

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held Thursday 20 May 2021 at 8pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.

Present: Cllrs P Morris, M Fleming, R Kember, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, D Maisey and T Pulham. County Cllr A Stringer and two members of the public

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Pulham proposed Cllr Morris was elected Chairman, seconded Cllr Kember. Cllr Morris indicated he would be willing to remain Chairman. The proposal was unanimously agreed.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs V Lane and G Tancred and District Cllr D Burn.

3. To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda – none.

4. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Mrs Maisey proposed Cllr Pulham was elected Vice Chairman, seconded Cllr Leggett. Cllr Pulham indicated he would be willing to remain Vice Chairman. The proposal was unanimously agreed.

5. PUBLIC FORUM: to receive the following reports:

Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>

County Council – County Cllr Stringer had presented his annual County report to the Annual Parish Meeting held earlier in the evening. Cllr Stringer added 15 Green councillors had been elected at the recent local elections. The group had now become the opposition group it being the second largest at County level. Cllr Stringer would be leading the group.

District Council – no report. Cllr Burn awaiting summary information from the Officer team.

Parishioners and Public

Parking on green verges - a member of the public requested an update on the issue of tape erected to cordon off sections of green verge in Roman Way due to damage from parked vehicles. He understood the tape would remain until the grass had recovered and those concerned ‘amended their ways’.

The Chairman stated the parish council was awaiting clarification of ownership of the green verges.

County Highways appeared to have been alerted and the Parish Council had been informed the verges were not to be obstructed.

The parishioner enquired as to action to be taken to encourage people to not park on the green verges and whether parishioners/carers could be asked not to park on the grass. The Chairman stated the Parish Council had no legal authority and action could not be taken until ownership was determined, this would be either in the ownership of MSDC or County Highways - MSDC had been asked for a map showing ownership of the verges. The Chairman added the Parish Council had previously been informed by MSDC that this was a district wide issue and in the long term they were looking at introducing a policy to cover the problem.

Items raised under Any Other Business at Parish Council meetings – the parishioner stated that items of expenditure could not be agreed by a council under AOB. Members noted the comments and thanked the parishioner for raising the item.

6. To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 23 April 2021

Cllr Pulham proposed approval of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Leggett and unanimously agreed.

7. 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	GT to repaint
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	Deferred pending record office move
18.1.18	Wash Lane maintenance: Bridge – fill and pipe ditch Remove tree stumps	PM Complete
17.5.18	Thwaite Comm Projects St George’s Hall St George’s Bring & Buy Sale Review allotment boundaries and mark pathways	Parishioners’ questionnaire on future of Hall – TP/GL deferred due to lockdown. Collection of items for a Bring & Buy sale after lockdown. RK Allotment Group

18.3.21 18.3.21 23.4.21	A future joint Community Hall Lawn mower service St George's Hall woodwork – obtain advice from pest controller Use of allotments – agreement not to cultivate. Sale of unused mower and purchase of strimmer	Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. Deferred due to lockdown restrictions. TP TP & GL TP to check arrangement with previous Project chairman. CM/DM
17.5.18 23.4.21	Speeding through both villages – Distribution of high viz vests to dog walkers/pedestrians and publicity Include availability of High Viz vests on village Facebook	TP/GL would continue to publicise availability of high viz vests to parishioners MF
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 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	Deferred to 2021/22 LC The PC and a parishioner objected due to the narrow stretch of road - single track. A grit bin at that site would obstruct large vehicles and involve pedestrians having to walk in the road.
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 New waste bins for village hall	GL – see agenda item Deferred pending survey Quotation for 3 bins – MF – see 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 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	Current year policy documents to be added when adopted.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	MF, GL, TP & RK – deferred due to covid
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. Awaiting response from MSDC. – see agenda item
21.1.21	Damaged highway verges	AS looking into Weight Restriction/Unsuitable for HGV signs and protocol for diversions from A140 with County Highways. Cllr Stringer reported he had received an unsatisfactory response from County Highways –

		the response stated Highways were unable to consider introducing restrictions at the moment. Awaiting further report from Cllr Stringer.
23.4.21	Parking in layby opposite tel kiosk, SA	GL to speak to landowner re. possibility of piping and infilling ditch to extend layby for parking – see agenda item

8. To confirm parish council working groups and representatives:

Planning – all councillors

Finance Working Group – Cllrs G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey and T Pulham

Thwaite Community Projects Group – Cllrs G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, D Maisey and T Pulham

Footpaths – Cllr T Pulham

Trees – Cllr P Morris

Website – Cllr G Tancred

Play Area, Stoke Ash – Cllr M Fleming

Emergency Planning – to be confirmed

Parish Plan – Cllr G Leggett

Lunch Club – Cllrs G Leggett and Mrs C Maisey

PIIP's – Cllrs T Pulham, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, D Maisey, Mrs V Lane and G Tancred

Wash Lane – Cllrs M Fleming, P Morris and T Pulham

To confirm RFO and Internal Auditor – the clerk to be appointed RFO and SALC appointed Internal Auditor

With the exception of Emergency Planning (to be agreed) Cllr Mrs Maisey proposed the above were appointed on block, seconded Cllr Pulham and unanimously agreed.

9. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC:

1. DC/21/02588: Thwaite Hall Barn, Wickham Road – replace roof and garage doors. Parish Council members agreed no comment regarding the replacement roof and garage doors but requested the asbestos material in the current roof was disposed of so as not to impact upon neighbours and the environment.

2. DC/21/01807: Cousins Barn, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – erection of one single storey dwelling (following demolition of existing structure). A recommendation of refusal was unanimously agreed on the following grounds:

The proposal was not sustainable and contrary to NPPF, para 79 – none of the objectives would be fulfilled.

The proposal would represent a new build in an isolated rural area outside the development boundary. There was no justification to set a precedent in this regard. There had never been a dwelling on the site, there had previously been an ancient barn (Cousins Barn) demolished many years ago and replaced by the current sheds which have no historic value.

It was likely that bats use the remaining current shed. The Parish Council requested that a thorough survey was carried out.

From the block plan it appeared the mature Oak Trees on the site would have to be substantially reduced or would be badly affected by the proposed development. These trees should be protected by a TPO as soon as possible.

In summary this was a rural site, unsuitable for development, would damage the current peaceful environment and did not satisfy MSDC planning policies.

3. DC/21/02447: Brookside, The Street, Stoke Ash – Outline Planning Permission (some matters reserved, access to be considered) Town & Country Planning Act 1990 – severance of garden and erection of one dwelling including creation of new vehicular access and works to ditch.

The following response was unanimously agreed: The Parish Council had no comment to make regarding the proposal but would draw attention to the already overloaded village sewerage and drainage system and recommended this was taken into consideration when determining the application.

9.05pm – One parishioner left the meeting

4. DC/21/02801 & Eastwick Farm, Clay Lane, Stoke Ash – erection of two storey extension

DC/21/02802 A Parish Council response of No Comment was proposed by Cllr Pulham, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey and unanimously agreed.

10. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/21/01589: Oak Cottage, 144 The Street, Stoke Ash – erection of one single storey disabled

friendly holiday let – **Planning Permission Refused**

2. DC/21/01590: Oak Cottage, 144 The Street, Stoke Ash – application for listed building consent – erection of one single storey disabled friendly holiday let – **Listed Building Consent Refused**

11. **Planning correspondence** - none

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

13. **Neighbourhood Watch report**

Cllr Kember reported there had been no crimes or suspicious activities reported over the last month. Newsletters from Suffolk NHW and the local police continue to be circulated. Cllr Mrs Lane was in the process of compiling an alert list of residents.

14. **MSDC Cil Award:**

1. Stoke Ash Village Hall playing field east boundary fencing – Cllr Leggett reported work would commence at the end of May.
2. Provision of additional Play Equipment – Stoke Ash. Deferred due to restrictions
3. To consider cost for three new waste bins at Stoke Ash VH Green
Cllr Fleming reported the cost of a standard waste bin ranged from £70.00 to £164.00. Members discussed a purpose made more attractive design, ie galvanized with a wooden surround. Cllr Fleming to look at further designs and costings.
4. To consider additional items of expenditure from Cil funding
Cllr Kember suggested two projects for Thwaite: clearance of the overgrown ditch in Church Lane and provision of a hardstanding next the Old School Room. Items to be included on the next agenda.

15. **Thwaite Community Projects Group**

1. Report on allotment review and mapping – Cllr Mrs Maisey reported further plots had been measured and marked. The Allotment Group were due to meet to discuss the review to date.
2. Report on St George's Hall woodwork – Cllr Pulham reported he and Cllr Leggett were due to speak to a pest control company in Bury St Edmunds to discuss the work required and cost. Cllr Pulham added the pews were in need of replacement. Conservation advice would need to be obtained for removal and any replacement.
3. Items for report
Mower - Cllr Mrs Maisey reported the Projects Group owned a defunct mower stored in St George's Hall for the last 10 years. It had been valued by a mower dealer at between £800 and £1,000. The dealer would be willing to sell the mower, his commission being £100.00. The Thwaite mowing team required a strimmer, the Projects Group therefore proposed the mower was sold and sale proceeds were used, or some of it, to purchase a strimmer. The proposal was unanimously agreed.
Thwaite Notice Board – A140 - It was reported the Thwaite Notice Board on the A140 had suffered damage during recent high winds and was irreparable. Cllr Maisey had made a new Notice Board in the same style. The meeting recorded its thanks to Cllr Maisey for his work, this had been much appreciated.

16. **Lunch Club** – cancelled pending Government guidance

17. **Stoke Ash Play and Exercise Area report**

The Chairman stated he was working on removal of the molehills.

18. **Wash Lane**

1. Report on proposed piping and infill of boundary ditch
A further discussion took place regarding the proposed piping and filling of the boundary ditch. There had been no issues with the ditch and suggested most people prefer open ditches. It was agreed the ditch would remain as it was for the present time.
2. Maintenance – The Chairman continued to strim the lane regularly to keep the grass down.

19. **Dog Fouling** – to consider request for dog waste bin between Roman Way & Huggins Farm

A dog waste bin would cost in the region of £150.00. Members agreed there was an issue with dog fouling in that area of the village. Following the request for a bin from a parishioner Cllr Fleming proposed providing an additional bin, seconded Cllr Maisey, 6 councillors in favour, 1 abstention, proposal carried. Purchase to be deferred until exact location had been agreed. A query was raised as to whether the bin could be purchased from Cil monies.

20. **Stoke Ash – highway parking and grass verges :**

1. The Street - to consider parishioner suggestion of a white line between the road edge and layby to mark layby area for car parking and to confirm ownership of adjoining ditch
This request had come about due to some parked vehicles in the layby encroaching on to the road not leaving enough room for the school bus and larger service vehicles to pass. Cllr Stringer stated

a solid white line would not be permissible but a dotted line would possibly be allowed. Highways would need to be asked whether a dotted line would be permissible and repair of the layby edge requested. Cllr Leggett was investigating ownership of the ditch including the possibility of piping and infilling.

Resident would be informed of parish council action.

2. Grass Verges at the Village Hall and Roman Way – to consider correspondence from Suffolk CC Highways regarding barrier tape

The tape had been removed from the area in front of the Roman Way garages. Item deferred pending response from MSDC regarding ownership of the verges.

21. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests – a newsletter and request for support from Parish Councils from the St Elizabeth Hospice. Members were unable to support this at the present time.
2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
20/5/21	MSDC	Waste & Dog bin emptying 2021-22	£217.45	£43.49	£260.94	Agreed	100492
20/5/21	Clerk	Sal-expen April - May 2021	£285.15	-	£285.15	Agreed	100493
20/5/2123 /4/21	E.on	Old School Room electricity Feb-April 2021	£63.44	-	£63.44	Agreed	100274

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

3. Finance report – Cllrs Mrs Maisey and D Maisey had arranged to meet an E.on engineer at the Old School Room early June to discuss the smart meter as it appeared readings were currently based on an estimated reading.

22. Clerk's report/correspondence - none

23. Chairman's report - none

24. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

Thatch fire in Thwaite – Cllr Stringer reported he would be expressing his concerns to the Suffolk Fire Commissioner over the recent response time to the thatch fire in Thwaite. Local stations Debenham and Eye appeared to be unavailable at the time. The first fire team arrived on the scene 21 minutes after reporting the fire and the second team 23 minutes. These timings did not provide the public with confidence.

25. Date of next meeting: Thursday 17 June 2021, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.

Meeting closed: 9.40pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of action points

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18.3.21	pathways A future joint Community Hall	Allotment Group Obtain Stoke Ash VH committee view. MF. Deferred due to lockdown restrictions.
18.3.21	Lawn mower service	TP
23.4.21	St George's Hall woodwork – obtain advice from pest controller	TP & GL
	Use of allotments – agreement not to cultivate. Sale of unused mower and purchase of strimmer	TP to check arrangement with previous Project chairman. CM/DM
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		with County Highways. Cllr Stringer reported he had received an unsatisfactory response from County Highways – the response stated Highways were unable to consider introducing restrictions at the moment. Awaiting further report from Cllr Stringer.
20.5.21	Parking in layby opposite tel kiosk, SA	GL to speak to landowner re. possibility of piping and infilling ditch to extend layby for parking. Provide white dotted line to delineate highway and laby – Suffolk Highways
20.5.21	Neighbourhood Watch – alert list of residents	VL
20.5.21	Dog Waste Bin – to agree site	Meeting 17.6.21

Suffolk County Council - Annual Parish Report 2020-21

During this most challenging of years, the LDGI Group have worked hard to continue holding Suffolk County Council's administration to account. We have adapted to the new way of working and the introduction of online council meetings and have been present at every Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council, representing the people of our divisions.

Suffolk County Council Budget 2021-22

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 key change proposed by the LDGI Group was to authorise the use of the full 3% social care precept, unlocking the maximum available funding without impacting SCC's reserves. This would generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household, freeing up general council tax funds to be spent on other projects and investments including:

- £700k for establishing a COVID-19 grant scheme for Suffolk charities and arts & culture venues.
- £500k for a solar energy scheme for Suffolk businesses.
- £500k to re-enable the use of concessionary bus passes on community transport and demand responsive transport across Suffolk.
- £15k for a citizen's assembly on how Suffolk can build back better while recovering from the pandemic.
- £75k to enable community reviews of highways signage in the local area.
- £50k to expand the flood management team to ensure SCC is applying for all flooding grants it is eligible for.
- A demand-scoping exercise on where demand is for bus routes, a priority list for where future routes need to be, and a feasibility study on establishing an SCC-owned bus company to serve rural areas if commercial bus companies cannot.

This budget amendment was not accepted by the administration.

Motions from the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group

My Group proposed three motions to Council in 2020-21:

- A call for the Council to publicly oppose EDF Energy's proposed Sizewell C development and retract any 'in principle' support for nuclear power.
- A 20mph scheme to reduce speed limits in all suitable residential areas from 30mph to 20mph, for a price of £4m. Communities would have been able to opt out.
- A biodiversity strategy motion.

The first two motions were rejected, although the Council backtracked on Sizewell C just two months later and now do not support the build. The biodiversity motion passed.

Biodiversity strategy adopted

At Full Council on the 3rd December, Suffolk County Council unanimously passed a motion that will see Suffolk County Council developing a biodiversity strategy and embracing biodiverse land management practices. The motion was proposed by the LDGI Group and supported by all other groups. The motion will ensure:

- Delivery of a biodiversity strategy that will set out how we could increase Suffolk's biodiversity, halt the loss of habitats and species, and reintroduce declining species in suitable locations.
- Assessment of how the council can lead organisations across the county in efforts to improve biodiversity.
- Adoption of biodiverse land management options on council land.
- A letter to the Secretary of State asking what further support can be made available to local authorities to enhance bio diversity within their areas.

Suffolk County Council decides to oppose Sizewell C

The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council agreed on 22 September that they can no longer support EDF Energy's proposals for Sizewell C in their current form. However, the Cabinet maintained their support for the principle of a new nuclear power station in Suffolk.

The Cabinet's key concerns were regarding transport impacts, site design and the environmental impact on the Suffolk coast. The Cabinet also believe that the current proposals do not sufficiently avoid, minimise, mitigate or compensate impacts of the proposed development.

These concerns will be submitted as Relevant Representations to the Planning Inspectorate.

Increase in social worker pay

In April 2020 Suffolk County Council agreed to increase the pay of children's social workers to match the remuneration offered by neighbouring councils, in order to attract and retain skilled social workers in Suffolk. It is estimated that the pay increase will cost £1.4m and will be funded from council reserves.

This policy was first proposed by the LDGI Group in as part of our budget amendment in February 2020. Both the Conservatives and Labour voted against this motion at the time.

Cabinet approves 5-year cycling plan for Suffolk

In June 2020 the Cabinet approved a 5-year cycling plan for Suffolk, which identified 148 potential routes to be prioritised. This is a result of a motion proposed by the LDGI group in July 2018, which called on the council to produce a strategic costed 5-year cycling plan.

Funding has not yet been secured for these routes, but the cycling plan will provide a strong basis to bid for funding as and when it becomes available.

The 148 routes identified by the plan are intended to be a starting point, rather than a fixed programme of works. The Cabinet's approval of the plan means that discussions can begin with district and borough councils on developing the five-year-plan further. If the parish council has known routes in the area it would like to see improved or created, please let me know and I can feed this into the process.

Climate emergency recommendations published

In July 2020, the Cabinet approved the recommendations of a cross-party policy development panel outlining how the council should respond to the climate emergency and reduce emissions. This followed a motion from the LDGI group in March 2019, which declared a climate emergency and committed the council to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Key recommendations include:

- All future decisions must take into account carbon emissions
- Annual publication of a carbon budget alongside the financial budget
- Publish a cross-council action plan by the end of 2020 for net zero emissions across Suffolk
- Changing to a 100% renewable energy tariff
- Replacing all pool cars and service vehicles with fully electric vehicles by 2025
- Develop an investment programme for renewable energy generation on the county farms estate
- For all existing council buildings (including maintained schools), switch away from oil, LPG and natural gas use by 2030 and invest in onsite renewable energy generation
- Provide advice for academies/free schools to develop their own net zero emissions plans

Changes to Children's Centres challenged

In August 2020, 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.

Concerned about the detrimental effect on families, particularly those in rural areas, the LDGI Group worked with the Labour group to collectively challenge the Cabinet's decision. Our challenge focused on concerns over the lack of financial analysis and the lack of clarity over the new outreach model.

The challenge was discussed by the Scrutiny Committee on 11 September. Unfortunately, the majority of the Committee voted against our challenge and endorsed the Cabinet's decision. This means that the planned changes to children's centres in Suffolk will go ahead.

I would like to thank all Parish Councillors and Clerk for all their work and patience through what has been a testing year

Andrew Stringer