

**STOKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF ONLINE MEETING
HELD 10TH DECEMBER 2020**

PRESENT:**COUNCILLORS:****P. SPENCE (Chairman)****MRS P. DOUST****J. ANSELL****MISS G. ADDISON****D. COLLIVER****G. WEBBER****T. LYNN****C. ROGERS****A. GOODMAN****A. GHADIALI****R. PAIN****L. COWLEY****MS. L. MOONEY****J. BRAZIL (District and County Councillor)****APOLOGIES: None as all present****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. None.

2. MINUTES

The:

- (a) Minutes of full council meeting held 19th November 2020 were agreed ready for signature by the Chairman.
- (b) No delegated Planning responses made during December 2020.

3. OPEN FORUM***Cllr Ghadiali joined the meeting.***

Vanessa Woods Community Engagement for Plymouth and South Hams Office of National Statistics was present to explain the changes in delivering the census for 2021. The next review took place March 2021 and she would be explaining over the next few months how to take part and encouraging others to include groups in the communities to get the message out. She had been working with District Council who had highlighted groups within communities who might need additional support. This was all stair casing on the 2011 work so next year was important to ensure Government fund were effective and used in a proper way in society. This was to be a digitally collected census with everyone receiving a code along with other supporting guidance on how to complete the details in various languages et al. Ten per cent of South Hams were deemed hard to count so might not have completed details before and not be on the Electoral Roll. These people would still receive a paper questionnaire and might include poor broadband areas among other reasons. Maps of those hard to reach areas were to be shared with local authorities and she return if any of those areas were found in this parish. With organisations that had a positive relationship with communities they would understand and be more likely to take part and this was why she needed town council to raise this importance so everyone joined in. People with barriers or those who required additional support could be identified and she would help by targeting additional engagement or form completion activities. She had had virtually heard from all parish councils so she knew that people in this area were engaged. By the end of January 2021 there would be a mass marketing television, radio, all media, newspapers and interviews campaign as

there were a lot of questions around asking with Covid why they were going ahead. Showing how important the national statistics were to reacting to such outbreaks was one of the reasons. During February there would be help available to get the message out and every household would hear mid-February with literature saying the census was coming and then in March receive a pack for completion. After then field officers would follow up and the last time would be 4th May. The census was expected to capture 94% of people and they were hoping for 75% completion online. They also had field team vacancies for anybody interested in joining the team. This would involve helping people to complete online. There would be support for other languages or issues and as an example the University in Plymouth was holding a veterans group along with other ideas.

Government had additional funding to put into the community or even community groups as nobody knew the community better than parish council so they were key for contact. Everyone was already using data collected that was 12 years out of date so this census was the key to statistics. Census day would be Sunday 21st March 2021. Then a support team would go out and the last day for collecting was end of May. She could provide posters, leaflets anything people needed to promote this and direct assistance to the right areas to help people.

The Chairman asked if in terms of specifics was this just generally making people aware and advocating participation but no action plan for parish councils. She had been in contact with Devon County and Catholic churches but any links that might open barriers up would be considered. All data collected had names but then as it went forward it becomes anonymous and merely provided the information to help funding streams.

Vanessa Woods left the meeting.

Mike Laithwaite, Torcross was in attendance. He was wished to know, as a resident opposite Slapton ley, who was responsible for cleaning out gutters going into the ley. He had asked Cllr Brazil but nobody seemed to know who was responsible for these and if they were full of rubbish who should carry out the job to clear them.

Cllr Brazil advised it would have been the parish lengthsmen in the employ of Devon County but due to current pothole work this was not being done. Whilst calls could be made to County to carry this out it would be perhaps just once a year. County was saying the responsibility was the Field Centre as they should go into ley and clear but the Field Centre insisted it drained the road into their ley. Cllr Brazil felt either the parish could have its own parish maintenance regime out of the parish precept and include these drains or try and pressurise the Field Centre. The Chairman noted that these were two slightly different points. The generality for clearing many local drains was downward delegated from County to parish and something which was often done by bands of volunteers within a parish. Some clearing had historically been carried out in areas by parish council but otherwise clearing was in working parties. But the very specific issue of the ley and its outlet which tended to block once or often more frequently each year and the clearing of blockage within the ley was another matter. From his 8 years in parish council this responsibility had been assumed to be shared by the Field Centre in summer and perhaps Devon County in winter but there was nothing that confirmed this. It was an ad hoc understanding which appeared to have broken down due to personnel and cuts in funding. The Field Centre was happy to organise clearing of the outlet when blocked but were calling for wider participation to fund this costly service.

The Chairman had received an email from Lee Dennison, Slapton Field Centre which advised he had been working with South West Water regarding clearing the blocked out flow to reduce the ever increasing water levels on the ley. They had agreed to cover the cost of the unblocking this

time, which was fantastic, and he was working with them on method statements and other documents. Lee would meet them on site to see this clearance through.

His concern was the ongoing maintenance so he had requested that all partners look at different funding streams so they could stop being so reactive to this problem. Lee offered that the Field Centre could manage the situation on a day to day basis but needed others to contribute. He had talked to South West Water who was willing to be part of this group and contribute.

The Chairman felt that the will to collaborate must be taken forward from this parish council meeting and that Slapton Line Partnership and other groups should formally put together some coalition of parties to deal with this on an ongoing basis.

The Chairman advised that the ley outlet should only be cleared by people understanding the dangers with knowledge of the technique for safety. The special status of the Field Centre meant that permission had to be obtained to clear the other side of the drains/grips to release blockages.

The Chairman asked if Cllr Brazil could bring everyone together, as he had links to County and District, to sign up to pool money to pay for ongoing clearance costs.

Cllr Ms Mooney advised that Torcross Fund would contribute some locally raised money into the pot but it was not an endless pot. All agreed that if every agency plus residents put a little amount in with a 5 year agreement and the funding stream divided up this would be a start. Cllr Ghadiali noted that Alan Denbigh had raised this proposal with Dan Field, District Engineer, and it seemed a general agreement that all should be 'chipping in'. Cllr Brazil agreed to arrange a meeting of all players to include parish council and the Torcross Group to consider a five year payment fund.

Cllrs Mrs Doust and Rogers joined the meeting from other appointments.

DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Brazil referred to the issue on Slapton ley and the high level of drainage.

The Road Closure for just below Carehouse Cross to repair the wall was still struggling to get permission from landowners so the date could change. With regard to flood alleviation at Coleridge Cottages the Road Closure proposed was for the mid to end of March. Another closure was looking to install a water connection further along the A379 at Langholm in Chillington so he was trying to co-ordinate the two.

The County Council was the main player in respect of cluster outbreaks of Covid across Devon. This was a relatively low area although higher than Cornwall.

For coastal defences at Beesands along to the fishermen's jetty District Council might be extending this to, obviously, protect houses and the car park but once this was done that would be the last intervention. It was not known whether it would be rock armour or gabion with perhaps smaller stones in smaller baskets as rock armour alone did not work.

Rubbish collections should have been better but it was noted that drivers were lost due to isolation. All were encouraged to advise Cllr Brazil of any trouble spots for rubbish. Parking permits for residents at Torcross were going to be more than doubled even though a consultation had been done and he accused others, officers and councillors, of this just being a revenue exercise. All other permits across South Hams were understandable but this had not solved problems and people in Torcross went from £140 to over £300 p.a. District was not increasing parking charges, just permits.

Cllr Pain noted recent power outages and wondered whether Western Power Distribution had advised why this occurred. The ones in Prawle were scheduled outages although Tesco in

Kingsbridge had to shut due to one. Cllr Brazil hoped to meet everyone face to face at the earliest opportunity and wished all Happy Christmas.

4. PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS

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

- 3650/20/CLE Certificate of lawfulness for existing use of land as residential garden Cousens Farm, Chillington – Response 16th December –

Cllr Pain was advised he had an interest in this application and could not take part in any discussion or consideration of it.

Cllr Brazil advised that this was an application for certificate of lawfulness so the question was that the applicant stated they had used this as a garden for the last 10 years should it become permitted. There had been no camping previously observed and this was a quiet valley and it was questioned why there was a need for a certificate if it was continuing as a garden. Discussion took place as to why the property wanted to state such extension for the curtilage of the house as the pictures appeared to show pasture. So the question of lawfulness hinged on whether the land was used as curtilage garden and parish council recollection was they were not convinced it had been residential a garden, maybe market and/or agricultural use. Parish Council did not support such residential extension into agricultural land. There was reference to slow worms, snakes and barn owl that used the area which appeared more in keeping with wildlife usage, not garden. Therefore the area was felt to be agricultural use with an agricultural barn/horticultural.

- 3694/20/HHO Householder application for gable end and terrace alterations (Re-submission of 1136/20/HHO) Woodpeckers, Holmleigh Road, Torcross – Response 24th December – Objection as this application increased the window sizes and thus glazing which would affect wildlife through excess light spillage, as raised as a concern for the previous application, in this sensitive area adjacent to a nature reserve. This along with a larger proposed balcony which would provide overlooking of adjacent Leyburn. The proposed change from a double garage into a gym was questioned as to its effect on parking problems if the garage use was removed with no parking available on the road, where would cars go.
- 3768/20/HHO Householder application for new garage/workshop to replace existing garage Green Meadows, Stokenham – Response 31st December – No comment

Cllr Brazil gave his report at this point of the meeting and then left.

PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing further added.

5. DELEGATED AUTHORITY

It was AGREED to allow the Clerk delegated authority to respond to any planning application requiring a comment before the January 2021 meeting, following input from parish council.

6. CAEN MOSAIC

Following an introduction by Cllr Pain, Jane Mahood had been contacted and agreed to look at the Caen mosaic and see if it was possible to provide an acceptable repair without full restoration previously proposed.

Cllr Colliver advised he had also been in communication with the Mayor of Caen and the Mayor had shown great interest. The history of the memorial here and link to the garden in Caen designed by a District Council park superintendent had been provided and Cllr Colliver was trying to open out the conversation to encourage them to become part of the enhancement of the memorial here. It was AGREED to await input and quotes and seek a way forward.

7. CHILLINGTON PLAYING FIELD

The electrician had advised that low level lights at the car park or ground lights were a bit of an issue for several reasons. Any light worth purchasing was not cheap, they also needed a decent surface to be mounted on otherwise even the good quality ones would flex, the seals would fail and water would get in. They were not particularly effective as functional lighting.

The most economical, functional light for the car park would be a street light but this was not environmentally acceptable. An alternative might be short bollards with louvered tops so that most of the light was spread sideways and down. These could be mounted on the bank, by the fence between the car park and the play area. The reasons for suggesting the bank for the lights was that it would be easier/cheaper to dig in the cables and set mounting blocks than digging up the car park and they would be less vulnerable to damage both from cars and anyone who viewed them as a bit of play equipment. They would also throw some light on the play area and the path leading to the hall. A similar or perhaps taller light fitting could also be used at the Tanpits gate, in place of the two bulkhead lights on the arch.

For switching to all of the above the advice was a photocell and time clock. Photocells were much more robust and reliable than motion sensors and could be fitted at the back of the hall where it would also be less vulnerable to damage. The idea behind having the photocell and timer meant the lights would come on at dusk, go off at dawn but the time allowed users to programme a dark period in the night. For example, on at dusk, off at dawn, but no lights from midnight to 5am or whatever was considered the best balance between safety and light pollution.

It was AGREED to;

- (a) obtain quotes for electrical works as detailed above. The Yorkshire Dark Sky Lighting Plan for all national parks and AONBs was referred to and it was suggested that good lighting from the hall alongside the driveway from the hall to car park could provide lighting across the dark car park. Perhaps it would need two to three bollards along this path. Another suggestion was drive over lights within the car park to allow further illumination but this was disregarded as this was a rural car park.
- (b) await Cllr Pain to return with a proposal at the next meeting for installation of public furniture and fitting requirements.
- (c) that the legal remit advised that the open space could not be for commercial usage. However a community event might be allowed to use the surroundings to enable commercial input into charitable funds. So it was suggested that a protocol could be drawn up to focus on usage of the area for certain uses under condition for fundraising. A policy would be written to ensure that there was no issue under the land transfer and lease usage.
- (d) DEFERRED as a site visit to quote for urgent works advised that there was no visible Ash die back in the tree, situated behind the hall and leaning across the road towards the private house. However this was an ash tree and it sat adjacent to a highway facing a residential property and thus should be dealt with but there was time to consider works. The site visit noted that a cable had been run up the tree to observe a bird box and this removal was to be dealt with. Quotes for works would be provided in January 2021.

8. FOOTPATH

Cllr Goodman advised he had tried to walk to Iron Bridge and it involved walking through a foot of water due to the ley level which was up along with reed management of the ley. It was felt that to request this route would be folly of the highest order as to reopen it would involve a fair if not inordinate amount of reestablishment.

Cllrs Mrs Doust, Ms Addison and Ms Mooney had volunteered and walked a route which was indeed good. They went to France Farm woods via the old building to the board walk and doubled back to the rear of Stokeley Farm shop but did not get to Slapton and it was not public. Cllr Goodman suggested this was the Old American path. Perhaps if there was a path through France Farm wood it might allow it to be managed better but Cllr Rogers whilst acknowledging it would be a lovely path felt it was a battle that needed a certain amount of energy to fight and the cost would be too burdensome on the paying parish residents to enable it walkable.

The councillors who walked the route from Slapton Iron Bridge to Kiln Lane having given an overview of where they had walked and the access available proposed and it was AGREED that parish council would not initiate an application to County Definitive Footpaths for this route.

9. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS AND CLERK

- Cllr Lynn – Apologised for his lack of attendance at previous meetings but had been busy having his best year in fishing. He along with other fishermen had created a Christmas tree with crab pots and he encouraged all to visit and see. Fishermen were creating this along the coast in memorial to a recent fishermen disaster
- Cllr Pain – Advised he had been selected to be member of South Hams and Biodiversity Forum and would be sitting alongside Drew Powell District Officer hosting together with Alan Denbigh of the Slapton Line partnership.
- Cllr Miss Mooney – Attended the Fuel Poverty Awareness online conference and found this really interesting. The group were trying to support people for short term funds and long term heating improvements for residents across the area. There were three different strands that people could obtain assistance and this group would work out what help could be accessed. So this advisory meeting was about how to let people in the community know. She would provide posters to put up in post offices, pubs, et al. Also information could be provided for websites, noticeboards, Chillington Community Association along with all other parish contacts.
- Cllr Webber – Noted a piece of land in Kernborough which was sold off as a postage stamp and had changed hands many times which now had a caravan on it and fencing around along with a hedge knocked down for access. It was advised this matter had already been raised with planning enforcement.
- Cllr Rogers – Installed a gate for County Footpaths on Footpath 13 from Coleridge Cross to Kiln Lane. Beeson Pool, Withery Well there was flooding again and currently no lengthsmen works appeared to be being carried out by Skanska. These drains and buddles would need works to alleviate flooding. Problems around the parish were discussed and it appeared that locally people needed to take on board that they must have volunteer groups clearing to avoid floods.
- Cllr Ghadahli – Raised the idea of a bus shelter in Torcross and advised he had received approval from Whitley Trust/Field Centre that this could be built if parish council wanted to pursue such an installation. The Chairman advised this was a project better discussed in the New Year.

CLERK'S REPORT

- A Road Closure at the end of March had been received from Kier with regard to a connection in the area of the A379 by Langholm. A further Road Closure relating to the flood alleviation works by Coleridge Cottages on the A379 had been received for the second and third week in March 2021. This would render the A379 impassable along this stretch for most of March and therefore Cty Cllr Brazil had been asked to assist.
- The person who provided care, at Stoke Fleming, for hedgehogs found in distress had asked if anyone was interested in being trained as a warden. This was not to take

hedgehogs in but to provide parish advice on the care and awareness of how to take actions to make areas safe and advise on what goodwill foods provided can make them ill. Cllr Rogers and Tilly Spence wished to be put in contact to take on this role.

- Devon Carbon Plan consultation responses by 15th February 2021. For councillors to advise if parish should put this on the agenda for January.
- Pete Moore and Till the Coast is Clear had been collecting marine refuse along the parish coast. They had found matting that they believed to be from sea defences so an approach had been made to District to assist with a charitable contribution towards removal. District had responded that they did not believe it was their material and offered to assist taking it away once got to land.
- Thank you to all parish councillors who delivered the newsletters across the parish along with the village team in Torcross covering that area. All newsletters were hand delivered within a few days of printing.
- Devon County Highways had advised that the amount of support grant for highway visibility cuts in 2021/22 would be £551 and the new agreements, the content of which had not changed, would be completed and returned.
- District Council had advised this day that the precept request must be submitted by 29th January 2021. Currently the Government had yet to make an announcement by 14th December as to whether there would be a limit before a referendum would need to be called for a parish council to increase their Band D.

10. FINANCE AND CHEQUES

Balances were provided as below;

Current £745.03

Savings £108,105.26

Received: Nil

Below transactions were approved

Payments:

HMRC November – Tax & NI £187.30

Wages November – £1182.10

DCC November – Pension £370.35

Greenscape – Annual highways maintenance cuts payment £987.00

LexisNexis – Arnold-Baker Local Council Administration 12th Edition, ½ cost shared with Salcombe TC £60.00

Cheques: None

13. NEXT MEETING

The next parish council meeting would be held online on Thursday 21st January 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: 20.35p.m.

Signed Chairman Dated: 21st January 2021.