



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Stoneleigh Community Hall

Monday 17th February 2020

Present Sue Isherwood, Chair
Ros Wyke, Councillor
Jo Tucker, Councillor
Sue Reece, Councillor
Peter Bright, Councillor
Guy Timson, Councillor

In attendance Chris Harris, Clerk

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Graham Noel, Somerset County Councillor.
Sue Reece, Councillor
Guy Timson, Councillor

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

2a Declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda

Cllr Wyke, as a Member involved in the consideration and determination of planning applications by Mendip District Council, declares that the views expressed by her at Parish Council meetings on any particular proposal are based on the evidence available to her at the time, and is provisional only. Cllr Wyke will not be bound by any recommendation made by the Parish Council on any proposal, and will consider any matter afresh in connection with any application which comes before her in her capacity as a Member of Mendip District Council, taking all further evidence into account.

No other declarations or written requests were received.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2020

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed, agreed and signed as a correct record.

4. Reports from the Somerset County Councillor and Mendip District Councillor

4a A written report was received from the Somerset County Councillor, main points as follows:

- The Somerset Fund is now closed to grant applications;
- Various Climate Emergency Strategy events have been organised around the county (there is a poster on the Parish noticeboards);
- Community Connect: Somerset County Council's Adult Social Care team have implemented a new website with a range of information available for care providers:
www.somersetcommunityconnect.org.uk ;
- SCC are supporting Fizz Free February to encourage people to cut out sugary drinks for 29 days as a supportive attempt to reduce rising levels of childhood obesity in the county;
- Adult Social Care now have 17 Talking Cafes and a network of Community Agents and village agents who work closely with SCC's social work teams to ensure that people are able to find solutions that help them live as independently as possible in their own home and community. To date 5,519 people have been supported through the Talking Cafes.
- Free Health Checks: Nearly 7,000 people benefitted from free health checks last year thanks to the service delivered for Somerset County Council and the NHS.
- Bovine TB: Following a successful bid for funding from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Somerset Trading Standards has launched a new information pack giving farmers all the information they need to help safeguard their herd from Bovine TB.
- Somerset Prepared: Somerset Prepared is the official multi-agency partnership working closely with communities to deliver advice, support and training to enhance local resilience to emergencies. For further information visit www.somersetprepared.org.uk

4b The Mendip District Councillor updated members on various developments currently in progress.

- The 2020 Business Awards, now in their 6th year, have been launched with a range of categories. Full details can be found on the Mendip Business Awards website: <https://www.mendipbusinessawards.co.uk/>
- Rollout of the new South West Waste Partnership Scheme 'Recycle More' will be underway shortly, streamlining services to 250,000 households in the region. However, as Westbury-sub-Mendip and Draycott's waste management comes under Sedgemoor rather than Mendip, both villages will have to wait until 2022 for any changes to be implemented.
- Discussions are underway for a plastics/tetrapak drop off point to be sited in Easton.
- A public consultation period is planned for later in the year on issues waste management, sustainability, environmental awareness and tree planting.
- New priorities for a fairer, greener Mendip will be discussed at a full Council meeting week commencing 24/02/20. The individual character and distinctiveness of Mendip's villages will be emphasised.
- Attendance by Councillors at the successful parish forums is commended, as they are proving to be very useful events for networking across the district and sharing best practice.
- Action regarding the proposed unitary council is under way, but is a long and complex process which will be in train for some considerable time.

Members thanked the District Councillor for her informative report.

5. Clerk's Report

5a Actions from previous meetings

- i) 2019/0544/FUL Lodge Lane appeal - agenda item
- ii) WSM phone box library – letter sent to Mr & Mrs Dolby, no response but none expected (Cllr Reece is in touch with them)
- iii) Playing Field/Rail Canopy Interpretation Panels – to be installed once weather improves
- iv) Dog waste bins survey – agenda item
- v) Grit bin for Stoneleigh – agenda item
- v) Footpath review – letters to SCC ROW and Church Commissioners pending

5b Other ongoing matters

- i) Report on condition of Westbury Cross – pending
- ii) AutoSpeedWatch update – no further progress
- iii) Road safety issues around Westbury Cross – for next meeting
- iv) Speed restrictions – no further progress

5c Feedback from MDC Planning training session, 11/02/20

A useful session in which the planning officers explained the recent changes to the NPPF and its impact on Mendip. In essence it means that MDC's building requirements have gone up from 420 units per year to 604 units per year, a substantial increase. (MDC have exceeded the 420 limit in recent years but this is discounted for the purposes of the NPPF). There is now a presumption in favour of planning and councils will have less control over where new homes are built. Social, economic and environmental considerations will outweigh local housing requirements and development limits going forward. The potential contradictions these create – and the lack of emphasis on concomitant infrastructure development - was discussed at length but neither were fully resolved. However, this seems to be targeted mainly for larger housing scheme applications, and not necessarily for smaller or single building infill, for example, where existing planning requirements will still hold. That said, the planning officers did say that weighing up risks and benefits to these applications is often a matter of professional judgement, which perhaps explains some of their more curious decisions in recent years. In 2017 MDC identified a number of areas of land for future development, and will be considering all applications for those areas going forward. Wells has a lot of land already earmarked for development, apparently, as we are seeing with the two significant developments near Haybridge.

6. Planning

6a Mendip Local Plan Part II: Sites and Policies Consultation

The Council agreed to write to MDC regarding the unique and integral importance of green spaces for the village as part of its history, geography/topography and overall character as an ancient farming community.

Action: Clerk

6b Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Update

The Chair confirmed that Cllr Harvey of Burnham and Highbridge Town Council had provided a number of dates in March to undertake a presentation on preparing a housing needs survey to the working group, but it has so far proven difficult to set a date. Cllr Harvey to be asked to provide some dates in April with the intention of holding a meeting then.

Action: Chair and Clerk

6c The following Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision was noted:

2019/0544/FUL	Units 17 & 18 Lodge Hill Industrial Estate: dismissed
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Following a site visit on 18th December 2019, this appeal was dismissed on 20th January 2020, on the grounds that it is contrary to policies CP3 and DP20 of the Local Plan and outside B1 permitted business development. Residents' issues with noise, traffic and other concerns were discounted. A notice to cease trading has been issued, although details/dates are unavailable.

The Chair had received a number of complaints subsequent to the dismissal, noting that trading was continuing outside of agreed times, and noise was noticeably worse. The Clerk to write to MDC Planning informing them of these issues and to see what if any further action can be taken.

Update: The Planning Officer at MDC is unable to provide any further information to local residents or take any action while investigations are in progress. Comments will only be made available once said investigations are completed.

6d Feedback from the Planning Board meeting regarding 2019/2336/FUL Shamrock Stables

Cllr Bright and Cllr Wyke fed back from the Planning Board meeting. While the Planning Officer recommended approval of the planning application, Board members raised a number of concerns regarding the detail of the application, most notably regarding the septic tank and waste disposal, the number of dogs to be housed, visibility and parking issues plus the large number of complaints received over noise and safety issues. Because of the number of clarifications required, the Board deferred any decision for up to three months so that further information could be provided on these and other issues.

Subsequent to the Board meeting, Cllr Bright and Cllr Wyke were invited to visit Shamrock Stables.

- The septic tank and dispersal field were explained, although concern remains over a manual pump to disperse large volumes of fluid uphill.
- The proposed kennel block faces North to reduce disturbance to dogs, although the issue of noise to the wider area and effects on local residents was not addressed.
- The total number of dogs to be kept onsite remains unclear; while it was explained that each kennel would house no more than three dogs (30 in total) and that the plan is to foster as many re-homing dogs as possible, this does not take into consideration the extremely large number of 'pet' dogs on site. It was felt that the total dog population needs to be factored in to any allowance on dogs taken on for rehoming.
- Parking issues were raised but left unresolved.
- Concerns were raised over the number of young and vulnerable persons who either work or volunteer at the kennels as there did not seem to be any evidence of formal safeguarding procedures in place, nor any acknowledgement of whether DBS certification was routinely required of adult staff/volunteers.
- There did not appear to be any awareness of the impact of noise, disturbance or safety issues for the local population or insight into their detrimental effects.
- The significant amount of dog mess all over the site and the attendant health risks was noted.

Members thanked Cllrs Bright and Wyke for their feedback.

6e Planning Applications for consideration:

Cllr Wyke's declaration of interests regarding planning application considerations is recorded. Council considered the following applications:

2019/0011/HSE	Erection of car port, Old Horse and Groom, The Square
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It was noted that the Heritage Statement was inaccurate as the car port is visible from some properties nearby. That said, members noted that the car port was generally unobtrusive and in keeping with the surrounding buildings and unanimously resolved to **approve** this application.

2019/3030/HSE	Erection of Garage, Oak View, Roughmoor Lane
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It was noted that the original planning application, 2015/1881/FUL, included a garage within the original footprint which was subsequently altered to create a utility area.

It was unanimously resolved to **object** to this application on the following material grounds:

Note 3 Design and appearance, impact on public visual amenity and Note 4 layout and density of the building:

The proposed garage appears to present overdevelopment of an already restricted site and is not in keeping with the overall construction of the existing building, nor does it take into consideration the rather awkward nature of the plot it sits in.

Note 8 Access, highways safety or traffic generation:

Stoke Road, which runs alongside the site, narrows as it approaches the property from both directions and vehicular sight lines are already compromised. There are considerable concerns that sight lines towards the junction with Roughmoor Lane will be further compromised should the existing building be further extended. Furthermore, there would be no space for a turning area on the property, necessitating vehicles to either turn and back in from Roughmoor Lane or back out and turn onto Roughmoor Lane, in perilously close proximity to Stoke Road with the attendant issues of reduced visibility. This is a significant safety risk.

2020/0086/TCA	Tree Works, Wester House/Lodge Hill House, Station Road
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Members had no issues with these tree works and unanimously resolved to **approve** this application.

6f Mendip District Council Decisions:

Council noted the following decisions:

2019/3057/HSE	Dormers, 21 Stoneleigh	Approved with conditions
2019/2963/HSE	Extension, Mole Hill Cottage, Perch Hill	Approved with conditions
2019/2776/TCA	Tree works, 1 Broadhay	Approved
2019/2987/TCA	Tree works, West View, Station Road	Approved
2020/0014/TCA	Tree Works, Little Orchard, Lynch Lane	Approved
2020/0074/TCA	Tree Works, Hillside Farm, Hannah's Lane	Approved
2020/0009/TCA	Tree Works, Clover Hill House	Approved
2020/0001/TCA	Tree Works, Westbury House, Church Lane	Approved

6g For general consideration/monitoring:

Land at Lynchcombe Lane, unauthorised occupancy

A member of the community had commented to the PC that this situation was ongoing. No further information regarding legal action is available from MDC. **Update:** The Planning Officer at MDC confirmed that a planning enforcement notice was issued on 03/02/20, land to be vacated by 05/09/20.

7. Finance

7a 2020/21 Precept and Budget

Members examined a draft copy of the current financial statements in detail. Some figures of the 2019/20 forecast and 20/21 budget are still to be provided, and thus will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

7b Payments to Approve

Members unanimously approved the following payments:

- HMRC PAYE/NIC (For Matthew Cheyney) £272.47
- SLCC annual subscription £92.00
- CPRE annual subscription £36.00

7c Website Matters

i) The website needs to meet the accessibility regulations 2020 which will come into force in September. Tickbox had been approached for a quotation for the work and suggested it would be in the region of £150-200 plus VAT. Members agreed to Tickbox undertaking this necessary work.

ii) Members agreed to appoint Mark Smith as a freelance website manager. The Chair to discuss details and remuneration with Mr Smith.

Action: Chair

7d To note and discuss account balances as at 14/02/20:

Members noted the current account balances as follows:

- Treasurer's Account £800.00
- Business Bank Account £19078.79

8. Co-option for Parish Council Vacancy

Members discussed co-option of another member of the Council. As there had been no response to the last re-advertisement, the Chair will approach a couple of interested parties to discuss the matter in more detail with them.

Action: Chair

9. Grant Request from Westbury Footlights

Members discussed and unanimously **approved** a request for a grant of £200 from Westbury Footlights towards the cost of a performance of 'Comedy of Errors' by the HandleBards on 27th June 2020 on the Robert Glanville Playing Field.

10. Support for Local Electricity Bill

Unfortunately feedback from a local environmental specialist regarding this initiative was not available. However, the matter was discussed again and members decided that the information provided was not sufficiently robust to warrant support at this time, although this could change in the future.

11. Dog Waste Bins Survey

Somewhat disappointingly, there had been only one response to this survey, which was a strong objection. In view of this, purchase of the bins will be put on hold until such time as interest/demand increases again.

12. Grit Bin for Stoneleigh

Discussions as to siting of a grit bin in the Stoneleigh area were superseded by the unexpected appearance on 13/02/20 of a filled grit bin at the bottom of Stoneleigh, on the other side of the road to the one previously approved by SCC Highways. The assumption is that SCC Highways has installed it – the Clerk is awaiting confirmation.

13. Great British Spring Clean Campaign 2020

Members discussed the purpose of this campaign and felt it would be more appropriate for other organisations to participate. The Chair to contact relevant groups to encourage participation.

Action: Chair

14. Stoneleigh Parking Proposals

Members discussed the detailed review Cllr Bright had put together on a site which had been suggested (small grassed area in front of the parking area to the rear). Issues with this area include:

- Land ownership is unclear and need to be clarified before any proposal is considered. Cllr Bright and Cllr Wyke will investigate.
- There are clearly a number of facilities under the pavement which would require a detailed structural review and possible reinforcement to ensure that cars driving over them do not cause any damage.

- Removal of the low wall and digging out to a sufficient depth for levelling and hard standing to meet current regulatory requirements is likely to be extremely expensive and will at best produce only four additional parking spaces.

In summary, it is likely that practicalities and cost will mitigate against converting this area to parking, although research will continue.

Members thanked Cllr Bright for his report.

15. Bristol Grand Tour Cycling Event

An email was sent to Pat Flaherty, CEO of Somerset County Council noting the Parish Council's considerable concerns regarding this event and the potentially deleterious effects it would have on the village with the various planned road closures. A response was received from Alyn Jones, Director of Economic and Community Infrastructure Operations at SCC which confirmed that negotiations were still at the preliminary stages and the necessary permissions had not been granted. The event has since been postponed until 2021 and only if SCC Highways gives approval for the various road closures required.

16. Notices

Members noted with sadness the passing of Ann Shepherd, wife of Tony Shepherd who had been Chair of the Council until 2018. The Parish Council extend their heartfelt condolences to Tony and family for their loss.

17. Any Other Business/ Items for Next Agenda

The Chair requested members to bring ideas for projects to be undertaken in 2020-21 to the next meeting.

18. Date of next meeting – currently scheduled for Wednesday 4th March 2020 @ 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Signed.....Chair of the Parish Council Date.....