

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 15 July 2021, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.

Present: Cllrs P Morris (Chairman) M Fleming, Mrs V Lane, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey, T Pulham and G Tancred. County Cllr A Stringer

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr R Kember.
2. **To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** - none.
3. **PUBLIC FORUM:** to receive the following reports:

Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.

County Council – Cllr Stringer presented his written report (copy attached to the Minutes).

Queries raised included a recent closure of the A140 and inappropriate diversions through Stoke Ash, the £1.4m left in the Kier highway maintenance budget 2020-21 – Cllr Stringer stated that sum went back into the County Highway budget.

The request for a dotted white line to delineate the road edge in the layby at The Street, SA was raised. A response had been received from Highways stating: ‘Whilst it was feasible to place a dashed line at the location, it would have to run at the edge of current carriageway to maintain the width and it was felt that would push vehicles that park there further towards the edge of the carriageway’.

Highways went on to say, ‘they were not entirely sure that section of road was a fully constructed “layby” but believed it may be an area of verge that had been flattened by parking/passing vehicles and subsequently tarmacked over as part of carriageway maintenance. Encouraging vehicles to park closer to the edge might cause the edge to break up further or the edge to push towards the ditch. The road had last been inspected on 8 July 2021 and no defects were noted’.

Cllr Stringer stated he would pursue the problem further with Highways.

District Council – District Cllr Burn had reported via email that any complaints regarding the procedure followed relating to The Orchard planning appeal would need to be made direct by the applicants. Cllr Tancred would inform the applicant. Cllr Burn was pursuing a response from MSDC regarding the Roman Way grass verges.

Parishioners and Public – none.

4. **To consider for approval Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 17 June 2021**

Cllr Pulham proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Tancred and agreed.

5. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report**

May 2019	Stoke Ash PC vacancy	Vacancy reported in the parish magazine.
17.5.18	Damaged road signs A140	Reported via Suffolk CC Highways website reporting tool. Action pending.
23.11.17	Red telephone kiosk	Maintenance and repainting complete.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	Deferred pending record office move
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George’s Hall St George’s Bring & Buy Sale	Parishioners’ questionnaire on future of Hall – TP/GL deferred due to lockdown. Collection of items for a Bring & Buy sale after lockdown. RK
	Review allotment boundaries and mark pathways	Allotment plan with four additional plots pending
	A future joint Community Hall	Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. Deferred due to lockdown restrictions.
	Lawn mower service	Complete
18.3.21	St George’s Hall woodwork – obtain	TP & GL
18.3.21	Heritage advice	TP to check arrangement with previous Project chairman.
23.4.21	Use of allotments – agreement not to cultivate.	
	Sale of unused mower and purchase of strimmer	Complete
	E.on to check OSR meter	CM & DM
17.5.18	Speeding through both villages – Distribution of high viz vests to dog walkers/pedestrians and publicity Include availability of High Viz vests on	TP/GL to continue to publicise availability of vests to parishioners. Complete

23.4.21	village Facebook	Complete
20.9.18	Grit Bins: Replace small bin at A140 junction opposite primary school with larger bin Replace grit in bins at : A140/Church Lane, opposite Stoke Hall and at Huggins Lane/Roman Way Suffolk CC had suggested moving the large grit bin in layby opposite the Post Office in SA to the other side of the road next the post box. In its current position it was at edge of the road next an adjacent ditch	TP/GL LC Report to Suffolk CC Highways, the PC and a parishioner objected due to the narrow stretch of road, single track which would obstruct large vehicles and involve pedestrians having to walk in the road. Awaiting Suffolk CC response.
15/11/18	PIIP's - identify items of community expenditure from Cil award. Stock fencing at rear boundary of SA Playing Field. Parishioners views on joint village hall or retain separate halls Three new waste bins for village hall Ditch clearance - Church Lane, Thwaite Hardstanding at OSR	To be installed - GL to arrange Deferred pending survey MF/TP TP/RK TP/RK
30.5.19	Monitor road edge - The Street, SA	All councillors. Monitoring extended to whole of both parishes.
18.7.19	Play equipment/play surface grant funding Tyre maintenance/cleaning Bark chippings - replace/clean Remove molehills	Pursue grant funding with MSDC - Finance Group PM MF PM
18.7.19	Suffolk CC Our Water Project	Working Group to meet Mr Locksmith, Suffolk CC to progress- TP, GT, PM, DM, CM GL. Deferred due to lockdown.
16.1.20	Lunch Club Funding	Possible funding from MSDC - District Cllr Burn/GL
18.6.20	Local Government Transparency Code - ensure PC compliant	2 further documents to be added to complete current year 2021/21.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK - deferred due to covid
17.12.20	Roman Way - parking on public grassed areas. The Mid Suffolk map showing ownership of verges confirmed ownership by MSDC and not Suffolk CC	MSDC looking at developing a policy and enforcement of legal powers. Awaiting response from MSDC. District Cllr Burn pursuing
21.1.21	Damaged highway verges	AS looking into Weight Restriction/Unsuitable for HGV signs and protocol for diversions from A140. Under review with County Highways - AS
20.5.21	Parking in layby opposite tel kiosk, SA	GT to speak to landowner re. possibility of piping and infilling ditch to extend layby for parking. Provide white dotted line to delineate layby - Suffolk Highways. Cllr Tancred reported the landowner was not keen to infill ditch as would result in change to the village to its detriment visually.

20.5.21	Dog Waste Bin – to agree site	Purchase of a bin left in abeyance. GT to inform parishioner. Complete.
17.6.21	Overgrown footpaths 14, 16 & 17	TP to speak to landowner. TP reported landowner had been keeping footpaths clear. The footpath at the rear of the Village Hall was in need of clearance. TP would speak to landowner.
17.6.21	Van obstructing passing traffic - parked in layby, The Street SA	MF had been unable to contact the van owner. The only other action available would be to report the obstruction to the police.

6. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/21/03558: Lodge Farm, Wickham Road – change of use of land and siting of static caravan for use as holiday let. A response of ‘No Comment’ was unanimously agreed.
2. DC/21/03762: Honey Pot Cottage, Wickham Road – erection of extension to garage with external staircase to provide access to home gym/office over. A response of ‘No Comment’ was unanimously agreed.

7. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/21/02802: Eastwick Farm, Clay Lane – erection of 2 storey extension. **Listed Building Consent Refused.**
2. DC/21/02801: Eastwick Farm, Clay Lane – erection of 2 storey extension. **Planning Permission Refused**
3. DC/21/01807: Cousins Barn, Clay Lane – erection of one single storey dwelling following demolition of existing structure. **Planning Permission Refused.**
4. DC/21/02447: Brookside, The Street – severance of garden and erection of one dwelling including creation of new vehicular access and works to ditch. **Outline Planning Permission Granted.**

Two items were raised with regard to permissions granted:

The Thatched Cottage, The Street, Stoke Ash – it was reported the plastic sleeve had been removed from the property revealing two velux windows where there had previously been one. MF would check the permission granted.

New property adjacent Brookside, The Street, Stoke Ash – it was reported a door had been fitted to the carport

8. Planning correspondence

Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan - Consultation under Reg’ 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) – the Modification Draft Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2037. Response date to the consultation Friday 3 September 2021. The Chairman proposed councillors view the document and made their individual responses or requested the item be included on the next agenda.

9. **Proposed Affordable Housing Scheme** – no report. The Chairman stated this should remain as an agenda item.

10. Neighbourhood Watch report

Following the last meeting and reports of a drug related incident on the triangle at Stoke Ash Street, Cllr Mrs Lane had contacted PC Simon Green. He had checked incident reports from the beginning of 2021, there had been 81 for Stoke Ash, one drug related, and 17 in Thwaite, all traffic related. The Police UK website gave a record of national crimes. As far as Stoke Ash was concerned there had been no recent reports of drug related incidents.

11. MSDC Cil Award:

1. Stoke Ash Village Hall playing field: report on East boundary fence. Cllr Leggett reported the fence should be erected during August.
2. Additional Play Equipment – the Village Hall Committee were due to meet shortly and would discuss the type of equipment required.
3. Stoke Ash Village Hall playing field – three replacement waste bins. The bins were due to be installed within the next few days.
4. To consider additional items of expenditure from Cil funding including:
Ditch clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite. Cllr Pulham would obtain details of the process required for road closure during clearance work from County Highways.

Hardstanding next Old School Room, Thwaite – Cllr Pulham stated the recent Heritage report had recommended a French drain was installed around the OSR. This would need to be dealt with before a hardstanding could be installed.

12. Thwaite Community Projects Group

1. Report on allotment review, mapping and lettings.

A map showing all plots and pathways was being prepared. The remaining community area was due to be rotavated to create four additional allotments. The Map showing plots and pathways (plots to be numbered) would be provided to the Clerk to assist with the re-lettings in October. Members of the Allotment Group had met with the new owner of Lavender Cottage who wished to take over the plot at the rear of the property let to the previous owner. The letting had been agreed up to the date of renewal of all plots in October 2021. A tenancy agreement for the half year and half year's rent would be sent to the new tenant.

2. Report on St George's Hall woodwork – a representative from English Heritage had met with Cllr Leggett at the property. A report was being prepared and would be received shortly. The Bat Society had also been contacted. They were not able to advise without charge. Bats were present in both St George's Hall and the OSR. Two quotes for treatment to the workwood had been requested but treatment could not go ahead until advice had been received regarding the Bats. Two of St George's stained glass windows had been broken as a result of strimming. A check would need to be made with Zurich as to whether a claim could be made for their repair.

3. Report on Old School Room smart meter and E.on contract – Cllr Mrs Maisey reported E.on had changed the meter to an aerial meter which was now working.

13. Lunch Club – cancelled awaiting Government guidance

14. Stoke Ash Play and Exercise Area report

1. Report on tyre and bark cleaning. The Chairman reported the tyre cleaning was pending. To deter cats from using the bark it was suggested it was replaced with grass.

2. Further items for report – some tree branches would need lifting. Removal of the molehills was ongoing.

15. Wash Lane report

The Chairman reported he would continue to trim the lane over the summer months. The installation of a tree seat from Cil funding was considered.

Proof of maintaining the lane, at least 10 years, could be grounds for claiming possession and ownership.

16. Stoke Ash Parking: The Street and Roman Way grass verges – see matters arising above

17. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests – none received.

2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
15/7/21	Cllr G Tancred	Telephone Kiosk maintenance	£49.48	£6.60	£56.08	Agreed	100496
15/7/21	Clerk	Sal-expen June-July 2021	£265.56	-	£265.56	Agreed	100497
15/7/21	Stoke Ash VH	PC Hire of Hall May & June 2021	£42.25	-	£42.25	Agreed	100498
15/7/21	E.on	Thwaite Comm Projects - Electricity Old School Rm – April – July 2021	£62.83	-	£62.83	Agreed	100275

Cllr Pulham proposed payment of the above accounts, seconded Cllr Leggett and agreed.

3. To consider for approval Asset Register at July 2021

Cllr Mrs Maisey proposed adoption of the Asset Register subject to amendment of the value of the Thwaite Notice Boards (items 27 and 28) to £475.00 each a total of £950.00, seconded Cllr Leggett and agreed.

4.. Finance report including Internal Audit report 2020-21. The internal audit report had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed this be included on the next agenda to enable members to go through the document prior to consideration of any items for action.

18. To consider for adoption the following policy documents:

The Suffolk Code of Conduct – the document had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. No queries were raised. Cllr Pulham proposed adoption of the Code of Conduct, seconded Cllr R Maisey and unanimously agreed.

GDPR 2021- 22 – deferred pending review.

19. **Clerk’s report/correspondence** – no further report

20. **Chairman’s report**

Festival of Suffolk and nomination of a Community Champion. The Chairman suggested this could form part of the Platinum Celebrations for both villages during 2022 and proposed this be included on the next agenda for appointment of a community Working Group.

21. **Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests**

Defibrillator – Cllr Mrs Lane reported on comments concerning a village defibrillator on the Stoke Ash Facebook page. It had been reported and publicized that the defibrillator at Hill Farm was available for village use and training had been offered. Cllr Stringer stated CPR training was also important and offered to provide details of training available via the County Council.

22. **Date of next meeting: Thursday 19 August 2021, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash**

Meeting closed 10.12pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of Action Points

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23.4.21	E.on to check OSR meter	Complete
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17.6.21	Overgrown footpaths 14, 16 & 17	All footpaths other than that at the rear of the VH field were now clear. TP would speak to landowner.
17.6.21	Van obstructing passing traffic - parked in layby, The Street SA	MF had been unable to contact the van owner. The only other action available would be to report the obstruction to the police.
15/7/21	St George’s Hall – check insurance cover for stained glass windows	LC
15/7/21	CPR training	AS

Bus Back Better

Bus Back Better is being launched by central government essentially as a reaction to Covid 19, But on closer inspection it is an initiative that could lead to re-regulation of Bus services.

For this reason, it could be a positive move for Rural Suffolk.

The de-regulated services we have at present, have lead to the decimation of rural services in many communities, as this policy renders it unlawful to cross subsidise routes, I.E if an operator makes profit on a busy route, they cannot use that money to subsidise a loss making route elsewhere, This policy was originally aimed at city's and towns where multiple operators basically had turf wars on routes, this was a problem that never existed in rural areas.

Re-regulation will mean that an operator can cross-subsidise once again, this should allow for greater choice and service to our rural community.

Once again the offer from government asks for a plan from participating authorities, to bid into a central pot, to help fund not only this renewal of services, but also government are offering 4000, zero emission electric buses that can also be bid for.

We have asked the conservative administration how many of these zero emission buses will we secure for Suffolk, I am disappointed they would not commit to any number, as the small print in the government offer asks for up to 30% of the cost of each Bus bid for. With this being the case, it is highly likely that the most of these Buses will end up in a large Town or City. On a population split, Suffolk ought to able to secure 40 of these Buses, if they were focussed in say Ipswich or Lowestoft, we could radically reduce emissions as well as encourage much needed "Modal Shift" in transport.

Highways Contract

Our Current outsourced contract for highways services with Kier, expires on the 30th of September 2023, The cabinet has agreed to start the process of renegotiating a new "hybrid" contract, extendable for up to a 20 year term.

This contract process will cost £2000,000.00 alone, and we have been informed that they will learn from the good points of the current outsourced service while making improvements.

The Conservative administration has ruled out the possibility of taking the service back in house, but already many of the features of the highways are either carried out be SCC, or are going to be carried out by a number of contractors making up the "hybrid" approach.

Andrew Stringer