

**STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD 3 MAY 2022
AT 7.30PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Stevie Bezencenet – Chairman (SB)
Sean Fry (SF) – Vice-chairman
Adam Sedgwick (AS)
Martin Nielsen (MN)
Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Rosemary Emeny (RE)
Fred Grosch (FG)
Nigel Warren-Thomas (NWT)

Apologies: BDC Councillor Melanie Barrett

In attendance: James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD), SCC councillor James Finch (JF) (7.55-8.45)

The meeting started at 7.55pm as the preceding planning and environment committee meeting took longer than scheduled.

22.5.1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

SB was re-elected as chairman. SF was re-elected as vice-chairman. Both signed Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

22.5.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above

22.5.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

FG declared an interest in agenda item 22.5.11.6. The Clerk reported that he had contacted SALC for advice on any procedural requirements relating to FG's potential involvement in work on the parish council's website. This followed FG's offer to update the website at no charge other than the direct cost of a new website hosting platform. The Clerk noted that FG's offer appeared consistent with work that would be permissible for a councillor declaring an interest to undertake and that FG had been clear on his involvement in a marketing agency. However, it was advisable to check the position with SALC before any work starts.

A discussion followed on the need for all councillors to make sure their Register of Interests form is up to date at all times. Although this is formally checked at each Annual Meeting of the parish council each year, it was noted that councillors should make sure any changes are notified at the earliest opportunity.

Action: Clerk to send all councillors the web link to their Register of Interest forms.

22.5.4 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

22.5.5 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS; REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE; REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

22.5.5.1 Planning and environment committee

All members of the committee (MN, SF, VK, FG, AS, SB) were re-appointed. The committee's terms of reference were confirmed. It was agreed that responsibility for activities covered by relevant lines in the annual budget should be devolved to the committee along with any relevant

projects agreed at parish council meetings during the year. Therefore responsibility for grass cutting was devolved to the committee.

22.5.5.2 Review of councillors' responsibilities

Recreation Ground Committee

RE, a member of the Recreation Ground Committee, agreed to continue reporting to the parish council on relevant recreation ground matters.

SALC

It was agreed that it was not necessary to appoint a councillor with responsibility for engagement with SALC. However the Clerk would circulate SALC meeting agenda and information so that it could be discussed whether it would be beneficial for a councillor to attend.

Village Hall Committee

NWT agreed to continue as the parish council's representative on the committee.

LAWC

It was noted that AS and RE had been appointed as trustees, on the Parish Council's nomination, for a fixed term of four years starting January 2022.

BAPTC

It was agreed that it was no longer necessary for a councillor to attend these meetings.

Primary School

VK, a former governor who maintains links with the school, agreed to continue liaising with the school on the parish council's behalf and reporting to the parish council on relevant activities.

PCC

AS agreed to continue liaising with the PCC on the parish council's behalf and reporting to the parish council on relevant activities brought to his attention.

Grasscutting

It was noted that this had been devolved to the planning and environment committee. MN would continue to act as lead councillor.

Public transport

It was noted that the very limited bus service in the parish and difficulties this causes to residents had been raised at the Annual Parish Meeting, and that SB had indicated that the parish council would look into the matter. It was agreed that the potential to set up a working party, comprising parish council members and parishioners, should be investigated. VK and RE would lead on this. This work would include arranging a public meeting to hear parishioners' concerns.

Action: VK and RE to make arrangements for the public meeting.

SB would continue to act as lead councillor for day to day public transport issues, arranging assistance from other councillors as necessary.

Assets

FG agreed to act as lead councillor for asset repair and renewal. SF agreed to assist the Clerk in considering asset valuation for insurance purposes.

Action: Initially FG would consider the condition of the Well Housing. MN had looked at the Well Housing previously and could be contacted for his view of its condition.

22.5.6 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 1 March 2022 were approved and signed, following correction of a date.

22.5.7 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO BDC & SCC COUNCILLORS

22.5.7.1 District Councillor's report

The written report was noted.

VK noted that BDC had not acted on the parish council's requests, raised last year, to prune a tree near a disabled resident's house to prevent falling debris that has been causing him difficulty.

RE noted that BDC had not acted on the parish council's requests, raised last year, to repair a path on a passage in Goldenlonds or trim back vegetation protruding into the passage. The uneven surface and restricted access has been causing elderly residents difficulties. It was noted that MB had indicated that taking this type of maintenance work in house rather than using a contractor would improve BDC's service.

Action: Clerk to write MB requesting these works are carried out and reminding her of the length of time since the requests were raised.

22.5.7.2 County Councillor's report

The written report was noted and oral updates provided.

22.5.7.2.1 Traffic and highways issues

Sudbury Road pavement

JF reported that SCC Highways had agreed to clear vegetation blocking a very small part of the path around a pole. However, SCC Highways would not clear vegetation growing over and blocking a large part of the remainder of the path. JF explained that SCC's position is that it will ensure the hardstanding material meets a minimum width requirement but will not clear vegetation preventing the usable area meeting this width requirement. JF indicated that this was due to financial pressures and that he did not support this position if applied inflexibly as in this instance.

Action: SB to investigate alternative ways of clearing the pavement.

Village Gateway signs

JF reported that SCC owns these signs but SCC Highways would not repair them due to financial pressures. This was on the grounds that SCC considers that they do not present a highways safety issue. JF indicated that he would provide funding from his Locality Budget for the parish council to arrange repairs on the grounds that this would prevent deterioration to assets within the AONB.

Action: MN/SB to consider what needs to be done to repair the signs and report to the next parish council meeting.

Action: Clerk to contact JF regarding a Locality Fund application.

18t weight limit

VK reported that the sign off the A134 indicating the 18t weight limit in the parish is not visible because it is obscured by vegetation. It was pointed out to JF that this is the third year running that this issue has occurred.

VK reported a further instance of a tractor and trailer breaching the 18t limit.

Action: Clerk to write to the farmer to make him aware that vehicles, including farm vehicles, above the weight limit are only allowed within the 18t limit zone for delivery.

Traffic calming

Following correspondence with SCC Highways, VK and SF recommended that the parish council request installation of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) in appropriate areas of the 20mph zone on the B1068 from Clipt Bush to Blundens Corner and on Church St. If this was not effective in reducing traffic speeds to an acceptable level, the next move would be to request that SCC installs speed humps.

It was agreed that this approach was acceptable in principal. VK and SF should explore it further with SCC to establish any costs that would be borne by the parish council in relation to SIDs in the first instance. A proposal for final approval could then be presented to the parish council.

Action: Clerk to write to James Finch outlining the parish council's request for costing information for SIDs and the intention to request speed humps if SIDs prove ineffective. JF would be asked to pass the request to the relevant asset manager and report on SCC's progress in responding to it.

Traffic signage

RE reported on traffic issues caused by vehicles attempting to use the route from Stoke Tye crossroads to Nayland. These were caused by a road closure on the route.

Action: JF agreed to ask SCC Highways to install temporary signage advising 'No access to Nayland' at the crossroads.

Parking during special events at The Crown

It was noted that an event at The Crown had caused significant parking and traffic issues in the village centre and that the Recreation Ground could have been used as a car park had The Crown considered this and organised stewarding in good time.

Action: SB and SF to arrange a meeting with The Crown's general manager to discuss how these issues can be avoided during future events, including through effective advance planning.

22.5.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

22.5.8.1 Internal audit report 2021-22

The Clerk outlined the recommendations in the internal audit report and suggested that all should be investigated or progressed.

SB noted a recommendation on the lack of a reference to online payments in risk assessment documentation. The Clerk explained that provisions for online payments are contained in the parish council's Financial Regulations and said he would update the risk assessment documentation to reflect this.

Action: It was agreed that the Clerk should progress the auditor's recommendations, including a request from councillors that he check with SALC whether acceptance of apologies for absence would have the impacts outlined by the auditor.

22.5.8.2 Annual accounts 2021-22

The accounts were reviewed approved and signed.

22.5.8.3 Certificate of Exemption for 2021-22

It was agreed that the conditions for exemption from limited assurance review and submission of the AGAR to the external auditor had been met, and that the parish council would certify itself as exempt. Therefore, the Certificate of Exemption was reviewed, approved and signed for the Clerk to send to the auditor.

22.5.8.4 Annual Governance Statement 2021-22

The Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was reviewed, approved and signed.

22.5.8.5 Accounting statements 2021-22

The accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return were reviewed, approved and signed.

22.5.8.6 RFO's report

Members received the RFO's report and were satisfied it was a correct record of the parish council's financial position.

It was agreed that a lower level of data should be purchased for internet access during parish council meetings to reduce costs.

Action: SF to cancel current data package. Clerk to arrange an appropriate replacement package.

Action: NWT to ask the Village Hall Committee to place an item on internet access on its next agenda. This discussion would cover whether the committee would like to make use of any

facility arranged by the parish council in order to offer internet access to groups hiring the hall, and if so whether the committee would be willing to share costs of the first year's provision with the parish council. A decision could be made on appropriate cost allocations after the first year. The CIL report was reviewed, approved and signed.

Action: Clerk to send the report to BDC and confirm which potential forthcoming parish council projects CIL funding can be used for.

22.5.8.7 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve unpaid orders totalling £1,808.72, plus a £35.00 direct debit payment made before the meeting.

22.5.8.8 Exercise of Public Rights

It was agreed that the Exercise of Public Rights would be from 20 June 2022 to 29 July 2022.

22.5.9 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS, REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND INTERESTS

22.5.9.1 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were reviewed. It was agreed that SB would contact the Clerk to check bank reconciliations quarterly. This would be in line with Financial Regulation 6(ii).

A discussion took place on the need for timely submission of agenda items/papers to the Clerk to ensure councillors have adequate time to review business before meetings. VK proposed councillors should aim to submit:

- Agenda items to the Clerk at least two weeks¹ before meetings so they can be included on draft agenda sent to the Chairman;
- Papers to the Clerk at least one week before meetings so that they can be distributed with the agenda.

It was agreed that, while desirable, practicalities will mean there are occasions when these timescales can not be met. Therefore, it was agreed that papers may be sent to the Clerk for circulation and consideration at a meeting up to three clear days before the meeting. This would be subject to confirmation by the Clerk of any legal requirements relating to submission of papers.

It was agreed that this provision should apply only to full council meetings due to the sometimes unpredictable timings relating to planning and environment committee business (e.g. receipt of planning applications).

Action: Clerk to check on any legal requirements with regard to submission of papers.

Action: SB to contact The Clerk quarterly to arrange to check bank reconciliations.

Following a discussion on record keeping it was agreed that the Clerk should investigate transferring appropriate records older than 7 years to the County Records Office.

22.5.9.2 Policies

Roadside advertising: MN advised that the policy is up to date.

GDPR: The Clerk advised that the policies had been adopted recently based on SALC templates which are up to date.

Volunteering: SB noted that there may be occasions when young people aged 17 and 18 wish to take part in activities but will require supervision by an adult who has been DBS checked, which the draft policy does not make allowance for.

¹ The Clerk advised after the meeting that Standing Order 2(iii) states the following in relation to agenda items –“Any member may require motions relevant to the meeting’s responsibilities to be placed on the agenda. Subsequently, the member may require these motions to be amended or withdrawn. In all these cases, details, including wording of motions, must be provided to the clerk by email at least 10 days before the meeting. The clerk may discuss these motions with members to ensure appropriate wording.”

Action: It was agreed that SB should send wording to the Clerk covering this point, for insertion into the policy.

22.5.9.3 Adequacy of land and asset insurance

Provisions were considered appropriate. FG, SF and JD would consider asset valuations before policy renewal.

22.5.9.4 Register of interests

Members would review their forms after receiving the website link from the Clerk.

22.5.10 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SB reported that the next work on the plan is expected to take place in June.

22.5.11 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

22.5.11.1 Clerk's Review

Councillors thanked the Clerk for his work and flexibility. It was agreed that the Clerk's pay band should be increased to SCP10 which is in the middle of the substantive range for a parish of Stoke by Nayland's size.

22.5.11.2 Downs tree work

AS reported that tree works to protect cabling to the alms houses may not be required depending on decisions on projects to renovate the properties. He would report further at the appropriate time.

22.5.11.3 The Angel

Councillors noted that significant nuisance had been reported by the occupants of a neighbouring property during works at the Angel, as well as SB's reports on her meetings with both the occupants and the business. In addition councillors considered that there appeared to be a number of potential breaches of The Angel's planning consent and that the District Council appeared unable to prioritise investigations into the issues raised. Councillors expressed concerns over a number of aspects of The Angel's approach but accepted that the parish council does not possess the powers to intervene directly.

22.5.11.4 Website

This would be discussed at the July meeting following receipt of advice from SALC as referred to in item 22.5.3.

22.5.11.5 Torch Relay

The Clerk reported on the Torch Relay routes planned in the parish. The Stoke route would pass the primary school. The organisers had suggested that it would add to the occasion if the school allowed pupils to line the route.

Action: VK to contact the school to pass on the organisers' suggestion.

22.5.12 TO AGREE ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- Public meeting on public transport provision.

22.5.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 5 July 2022 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.05pm.