

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held at The Forge, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath on the 4th December 2023.

Present: Councillors Peter Williams (Chair), Liz Eden (Vice Chair), Sue Abel, Paul Eden, Malcolm Gulliver, Jean Jackson, Alyson Jewson, Chris Jewson and Liz Miller.

In attendance: Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk).

171/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Dan Bright, Jill Howe, Paul Pittaway, Chris Cooke and D/Cllr David Nicholl.

The Chair then commented on the recent planning appeal in respect of the proposed houses on the site of Intall Fields Farm. He felt that the representation from Bromsgrove District Council was extremely poor and that the Highways Authority had been advised that they were not required to attend the hearing. In his view the Parish had been severely let down by the local authority.

172/23 Declarations of Interest

173/23 Requests for Dispensation

None.

174/23 Adjournment of Meeting for Public Question Time

(1)Members of the Public

(2)County Councillor Kyle Daisley

(3)District Councillors David Nicholl and Harrison Rone-Clarke

There were no members of the public or County and District Councillors present.

175/23 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 6 November 2023

Under Minute 169/23, Chris Jewson pointed out that the reference to Woodgate Road should read Moorgate Road. It was agreed to amend the minutes accordingly.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6 November 2023, as amended, were approved and signed by the Chair.

176/23 Refurbishment of Shaw Lane Recreation Area

The Chair reported that the local residents had submitted a revised layout but seemed in agreement with the proposed number of play equipment items. He proposed to send the residents' layout to Wicksteed to get their view on whether it met the requirement safety requirements. Once that information had been received he felt that the Parish Council should go ahead and place the order. This was agreed.

17723 Planning Applications

1) 23/00894/FUL - Appletrees, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior - Proposed Detached Garage

The Clerk reminded the Parish Council that he had submitted a complaint to the District Council's Enforcement Officer regarding the construction of the garage without prior planning permission. Subsequently a planning application appeared to have been submitted but it did not refer to a retrospective application. The Parish Council were opposed to this application and asked the Clerk to ascertain why this was not being treated as retrospective given that the garage had already

been built.

2) 23/00898/FUL - Land to the East of Appletrees, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior - Proposed Two Detached Dwellings

The Parish Council considered this application and unanimously agreed to strongly oppose it. They had previously opposed the development of the three existing properties on the grounds that that proposal was located within the green belt and therefore this new application fell into the same category. Whereas the previous application was based on using the existing footprint, that argument could not be used in this latest application.

178/23 Urgent Decisions taken since the Council's last meeting

The Chair commented that he had been aware that some people attending last year's Carols in the Park had complained that the sound quality was not very good. He had therefore looked at the Parish Council purchasing its own sound system at a cost of £150. The Parish Council fully supported the purchase of this equipment.

With regard to this year's event, several Councillors offered to help on the day together with Ian Gerard. In addition Dan Bright would be providing the majority of the catering on the evening.

179/23 Finance

(1) Invoices for Payment for October 2023

The payments totalling £4,223.20 were unanimously agreed as follows:-

	Cost £	Method
Direct Debits Payment		
<i>Cartridge World – Copier Rental</i>	23.79	-
Sub total	23.79	-
Payments made since the last Parish Council Meeting		
Christmas World (2 orders)	176.47	Online
Reynolds Xmas	450.00,	"
Clerk's net salary for November 2023	XXXX	"
Sub total	1895.96	-
Cheques/Payments to be authorised at the Parish Council Meeting		
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax/NI on Clerks salary – November 2023	431.79	Chq No.1221
Clerk's Expenses & other Parish Council Expenditure for November 2023	120.71	Online
Bromsgrove Printing	66.00,	"
Avoncroft Arts Society	96.75	"
Bullivant Media Group Ltd	180.00,	"
IDG Garden Services	726.00,	"
Chris Cooke	682.20,	-
Sub Total	2303.45	-
Total Value of Payments for November 2023	4223.20,	-

(2) Financial Management Statement for November 2023

The Parish Council noted the report.

180/23 Film Night 2024

It was unanimously agreed that the next Film Night should be held on Saturday 31 August 2024. Details of the film to be shown to be agreed at a later date.

181/23 Parish Lengthsman's Report

On behalf of Chris Cooke, the Clerk reported the following points:-

Problems continue with Bromsgrove District Council regarding the collection of rubbish, dealing with plasterboard dumped in the lay-by at Harbours Hill, lack of a camera in that same lay-by and the lack of road/path sweeping along Hanbury Road.

The Chair confirmed that he had asked the Clerk to arrange a meeting with senior officers at the District Council to discuss the Parish Council's concerns about a number of issues including those referred to above.

Problems with Worcestershire Highways regarding gullies still not being cleared as requested, HGV signage re low bridges still outstanding, the flashing height sign at Avoncroft not working properly and a number of items of work which had been identified still remaining undone.

182/23 Correspondence

The Clerk reported the following items of correspondence:-

1. Cllr Kyle Daisley was making good progress in getting the County Council to replace the stiles on the John Corbett Trail replaced with kissing gates.
2. The Planning Inspector had allowed an appeal by the owner of Sugarbrook Nurseries in Stoke Pound to be granted a Certificate of Lawful Use.
3. Worcestershire County Council was looking to reintroduce the Parish Tree Warden Scheme and the Parish Council had been invited to nominate a Warden. Chris Jewson expressed an interest in taking on this role alongside his role as Footpaths Warden. The Clerk agreed to find out some more information about the role.
4. Bromsgrove District Council had notified the Parish Council about the Community Infrastructure Grant and the Clerk explained that the Council would be eligible to apply for a grant under the Green and Blue Spaces section of the process for the possible refurbishment of the play area at Stoke Heath Recreation Area. It was agreed that the Clerk should start to draw up an application and report on progress to the Council's next meeting.
5. Two flower boxes required replacement and the options were to replace with new wooden boxes at a cost of £75 each or recycled plastic at the cost of £165. It was felt that the recycled plastic ones would last longer so it was agreed to purchase two of these.

183/23 Parish Clerk - Administration Items

The Clerk reported that the national pay award for 2023/24 had been agreed and took effect from the 1 April 2023 giving a £1.00 per hour increase across the board. The Parish Council noted that they were committed to this increase under the terms of the Clerk's contract.

The Clerk also reported that the Council's laptop was now over 7 years old and was in need of replacement. After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should purchase a new laptop at a cost in the region of £500.

184/23 Councillors Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

Paul Eden reported that one of the top rails on the fence at Stoke Heath Recreation Area was broken and the Clerk confirmed that he would get Ian Gerard to repair it.

185/23 Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the Parish Council's next meeting would be held on Monday 8 January 2024 commencing at 7.30pm at The Forge, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Chairman