

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the virtual meeting held Thursday 18 March 2021 at 7.30pm

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

1. **Apologies for absence** – none.
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).

With regard to Stowmarket becoming a freeport centre a query was raised as to whether a railway connection between Stowmarket and Felixstowe was planned to take haulage off the road. Cllr Stringer stated the chances of that would be limited due to the single track from Derby Road in Ipswich.

District Council – Cllr Burn reported the District Council had approved a pilot solar carport scheme at Stowmarket Leisure Centre. The carport solar panels would cover existing car park spaces contributing towards electricity to power the Leisure Centre. Any excess would be fed back to the national grid. The scheme would include a number of charging points. The cost of the scheme was in the region of £300,000 but would be match funded from the Government. The scheme was due for completion Spring 2022.

The Progress Power Station proposed for Eye Airfield was going ahead and work was due to start before August.

KFC and Starbucks had made a planning application for a drive in facility at the A140 Stuston roundabout junction. If successful there was a condition land would be available for a 220 sq ft supermarket at the site. Comments raised included the proximity of the site to the river and the site itself was known to flood. Cllr Burn stated individual comments on the application could be made via the MSDC planning portal, ref. DC/21/01101.

Parishioners and Public – none.

4. **To consider for approval Minutes of meeting held 18 February 2021**

Cllr Pulham proposed adoption of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane and agreed.

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

May 2019	PC vacancy	The Stoke Ash vacancy continued to be reported in the parish magazine.
17.5.18	Damaged road signs A140	Reported via Suffolk CC Highways website reporting tool. Action still pending.
23.11.17	Red telephone kiosk	GT to carry out maintenance during spring 2021
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	Deferred pending record office move
18.1.18	Wash Lane maintenance: Bridge – return boundary to its original condition, ie piping and fill in ditch Remove tree stumps Winter Maintenance/strim. Collect dead wood & burn	PM PM PM & MF
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George's Hall St George's Bring & Buy Sale Review allotment boundaries and mark pathways A future joint Community Hall Consider including St George's insurance cover under the PC CAS policy	Parishioners' questionnaire on future of Hall – TP/GL deferred due to lockdown. Collection of items for a Bring & Buy sale after lockdown. RK GL/TP/CM Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. Deferred due to lockdown restrictions. Quotation circulated.
17.5.18	Speeding through both villages – high viz vests	20 high viz vests, funded from Cllr Stringer's locality budget had been delivered.

20.9.18	Grit Bins: Replace small bin at A140 junction opposite primary school with larger bin Replace lost grit bin at A140/Church Lane junction with 350ltr bin	Deferred to 2021/22 Complete. Grit had been ordered via Suffolk CC reporting tool. Replacement Grit also requested for bins opposite Stoke hall and Village Hall, Stoke Ash.
May 2018	Bus Stop A140 opposite Walnut Tree PH -	Complete.
15/11/18	PIIP's - identify items of community expenditure from Cil award: Obtain stock fencing quotation for rear boundary of VH playing field Parishioners views on joint village hall or retain separate halls Stoke Ash Village Sign	GL -agenda item Deferred pending survey Agenda item
30.5.19	Monitor road edge - The Street, SA	All councillors. Monitoring extended to whole of both parishes.
18.7.19	Additional Play equipment & replacement play surface Additional tyres Bark chippings ROSPA inspection	Pursue grant funding with MSDC - Finance Group Agenda item MF Report received - low risk items to be monitored. PM to deal with molehills.
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 - Parishioners request for stickers to contact VL Put up Thwaite NW roadway signs Stoke Ash Holiday lets	VL RK Agenda item
16.1.20	Lunch Club Funding	Possible funding from MSDC - District Cllr Burn - GL
18.6.20	Local Government Transparency Code - ensure PC compliant	Current year policy documents to be added when adopted.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK - deferred due to covid
20.8.20	Stoke Ash Parish Notice Board repair	Replace Perspex - deferred to Spring. PM
17.12.20	Roman Way - parking on public grassed areas	MSDC looking at measures to prevent parking on green public spaces, this would involve developing a policy and enforcement of legal powers.
21.1.21	Church Lane - overgrown hedge. Damaged highway verges	Complete. AS looking into Weight Restriction/Unsuitable for HGV signs and protocol for diversions from A140 with County Highways
21.1.21	Litter picking	One family had carried out their own litter pick. A community litter pick would be considered following lifting of lockdown restrictions.
21.1.21	Car parking in front of garages at Roman Way	Residents to report direct to MSDC. Complete.
18.3.21	Parking on VH grass verge	The grass had been damaged due to workmen working nearby parking vehicles on the grass. MF had erected tape to fence off the area. The

		contractor had apologised for damage and would reinstate the grass – complete.
--	--	--

District Cllr Burn left the meeting.

6. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC

1. DC/21/00929: Thwaite Hall Barn, Wickham Road – application for listed building consent. Replacement of roof and garage doors. It was understood the roof contained asbestos. The following response was proposed, seconded and agreed: The Parish Council had no comment to make on the application but if granted adequate steps should be taken to protect neighbours and the environment from asbestos dust when the work was carried out.
2. DC/21/00788: The Walnut Tree, Norwich Road – erection of building for use as retail shop. A recommendation of full support was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

7. **Planning Decisions received from MSDC** –none.

8. **Planning correspondence** – none.

9. **Proposed Affordable Housing Scheme** – no report

10. Neighbourhood Watch report

Air B & B lettings. Following the reported lack of response from the police, Cllr Mrs Lane contacted PCC Tim Passmore. He was sympathetic to the concerns raised and had passed these to the Inspector at Halesworth. It appeared the original email raising the concerns had been sent to an out of date address. It had now been confirmed the police were investigating reports of holiday makers staying at the holiday lets. There had been no further reports from parishioners and very little evidence of anyone staying at the properties.

Neighbourhood Watch scheme – Cllr Kember was now in possession of window stickers and the signs for Thwaite. These would be erected shortly and all stickers had gone to parishioners, a further supply would be required. The Chairman thanked the Neighbourhood Watch group for progressing the scheme and Cllrs Tancred and Mrs Lane for pursuing the holiday let situation with the local police.

11. MSDC Cil Award:

1. Stoke Ash Village Sign. Cllr Tancred reported the sign was now complete and parishioners had expressed their approval. Cllr Pulham reported on an article on the sign in the parish magazine. The Chairman recorded thanks to Cllrs Tancred and Pulham, this was a welcomed feature for the village.

2. Additional Play Equipment – deferred

3. To consider quotation for fence on east boundary of Stoke Ash playing field

Cllr Leggett had obtained a quotation for livestock fencing using approximately 25 6ft posts. The quotation included widening the footpath on the southern boundary: labour £585.00, materials £257.36. The fence would be 1.2 metres high with two wire strands above the stock fencing. For work of this value it was noted financial regulations required the council to strive to obtain three quotations. Members believed the quotation obtained represented good value.

It was noted the footpath on the field adjoining the current hedge was at the edge of the field when it should be across the middle of field, currently cropped.

Cllr Fleming stated the Village Hall was in need of new waste bins. It was agreed item be included on next agenda as a Cil expenditure.

4. To consider additional items of expenditure from Cil funding:

Water supply to Thwaite allotments – deferred pending report from Allotment Group.

12. Thwaite Community Projects Group

1. Report on allotment review - deferred pending Allotment Group report

2. To consider quotation to transfer St George’s Hall insurance to CAS policy– deferred to next meeting.

3. Any other items for report

(1) The Projects Group lawn mower was in need of new blades and service. A cost of £150 has been estimated. The work was unanimously agreed. Cllr Pulham would action.

(2) Cllr Kember reported concerns of woodwork or death watch beetle in St George’s Hall. Cllr Pulham would obtain advice as to whether either was present in the woodwork.

13. Lunch Club – cancelled pending Government guidance

14. Stoke Ash Play and Exercise Area report

1. Play Area maintenance following ROSPA inspection – Inspection report to be re-circulated for discussion at the next meeting. If the Chairman was unable to dispose of the molehills, Cllr Pulham would obtain a quote for removal from a pest control contractor.
2. Installation of additional Tyres – upon re-consideration, due to the high maintenance required, it was agreed additional tyres would not be appropriate. The existing tyre would be retained. The Chairman would arrange cleaning and top-up of the surrounding surface.
3. To consider additional play equipment with PC contribution – deferred pending VH Comm Meeting.

15. Wash Lane maintenance report

1. Pipe and infill boundary ditch – the Chairman stated he was looking into a suitable design.
2. Removal of tree stumps and winter maintenance/strim – deferred to spring.

16. To consider arrangements for use of High Viz vests

Twenty vests had been delivered to Cllr Pulham. Cllr Leggett would hold the supply for Stoke Ash. Cllr Leggett would produce a flyer for the parish magazine informing parishioners of the pilot scheme, that wearing the vests was an attempt to slow down traffic through both villages, and that a limited number of vests would be available to regular dog walkers and pedestrians. Any parishioner interested in taking part in the scheme to contact Cllrs Pulham or Leggett.

17. To consider Parish Council support for Easter Quackers event

Cllr Tancred outlined arrangements for the event to take place on Easter Saturday afternoon 3 April: an Easter Egg hunt involving a short walk through Stoke Ash. Participants would be encouraged to wear an Easter bonnet and there would be a small quiz the prize being an Easter egg. Publicity would be arranged and parishioners from both villages would be encouraged to take part. Later in the afternoon a jeep would dispense an egg to each household with children in both villages. Cllr Tancred estimated expenses not exceeding £110 and asked the Parish Council to consider funding the event to that sum. Members agreed support of the event to that level. Cllr Tancred thanked Cllr Leggett for arranging the publicity paperwork.

18. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

A donation request had been received from Ipswich charity, Fresh Start. The request was declined at the present time.

2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
18/3/21	Polstead Press	20 High Viz Vests	£310.00	£62.00	£372.00	Agreed	100487
18/3/21	Clerk	Sal-expen Jan – March including Feb 2021	£570.40	-	£570.40	Agreed	100488
18/3/21	Clerk	Expenses Thwaite Comm Projects 2020-21	£165.68	-	£165.68	Agreed	100273

The above were proposed, seconded and agreed as follows:

Polstead Press - Cllrs Leggett and Kember; Clerk sale/exen Jan-March include Feb – Cllrs Tancred and Fleming; Clerk expenses Thwaite Comm Projects 2020-21 - Cllrs Leggett and Mrs C Maisey.

3. Finance Working Group report

1. To consider for approval Internal Financial Control document

The SALC revised model document had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Kember proposed adoption of the document, seconded Cllr R Maisey and agreed.

2. To confirm Asset Register to 31.3.21

The Register had been updated with the addition of 1 new grit bin and the 20 high viz vests. Cllr R Maisey proposed adoption of the asset register, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane and unanimously agreed.

3. To confirm adoption of website accessibility statement 2020/21. The Accessibility Statement had been prepared by the Onesuffolk Editor and uploaded to the website August 2020. Cllr Kember proposed adoption of the document, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane and unanimously agreed.

19. Clerk's report/correspondence

Police meeting for Eye Parishes – a date of 15 April 2021 at 10am via Teams had been agreed and Teams Link circulated.

Suffolk CC – notification that Deadman's Lane would be closure for repairs 22 – 25 March diversion via The Street, A140, Stoke Road and Stanwell Green.

20. Chairman's report – none.

21. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

VH Grant – Cllr Tancred had been approached by a parishioner enquiring as to expenditure of the VH covid grant monies from the Government. Cllr Fleming stated there had been no VH income over the last year. The grant money was being held until the VH Committee was able to meet to discuss use of the funding.

Local elections 6 May – Cllr Fleming reported the Hall would be open for the elections only on 6 May and would comply with covid regulations.

22. Date of next video link meeting: Thursday 15 April 2021

Meeting closed 9.52pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of action points

May 2019	PC vacancy	The Stoke Ash vacancy continued to be reported in the parish magazine.
17.5.18	Damaged road signs A140	Reported via Suffolk CC Highways website reporting tool. Action still pending.
23.11.17	Red telephone kiosk	GT to carry out maintenance spring 2021
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	Deferred pending record office move
18.1.18	Wash Lane maintenance: Bridge – return boundary to its original condition, ie piping and fill in ditch Remove tree stumps Winter Maintenance/strim. Collect dead wood & burn	PM PM PM & MF
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George’s Hall St George’s Bring & Buy Sale Review allotment boundaries and mark 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 GL/TP Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. Deferred due to lockdown restrictions.
18.3.21	Lawn mower maintenance	TP
18.3.21	St George’s Hall – check for woodworm	TP
17.5.18	Speeding through both villages – distribution of high viz vests to dog walkers/pedestrians and publicity	GL/TP
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 Village Hall	Deferred to 2021/22 LC
15/11/18	PIIP’s – identify items of community expenditure from Cil award. Parishioners views on joint village hall or retain separate halls New waste bins for village hall	Progress quote for stock fencing on rear boundary of Playing Field – GL Deferred pending survey Next agenda item
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 Bark chippings Annual Play inspection report	Pursue grant funding with MSDC – Finance Group PM MF Re-circulate report. Low risk items to be monitored. PM to deal with molehills.
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 – Parishioners request for stickers to contact VL Thwaite NW roadway signs	VL RK
16.1.20	Lunch Club Funding	Possible funding from MSDC – District Cllr Burn - GL
18.6.20	Local Government Transparency Code – ensure PC compliant	Current year policy documents to be added when adopted.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK – deferred due to covid
20.8.20	Stoke Ash Parish Notice Board repair	Replace Perspex – deferred to Spring. PM
17.12.20	Roman Way – parking on public grassed areas	MSDC looking at measures to prevent parking on green public spaces, this would involve developing a policy and enforcement of legal powers.
21.1.21	Damaged highway verges	AS looking into Weight Restriction/Unsuitable for HGV signs and protocol for diversions from A140 with County Highways
21.1.21	Comm Litter Pick to be considered following easing of lockdown restrictions	All councillors
18.3.21	Availability of High Viz Vests	GL and TP

County Councillor Report – March 2021

The Suffolk County Council Budget was voted through Full Council on February 11th. This year’s budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3 or 4 year agreement which is usually offered. Key points include:

- A council tax rise of 3.99% (1.99% basic council tax and 2% Social Care Precept), representing an increase of £53.55 for a Band D property, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to £1,397.16 in 2021-22.
- A council tax shortfall of £7.9m less than expected, to be met by using reserves.
- Planned spending is £597.9m, 7.4% more than 2021-21.
- £15.3m of spending to address ongoing COVID-19 costs.
- No proposed reductions in council services or personnel.

LDGI Group Budget Amendment

The LDGI Group submitted a Budget Amendment to Full Council on February 11th alongside the administration’s Budget. The amendment would have authorised the use of the full 3% social care precept to avoid impacting SCC’s reserves and generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household. The extra income would have provided funding for a wider service offer for Suffolk residents, including a new officer for the flooding team to unlock more government funding, and the re-enablement of concessionary bus passes on community transport. The amendment was not passed.

Suffolk & Norfolk County Council submit joint bid for £6m flood funding

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils have submitted a joint bid to the £200 fund for Flood and Coastal Resilience, requesting £6m to invest in flood protection schemes across both counties. The proposed projects would also capture water for reuse. If the bid is successful town and parish councils will be encouraged to get involved through measures like permeable paving, water butts and 'rain gardens' that can cope with occasional flooding. These projects would be in place by 2027 if the bid is approved.

Government's last-minute approach to local authority grants

Suffolk County Council will receive £27m for highways repairs, maintenance, and drainage in 2021-22, a reduction in from £31m the previous year. This has necessitated the use of £2m of reserves to top up the grant. In the view of my Group, these cuts in Government funding make it impossible to plan long-term for road maintenance and repair. Due to the uncertainty as to whether this grant would materialise at all, some vital work had already been postponed.

Going through the Motions

Motions to council are way any councillor can try to debate and change Council policy, the current administration changed the rules of this during this last term, and as this term ends it is a good time to reflect to see if the changes have worked. The new rules allowed for just one motion from each of the 3 groups to be allowed to have a time limited debate. When the new rules were debated, we felt it strange that the ruling administration would see the need to debate a change to policy when if they run the council, they can change it whenever they please.

We feared that motions from the administration would turn into a self-congratulatory talking shop. Our groups motion today focuses on setting up an opt in database of carers, as we have many unpaid carers on Suffolk who qualify for help but never ask. Or some that may need support and we are unaware. The Conservative administration has asked for this motion to be amended, our group have worked with them and we now have a motion that all sides can agree on.

The ruling administrations motion for today asks that we "applaud government for our freeport & town fund awards, it also thanks all our MPs" and the motion carries on to ask that we "call on the government and Highways England to ensure all preparations are carried out for the Copdock & Fiveways improvement works." and that we write to the secretary of state to re-affirm our support for improvements to the A14 junctions 37, 43, 44, 56-58.

This is hardly a change to our current policy!