

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 7 NOVEMBER 2023
AT 7.30PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present:	Stevie Bezencenet – Chairman (SB) Sean Fry (SF) – Vice-chairman Martin Nielsen (MN) Rosemary Emeny (RE) Fred Grosch (FG) Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Apologies:	Adam Sedgwick (AS), Vicki Gibbins (VG), BDC Councillor Isabelle Reece (IR)
In attendance:	James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD), SCC Councillor James Finch (JF) (7.45pm – 9.00pm), Jeremy Bloomfield (JB), Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Group (7.45pm – 8.10pm), 1 other member of the public

23.11.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above. Apologies and the reasons given were accepted.

23.11.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

None.

23.11.3 CO-OPTION OF A NEW COUNCILLOR

As there were two candidates but only one was able to be present, it was agreed that the decision would be made at the next meeting. A fair process would be put in place in advance.

23.11.4 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public wished to raise any issues.

23.11.5 MINUTES

23.11.5.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meetings held 5 September 19 October 2023 were approved and signed.

23.11.5.2 Actions from previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda

- SB confirmed she would distribute a note to houses on Crossfields requesting car owners are mindful of issues caused by parking on pavements. RE, VK had offered to assist.
- RE said she would provide MN with contact details for a volunteer to attend to overgrowth on the allotments path.
- SCC had said they could take no action regarding damage to a post on Blundens Corner. However, further damage had been caused knocking a post out and breaking paving. JF advised that the matter should be reported on the SCC highways reporting tool but it was not possible to inform parish councillors when the SCC team would visit to assess the damage. However, he would make SCC's highways liaison engineer aware of the parish council's concerns.

Action: Clerk to report the damage, VK to provide pictures.

23.11.6 CORRESPONDENCE FROM HASTOE

It was agreed that agenda item 23.11.8.2 would be brought forward as JB was in attendance to contribute to this item..

Correspondence from Hastoe suggesting a meeting to discuss the possibility of exploring a potential site for new social housing had been circulated. This followed the opening of Hastoe's Underwood Close development. It was noted that a number of views had been expressed on the

appropriate forum for the meeting. Considering the Neighbourhood Plan Group's experience in housing issues, it was agreed that the most appropriate arrangement would be for Hastoe representatives to join a meeting of the NHP Group. Parish councillors not on the NHP should also be invited to attend. A number of views were expressed on the demand for additional social housing in the village as well as concerns over the process for allocating housing in Underwood Close.

Action: JB to contact Hastoe to arrange the meeting.

23.11.7 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO BDC & SCC COUNCILLORS

23.11.7.1 District Councillor's report

IR's written report was noted.

Crossfields garages

RE reported that BDC had carried out repair works to guttering despite previous reports that the garages had been condemned due to the condition of the asbestos. The Clerk reported that BDC had not responded to inquiries from IR and letters from the parish council asking for clarification on the condition of the asbestos and the works required or planned to ensure the garages and asbestos are safe.

Action: RE to contact IR to request the clarification.

Crossfields public realm

It was noted that issues of overgrown public realm including infringement on paths had not been addressed.

Action: RE to contact IR to ask for an update on when this would be addressed.

23.11.7.2 County Councillor's report

The written report and oral update were noted.

JF highlighted a BDC/SCC initiative with bid funding to provide digital support for people who are not confident using IT. JF envisaged this could work through a local digital champion or ambassador. The first step would be to establish if there is a local need. JF would place an article in the LSPN as a first step.

Vacant Housing

JF reported that SCC is reviewing two former caretakers' houses on the former Middle School site for potential return to use. He would report back on progress.

23.11.7.2.1 Traffic and highways issues

Report from parking group

SB reported that the Trustees of Tendring Hall Estate would consider the parish council's request for the Estate to lease land for parking in Stoke village at their next meeting.

Village entrances and green spaces

It was reported that a number of residents had raised issues around damage caused by parking on the grass at village entrances and other green spaces. While no solution is evident at present the parking group was asked to consider this when taking forward their work.

It was noted that felled dead trees have been stored on land that may be SCC property for some time.

Action: SB to send JF photos of the space so he can understand the issue and space in question and advise on any action SCC can take to tidy the area.

Action: JF committed to send the parish council an inventory of the spaces in the parish owned by SCC.

Diversions during roadworks

It was noted that SCC had proposed potential options to prevent School Street being used as a

‘rat run’ diversion during road closures in Stoke Village. However, it was considered that these were unlikely to be viable long term solutions that residents would favour.

Following advice from JF, it was agreed that School Street residents would be invited to a meeting in early 2024 at which parish councillors and JF would ask what outcome they are seeking during road closures elsewhere in the village. SCC would then be asked to design a solution which would achieve these outcomes.

Action: VK agreed to organise a meeting for residents of School Street in February.

Speed control

It was noted that speed indicator device posts had been in place for nearly a year without SCC fitting any temporary SIDs. SF reported that he had been looking in to who the correct person at SCC would be to raise this with.

SF reported further that the police and crime commissioner had suggested sending him a letter requesting police action to enforce speed limits in the parish.

Action: SF to write to the police and crime commissioner and JF requesting action.

23.11.7.2.2 Bus service improvements

VK reported that she had been discussing priorities for improvements to the bus service with residents which JF would then take to the bus company along with priorities for the route from other parishes. The company would then be in a position to consider incorporating these requests and make a case for Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from SCC.

23.11.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

23.11.8.1 RFO’s report

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

The clerk reported that, since the issue of the report, the trade unions and local government employers had agreed a pay settlement for 23/24. This meant an additional £1/hour for the clerk’s grade. It was noted that the council’s established position is that the clerk should be paid the agreed salary for their grade in the NJC payscales, and therefore the increase would apply automatically.

Action: The clerk was asked to report back on the pay threshold at which the council would be obliged to make pension contributions.

MN asked if higher interest rates would be available from Barclays if funds were transferred from the current account and a working balance maintained.

Action: SF to contact Barclays to discuss the options available.

23.11.8.2 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve orders set out on the RFO’s report totalling £9,091.64. In addition an invoice received since the circulation of the RFO’s report was approved - £220 to CO10 for grass cutting in October.

23.11.8.3 Draft budget

The draft budget report was noted. In line with usual process it was agreed that a Budget Working Party would consider the report and potential amendments in December, before the budget and precept are agreed in January. All members present were willing to sit on the group.

Action: SB to arrange BWP meeting.

23.11.8.4 Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2023-24 accounts

The Clerk reported that SALC had carried out a thorough audit for 2022/23 and recommended that they be re-appointed. This recommendation was agreed.

23.11.9 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SB reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Group had sent BDC's People and Places team information to start putting together a People and Place Plan for the parish. This could act as a step towards a full neighbourhood plan.

23.11.10 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

It was agreed that items scheduled to be reported on by AS and VG would be deferred to the next appropriate committee or parish council meeting as they were not present.

23.11.10.1 Website

FG reported that VG had made some preliminary suggestions regarding the rate card.

Action: FG to discuss further with VG with a view to proposals being brought to the January meeting.

FG reported that all councillors and the clerk would be able to have a parish council email address consistent with the domain name of the new site.

Action: FG to assist the clerk in setting up the email addresses when the new site is live.

23.11.10.2 Condition of village lock-up

The clerk reported that he had inspected the lock-up with the neighbour to understand its condition and that it was dry and in generally good repair. The neighbour had fitted a downpipe on a shared section of brick work and guttering adjoining the lock-up and her house. SF asked if this is a party wall.

Action: SB to look into whether it is a party wall.

23.11.10.3 Primary School

VK reported that the school had received an impressive OFSTED report with good ratings across the board. Councillors recognised this impressive achievement and expressed appreciation.

23.11.11 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk reported that BDC had asked for views on the suitability of the village hall as a polling station.

Action: It was agreed that the clerk should respond that the village hall works well as a polling station and should continue to be used as such.

23.11.12 TO AGREE ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Any suggestions could be sent to SB.

23.11.13 OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Rate card for website
- Precept and budget
- Co-option of new councillor
- Condition of garages and public realm on Crossfields
- Update from JF on vacant housing
- Leasing land for parking
- Arrangements for organising dates for briefings/working parties
- Representation of Suffolk Parish Councils on Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project
- Community Pantry and Hardship Fund

23.11.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 9 January 2024 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall

Action: Clerk to confirm with village hall committee Chairman that this date is available.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25pm