

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held in The Hall Annexe at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath on the 4th March 2019.

Present: Councillors Peter Williams (Chairman), John Ellis (Vice Chairman), Sue Abel, Jill Howe, Alyson Jewson, Chris Jewson, Liz Miller, Penny Power, Keith Shakespeare and Dean Smith.

In attendance: Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk), Stan Petrovic (Assistant Clerk), Chris Cooke (Parish Lengthsman), Ian Gerrard (Parish Groundsman) and 4 members of the public.

032/19 Apologies

An apology was received from Diane Brown.

033/19 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman and Alyson Jewson declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 8.

034/19 Requests for Dispensation

None.

035/19 Adjournment of Meeting for Public Question Time

1) Members of the Public

A member of the public commented on the lack of progress regarding the planning application for the proposed barn in Woodgate Road, Stoke Prior.

2) County Councillor Chris Bloore and District Councillors Malcolm Glass and Mike Thompson

There were no County and District Councillors present.

036/19 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 4 February 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4 February 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

037/19 Urgent Decisions taken since the Council's last meeting

None.

038/19 Planning Applications

- 1) 17/00846/FUL – Rowhouse Farm, Moorgate Road, Bromsgrove – Extension to ancillary living accommodation and replacement windows.**
- 2) 19/00059/FUL – Foalsdon Barn, Whitford Bridge Road, Stoke Prior – Proposed extension to dwelling.**

The Parish Council agreed to support both applications.

039/19 Finance

(1) Invoices for Payment – February 2019

It was unanimously agreed to approve the list of payments circulated at the meeting.

(2) Financial Management Statement for February 2019

This was noted.

040/19 Smartwater

John Ellis reported that Cty Cllr Chris Bloore had agreed to give a grant of £1,500 towards the project and he was very hopeful that the Stoke Heath Neighbourhood Watch Group would match that sum. The Chairman thanked him for his efforts.

After discussion, it was agreed that the matter should be considered further at the April meeting of the Council.

041/19 Parish Lengthsman Contract

The Clerk reported that he had only received 1 application for the contract and that was from the current Parish Lengthsman, Chris Cooke. He suggested that, in the circumstances, a 2 year contract be offered to Chris Cooke effective from the 1 April 2019 and that the hourly rate should be increased to £12 per hour. He also suggested that the Parish Council review the contract in March 2021 with a view to extending it for a further 2 years.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to appoint Chris Cooke as Parish Lengthsman on the terms as set out above.

042/19 Project Updates by Chairman and Clerk

The Chairman confirmed that the Film Night would be going ahead on Saturday 31 August 2019 and he would be looking for suggestions regarding a suitable film.

John Ellis commented that he understood that the Tai Chi classes would take place again this summer and it was also proposed to hold 'Fitness in the Park' during the summer.

The Clerk reported that the mound in the children's play area at Stoke Heath Recreation Area was in very poor condition and was in need of some remedial work. In order to do this it would be necessary to hire fencing to secure the site while the work was being undertaken. Several Councillors commented on whether this was the correct course of action and the Chairman agreed to look at possible options before any work was carried out.

043/19 Diary Commitments

The Clerk reminded the Council that the next Area CALC meeting would take place on the 13 March 2019. He added that this meeting would include a briefing on the forthcoming Parish Council elections and was open to all Councillors and anyone else interested in standing for election.

044/19 Correspondence

None.

045/19 Councillors' Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

John Ellis commented that there appeared to be a general consensus amongst local residents along the A38 Redditch Road that increasing the speed limit to 40mph would actually increase the likelihood of more drivers being caught speeding.

John Ellis also commented that the direction signs for the Aluminium Can Recycling site around the parish should be removed as the site no longer exists. Chris Cooke agreed to raise the matter with County Highways

Jill Howe stated that the parking problems along Westonhall Road were getting worse. The Chairman replied that the Site Manager at Barratts was aware of the problem and hopefully the situation would improve when the access roads were opened up and his contractors could park there. He agreed that the problem needed to be kept under review

Chris Jewson commented that he had been approached by 'Keep Bromsgrove Beautiful' to see whether there was any interest in organising monthly litter picks in the area. A general discussion ensued during which concerns were expressed regarding individuals being keen to co-ordinate the project, safety issues and insurance cover. Chris Jewson agreed to talk to the organisers of the scheme and report back with further information.

Sue Abel stated that the John Corbett Information Boards needed cleaning. The Clerk confirmed that this was already in hand.

Sue Abel commented that the access road alongside the Shaw Lane Recreation Area was in a very poor condition and asked if the Council could look at purchasing some brick dust or similar product to fill in the potholes etc.

Sue Abel reported that she had received complaints about the noise levels from the Metal & Ores site particularly in relation to the car crushing activities. The Clerk agreed to refer the matter to Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

The Clerk added that he had received a number of complaints regarding the condition of the footpath along the Hanbury Road from the Church down to the Navigation Inn. The matter had now been referred to County Highways for action.

046/19 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Members of the press and public were excluded from the meeting to allow confidential discussions to take place under Agenda item 16.

047/19 Clerk's and Assistant Clerk's National Pay Increase

The Clerk reported that the hourly rates of pay for himself and the Assistant Clerk had been increased under a National Salary Award with effect from the 1 April 2019. The Parish Council agreed unanimously to implement the new pay rates.

Date of Next Meeting - Monday 1 April 2019 commencing at 7.30pm at the Hall Annexe, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chairman

