

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held in The Hall Annexe at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath on the 4th April 2016.

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

In attendance: D/Cllr Mike Thompson and Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk).

Public Question Time:

No members of the public were in attendance.

047/16 Apologies

An apology was accepted from C/Cllr Chris Bloore.

048/16 Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensation

None.

049/16 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7 March 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 March 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

050/16 Urgent Decisions since the Council's last Meeting

None.

051/16 District and County Councillors' Reports

D/Cllr Mike Thompson read out a report from C/Cllr Chris Bloore which included the following points:-

- After a series of frustrating delays, BDHT are now developing the new SHAC with a launch party set for two weeks' time. Arrangements had been for users to visit the building and discuss the proposed layout. Funding had been secured for the Users Group to welcome new members with a full users experience including enhanced bingo prizes and a fully subsidised trip away. SHAC users intend to hold a meeting before the opening with the support of Ashlea Green from BDHT to form an official committee again. Parish Councillors would be welcome to visit the site.
- At the request of D/Cllr Glass, the County Council had been asked to undertake a review of existing traffic orders and signage in and around Foley Gardens. As the Parish Council were aware, properties in this area had been damaged by HGVs using it to turn around. New signage would be put up in the forthcoming weeks to further warn drivers and positive signage directing them down Stoke Pound Lane is being considered. It had been noted that many of the lorries turning around in Foley Gardens had missed the turn for Stoke Pound Lane. This was recent news and he intended to liaise with D/Cllr Glass on this point.
- With regard to the closure of the M5 for major works, Highways England had carte blanche to close any motorway without the input of any local representatives. With the

help of local residents, a petition to the Secretary of State for Local Government and the Secretary of State for Transport had been launched to try and halt the six lane closures on the M5. It was a cross party and well supported petition and he would forward copies to the Clerk in case any Parish Councillors wanted to help collect signatures.

- He was disappointed to say that all efforts to save the Sports Hall in Bromsgrove had so far failed despite the support of several residents from the parish.
- With regard to the tragic death of a local cyclist on the B4091, a police investigation was currently underway and it was too soon to make any comments. A speed review was already underway on sections of the B4091 but it was not clear whether this accident occurred in one of those areas. He was in touch with the police and the County Council and would keep the Chairman and the Clerk up-to-date with any developments. His thoughts were with the victim's family and friends.

D/Cllr Thompson added that he was trying to resolve a problem with overhanging trees in Wheatridge Road and Coopers Close. In addition, he was aware that dog fouling was a growing problem in the Stoke Heath area and he would try and get the District Council to install additional litter bins.

052/16 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

This was noted.

053/16 Grants Policy

After the Clerk had presented the proposed policy and several Councillors had commented on the need for such a policy, the Chairman, seconded by Keith Shakespeare, moved and it was resolved by 8 votes to 1 to adopt the Grants Policy.

054/16 Progress Reports by the Chairman and the Clerk

The Clerk reported that the picket fence around the children's play area at Stoke Heath Recreation Area and one of the pieces of equipment had been vandalised. The best option would be to repair the picket fence but also to install wire netting over the fence to give added protection. He also reminded the Council that he had reported to a previous meeting that part of the perimeter fence needed to be replaced. In addition there were also two further areas of fencing which needed to be replaced as the timbers had rotted away. He suggested that the work should be carried out by IDG Garden Services and that the cost could be met from the budget set aside for the refurbishment of the Stoke Wharf Picnic Site. He was confident that both projects could be completed within the overall budget for the Picnic Site.

The Parish Council agreed that the necessary repair and maintenance work at Stoke Heath Recreation Area should go ahead as soon as possible.

The Chairman reported that he had received representations from parishioners regarding the speed limit on the B4091 which they felt should be reduced to 30mph rather than alternating between 30 and 40 mph. After discussion, the Parish Council agreed that there was a strong case to reduce the speed limit to 30mph and asked the Clerk to write to C/Cllr Chris

Bloore, Worcestershire County Council and West Mercia Police urging them to give this proposal serious consideration.

055/16 Parish Fete 2016 Update

During the discussion on the arrangements for the fete, the following issues were agreed and/or noted:-

- The evening dance and the craft fair had been cancelled.
- The guide dogs would not be attending.
- The proposed marching band needed to be confirmed.
- Six display cars would be on site from Arbury Motors and they would also be making a financial contribution.
- Red Barn had agreed to have an advertising banner and would be making a £100 donation.
- Dean Smith was organising a Miss Bromsgrove and a Mr Bromsgrove competition.
- John Ellis would be supplying cakes for the tea stall
- A Kings and Queens competition would be organised for the children.
- It was agreed that a meeting of all those helping with the Fete should be held two weeks before the event.

056/16 Project Updates

The Clerk reported that the new flooring at the Shaw Lane Recreation Area should be installed in the next few weeks.

057/16 Agenda for Annual General Meeting/Parish Assembly

The Clerk suggested that the Council's Annual General Meeting on the 11 May should commence at 7.00pm immediately followed by the Parish Assembly at 7.45pm. The agenda for the first meeting would be a slightly shortened version of the normal monthly agenda and the agenda for the Assembly would include reports from the Chairman, the local County and District Councillors and local organisations. There would also be an opportunity for a public open session. This was agreed.

058/16 Diary Commitments

None.

Keith Shakespeare commented that he had been in conversation with Droitwich Town Council who had offered the Parish Council a free stand at the Salt Fest in September to promote the John Corbett Trail. Further details would be sent to the Clerk.

059/16 Correspondence

The Clerk reported that he had received a request from Bromsgrove & Redditch Citizens Advice requesting a grant from the Parish Council. It was agreed that this request should be considered at the next meeting on the 11 May 2016.

060/16 Councillors' Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

The following items were raised:-

- John Ellis stated that the plaques for the Memorial Garden had been delivered but he was unhappy with the quality and style. He was under the impression that they would be engraved. The Clerk was asked to check the details on the quote provided by the company before deciding what action to take.
- John Ellis commented that it had been the Council's practice in the past to give a grant to Age UK but he understood that the Bromsgrove branch had amalgamated with the Kidderminster and Redditch branches. However they had introduced a scheme called 'Men in Sheds' which was a means of getting older people involved with small jobs in their community as part of a local project. He agreed to get more details in time for the Council's next meeting.

061/16 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the Parish Council's next meeting would be the Annual General Meeting and Parish Assembly which would be held on Wednesday 11 May 2016 commencing at 7.00pm at Stoke Prior Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Chairman