

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 3 JANUARY 2023 AT 7.30PM
AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Stevie Bezencenet (SB) – Chairman
Sean Fry (SF) – Vice-chairman
Martin Nielsen (MN)
Adam Sedgwick (AS),
Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Rosie Emeny (RE)
Fred Grosch (FG)
Vicki Gibbins (VG)

Apologies: Nigel Warren-Thomas (NWT)

In attendance: James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD), SCC councillor James Finch (JF) (7.30-8.45), BDC Councillor Melanie Barrett (MB) (7.30-8.15)

23.1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

NWT had sent apologies and the reason for absence. These were approved.

23.1.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

AS declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 23.1.7.3 in relation to the community pantry (organiser for Stoke by Nayland) and hardship fund (administrator for the 4 parishes).

23.1.3 PUBLIC FORUM

None present.

23.1.4 MINUTES

22.1.4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2022 were approved.

23.1.4.2 Actions from previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda

The Clerk reported that NWT would investigate providing an estimate of the value/reinstatement costs of parish council buildings for insurance purposes.

23.1.5 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO BDC & SCC COUNCILLORS

23.1.5.1 District Councillor's report

The written report and oral update was noted.

23.1.5.1.1 Maintenance requirements on Crossfields/Goldenlonds

RE reported that improvements to the public realm, including rectification of safety issues on the path behind bungalows on Crossfields, had been completed and were generally well received by residents. The outstanding issues are repairs to fencing near garages on Goldenlonds and the garage roofs. MB advised that dealing with these issues may not be possible before BDC has carried out its review of its garage portfolio.

23.1.5.2 County Councillor's report

The written report and oral update was noted.

23.1.5.2.1 Highways and traffic

Parish maintenance of SCC facilities

MN reported that volunteers had repaired the village gateway signs and JF had provided funding to cover most of the cost. Focus School pupils had cleared the pavement on Sudbury Road. In addition the verge from The Crown to Valley Farm had been cut. It was thought Tendring Hall Estate had done this work rather than SCC. While welcome, it had exposed significant litter.

Action: Clerk to ask the litter picking group if they could schedule a pick.

It was pointed out that SCC Highways is withdrawing from a number of maintenance responsibilities in the parish, including re-painting 20mph roundels and repairing bollards. SCC Highways and JF have suggested in a number of cases that repairs should be funded through the parish council or JF's budget. It was noted that SCC has not made clear in advance which of its facilities it will and won't maintain, and this is being learned through experience of rejected requests.

JF acknowledged these points and reported that SCC Highways main focus is highways safety issues, although even in this category some work which is not a legal obligation (e.g. repainting 20mph roundels) could not be prioritised.

One School Transport

VK reported that the school had provided assurances that, where practical, pupil transport vehicles would be routed via Leavenheath and convoys would be avoided. In addition, remote monitoring devices had been fitted to vehicles to enable the school to monitor whether drivers observe the 20mph limit.

TVAS/speed hump considerations

It was noted that a TVAS pole had been installed on the road to Blundens Corner, but the pole scheduled for School Street had not. JF confirmed that monitoring the impact of TVAS would be a prerequisite in making a case for any installation of speed humps.

It was noted that the SCC community liaison engineer had provided some information on the criteria that would need to be met if speed humps are to be installed but further details would be helpful.

Action: AS to draft a letter to the community liaison engineer requesting further details of the criteria, and pass it to the Clerk.

Traffic management

VK reported that farm vehicles were being driven more considerately since a meeting with the farmers in August. It was noted that the farmers had raised a number of issues at the meeting which would need to be considered in the context of wider traffic management in Stoke village, including parking and speed control.

Action: It was agreed that FG would write a letter to the farmers saying that the improved driving is appreciated and that the parish council will be considering how to address the points raised at the meeting. The letter would be sent by the Clerk.

Action: It was agreed VG, SB and FG would discuss forming a working group or sub-committee to consider parking issues and report at the March meeting. NWT would also be invited.

Gritting arrangements, Thorington St

The Clerk reported that he had applied to SCC for a bin location at the bridge on Hudson's Lane. It was agreed that the Clerk should purchase a bin if SCC approves the site. It was reiterated to JF that the bridge becomes dangerous in icy weather. In addition JF was asked to request that SCC Highways fills the existing bin at the top of Hudson's Lane near the B1068 so that the road onto the B1068 can be gritted.

Renovation of Downs path

Correspondence from SCC Highways' community liaison engineer was noted. It was considered that the correspondence was helpful in clarifying the need for feasibility studies but SCC had misunderstood aspects of the current arrangements including ownership of parts of the land.

Action: AS to draft a letter to the community liaison engineer clarifying issues. This would be circulated to councillors for comment before being sent.

Action: JF to arrange a site meeting, potentially on 11 January.

Condition of Park Road near village entrance

The Clerk reported that a resident had called him shortly before the meeting to report that a very large pot hole had damaged her car.

Action: JF agreed to raise the issue with the local highways inspector and request it is fixed.

23.1.6 FINANCIAL MATTERS

23.1.6.1 RFO's report

Members received the RFO's report and were satisfied it was a correct record of the PC's financial position. The Clerk reported that the village hall committee would be increasing hall hire rates for the first time in many years due to increased costs and the longer period required for planning and environment committee meetings.

23.1.6.2 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve all orders on the RFO's report totalling £1,673.27. In addition, payment of an invoice for £35.00 for hall hire, received after the report was issued, was approved.

23.1.6.3 Budget and precept for 2023/24

A request had been received from Rev Javelle for funding towards the local community pantry and hardship fund. Following discussion of the options it was agreed the parish council would provide the £2.5k requested for 2023/24 with spending restricted/ringfenced for the Stoke by Nayland community pantry. This decision took into account relative demand for the pantry and hardship fund and the desirability of as many people as possible benefiting from the funding.

It was noted that the sum donated would be a substantial proportion of the parish council's precept, that there are considerable cost uncertainties and pressures affecting the core statutory services the council provides and that the council has a number of potential projects earmarked for coming years. In addition, given cost of living conditions it would be desirable to minimise any increases in the precept. Therefore the recipient should be advised of the likelihood that the parish council may not be able to continue providing funding at this level (and potentially not at all) in future years, despite the social value of the project and the council's support for it.

The Clerk advised that the funding would need to be provided using S137 of the Local Government Act and therefore the recipient would be asked to provide a report on how the money had been spent as a condition.

Action: Clerk to inform Rev Javelle of the decision and position on future funding.

It was agreed to approve the final budget proposal for 2023-24 which had been circulated with the agenda. The substantive additions to the November draft were £2,500 for the community pantry and £300 towards a defibrillator at the primary school. Therefore the BAU budget for 2023-24 was set at £13,144 with a further £23,900 allocated as reserves for projects, some of which are anticipated to be delivered beyond 2023-24. It was agreed that the precept should increase £200 to £13,500. Due to an increase in the parish's tax base, this would mean no increase in precept payments on Band D council tax bills, while covering funding requirements and providing for general reserves amounting to 66% of BAU spend.

Action: Clerk to complete and return the precept form to BDC.

23.1.7 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SB reported that the Chairman had proposed a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group for 12 January and asked members to advise the Chairman on availability.

VG agreed to join the group.

23.1.8 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

23.1.8.1 Use of Village Hall defibrillator

SB reported that the ambulance service had provided the wrong code to a person trying to access the defibrillator in an emergency. The emergency services had provided assurances that they have rectified this and have the correct code. As a contingency measure the code had been circulated to members of the defibrillator group and to local parishioners and businesses.

23.1.8.2 Website

FG had circulated an initial draft version of the new website before the meeting, with significantly expanded content.

Action: Councillors to provide feedback to FG by the start of February.

23.1.8.3 Firearms incident

A report of a firearms incident in Stoke village was received. It was noted that a representative of the owner of the land where the incident had been reported had not provided reassurances requested when the matter was raised with them.

Action: Chairman and Clerk to write to the landowner requesting reassurance that they are aware of the incident and whether there are any measures that can be taken to minimise the risk of future incidents. A draft would be circulated to all councillors before the letter is sent.

23.1.9 DATE OF 2023 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

It was agreed that the Clerk would approach the Chairman of Sudbury Citizens Advice Bureau to ask for his availability to speak at the APM if it were held on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday towards the end of April.

Action: Clerk to contact the CAB chairman to establish his availability.

23.1.10 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

SB and SF agreed to attend BDC's parish liaison meeting on 1 February.

23.1.11 ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SB said she would ask for suggestions by email.

23.1.11 OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

23.1.11.1 Outstanding issues

Action: FG and RE said they would look into reviving the committee which had arranged Jubilee events to consider arrangements for the King's Coronation in May.

23.1.11.2 Future agenda items

- Traffic management
- Neighbourhood Plan
- The Downs path
- Website

23.1.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 7.30pm – Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55pm.