

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held in The Hall Annexe at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath on the 7th December 2015.

Present: Councillors Peter Williams (Chairman), John Ellis (Vice Chairman), Diane Brown, Paul Eden, Jill Howe, Keith Shakespeare and Dean Smith.

In attendance: Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk), D/Cllr Mike Thompson, Chris Cooke (Parish Lengthsman) plus 7 members of the public.

Public Question Time: There were no questions to be considered.

173/15 Apologies

Apologies were accepted from Sue Abel and D/Cllr Malcolm Glass.

174/15 Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensation

None.

175/15 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 2 November 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on the 2 November 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

176/15 Urgent Decisions since the Council's last Meeting

None.

177/15 District and County Councillors' Reports

D/Cllr Mike Thompson commented on the following issues affecting the parish:-

- Discussions were ongoing with the District Council to get a hawthorn hedge installed at the junction of Wheatridge Road and Austin Road.
- Having confirmed that the speed warning sign would be installed in Austin Road in the near future, he agreed to discuss the possibility of double yellow lines being installed on the dangerous bend in Austin Road.
- The planning applications relating to the development of the former Polymer Latex site in Stoke Works and the proposed new leisure centre in Bromsgrove were due to be discussed by the District Council's Planning Committee that evening.

178/15 Finance

(1) Invoices for Payment

It was unanimously agreed to approve the payments as set out on the list circulated at the meeting.

(2) Financial Position Statement for November 2015

This was noted.

(3) Draft Illustrative Budget for 2016/17

The Clerk explained that this budget was purely for information at this stage and a more detailed budget would be made available for the Parish Council's February 2016 meeting when they would be asked to approve the budget and precept for 2016/17. However in the meantime, if any Councillor wanted clarification on any of the items in the draft budget, the Clerk would be happy to discuss those with them.

179/15 Progress Reports by the Chairman and the Clerk

The Chairman reported that the Remembrance Service at Hanbury Church went very well and that the Christmas tree at Stoke Heath Recreation Area had now been installed.

The Clerk then referred to the following issues:-

Request from St Michael's Church – The Clerk reported on a meeting he had had with representatives of the Parochial Church Council regarding the possibility of the Parish Council assisting with the cost of the maintenance of the churchyard in the next financial year. He added that he would look at the costs involved and bring a proposal to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

Stoke Wharf Picnic Site – The Clerk reported that the handrail on the footpath leading down to the site was unsafe and, in the interests of health and safety, should be repaired as soon as possible. The cost of the work would be in the region of £200. The Council agreed unanimously that this work should be carried out.

Fence at Stoke Heath Recreation Area – The Clerk stated that a large part of the wooden fence along the A38 was in need of repair. The cost of the work would be in the region of £400. He added that the Parish Council had the option of carrying out running repairs now and review the situation in the spring or replace the fencing now. The Parish Council agreed to take the former option.

Ryefields Road Recreation Area – The Clerk reported that there had been an increasing number of incidents of the recreation area being used for dog walking and dog mess being left on the site and he suggested that appropriate signage should be installed. John Ellis suggested and it was agreed that one of the signs from the Stoke Heath Recreation Area should be moved to this site.

180/15 Ryefields Road Recreation Area – Social Facility

The Clerk explained that he had been having discussions with Diane Brown about the possibility of a social club or sports hall being built on this site. He was now seeking the Parish Council's agreement to investigate whether such a project on this site was feasible. After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should look into this proposed project in detail and report back to them at a future meeting.

181/15 Arrangements for Christmas Decorations Competition

After discussion, it was agreed that Keith Shakespeare, Dean Smith, Alyson Jewson and Jill Howe should tour the parish on an agreed evening to judge the best outdoor Christmas lights in Stoke Heath and Stoke Prior with the prize of a gift voucher for a meal at the Ewe and Lamb being given for the best display in each area. The Clerk was asked to arrange for the vouchers to be available at the next parish Council meeting when they would be awarded to the winners.

182/15 Parish Fete 2016

Keith Shakespeare and the Clerk explained that they had reviewed the possibility of hiring a marquee which would cost in the region of £1,000. They had also enquired about the possibility of hiring the main hall at Avoncroft Arts Society which would be the ideal venue for a craft fair as part of the fete. This option was likely to cost around £175. The Parish Council confirmed that they supported the option of hiring the main hall.

The Chairman asked all Councillors to help support the work needed to set up the fete and to put any ideas for new events etc to the Clerk. Councillors would then decide with events they wished to go ahead with.

183/15 Dates of Meetings 2016/17

The Clerk suggested that the January 2016 meeting of the Parish Council should be moved back to Monday 11 January with the Planning Committee meeting on Monday 18 January. The Council then agreed the programme of meetings with the aforementioned amendment.

184/15 Project Updates

Diane Brown reported that so far two areas of land had been identified as possible site within the parish for development for social housing. It was now proposed to discuss those sites with the District Council's Planning Officers to see whether they might be suitable.

185/15 Diary Commitments

John Ellis and Diane Brown confirmed that they would be attending the CALC meeting on Wednesday 9 December 2015.

186/15 Correspondence

The Clerk reported that he had been notified by Avoncroft Arts Society that there would be no change in the cost of hiring the Annexe in 2016.

187/15 Councillors' Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

The following items were raised:-

- John Ellis reported that, together with Sue Abel and the Clerk, he had met with the District Council's Head of Planning to discuss the District Council's decision to grant planning permission for the development of a piece of land in Foley Gardens which had caused a lot of concern and anger amongst the local residents. There were particularly concerns about a very old oak tree on the site which residents believed was the subject of a tree preservation order.
- Diane Brown stated that she understood that Wychavon District Council were now fining local supermarkets for trolleys which were left on the highway etc. The Clerk was asked to enquire whether Bromsgrove District Council had a similar policy.
- Alyson Jewson produced photographs of the litter problem on the footpath at the rear of the Morrisons Superstore which was becoming a serious problem. The Clerk agreed to raise this problem with the District Council.
- Keith Shakespeare reported that he had attended a meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee and that there were still problems with the structure of the building caused by a leaking underground water pipe.

- Jill Howe asked that the possibility of the Parish Council making a donation to the St Michael's Church Tower Fund be included on the agenda for a future meeting of the Council.
- Paul Eden reported that the graffiti had reappeared on the railway bridge in Shaw Lane. The Clerk agreed to contact the District Council to get it removed.

188/15 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the Parish Council's next meeting would be held on Monday 11 January 2016 commencing at 7.30pm at the Hall Annexe, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Chairman