

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

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

Before the start of the meeting, Alan Bayliss stated that he would be recording the meeting. The Chairman confirmed that he would also be recording the meeting.

013/21 Apologies

An apology was received from D/Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke.

014/21 Declarations of Interest

Liz Eden and the Chairman declared personal interests in Agenda items 6 and 9(1) respectively.

015/21 Requests for Dispensation

None.

016/21 Adjournment of Meeting for Public Question Time

1) Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

Chris Cooke raised the following points:-

- The numbers of vehicles exceeding the speed limit recorded by the VAS had greatly reduced. He added that one of the batteries was nearing its end of life and would need replacing shortly.
- He had noticed an increased number of dogs being walked on Stoke Heath Recreation Area and questioned whether the 'No Dogs' notices were backed up by a bye-law. If they were then it would be possible for the Police to take action. John Ellis stated that he was sure that a bye law did exist and it was agreed that the Clerk would look into this.
- The pothole on the path through the churchyard was not very deep and suggested that it would be very difficult to repair. It was agreed to take no further action at this stage.
- He had carried out gritting on 14 nights and collected 25 bags of litter during January.
- There were still a lot of blocked gullies, some of which had been reported some time ago. He would let the Clerk have a list of the outstanding reports.
- He thanked Chris Jewson for his help in keeping an eye on the footpaths across the parish. This was also much appreciated by the local farmers.

2) County Councillor Kyle Daisley

Cty/Cllr Daisley gave a brief update on the current Covid-19 situation in Worcestershire and in particular the Bromsgrove area and ensuring that all grit/salt bins were topped up in the parish. He added that the bus shelter in Ryefields Road was due to be removed next week

and the issues relating to parking and a one-way traffic system in that road were still under discussion.

3) District Councillors Malcolm Glass and Harrison Rone-Clarke

There were no District Councillors present.

017/21 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11 January 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11 January 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

018/21 Co-Option of a New Parish Councillor

The Chairman stated that 1 Councillor had indicated that they were unhappy with the way that the process for appointing a new Parish Councillor had been dealt with particularly with regard to the late submission of 2 applications. He therefore proposed to start the whole process again and that all existing applicants would be invited to re-apply.

After discussion, it was agreed:-

- The position to be re-advertised on the Parish Council's website with a closing date of the 28 February 2021 for the receipt of applications.
- The Parish Council would consider all the applications at their meeting on the 12 April 2021. Alternatively a special meeting would be held to consider applications.
- The Clerk to look at options for the voting process.

019/21 Urgent Decisions taken since the Council's last meeting

The Chairman stated that he had received a request from Dodderhill Parish Council to borrow the VAS for 1 week to help with the recording of data on speeding vehicles. This was agreed.

020/21 Planning Applications

The Clerk confirmed that there were no applications to be considered. He also reported that the planning application in respect of 32 Greenside, Stoke Prior had been approved by the District Council.

021/21 Finance

(1) Payment made since the Parish Council's 11 January 2021 meeting and Invoices for Payment for January 2021

The payments totalling £ were agreed unanimously as follows:-

	Cost £	Payment Method
Direct Debits		
Cartridge World – Copier Rental	23.79	-
Sub total	23.79	-
Payment made since the last Parish Council meeting		
Chris Cooke	180.31	Via online banking
Sub Total	180.31	-

Cheques/Payments to be authorised at the Parish Council Meeting		
Clerk's net salary for January 2021	XXXX	Via online banking
Assistant Clerk's net salary for January 2021	XXXX	Via online banking
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax on Clerks' salary plus NI & Asst Clerk's salary for January 2021	437.96	Cheque No.1177
Clerk's Expenses and other Parish Council Expenditure for January 2021	255.02	Via online banking
Peter Williams	28.78	Via online banking
Information Commissioner	40.00	Cheque No. 1178
IDG Garden Services	240.00	Via online banking
Chris Cooke	623.88	Via online banking
Sub Total	2979.98	-
Total Value of Payments for January 2021	3184.08	-

(2) Financial Management Statement for January 2021

This was noted.

022/21 Budget and Precept for 2021/22

The Clerk presented the report setting out the proposed budget for 2021/22 and the options for the precept. 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 each year and he felt that it was time to raise the level of the precept. He also pointed out the financial impact of adopting either option for the precept on a Band D property.

The Parish Council then discussed the precept options during Alan Bayliss proposed that the precept should remain unchanged but this was not supported.

Alyson Jewson, seconded by Sue Abel, proposed:-

That the Parish Council –

- (i) approves a precept for 2021/22 of £58,407.00.
- (ii) approves the proposed budget for 2021/22 as set out in the Clerk's report.

The Chairman, seconded by John Ellis, proposed:-

That the Parish Council –

- (i) approves a precept for 2021/22 of £57,079.00.
- (ii) approves the proposed budget for 2021/22 as set out in the Clerk's report.

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 second proposal. There was 1 abstention.

The Council then confirmed that they had approved the budget for 2020/21 and that the level of precept would be set at £57,079.00.

023/21 Repairs to Outdoor Gym Equipment

The Clerk introduced the report and pointed out that he was recommending Option 1 which involved a complete reinstallation of the Air Skier at a cost of £419.00 plus VAT.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed to approve Option 1 as set out in the Clerk's report.

024/21 Review of Financial Regulations

It was unanimously agreed to endorse the Parish Council's Financial Regulations.

025/21 Correspondence

The Clerk reported that the following items of correspondence had been received:-

1. The County Council had drawn up a proposal to extend the existing Prohibition of Waiting At Any Time restrictions on the east side of Shaw Lane outside the Corbett Business Centre.
2. A request had been received to install goal posts at one of the 3 recreation areas in the parish. After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should get quotes for either installing full size goal posts or mini goal posts and report back to the Council.
3. The Clerk stated that he had followed up Sue Abel's suggestion to approach the L G Harris Trust to see whether they would be interested in giving a grant towards the restoration of the Stoke Wharf Picnic Site. He was pleased to report that he had secured a grant of £3,000 from the Trust which should cover the cost of the majority of the work on the site.

026/21 Councillors Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

Liz Miller thanked the Parish Council for repairing the basketball nets and asked whether it would be possible for the courts to be used for walking basketball under approved coaches as soon as the Covid-19 restrictions allow. The Parish Council confirmed that they were happy for this to go ahead.

Alyson Jewson reminded the Clerk that the waste bin at the junction of Wheatridge Road and Austin Road has still not been replaced. She added that the dog bin in Teeswater Close could be moved to that site or replaced with a larger dog bin.

Jill Howe asked if any further action had been taken regarding traffic calming in Shaw Lane. The Clerk replied that he had raised this with the County Council but that they were of the view that it was not necessary.

Sue Abel asked whether it had been agreed at the last meeting to include the contact details for the Parish Council in the Link Magazine. It was agreed that it had and the Clerk was asked to submit some suitable wording to John Ellis as Editor of the Magazine.

Sue Abel commented that there appeared to be a lot of vehicular activity in and out of the former Sugarbrook Nurseries site and asked whether this could be investigated. The Clerk agreed to discuss the matter with the District Council's Planning Officers.

Sue Abel also asked when the picnic benches etc would be put on the Stoke Wharf Picnic Site and what other work would be carried out to improve the site. The Chairman and the Clerk

explained that the benches would be in place for the spring, new shrubs would be introduced together with native flowers. It was also proposed to remove the information board and replace it with a new up-to-date one.

027/21 Exclusion of 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.

028/21 Stoke Heath Recreation Area – Approval of Tender for the Repair Work to Fence alongside School Drive

After opening comments by the Clerk, the three submitted tenders were considered in detail after which Sue Abel, seconded by Alyson Jewson, moved and it was unanimously agreed to accept the tender submitted by Chris Cooke at a cost of £2,000 plus VAT.

The Chairman then suggested that it might be prudent to replace at least some of the small strengthening bollards with small concrete posts. It was agreed that this should be done subject to a further quote being obtained from Chris Cooke.

Date of Next Meeting – In the light of the Covid-19 restrictions, the Parish Council's next meeting would be held via Zoom on Monday 1 March 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Chairman