

STOKE LODGE AND THE COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING ON 6th May 2021

7.00PM VIRTUAL MEETING OVER ZOOM

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Present: Councillors Andrew Alsop, Tracey Harrison-Ashe, Andrew Dyer, Jon Butler, Brenda Stokes, Bryan Hopkins, Rebecca Strong, John Blight (part), Ward Councillor Sarah Pomfret (part)

Minute Agenda Item

05.21.1 Welcome and Apologies for absence

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Councillor John Bowyer sent his apologies.

05.21.2 Declarations of Interest

None

05.21.3 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair of council

Councillor Andrew Alsop was proposed to continue as chair by Councillor Jon Butler and Seconded by Councillor Tracey Harrison-Ashe.

Vice Chair of Council

Councillor Brenda Stokes was proposed as vice-chair by Councillor Tracey Harrison-Ashe and seconded by Bryan Councillor Hopkins

Councillor Andrew Dyer was proposed as vice-chair by Councillor Jon Butler.

Upon being put to a vote it was resolved to elect Councillor Andrew Alsop as Chair and Councillor Brenda Stokes as Vice-Chair.

05.21.4 Public Speaking Session

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

05.21.5 Ward Members Session

Ward Councillor Sarah Pomfret invited feedback on the current e-scooter trial.

Councillors outlined the issues and serious safety concerns the council have for both the riders and pedestrians.

Councillors asked Ward Councillor Sarah Pomfret if the work on the Stokemead waiting restrictions can be brought forward. Councillor Sarah Pomfret confirmed that this has been put on hold to avoid further disruption whilst the Gypsy Patch Lane Bridge is still closed. It was asked if this can be reviewed as the parking at Stokemead is a real problem. Ward Councillor Sarah Pomfret to investigate.

05.21.6 Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising from Meeting on 8th April 2021

A small amendment to the attendees was noted. Councillor Andrew Dyer proposed and Councillor Brenda Stokes seconded; and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:

Approve the minutes as an accurate record.

Update on Previous Matters

Laptops for Holy Family primary school – we have received confirmation that these have been received and are being put to good use providing additional support in Maths for children who need it. Kevin Walke has thanked the Parish Council for the providing the grant.

Wheatpatch – They have confirmed that they are unlikely to reopen until September.

Brownies – They have confirmed that they are unlikely to reopen until September.

Drainage on The Common – Councillor Andrew Alsop confirmed that he has reported again to South Gloucestershire Council but has not yet received a response.

Newsletter – There have been no requests for any amendments or any additional content submitted so we will proceed to publish. Councillor Andrew Alsop thanked Councillor Brenda Stokes again for her excellent work on the newsletter.

05.21.7 The Hut – There have been no further developments on this.

04.21.8 Internal Audit Report Presentation and matters arising (Clerk Annie Wherrett)

A copy of the audit report was sent to Councillors in advance of the meeting and clerk Annie Wherrett checked that all had received and read it and all councillors confirmed that they had.

Clerk Annie Wherrett read the report to council again and advised that the following actions have been identified:

High Priority

Budget Approval Meeting 23/01/2020

There are no available minutes for this meeting as they do not appear to have been produced by the previous clerk. It is a requirement that these are kept both on file and published on the website. We must ensure that this is done in future.

Lack of Financial Reporting to Councillors (this had been highlighted in previous audit)

There have been no updates regarding progress against budget this needs to be done in future together with a simple monthly income and expenditure report. The Councillors agreed with the quarterly progress against budget (which was done in April for year end) but stated that they were very happy with monthly the annotated bank statements especially as we currently have little to no income. Clerk Annie Wherrett confirmed that the monthly reporting will need to be on the new basis from the June meeting with a Quarterly budget updates at the July/October/January and April meetings.

Presentation of the External Audit Outcome in the Minutes (this had been highlighted in a previous audit)

Whilst the results of the audit were provided at the December 2020 meeting the outcome was not fully documented. Therefore, Clerk Annie Wherrett covered the results and points raised again and will send a copy of the audit report for all to review again. The issues identified were as follows:

There was some confusion with the order in which the AGAR should have been signed and the completion of the precept box included CIL which was incorrect.

There was not sufficient explanation for the difference between boxes 3 & 4 of section 2. Adequate explanations were provided for failure to comply with Section 1 boxes 1,2 and 7 and the external auditor was satisfied that the actions identified would rectify these issues.

The report also stated that the internal auditor identified significant weaknesses in respect of Precept, Financial Reports, Minute and meetings of External Audit outcome, VAT requirements, IR35 possibility, rent concerns, Letting agreements, Bank and financial regulations concerns. It was stated that the Parish Council must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

Action Clerk will also share a copy of this external Audit report with councillors for their information.

Medium Priority

Risk Assessment schedule

The current clerk was unaware of the current risk assessment schedule (which has not been reviewed since March 2019) and no specific risk assessment has been conducted with regards to COVID 19.

Risk assessment schedule to be updated and reviewed by full council it is to include financial risks, reputational risks, health and safety risks, the retrieval of electronic and manual documentation in the event of a disaster. A separate risk assessment is to be completed in respect of COVID 19.

Action – Clerk Annie Wherrett to review documentation and present at June meeting.

Health and Safety Procedures

Health and Safety schedule, documentation and checklists need to be reviewed, updated and agreed by full council – this needs to be done every year or two.

Whilst we have undertaken health and safety checks periodically these have not been on a consistent basis and have not been documented. There is an issues log at The Pavilion which is completed by hirers and prompt action taken but this is not sufficient. There is no record of the dates and details of the checks so a spreadsheet will be drawn up. It is the intention that there will be a simplified weekly checklist to be completed by the caretaker and more comprehensive monthly checklist/checklists which will be undertaken by the clerk/chair.

Action – Clerk Annie Wherrett to review H & S documentation and create electronic record of checks and issues log. This will be presented at the June meeting.

Value for Money Exercises.

There has been some confusion over the application of the financial regulations and therefore we have not complied with them. The current limit states that 3 formal written quotes need to be obtained for purchases between £500 & £20000 but the council were under the impression that it should be over the higher limit. It was felt by the auditor that a limit of £20000 would be too high to effectively check for value for money. Council were asked to review the limits needed.

Clerk Annie Wherrett confirmed that an extensive exercise of check has been undertaken and it is felt that, in order to bring us in line with other Parish councils, the limits for written quotations and tenders should be increased to £3,000 and £25,000 respectively and with informal estimates being sought where possible for purchases between £500 & £3,000. It was put to the council that the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders be updated to reflect these limits.

Councillor Andrew Alsop proposed and Councillor Brenda Stokes seconded; and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:

Agree the revised quotation and tendering limits and update the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to reflect these figures.

05.21.09

Fees and Charges

The existing schedule of fees did not include all of the different charges currently in place and therefore lacks clarity. Clerk Annie Wherrett issued an updated schedule for approval. The new schedule includes all charges.

Councillor Andrew Alsop proposed and Councillor Jon Butler seconded; and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:

Agree the revised Fees and Charges for 2021/22.

05.21.10 Ad-hoc lettings agreement Contract

The existing document has been reviewed and updated to include the hirer being made responsible for ensuring that they are complying with current Covid regulations.

Councillor Brenda Stokes proposed and Councillor Jon Butler seconded; and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:

Agree the amended Lettings agreement wording for 2021/22.

05.21.11 Almondsbury Joint Burial Committee Update

Clerk Annie Wherrett has been in contact with Jack Turner at Patchway Town Council as promised. Unfortunately, the position is essentially unchanged as they have not yet purchased any additional land but if we wish for the matter to be reconsidered, we need to formally apply to both Patchway and Almondsbury Town Councils. It was suggested that it would be best to gain sight of the minutes from their meetings first to fully understand the current situation with regards to the purchase of land.

Action – Clerk Annie Wherrett to obtain AJBC meeting minutes.

05.21.12 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

It is usual to wait for the year end audit to present the AGAR governance statement and accounting statement for approval. However, in view of the imminent change of rules regarding online meetings and the COVID situation Clerk Annie Wherrett has taken the decision to complete it based on the in-year audit which was completed in March and proceed now to avoid any additional risks to Councillors which a face to face extraordinary meeting may present.

05.21.12.1 The Governance Statement was presented to council and detailed explanations for all answers given.

Councillor Andrew Alsop proposed and Andrew Dyer seconded and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:

Approve the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.

05.21.12.2 The Accounting Statement was presented to the council and detailed explanations given for the figures provided.

Councillor Andrew Alsop proposed and Councillor Jon Butler seconded and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:

Approve the Accounting Statement 2020/21.

05.21.13 Parish Council Finance Update

- **Invoices over £500**

Internal Audit £918 payable to South Gloucestershire Council.

Councillor Brenda Stokes proposed and Councillor Andrew Dyer seconded and upon

being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:
Agree payment of £918.00 as stated.

- **Bank statements**

Councillors were provided with fully detailed bank statements for the accounts.

Councillor Brenda Stokes proposed and Councillor Bryan Hopkins seconded; and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to: Approve the bank statements.

- **Bank Reconciliation**

Councillors were provided with copies of the Bank Reconciliation.

Councillor Andrew Dyer proposed and Councillor Brenda Stokes seconded; and upon being put to a vote it was unanimously resolved to:

Approve the bank reconciliation for this month.

05.21.14 Planning Applications

- 6 Dyrham Parade – Front and Rear Dormers (approved) - no issues
- 7 Dyrham Parade – Front and Rear Dormers (applications) – no issues
- 2 Standish Avenue – demolition of Garage and erection of PDH (application) – this is felt to be in a dangerous location with parking and access already presenting a problem to the residents.

05.21.15 Date of Next Meeting

24 June 2021 – due to current social distancing regulations it is not felt that we can effectively distance within The Pavilion. It has therefore been decided that we will move the June Meeting to later in the month when restrictions may have been removed.

05.21.15 Any other items the chair considers to be urgent.

See ward members session above.

I confirm that the minutes are a correct record of the meeting.

Signed: Annie Wherrett

Date: 06/05/21