

**STOKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ONLINE MEETING
HELD 18th MARCH 2021**

PRESENT:**COUNCILLORS:****P. SPENCE (Chairman)****MRS P. DOUST****J. ANSELL****MISS G. ADDISON****D. COLLIVER****A. GHADIALI****C. ROGERS****A. GOODMAN****T. LYNN****R. PAIN****L. COWLEY****J. BRAZIL (District and County Councillor)****APOLOGIES:****MISS. L. MOONEY****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 Goodman declared an interest in application 0270/21/FUL as the applicant was his son. Cllr Spence declared an interest in application 0437/21/VAR being a close neighbour.

2. MINUTES

The:

- (a) Minutes of full council meeting held 18th February 2021 were amended to note that Cllr Rogers when referring to problems with rubbish collection ‘should’ he put it in the grey bin not that he had before they were agreed ready for signature by the Chairman.
- (b) No delegated Planning responses made during March 2021.

3. OPEN FORUM

Samantha Dennis was present to listen to the issues of parishioners and advised that she was the Conservative Candidate for the Devon County Council forthcoming elections on 6th May. She had previously managed Kingsbridge Tourist Information Centre for 11 years, been a Kingsbridge town councillor and was on the Chamber of Commerce.

DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Brazil arrived later in the meeting and gave the following report at that point in the meeting.

He advised that there were no parish matters to report from County and most had received their council tax bills.

At District, the roll out of the new recycling regime should be in Stokenham parish mid to end of April but the indicator would be when the collection receptacles arrived. The service had started in some places and he was not aware of an outpouring of complaints so far. Cllr Ansell raised a concern regarding Kellaton as the new lorries might not fit the road. Cllr Brazil had received an

email on this that he would respond to following checking at District. Cllr Rogers enquired whether the large glass recycling bins would be going but was advised they were staying.

An online meeting was held to discuss several issues regarding Beesands. Cllr Brazil noted that Mr Steer, a Beesands resident, had today phone to say what a wonderful job had been done reinforcing the beach which was praise indeed. At the meeting there was a general acceptance that communications were poor, but the defence works were excellent. It had been a rush job but if it had not been implemented then the last storm would have caused significant damage.

When officers were questioned about the public toilets as far as they were aware there were no plans to get rid of or close them. Parking at Beesands, or lack of it, was the most contentious issue and they had a few plans. District had not progressed any extension of the car park at the football pitch end. They were now looking at who owned the football pitch as if this land was included in the Village Green area another section might be swapped out, under the regulations, for car parking. In the short term they needed to try and do something and suggested where the old play area was and possibly up on the ground between the public toilets and houses. Both would be temporary for this year. The Hutchings had their field on which they could have 56 days to offer what they liked. He suggested that Parish Council might feel this was good as a short-term idea. However, there were issues that people would suddenly have noise, perhaps rubbish and overlooking of their properties.

Regarding the proposed beach huts, they had quietly disappeared, but Cllr Brazil had made the point to officers regarding the beach huts project when they had done nothing for extending parking which was what the community had asked for.

Installation of parking signage was raised but Laura Wotton said she was trying to find out who approved this. Others had requested this information under Freedom of Information and Cllr Brazil had asked as ward member, but no one responded. It was believed just one or two individuals requested and all the signs went in with no consultation with anyone. Moreover, the concern was the scale and amount.

Moving on Cllr Brazil asked for feedback on what the parish council view was on the suggested extra parking for summer. Cllr Ansell felt that the old play area site would be trouble being part of the green under the law but was advised that Laura Wotton advised up to 200 sq m could be reutilised without breaking the law. This was a small patch but could host 16 to 20 spaces. Cllr Rogers felt that the Hutchings field was the easiest option as people parking would invariably eat at their café. Those who occupied the fishermen's cottages would raise objections to cars near to them and this had been the area parish council wish to move the play area to. Cllr Mrs Doust asked why District had not extended the car park just past the Hutching's house but it was the legal tied and District Council had a duty to uphold the law of the land. Ideally District would just turn a blind eye if this was what the community wanted but there were some who disagreed. Cllr Miss Addison suggested that as the problem only arose on 3 or 4 days could the field not be open and closed as needed. She asked how turning a green area in an AONB into a car park would enhance the area. Cllr Brazil agreed that no car park would enhance but Cllr Miss Addison noted that occasional parking on a field left it as a field. A car park brought an overall benefit to a community as opposed a field and one landowner benefitting. It was understood that Beesands was a special local beach because people did not pay for parking and the field was an option, but people would be expected to pay. Due to the sea 100 spaces had been lost and the basis of the argument was should they be reinstated. Discussion took place regarding the loss of contact on what had been happening in Beesands along with certain elements of Beesands appearing to have the ear of senior people at District which caused the problem in that elements were bowing to this.

Cllr Brazil advised he must report back to District and Cllr Rogers noted that the use of the football pitch was not feasible due to the wildlife such as adders and lizards and being sited at the wrong end of the village. Cllr Brazil corrected that the intention was to take in the football pitch as green to allow other areas to be utilised. Parking on the old play area, Hutchings field and then Fishermen's Cottages could be considered, and Cllr Cowley suggested all should be put to Beesand residents to ask them to choose which they preferred. There were only two areas to consider as the Hutchings land use was up to them.

Finally, Cllr Brazil advised that by the following month District would have a motorhomes scheme in place for areas such as Torcross tank car park. Cllr Spence had sight of this draft document and felt it was problematic due to specific conditions which were not possible to check.

Cllr Brazil left the meeting after giving his report.

Cllr Goodman continued to suffer from poor internet problems through the whole meeting and was absent for much of it to the point that it was not possible to record when he was present.

4. PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS

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

Cllr Goodman was not present whilst the following application was discussed due to internet failure and thus nonattendance.

- 0270/21/FUL Change of use of agricultural field to touring caravan site to include ten caravan/tent pitches, along with a toilet and wash facility Mattiscombe Farm, Beeson – Response 8th April – Support as the proposal was an acceptable layout well sited, out of the way, with no permanent hard landscaping, having good access with provision of a toilet block built out of wood so was in keeping with the locality. There was a definite need for caravan sites that side of the A379 and this would not be visible in the landscape. Noting the translucent roof on the toilet block parish council requested that the light be on a sensor or timer to ensure no light pollution. The wildlife survey undertaken included recommendations that would provide opportunities not currently available, and it was requested that this enhancement be followed to add value in the AONB.

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

- 0437/21/VAR Application for variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning consent 53/2876/11/F Old Cotmore Farm, Cotmore – Response 8th April – It was felt that this application broke a clear breach of trust when the original planning conditions were imposed to protect this sensitive rural area. Of concern was the apparent highway new access situated at the north end of the site indicating a private entrance? It was of local concern that this variation deviated from the spirit of the planning condition.

Cllr Brazil arrived at this point and a resume was given of discussions on this application so far.

The application being submitted as a Variation of Condition had been questioned as the variance was significant and parish council felt it should be a full application but District Planning responded, no.

Objection.

- Policy DEV23 and DEV24 Landscape Character and undeveloped coast.

The new building proposals were prominent on the landscape, and there would be a great deal of light spillage. This was in part due to the removal of a number of trees in phase 1 of the development. This variation did not enhance the AONB or undeveloped coast. A landscape and visual impact assessment would have highlighted the negative impact of these changes. At a recent Appeal the inspector stated that any development was required to enhance the AONB but nothing in this variation could be considered enhancement.

- The changes were not compliant with the conditions attached to the original approved application for root protection and preservation of trees on the site nor the recommendations contained in the approved document, Protected Species, particularly applicable to bats and their roosts, which were required to be incorporated on all the new buildings on site. Google Earth illustrated the amount of vegetation removed to build the existing chalets and, therefore, updated wildlife and vegetation reports were crucial for this densely wooded and environmentally sensitive plot.
- No information had been provided regarding the car parking space or the materials to be used or any dimensions. The impression of a further access was of concern as the original plan stated that field access and visibility on to the highway was poor.
- The new buildings proposed in this application did not appear to be of a suitable design for short-term letting, which was the original purpose of this application. Large utility rooms were not a normal feature of short-term letting accommodation. These appeared designed as second homes or permanent residences, which was against the JLP policy for rural development.

Dist Cllr Brazil understood the depth of frustration of the original conditions with this and another application and would call for the other application to go to committee to allow parish council to raise concerns and speak to this.

Cllr Ghadiali joined the meeting.

- 0537/21/HHO Householder application for proposed first floor extension to existing bungalow to form bedroom with en-suite bathroom (Resubmission of 0669/20/HHO) Coombe Gardens, Beeson – Response 8th April – It was noted that this address was in fact Muckwell and not Beeson as listed. Parish Council was encouraged by the change in proposed size and welcomed this application as more in keeping and scale. Objection due to the introduction of the balcony and roof lights which would increase light pollution, with the south facing large windows, into the dark valley and thus did not enhance or conserve the AONB. The lower conservatory light would be screened by the garden whereas the balcony and roof lights would push light straight up.

Cllr Brazil was invited to make his report at this point.

5. CHILLINGTON PLAYING FIELD

The below decisions were.

- (a) a protocol about usage of the car park and surrounding open space in the light of legal advice regarding covenants on the issue of commercial use – AGREED.
- (b) the new Public Space Order implemented by District Council on the 25th March was discussed and how this affected this play area – Chillington Community Association had historically agreed to contribute to fencing but this had moved on to include a sum for general area improvements too. It was questioned how all play equipment could be encompassed in fencing and that a fence would have to be metal due to trimmer damage during maintenance. There then followed full robust discussion as to users and usage and the fact that errant owners and dog mess was not going to go away with the installation of a fence. It was suggested that not being fenced made users more vigilant. All gates were currently being tied open due to Covid and often park gates were propped or left open. Parish Council remained AGAINST fencing or banning dogs in this community open space.
- (c) the quote for provision of external low lighting to the gate and car park up to £2000 - DEFERRED due to no quotes
- (d) the works to repair a section of playing field – It had been advised that the muddy area appeared boggy, and it was felt that just digging it out and filling with some gravel and then earth with turfs would only hide the problem for a few months. The boggy section appeared to need to be joined to the gravel drainage system and then resurfaced as it was

the only wet section now. This work could be carried out in tandem to the work to dig a trench alongside the field as below (e).

- (e) ratifying works to dig a trench alongside the field at a cost up to £200 – AGREED that both works to go ahead, and Cllrs Rogers, Miss Addison and Spence would visit to approve the requirements.
- (f) further input and update was given to inform provision of civic furniture – AGREED need for Cllr Pain to arrange for himself and a few councillors to view such fitting in situ when lockdown was lifted.

6. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS AND CLERK

- Cllr Rogers – Noted the stretch of footpath renovation in the centre of Beeson had been completed and cost about £2500 instead of £1250 due a lot more work. Parish Council had agreed to contribute to Devon County, but funding was not required. On the route from Widdecombe to Beeson at a stream crossing the erosion around the pipe had been repaired again for Devon County. He noted that Skanska were leaving the Devon County contract and a new company would be taking over the next financial year. Therefore, works regarding buddle holes was failing as no maintenance had been done. Stokenham was in a good position prior to Skanska but not now. He had calculated how much it would cost for the parish and a budget of £4000 for a twice-yearly maintenance would be the figure. Cllr Rogers noted the lane from the caravan site along Sumerye Lane had been scraped at the end of last month, but the farmer's hedge trimmer came within an hour of completion of works and the lane was now worse than 2 hours before.
- Cllr Miss Addison – Had made enquiries regarding the provision of an allotment field at the back of Home Close. She had spoken to Karen on the phone who was not against the idea but shared the field with her brother and he probably would not be keen. Currently the field was leased to a farmer for a couple more years. Karen had thought of allotments previously but believed once land was an allotment it remained in perpetuity as this. If this was so she would be against it. She wanted something in writing, asked how it would be accessed, was concerned about scruffiness, sheds and compost and how much lease arrangements would be. Cllr Cowley felt judging by restrictions parish council would have to purchase suitably sized land and the cost to council of £15 - £20000 was not within the local remit. Cllr Miss Addison would revert to the landowner and advise that there had been no progress and discussions were ongoing.
- Cllr Colliver – Advised that the wooden walkway around part of Slapton Lee was dangerous due to it rotting out. Cllr Miss Addison thought the Field Centre had a grant in hand to replace these sections and Cllr Rogers advised that Devon County Rights of Way had given grant money towards a wood cutting machine to allow the Field Centre to utilise the wood from the trees chopped down to make slats. At the viewpoint there was also netting which had come adrift and was a trip hazard.
- Cllr Cowley – Raised concerns from residents regarding the replacement of hedges with fencing and did not know what to answer to them. There was a proliferation of wooden fence posts instead of hedges and the Chairman agreed that this was an unintended consequence of change in the way stewardship grants were given out. There had been a move towards encouraging farmers to gear up fields to contain livestock instead of planting arable crops. He did not know why this was accompanied by the grubbing out of hedges. It was a complete mystery as everyone was encouraging tree planting, but hedgerows were being trashed or coppiced on the top of hedges. Cllr Goodman would be asked for his expert input at the next meeting.
- Cllr Lynn – Noted all the road closure signs being left strewn around the parish. He noted that in the next few weeks they would be tidying up the Hallsands car park again.

- Cllr Miss Mooney – Sent the following report by email:

Mosaic – She had been in contact with five other mosaic artists, three responded but two did not. None were able to assist but one did say there were issues in ‘seeing’ the work due to lockdown. She wondered if parish council should go ahead with previous mosaic artist who had offered a quote or wait until restrictions were lifted when possibly there might be more interest but this could be 2022.

Bus shelter – She had spoken with Tom at the FSC and they would prefer a shelter (like the one built by Eddie by the ridge in Slapton) but were not insistent. Her feeling was that the design would need to be different for Torcross (more open) and this might bring the cost down and she asked if she should speak to Eddie and find out cost (unless someone knew the cost) or get prices for a shelter like the one in Chillington?

Share Shed – She had a meeting with a couple of people and once she had discussed plans, the need to research, volunteers, money and the like they seemed less interested in taking this project on. She explained she would help but that she could not run it. As yet not one had come forward to take it on so she believed this could be shelved.

Sea front shingle on promenade – She received very hotly worded feedback regarding this matter stating the residents did not own the land and therefore why was it their responsibility to clear the shingle. Non-residents with wheelchairs, buggies and walking stick users were having difficulty getting along with the shingle. Why did the parish council not want to make the area welcoming to visitors for the summer and perhaps just clear this promenade once per year before the season or possibly could they ask Devon County. Clerk had already asked the Locality Officer who advised this would need to be the County mechanical sweeper and had forwarded a message to ask for this.

Traffic speeds – How do residents go about requesting speed bumps (or other speed deterrents) for the village? The speed of traffic was getting worse and considering the death of Jethro Alsop a few years ago was there more that could be done.

Old Hannafords butchers site minimal work had been happening there now for a few weeks but someone turned up every few days to look around but it did not look like they were doing much. Historic photographs of the area had been sent to the police.
- Cllr Spence – Reported that regarding the old Hannaford butchers Planning Enforcement came back after visiting the site razed and advised there was nothing planning could do so the matter should revert to the police. He had written to the police who did not respond positively at first but following further emails thereafter Con. Dave Tungate emailed the developer pointing out that the land contained protected species under Wildlife and Countryside Act and work could not be carried out without the assistance of an ecologist. The slow worms referred to in an earlier ecological report could not be moved outside of slow worm moving season and he should stop works immediately. The police email was ignored so he attended and told the digger driver to stop and get off site. They had stopped work and seemed to be taking this matter seriously now. He had received three updates from the police investigating various aspects of wrongdoing. The police could not do anything about them taking the chimney down as there were no bats within. They could not do anything about trees cut down at the back of the site although they might have formed part of the bats flight line but it was not habitat, they were still pursuing the damage to the habitat of slow worms. A call had gone out around Torcross for evidence by photographs of the site taken prior to land clearance. Any evidence not sent in yet please let parish council know. The last conversation covered measures that could be imposed and what the police might do, and Cllr Spence advised that it was just the message to people to take notice and not flout the law. The community may not win but it was hoped that developers and builders talked and if they did hopefully the message would get out about the police and this action, so the action was generally positive. As far the police knew no one in this area had been pursued for potential damage to a habitat so this

was completely new ground to them. The next steps for the developer were to employ an ecologist and obtain a new ecological survey before they would be allowed to do any more work. At least they might get a reprimand and maybe a fine or prosecution with fines up to £10,000 for knowingly and willingly destroying a habitat of a protected species. The earlier report advised that there were 36 slow worms present before these works.

CLERK'S REPORT

- A concern was raised that there was oil in the pond within Helmers, Chillington but Nigel Mortimer estuary officer advised it did not look like mineral oil but the natural oil released during anaerobic activity in the bed of the pond. The test was to get a stick and run it slowly through the floating oil, if it 'followed' the stick it was mineral oil but if it 'fragmented' it was natural oil.
- Devon County Traffic Regulation & On-Street Parking Places) Amendment Order reference IMR/B06948-5867 extended to allow care workers and nurses to park on double yellow lines and in residents parking spaces was noted.
- Devon County Draft Resource and Waste Strategy for Devon and Torbay was out for consultation till 14th April. This was a two A4 page questionnaire which was sent to all councillors for completion individually as this would give more feedback.
- Margaret Straight had sent an online message to advise that her family visited Slapton/Torcross in the summer of 1978. They took photographs and not long after their holiday the flood took place so the family had a painting done from their photographs to remember how it was. She wished to donate the painting, at no charge, if parish council could think of somewhere it could be hung. Further details as to the content of the actual picture were awaited.
- Kingsbridge Gymnastics Club had been advised they were to get a £250 grant and asked if they would like to allocate what it would be used against. They were delighted and thanked Stokenham Parish Council and said it would be used to purchase two wall bar sets which would cost just over £250.
- The locality officer had been asked to review Sumerye Lane and along the path towards Carehouse Cross. She had noted the presence of dogs and advised District that a dog bin should be installed at the entrance by The White House Hotel. The district officer had responded that any additional dog bins needed to be provided and funded by the parish council. Advising Glasdon - Retriever 60 inc post- 60 litre capacity cost £260.66 + vat and Retriever 50 inc post- 50 litre capacity £306.73 + vat. A floor standing litter bin (Leafield) 110 litre capacity black with seagull flaps - £285 + vat. Installation would be £50-250+ VAT depending on how much work was needed with emptying costing £3.00 per lift (collection) either weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. Could be monthly for low time and increase in the summer. Parish Council noted that there was a dog bin along this path at Carehouse Cross and another through the gate on the last stretch towards Chillington. They felt that with these in place no further bins were going to make users pick up after their dogs, so it was not required.
- Adam Davison AONB Team advised that with regard to the completion of the Torcross tank area hard landscaping iCivils had confirmed they had scheduled the completion of the job on Thursday the 25th March 2021. Additional staff had been allocated to ensure that it was completed on that day.
- Salcombe Town Council was consulting till 30th April on a proposal to modify their Neighbourhood Plan. The modification related solely to policy SALC H3 Principal Residence requirement for new housing, and replaced the requirement for a planning condition, S106 agreement or other legal agreement, with a requirement for a S106 agreement only. The modification was required as Town Council considered that a S106 agreement would give greater security that any properties subject to the Principal

Residence obligation would maintain that obligation when such properties were sold. Town Council considered that the difficulties in monitoring a planning condition for a Principal Residence obligation would prove to be insurmountable in the long term and would inevitably lead to such properties being sold and the Principal Residence obligation being lost.

- Parish Council had been advised that Fishtek Consulting were applying to plant two fields just west (inland) of Hallsands adjacent to Batton Farm. The plan was to apply to the Countryside Stewardship scheme to support the planting of mixed broadleaves as part of a carbon offset activity. A response was sent acknowledging this information and a question raised to which they answered they were in the process of applying for Countryside Stewardship and until this was agreed they were not allowed to start planting. It could take a few months for an application to be granted so it was most likely that they would not start planting until the autumn of this year.
- There had been a report that metal gates had been put across Clappers Lane. The resident stated that this should remain open, but the meeting acknowledged it was a track not a Definitive Footpath. Councillors were asked if they were aware whether a landowner was moving cattle or why the gates had been placed. The gates had been noted but as this was a private track nothing more was known.

7. FINANCE AND CHEQUES

Balances were provided as below;

Current £541.65

Savings £99,195.28

Received – None

Below transactions were approved

Payments:

HMRC March – Tax & NI £186.70

Wages March – £1182.10

Rogers – Tax Reimbursement £0.60

DCC March – Pension £370.35

Kingsbridge Gymnastic Club – Grant £250

Parochial Church Council of Stokenham - Cemetery Grant £1000

KCOM invoice – 2year renewal for domain registration £132.00

Hawthorns Accounting Services Ltd – Payroll July – January 2021 £189.00

British Telecom – Parish phone and line £207.46

M.J. Hallett – Hedge trimming by flail (Torcross and Chillington Play) £210.00

Charles Rogers Blding Contractor - £216.00

Cheques: None

8. NEXT MEETING

The next parish council meeting would be held online on Thursday 15th April 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: 21.50p.m.

Signed Chairman Dated: 15th April 2021.