

Stoke Ash & Thwaite Parish Council
Minutes of the virtual meeting held Thursday 17 September 2020 at 7.30pm

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

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs Mrs C Maisey and Mr D Maisey.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **Public Forum** – to receive the following reports
Police – report available online – no comments were raised.
County Council – Cllr Stringer went through his written report (copy attached to the Minutes).
 Cllr Stringer requested that any queries regarding school transport arrangement and places should be referred to him direct. Cllr Stringer confirmed the County Council had withdrawn its support for the Sizewell C application.
 Questions raised included timescale for delivery of the pedestrian High Viz vests and Grit Bin funding.
 Cllr Stringer confirmed both were progressing.
District Council – no report available. The Government proposed Planning White Paper was raised.
 Cllr Stringer suggested members sent their comments direct to District Cllr David Burn.
Parishioners – none.
4. **To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 20 August 2020**
 Cllr Tancred proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane and agreed.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report**

May 2019	PC vacancy	Continue to include in parish magazine. LC
17.5.18	Damaged road signs	Stoke Ash list prepared – MF. Thwaite – none A140 – 3 identified - TP MF&TP to provide list to LC to report via Suffolk CC report tool
23.11.17	Red telephone kiosk – move to VH Green	Move deferred pending lifting lockdown.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	Deferred pending record office move
18.1.18	Wash Lane maintenance: Bridge Remove tree stumps Winter Maintenance Tractor wheel sign	MF/TP to provide costings Monitor Volunteer help. Path to be cut wider Complete.
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George’s Hall St George’s Bring &Buy Sale To consider sale of allotment land Review allotment boundaries/pathways A future joint Community Hall	Parishioners’ questionnaire on future of Hall – TP/GL deferred due to lockdown. Collection of items for a Bring & Buy sale after lockdown. RK Complete Allotment Working Group Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. Deferred.
17.5.18	Speeding – The Street – high viz 30mph vests	AS to deliver to Post Office. Vests available for both villages.
20.9.18	Grit Bin funding application Fill new bins Plus existing 4 new larger bins delivered	Application made to County Cllr Locality Budge – awaiting outcome. LC LC GL/TP to put out & provide list of all bin sites to LC
May 2018	Bus Stop A140 opposite Walnut Tree PH –	Notice Board for timetable – TP to obtain and install up to cost of £100
15/11/18	PIIP’s – identify items of community expenditure from Cil	Village Sign – GT /TP progressing Consider community items

	Parishioners views on joint village hall or retain separate halls	Deferred until pending survey
30.5.19	Monitor road edge – The Street, SA	All councillors
18.7.19	Play equipment/play surface grant funding Additional tyres Bark chippings ROSPA inspection	Pursue grant funding with MSDC – Finance Group TP/MF MF Due August/Sept 2020
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.
21.11.19	Neighbourhood Watch – Purchase 8/9 signs Provide window stickers and publicity in both villages Parish Mag report	VL VL/RK
16.1.20	The Orchard Planning Appeal	Substitute Planning Inspector at site meeting – await District Cllr report
16.1.20	Lunch Club Funding	Possible funding from MSDC – District Cllr Burn - GL
18.6.20	Local Government Transparency Code – ensure PC compliant	LC
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK – deferred due to covid
16.7.20	CPR training	MF to recruit volunteers via parish magazine
16.7.20	Website: Accessibility Statement Disposal of PC website equipment	Complete Finance Group
16.7.20	Church Lane, Thwaite – roadside mirror	Complete
20.8.20	NPPF draft Housing land supply consultation	Councillors to submit comments direct to MSDC
20.8.20	Changes to current planning system/planning for the future/transparency and competition – evidence on data on land control	Comments to clerk
20.8.20	Stoke Ash Parish Notice Board repair	PM
20.8.20	Set up Zoom for September meeting	GL

May 2019 – Parish Council vacancy Stoke Ash. Continue to advertise in parish magazine and members within the village.

17.5.18 – Damage road signs A140 – awaiting list from TP/MF.

17.5.18 – High Viz jackets – awaiting delivery from Suffolk CC Highways.

20.9.18 – Additional 4 Grit Bin funding – awaiting confirmation from Suffolk CC Highways.

May 2018 – provision of notice board for bus timetable – TP sourcing and installing.

16.1.20 – The Orchard Planning Appeal – awaiting update from District Cllr Burn.

18.6.20 – Local Government Transparency Code – documents on website progressing

16.7.20 – Parishioners CPR training – Cllr Fleming and Mrs Jane Fleming had both obtained CPR training. Item complete.

20.8.20 – Refurbishment of Stoke Ash Notice Board – Cllr Morris to carry out repairs including new Perspex.

6. **To consider planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC** – none received.

7. **To note Planning Decisions received from MSDC**

1. DC/20/02191: Coppins Cottage, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – creation of annexe from barn (following demolition of existing chicken shed), erection of cart lodge, new boundary and gate.
Planning Permission Granted
2. DC/20/03008: Gardiners Hall, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – application for listed building consent. Oil leak repair works to kitchen. **Listed Building Consent Granted.**
8. **Planning Correspondence** – none received.
9. **Proposed Affordable Housing Scheme** – no report.
10. **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme progress report**
Cllr Mrs Lane reported the order for 8 metal signs plus one further sign that would be funded by Cllr Kember had been placed with Normanton Screenprint of Nottingham and totalled £130.80. An emailed application had been made to County Cllr Stringer for funding towards the signs but had not received any response as yet. On checking his emails during the meeting Cllr Stringer stated he had not received the email, that he had two email accounts and the email may have gone to the incorrect account. Cllr Stringer suggested the application was re-submitted and he would give it his early attention..
Cllr Kember would draft a piece about the scheme for the next parish magazine – an introduction to Neighbourhood Watch, what it is and the benefits of becoming a member. A medium for sending out warning notices to members would need to be investigated. Cllr Kember would speak to the Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for advice. Cllrs Kember and Mrs Lane were already included in a Co-ordinators communication group. Window stickers would also need to be obtained, these would cost 66p each per 250 for vinyl or 44p each per 250 for polypropylene plus a small order charge.
11. **MSDC Cil Award report**
 1. Stoke Ash Village Sign – the sign could not progress until the brick plinth had been built.
 2. Additional Play Equipment – deferred due to covid restrictions.
 3. Other items to be considered for funding – to be re-visited after receipt of next Christmas list.
12. **Thwaite Community Projects Group**
 1. Report on review of Allotment Land
A Working Group had been set up to carry out a review of the Thwaite allotment land and amenity area. The working group had carried out a site inspection to measure and understand the area allocated to allotment and amenity area (play area) land. A meeting had also been held with allotment holders to ascertain what they wanted from the allotment land and whether they were satisfied going forward. Some issues concerning sections of land passing between tenants had been raised - that would need to be Resolved by the Group.
Going forward the following action had been put forward:
Preparation of a plan defining the individual plots
Marking out pathways between individual plots and between boundary hedges and plots
Identify whereabouts of reported Well. If this could not be identified consider provision of a water supply.
Review rents
Review tenancy agreements
Review use of the plots
Ensure sheds, greenhouses, horse stable were contained within individual plots and not encroaching onto amenity or other land.
Gates monitored and repaired where necessary
Notice of parishioners' expression of interest in renting an allotment would be included in the next Parish Magazine
 2. Thwaite document storage
The group had also spent time going through historical documents stored in St George's Hall. These would be scanned and stored with Cllr Pulham pending re-opening of offices at the Suffolk Record Office.
13. **Lunch Club** – cancelled pending further Government guidance
14. **Stoke Ash Play & Exercise Area**
 1. ROSPA inspection – awaiting inspection report
 2. Installation of additional tyres – Cllrs Morris and Pulham progressing.
 3. Additional play equipment with PC funding contribution – deferred
15. **Wash Lane**
 1. Proposed access bridge design and costing
Cllr Tancred produced historical information on the ditch and boundary at the village end of the lane dated 1974 which stated the boundary had been piped and that the ditch appeared to be a new addition.

The piped water flowed towards the brook and not the pond. It was therefore suggested the boundary was returned to its original condition, that the ditch was filled in and there would be no need for a bridge. The Chairman stated he would monitor any work required on the lane over the winter months. A circular bench around one of the trees was suggested.

16. Former telephone kiosk, The Street, Stoke Ash – refurbishment and move

Pending the move of the kiosk, Cllr Tancred offered to clean and repaint it to improve its appearance. It was understood the electricity supply was still connected. It was agreed any repainting should be deferred until the move was complete. In the meantime Cllr Tancred offered to clean and prepare the kiosk for the winter.

17. Parish Council Insurance

The CAS insurance renewal documents had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. Members agreed the cover as set out in the renewal document. Two queries were raised:

Level of cover for legal fees

Old School Room – in the event the building had to be re-built, would this need to be in its present style as it was within the curtilage of a listed building. Enquiries would be made with MSDC Conservation.

18. 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.
17.9.20	Laser Patterns	Village Sign	320.00	64.00	384.00	Agreed	100471
17.9.20	Normanton Screenprint	Neighbourhood Watch signs	109.00	21.80	130.80	Agreed	100472
17.9.20	CAS	PC annual Insurance premium	461.89	-	461.89	Agreed	100473
17.9.20	Clerk	Sal-expen July-Sept plus additional hours August	564.28	-	564.28	Agreed	100474
17.9.20	E.on	Thwaite Old School Room May-Aug 2020	36.39	-	36.39	Agreed	100267

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

3. Finance Working Group report

1. Confirmation of bank account balances at 31.8.20:

PC Business Premium a/c £11,999.51

PC Comm a/c £1397.30

Thwaite Projects Group comm a/c £4889.17

2. Disposal of Parish Council laptop, printer, copier & scanner

Members agreed a preferred method via a sealed bid advertised in the parish magazine. Deadline for receipt of the bid 14 October 2020. Cllrs Leggett and Tancred would prepare a notice for the magazine.

3. To consider for approval Asset Register 2020/21

The asset register with the addition of the Wash Lane Tractor sign and Thwaite Allotment & Amenity Land had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman stated the three Parish Council Notice Boards at a value of £300 each should be added to the register. With the amendment above Cllr Pulham proposed adoption of the register, seconded Cllr Fleming and agreed.

The Chairman reported the Stoke Ash War Memorial was in need of attention to keep it in good order. Cllr Mrs Lane and Cllr Tancred offered to carry out a cleaning exercise.

4. To appoint internal Auditor and RFO 2020-21

Cllr Pulham proposed the appointment of SALC Internal Auditors and clerk as RFO, seconded Cllr Fleming and agreed.

5. To consider items raised and any action required following the Internal Audit Report for year end 31.3.20

The report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The following items had been raised by the auditor for action:

1. When carrying out its annual review of financial regulations, suggest the Council adopted the NALC model Financial Regulations produced August 2019 – *included on next agenda.*
2. Payroll – Parish Council to be aware of its pension responsibilities. *The Council to comply with duties regarding automatic enrolment.*
3. Ensuring compliance with the Account and Audit Regulations 2015 – publishing required documents on a public website. *These were being progressed.*
4. Annual Parish Council Meeting 2019 – the Council to be aware of its duty to hold an annual meeting of the Parish Council in May in accordance with legislation. *The annual PC meeting had been set for 16 May 2019 (within the required time frame) but could not go ahead as it was not quorate. The meeting had been re-arranged and held 30 May 2019.*
5. Risk Management – to include additional items raised by auditor. *Include on next agenda.*
6. Budgetary Controls – review of expenditure against budget. *Include six monthly review in financial regulations.*
7. Bank reconciliations – *Chairman/Finance Group to sign-off reconciliations when presented to a meeting.*

Members agreed actions in italics above.

19. To review for adoption the following policy documents:

1. The Suffolk Local Code of Conduct
2. Equality and Diversity
3. Data protection and Management & Privacy Notice

The above documents had been circulated prior to the meeting. No queries or amendments were requested. Cllr Tancred proposed all three documents were adopted, seconded Cllr Leggett and unanimously agreed.

20. Clerk's report/correspondence

Stoke Ash Fire - Correspondence had been received concerning a request to recognise the actions of a parishioner who had helped the victims of a house fire in Stoke Ash earlier in the year. Members agreed the actions and help given by the lady in question should be recognized as should the help given and offered by the other members of the parish and the 20 plus fire crew. Due to the fear of overlooking a helpers name, members took the view a commendation notice thanking all those involved for their huge display of community spirit should be included in the parish magazine. The Chairman offered to draft a suitable notice.

Parish Certificate of Commendation – Cllr Kember enquired whether there had been thought of setting up a parish certificate of commendation scheme for recognizing outstanding contributions in the community, usually presented at an award ceremony. Members agreed this was something that could be considered at a future date.

20. Chairman's Urgent Business – none.

21. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

The Zoom video system appeared to have been a success. There was a subscription fee for meetings over 40 minutes. Item to be included on next agenda.

22. Date of next video meeting – Thursday 15 October 2020 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed 9.14pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of Action Points

May 2019	PC vacancy	Continue to include in parish magazine. LC
17.5.18	Damaged road signs A140	MF&TP to provide list to LC to report via Suffolk CC report tool
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17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at	Deferred pending record office move

	Ipswich Record Office	
18.1.18	Wash Lane maintenance: Bridge – following report on piping ditch to be filled in Remove tree stumps Winter Maintenance	PM PM to monitor tree stumps PM
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George’s Hall St George’s Bring & Buy Sale Review allotment boundaries/pathways A future joint Community Hall	Parishioners’ questionnaire on future of Hall – TP/GL deferred due to lockdown. Collection of items for a Bring & Buy sale after lockdown. RK Allotment Working Group Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. Deferred.
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21.11.19	Neighbourhood Watch – Purchase window stickers and publicity in both villages Parish Mag report Method of communication with Members	VL/RK RK RK
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16.1.20	Lunch Club Funding	Possible funding from MSDC – District Cllr Burn - GL
18.6.20	Local Government Transparency Code – ensure PC compliant	LC
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK – deferred due to covid
16.7.20	CPR training	Complete. MF & JF trained.
16.7.20	PC website equipment – sealed envelope bid	GL/GT to prepare advertisement for parish magazine

20.8.20	NPPF draft Housing land supply consultation	Councillors to submit comments direct to MSDC
20.8.20	Changes to current planning system/planning for the future/transparency and competition – evidence on data on land control	Comments to clerk
20.8.20	Stoke Ash Parish Notice Board repair	PM
17.9.20	Consider Zoom subscription	All members
17.9.20	Parish Magazine report commending community helpers following residential fire	PM
17.9.20	PC computer equipment – sealed bid notice in parish magazine	GL/GT
17.9.20	PC insurance – query legal fee cover and OSR rebuild	LC

County Cllr A Stringer report – September 2020

Changes to Children’s Centres challenged by our Group

On 25 August, the Cabinet agreed to reduce the number of Children’s Centres in Suffolk from 38 to 17 full-time and 11 part-time Family Hubs. 8 centres will be repurposed for nurseries or SEND provision, whilst 2 will close permanently (Chatterbox in Ipswich and Caterpillar in Woodbridge).

The council has said that this is not a cost-saving exercise and that any savings will be used to fund additional staff for outreach work. However, I am very concerned that the loss of so many centres will have a detrimental effect on families, particularly those in rural areas who may now find it more difficult to access support.

My group worked with the Labour group to collectively challenge the Cabinet’s decision. This challenge has been accepted as valid by the council’s Monitoring Officer, and so the decision will be suspended until it has been looked at by the Scrutiny Committee on 11 September. The Scrutiny Committee confirmed the Cabinet’s decision.

Update on school transport arrangements for September

Suffolk County Council has confirmed that it will initially not be offering spare seats on school transport. This is due to social distancing requirements, which have reduced the capacity on school buses. However, parents may be able to apply for a spare seat from October half term.

The council has also confirmed the arrangements for masks and social distancing on school transport. The rules vary depending on the type of transport used:

- Dedicated closed routes (vehicle only carries school children) – social distancing will not apply, face coverings are recommended for children aged 11+
- Shared routes (most passengers are pupils, but may be some members of the public) – pupils should observe social distancing guidelines with members of the public but they can sit next to members of their family or school, face coverings are mandatory unless a child is exempt from wearing one
- Public transport – social distancing will apply, face coverings are mandatory unless a child is exempt from wearing one

Council Agrees to withdraw support for Sizewell “C”

The Council has agreed to withdraw its unconditional support for Sizewell C, this comes after the Council rejected our motion to Council to do the same in July.

This does at last send a clear message that a predominately road based build here would be an economic and environmental disaster, and that Suffolk needs to predict energy use in a sector that has fundamentally changed over the last decade.

Infrastructure Board established to oversee costs of large projects

It has emerged that Suffolk County Council established an Infrastructure Board in November 2019 to oversee large infrastructure projects and ensure they remain within budget. This is in response to a number of recent projects where costs have increased dramatically, including the Upper Orwell Crossings which was eventually abandoned after costs increased by £43m.

The board is currently only made up of officers.

The Cabinet has given final approval for the Lowestoft Lake Lothing Third Crossing, and revealed that the name of the new bridge will be “Gull Wing Lowestoft”.

However, the cost of the bridge is now much higher than originally estimated. The report prepared for Cabinet estimated that the total cost of delivering the bridge is £126.75m, with an additional £19m allocated as a contingency for any unforeseen risks. The original estimate was £91.73m.

To fund the building of the bridge, Suffolk County Council will spend £6.9m of its own money, receive £73.39m of funding from the Department of Transport and borrow up to £64.96m.

It is expected that construction work will begin in Spring 2021.

Highways Delays

As you are all painfully aware getting any response from highways has been at best patchy over the last few months, after getting frustrated I escalated our concerns to director level, I received this response. This at least explains why we have been not receiving the response we hoped, they have completely reviewed the service, I have resubmitted all our previous requests and have been promised a better service in the future.

“As some of you may be aware, my team and I have been working on ways to improve how we deal with our customers; specifically you as County Councillors. We understand that the majority of public enquiries you receive are about Highways and services related to Highways – this can be a cause of huge frustration for you, especially if you’re unable to get an answer as quickly as you need.

In light of this, my team and I have been working on a new direct contact process; which we hope will help streamline the mechanism for receiving updates on the Highway-related challenges in your area. I have attached a more detailed document for you, however to summarise, please read below:

When you receive a contact about a Highway-related issue from a member of the public or Parish Council which is what you’d regard as a routine issue, you should be **encouraging the member of the public** to report this via the following routes:

- Online at <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk>
- By emailing customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk
- Or by calling 0345 606 6171

Using the highways reporting tool to tell us about routine issues saves the council time, money, and potential duplication of reporting. You can report most highway-related issues using the reporting tool. Anything reported via these means will be assigned to the correct team to assess and respond directly to the customer.

If the issue you've received from the member of the public or Parish Council is an escalated issue, or doesn't seem to fit into what can be reported online, or if you have a question you'd like answered yourself, please send this to our new single mailbox:

- CouncillorHighwaysSupport@suffolkhighways.org

This replaces the previous three Service Delivery Centre email addresses but is still managed by our Customer Co-ordinators – Lisa, Melanie, and Sophie. Claire and Maryanne are on currently maternity leave.

This mailbox is **not** just for Suffolk Highways-related enquiries, please also use this for:

- Rights of Way
- Transport Strategy
- Floods and Drainage
- Road Safety Education and Training
- Safety and Speed Management

This mailbox will be monitored Monday – Friday and is the quickest and most effective route in gaining an answer to your enquiry. Your enquiry will be logged and sent directly to the appropriate officer for response, a reference number will be provided and a response sent on to you as soon as possible.

If you would rather phone and speak to one of our Customer Co-ordinators to explain an issue, please phone:

- **0330 311 7837** (during the hours of 7.30am – 12pm Monday – Friday), or
- **0345 606 6171** (outside of the above hours, including emergencies out of hours and at the weekend)

I ask that you please follow the steps above to get the most out of our service, we are really keen to ensure you are as prepared as you can be with timely and accurate information, so your cooperation with the new process will be essential to its success.

We have already received some positive feedback on this process as we have been silently testing it in the background over the recent months, so I am confident it will provide benefit to you all.”

