

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held via Zoom on the 1st March 2021.

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

In attendance: Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk), Chris Cooke (Parish Lengthsman), Cty/Cllr Kyle Daisley and D/Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke.

029/21 Apologies

An apology was received from Jill Howe.

030/21 Declarations of Interest

Diane Brown declared a personal interest in Agenda items 7(3).

031/21 Requests for Dispensation

None.

032/21 Adjournment of Meeting for Public Question Time

1) Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

2) County Councillor Kyle Daisley

Cty/Cllr Daisley gave a brief update on the current Covid-19 situation in Worcestershire which was continuing to improve rapidly across the county. He added that the bus shelter in Ryefields Road had now been removed and consideration was now being given to options to improve the traffic flow and parking issues in that area. He had also given £1,000 to Stoke Prior Primary School to help towards the improvements to the playground.

The Chairman then thanked him for the funding he had given to the Parish Council towards the cost of a new VAS which would be used at various points across the parish. Cty/Cllr Kyle Daisley added that he would be meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner and would raise the issue of speeding in the parish and along Shaw Lane in particular with him.

3) District Councillors Malcolm Glass and Harrison Rone-Clarke

D/Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke reported on the progress of the proposed housing development on land off Perryfields Road, Bromsgrove and the Covid-19 Testing Centre in the town.

033/21 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 1 February 2021

Alan Bayliss pointed out that, under Minute 022/21, the abstention during the vote had not been recorded. It was agreed that the minutes should be amended accordingly.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 February 2021 as amended were approved and signed by the Chairman.

034/21 Urgent Decisions taken since the Council's last meeting

The Chairman stated that he had now received quotes for the new information board at the Picnic Site and the Clerk was now looking at the cost of providing the required artwork. The new board would be installed by the Parish Lengthsman and it was hoped that the site would be open to the public on the 1 May 2021.

035/21 Planning Applications

1) 21/00079/FUL – 52 Avon Close, Bromsgrove – Ground floor side extension.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application as a good extension to a family home.

2) 21/00122/FUL – 4 Dark Lane, Bromsgrove – Single storey side extension.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application as a good extension to a family home.

3) 21/00164/CUPRIO – Little Harbours Farm, Moorgate Road, Stoke Prior – Conversion of a single agricultural building to a pair of semi detached dwellings.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.

4) 21/00154/CPL – The Old Barn, Stoke Pound Lane, Stoke Prior – Construction of a single storey rear extension to existing dwelling.

The Parish Council were concerned about the lack of detailed information and plans supporting this application and asked the Clerk to take this up with the District Council's Planning Officers.

5) 21/00213/FUL – Stoke Court Farm, Sugarbrook Lane, Stoke Pound – Conversion and extension of the former milk bottle store to holiday accommodation and associated works.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.

6) 21/00210/FUL – 210 Worcester Road, Stoke Heath – Conversion of outbuilding to dwelling with single storey extension and hip to gable.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to support this application.

036/21 Finance

(1) Invoices for Payment for February 2021

Alan Bayliss questioned the payment of £75 to the United Parish of Stoke Prior, Wychbold & Upton Warren. It was pointed out that this was for 10 entries in the Link Magazine for 2021 which had been agreed at the previous meeting.

Alan Bayliss also pointed out that certain areas of Stoke Heath did not receive the Link magazine and it was estimated that a further 350 copies might be required to cover the area fully. John Ellis pointed out that any decision to increase the print number was a matter for the Parochial Church Council but he agreed to discuss this with them. The Chairman added that hopefully an agreement could be reached between the two Councils to resolve this problem.

The payments totalling £2,836.74 were then unanimously agreed as follows:-

	Cost £	Payment Method
Direct Debits		
Cartridge World – Copier Rental	23.79	-
Sub total	23.79	-
Cheques/Payments authorised at the Parish Council Meeting		
Clerk's net salary for February 2021	XXXX	Via online banking
Assistant Clerk's net salary for February 2021	XXXX	Via online banking
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax on Clerks' salary plus NI & Asst Clerk's salary for February 2021	437.96	Cheque No.1179
Clerk's Expenses and other Parish Council Expenditure for February 2021	319.85	Via online banking
IDG Garden Services	240.00	Via online banking
Chris Cooke	385.80	Via online banking
Sub Total	2812.95	-
Total Value of Payments for February 2021	2836.74	-

(2) Financial Management Statement for February 2021

This was noted.

037/21 Renewal of Parish Lengthsman's Contract and the Grounds Maintenance Contract

(1) Parish Lengthsman's Contract

The Chairman reminded Councillors that in March 2019, they granted a two year contract to Chris Cooke to operate as the Parish Lengthsman which ran until the 31 March 2021. In agreeing the original contract, they had also agreed that the position should be reviewed with a view to extending the contract for a further two years until the 31 March 2023.

It was acknowledged that Chris Cooke had provided an excellent service over the past few years and had carried out his duties extremely effectively and had often carried out work outside of his remit for the benefit of the parish.

It was unanimously agreed to extend the contract with Chris Cooke as Parish Lengthsman for a further two years until the 31 March 2023.

(2) Grounds Maintenance Contract

The Clerk reminded Councillors that this contract was currently held by IDG Garden Services on a two year contract which was due to expire on the 31 March 2021 and did not include any option to extend it as in the case of the Parish Lengthsman.

IDG had performed well over the past two years and maintained the recreation areas to a

high standard. However under financial regulations, it would be necessary for the Council to seek tenders for the new contract.

In addition to the above work, IDG maintained the 23 flower boxes located across the parish and was responsible for emptying the litter and dog bins.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed:-

1. That tenders be sought for the mowing of the recreation areas and the maintenance of the picnic site at Stoke Wharf.
2. That the services of IDG be retained for the maintenance of the flower boxes and the emptying of the litter and dog bins across the parish.

038/21 Update on Co-Option of a New Parish Councillor

The Clerk reported that the deadline for applications had now passed and no further applications had been received. It was therefore proposed to proceed with a further vote on the 4 applicants already received and he would be contacting all Councillors with the voting arrangements. At the end of the vote it was hoped to be in a position to invite the new Councillor to the April 2021 meeting.

039/21 Review of the Parish Council's Risk Register

It was unanimously agreed to endorse the Parish Council's updated Risk Register.

040/21 Correspondence

None.

041/21 Councillors Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

Chris Cooke raised the following points:-

- He was very concerned about the total lack of enforcement action against offenders dropping litter even when it was possible to identify them.
- There was growing concern about the level and volume of traffic in and around the TFM site in Brickhouse Lane. He felt that action needed to be taken before a serious accident occurred. The Clerk agreed to raise this problem with the District Council's Planning Officers.
- He was still monitoring the situation with regard to gully clearing. He would let Kyle Daisley have a list of the outstanding jobs in the near future.
- The new fence at Stoke Heath Recreation Area had been completed.
- The backboard to the basketball facility at Ryefields Road Recreation Area had been damaged and he would arrange a suitable replacement. The Clerk added that the backboard at Stoke Heath Recreation Area has also been damaged. It was noted that the court lines at the two sites would be done as soon as the weather warmed up.
- The Firs on Hanbury Road was advertising itself as a wedding venue but did not appear to have the appropriate planning permission. The Clerk agreed to follow this up.

John Ellis asked if the possible idea of setting up a memorial garden to commemorate those who had lost their lives as a result of Covid-19 could be included on the agenda for the Parish Council's next meeting. This was agreed.

Sue Abel asked for the provision of an additional flower box at the junction of Woodgate oad and Moorgate Road to be included on the agenda for the Parish Council's next meeting. This was agreed.

Liz Miller asked if consideration could be given to providing play equipment for older children at the Shaw Lane Recreation Area. The Chairman replied that money had been earmarked as part of planning permission for a nearby proposed housing development and if this eventually happened then this proposal could be looked at.

The Chairman reported that he was aware of building work going at Springfield Cottage in Woodgate Road for which planning permission may be required.

Diane Brown expressed concern about activities at the car dealership in Woodgate Road which the Clerk agreed to refer to the District Council Planning Officers.

The Chairman referred to the earlier comments by Chris Cooke relating to the lack of enforcement by District Council officers and stated that he would like a meeting with a senior officer at the District Council to discuss the problem. Cty Cllr Kyle Daisley suggested that it might be worth contacting the Police to see what action they could take on what is now being regarded as fly tipping.

The Chairman suggested the agenda and supporting papers for future meetings should be sent by email rather than delivered by the Clerk or posted. It would be a more cost effective way of working. It was agreed to trial this approach for the next two meetings.

Sue Abel commented that the planning application for flats at the Metal and Ores site was still outstanding. The Clerk was asked to raise this with the District Council via D/Cllr Malcolm Glass.

042/21 Dates of Next Meetings

It was confirmed that the Parish Council's next meeting would be held via Zoom on Monday 12 April 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.

The Chairman pointed out that the current legislation allowed for zoom meetings to continue until the 7 May 2021 thereafter Parish Council would currently be expected to revert to public meetings. Clarification was still awaited from the Government on this situation. He added that CALC had suggested that Parish Councils should look at holding their Annual General Meeting before the 7 May deadline. The Parish Council supported this view and agreed to bring forward the AGM to Wednesday 5 May 2021 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chairman