

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held in The Hall Annexe at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath on the 13th January 2020.

Present: Councillors Peter Williams (Chairman), Sue Abel, Alan Bayliss, Diane Brown, Liz Eden, Jean Jackson, Alyson Jewson, Chris Jewson, Liz Miller and Rory Shannon.

In attendance: Chris Cooke (Parish Lengthsman).

001/20 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors John Ellis and Jill Howe and D/Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke.

002/20 Declarations of Interest

003/20 Requests for Dispensation

None.

004/20 Adjournment of Meeting for Public Question Time

1) Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

Chris Cooke (Parish Lengthsman) reported the following:-

- The Clerk had been asked to write to Avoncroft Cricket Club regarding the rubbish left on the edge of the cricket ground.
- Daytime parking in the lay-by on the Hanbury Road still remained a problem although the situation with the lay-by on the A38 had improved.
- Refurbishment of the bus shelters – quotes for the rendering and paint materials were being sought and it was hoped to report back at the next meeting.
- The pipe on the Stoke Heath play area had been replaced and the surround had been reseeded. The area would remain fenced off to enable the grass to grow over the coming weeks.
- He was not getting any support from the County Highways regarding the clearing of ditches and had now started clearing some by hand. It would be necessary to hire a digger to clear the more difficult ditches. There was also a problem of how to dispose of the silt from the ditches as it was toxic waste. The Clerk would look at recovering some or all of the cost of the digger from County Highways and would also talk with Cty/Cllr Daisley about this problem.
- He had requested County Highways to allow him to attend a 'Stop & Go' sign training course to enable him to carry out traffic management without requiring support from County Highways.
- The Parish Council would need to purchase more vergemaster bollards and again try to recover the cost from County Highways.
- Policing in the area was about to change with a new Police Officer, PC Paul Downes shortly to take up his duties. It was PC Downes intention to attend Parish Council meetings whenever possible.
- He reported that prior to Christmas the latest litter pick had resulted in over 50 bags of rubbish being recovered.
- The hedges outside the Severn Trent site on Sugarbrook Lane and along Bunstford Hill

needed urgent attention before the nesting season started. The Clerk to follow this up.

2) County Councillor Kyle Daisley

3) District Councillors Malcolm Glass and Harrison Rone-Clarke

The Councillors were unable to be present due to other commitments. Rory Shannon commented on behalf of D/Cllr Rone-Clarke that he had been working with the local police to make the Wheatridge Road area safer and that there had been some recent arrests.

005/20 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 2 December 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 2 December 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

006/20 Urgent Decisions taken since the Council's last meeting

The Chairman reported that he had received a request from the Police and Crime Commissioner for the parish to host a rural crime prevention event on the 23rd January 2020. The event would be held at the Parish Hall between 6pm and 8pm that evening and he felt that it would be a good opportunity to hand out the Smartwater kits but it would need 1 or 2 Councillors to on hand to do this. Volunteers were requested.

007/20 Finance

(1) Invoices for Payment – December 2019

The new payments totalling £3,786.21 were agreed unanimously as follows:-

Direct Debits

Cartridge World	S/O	£23.79
Talk Talk	S/O	£32.34

Cheques issued since last Parish Council Meeting

Clerk's net December salary	chq 1085	£XXXX
Asst Clerk's net December salary	chq 1086	£XXXX
HMRC	chq 1087	£509.78
Clerk's expenses & other Parish		
Council Expenditure	chq 1088	£123.93
Malvern Art Products Ltd	chq 1089	£237.60
Jon Miller	chq 1090	£70.00
Stoke Prior PCC	chq 1091	£75.00
Parish Lengthsman	chq 1092	£697.80

Cheques to be signed at Parish Council Meeting

John Ellis	chq 1093	£52.10
Parish Lengthsman	chq 1094	£437.28
IDG Garden Services	chq 1095	£247.50
Information Commissioner	chq 1096	£40.00

(2) Financial Management Statement for December 2019

This was noted.

008/20 Budget and Precept for 2020/21

The Clerk presented the report setting out the proposed budget for 2020/21 and the options for the precept in 2020/21. He pointed out that it had been some years since the precept had been raised and that the level of reserves held by the Parish Council was falling given the financial support given to project such as Smartwater. The Parish Council then

discussed the options for 2020/21 following which the Chairman, seconded by Rory Shannon, proposed:-

That the Parish Council –

- (i) approves the proposed budget for 2020/21 as set out in the Clerk's report.
- (ii) approves a precept for 2020/21 of £53,097.00.

Sue Abel, seconded by Alyson Jewson, proposed:-

That the Parish Council –

- (iii) approves the proposed budget for 2020/21 as set out in the Clerk's report.
- (iv) approves a precept for 2019/20 of £55,752.00.

On being put to a vote, 5 members voted for the first option and 5 for the second option. The Chairman then used his casting vote in favour of the first proposal.

The Council then confirmed that they approved the budget for 2020/21 and that the level of precept would be set at £53,097.00.

009/20 Smartwater Update

The Clerk confirmed that he would be setting up a meeting with Tim Williams from West Mercia Police to discuss the options for distributing the remaining kits. The Chairman added that the Council needed to get some options in place to redistribute the kits in the spring. It was agreed to look at options such as a letter drop to individual houses and using the Church and the Parish Office as a distribution points. It was also agreed to liaise with the new Police Officer for the parish when he took up his duties.

010/20 Natural Habitats

Chris Jewson explained that he had been made aware of a scheme in Worcestershire offering grants and advice to projects aimed at creating or restoring wildlife-rich habitats. With that in mind he put forward a possible project in conjunction with Avoncroft Museum to develop the so-called wildflower meadow on that site. After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should discuss this proposal informally with the Chair of Avoncroft Trustees to see whether they would be interested in such a project and report back to the Council.

011/20 Revised Financial Regulations

It was then unanimously agreed to adopt the revised Financial Regulations.

012/20 Revised Code of Conduct for Members

It was then unanimously agreed to adopt the revised Code of Conduct for Members.

013/20 Diary Commitments

None.

014/20 Correspondence

The Clerk reported the following items:-

- The winners of the Christmas Lights Competition 2019 were 10 Dark Lane, Stoke Heath

and 46a Foley Gardens for Stoke Prior.

- The proposed Parish Council training event due to be run by the District Council had been postponed until late February 2020 to allow officers to provide an update on the Bromsgrove District Plan review.
- Ian Gerard (IDG Garden Services) had produced a new design of flower box which would be more distinctive than the current ones. Each new box would cost £230 inclusive of planting and compost. During discussion it was agreed that the box on the Hanbury Road by the Stoke Prior sign should be replaced. It was also agreed that sites within Stoke Heath should be looked at.
- The Parish Council had been approached by the District Council to see whether they were interested in taking over the children's play area in Heath Close. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be interested in principle but asked the Clerk to seek further information and to report back to the Parish Council.

015/20 Councillors' Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

Liz Eden reported that the residents of Greenway had received a letter from West Mercia Police regarding incidents of vehicle crime in that immediate area.

Chris Jewson reported that a crime gang was operating in Stoke Heath stealing cars from driveways. He suggested that everyone should be vigilant and report any concerns to the police.

Sue Abel asked whether there had been any progress with the District Council planners regarding the latest development on the Metal & Ores site. The Clerk confirmed that he would request a progress report from the officers.

Sue Abel questioned whether TFM in Brickhouse Lane required planning permission to tarmac the car park at the front of their trade building. The Clerk agreed to take this up with the District Council planners.

Rory Shannon reported that, together with D/Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke, he was looking at bus routes in the area particularly those which had been affected by cuts in service and would be running a campaign over the next two weeks to get the situation improved.

Alyson Jewson reported that the hedge along Austin Road from the A38 needed cutting back. The Clerk to follow up.

Alyson Jewson reminded the Clerk that she had highlighted the urgent need for a waste bin on Austin Road. The Clerk confirmed that he had raised this with the District Council but would follow it up again.

Sue Abel asked the Clerk to re-introduce the Action Summary so that Councillors could monitor progress on issues raised at meetings.

Date of Next Meeting – The Parish Council's next meeting would be held on Monday 3rd February 2020 commencing at 7.30pm at the Hall Annexe, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chairman