village making a lot of noise to the right people due to the sewage in properties then escalated the problem. It was questioned whether the relevant organisations agreed to join together but at this point time would tell whether they would act as a group to deal with this. Cllr Rogers asked who designed the gates as he was surprised first that it had happened and secondly noted it did not look strong as historically there had been heavy wooden gates which were smashed to pieces. Cllr Pearce noted that the Chief Engineer County Officer had taken this on knowing the area well for 30 years and had stated this was just a prototype on a smaller scale for a future two level gate with two hinges to catch shingle at the lower level and then block waves higher. So far it was believed that Devon County had paid for it.

- Cllr Ansell advised the old gates used to get shingle build up against them.
- Cllr Miss Addison advised that a large tree in Torcross had been taken down and questioned whether it needed a Tree Preservation Order request. Cllr Miss Mooney noted it had been situated on a hill and was a concern. It was felt that the Tree Officer should have been approached to advise what was permissible and the property was Linger Lodge and the question raised.
- Cllr Cowley – Advised that Start Circle of Friends were restarting their prescription delivery service as a trial for a few weeks to see if people were experiencing problems obtaining prescriptions. He had attended the Devon County online financial briefing by John Hart who advised they were doing a wonderful job but were short on funds and in future they would be doing less in the community other than what was required so parishes needed to precept for other things.
- Cllr Pain – Referred to the Chillington benches required and he had sent out a resume of benches he had reviewed. He enquired about hedging being removed along the Stokenham path. Whilst it looked stark Cllr Goodman advised that nothing had been a hedge adjacent to the main road, just brambles. This was being done due to a farming grant available to stock fence. He had received notification that there was a second South Hams Community Forum on Climate to be held just before the next full council meeting.
- Cllr Rogers – Work had begun on the track Marber Cross to Aller Lane for works of £3500 being spent with more stone laid. Devon County footpaths were, due to Covid, to have £1.2 million to spend on footpaths. County Footpaths had agreed to look at the footpath, which was eroded, from Beeson Pool to Huccombe called Cherry Tree lane. Maybe it would only be a makeover but at least it was being looked at. Cllr Rogers requested ideas within the parish of where to spend on public footpaths to get in quickly because funding was there. Cllr Miss Addison noted the Frittiscombe to Coleridge Cross path leading back down to the butchers could be put forward.

CLERK'S REPORT

- Cllr Brazil had directed a resident of Chillington to make contact regarding provision of allotments in the parish. She advised that she had four or five other people interested without advertising her request and it was explained that historically approaches from various areas of the parish had been made but no suitable land found. The area behind Chestnut Park, Beeson in the ownership of LiveWest was also highlighted as an area that no feedback or dialogue had managed to take further. She was from the local farming community and was going to approach landowners/farmers to see if a site could be located but it was explained that it either relied on the goodwill of the landowner or raising the monies to purchase land.
- It had been advised that the previous day three tank bombs were found on Torcross beach and the coastguards contacted the Royal Navy who attended and detonated them in situ.

- Chillington surgery had advised that they were now making appointments for patients to go to St. Boniface House, Ashburton and parish council together with local contacts had assisted in providing volunteers who could drive those unable to get there by themselves. Most people had friends and family but the surgery also now had a limited number of vaccine that they were calling more vulnerable patients to the surgery to administer. This was a limited amount though.
- Cllr Miss Mooney had contacted the mosaic artist but not had a response whilst Cllr Colliver had not heard anything further from Caen.
- Cllr Miss Mooney had received posters giving advice on help in reducing energy bills and she would put some posters up in Torcross and pass one to the clerk who could scan and send out so others could print them out and put up around the parish.

10. FINANCE AND CHEQUES

Balances were provided as below;

Current £266.32

Savings £105,607.13

Received: Nil

Below transactions were approved

Payments:

HMRC January – Tax & NI £187.10

Wages January – £1182.30

DCC January – Pension £370.35

Devon Communities Together – Annual Subscription £50.00

Play Inspection – Stokenham and Chillington Operational Equipment Inspection £120.00

Kingsbridge Websites – Hosting Package 1 year commencing 1st January £70.00

Cartridge Save – 4 Colour Ink Multipack for Brother copier £78.52

SLCC - ½ payment towards annual subscription £144.50

Cheques: None

13. NEXT MEETING

The next parish council meeting would be held online on Thursday 18th February 2021, subject to isolation restrictions for Covid 19, unless a member of the public requested the opportunity to speak to a matter when an online meeting would be set up so that all parish councillors and public could attend.

Meeting finished: 20.21p.m.

Signed Chairman Dated: 18th February 2021.