

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 7.30PM

Present: Isabelle Reece, Chairman (IR)
Andrew Collins (AC)
Adam Sedgwick (AS)
Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Martin Nielsen (MN),

Apologies: Jeremy Bloomfield (JB), Stevie Bezencenet (SB), Nicki Bray (NB)

In attendance: James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD), Melanie Barrett (MB) 7.50pm -9.05pm
James Finch (JF) 8.20pm – 8.45pm

Public present: Shaun Fry

17.9.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above

17.9.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

None declared.

17.9.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public had views to express.

17.9.4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 4 July 2017, 1 August 2017 were approved and signed.

17.9.5 REPORTS OF COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

17.9.5.1 District councillor's report

District council service quality

MB's report touched on the parish council's concerns over the district council's working culture and practices. MB said similar views relating to DC staff failing to pick up colleagues' work when they are absent had been expressed to her by other parties. At a meeting with a DC director to discuss the situation, MB was told that a new management system is being introduced and that these arrangements should help address the issues. MB added that the DC's move to Endeavour House would be beneficial because the open plan office and co-location of all DC staff will make for a more effective management environment and make officers more accessible to councillors. VK asked MB to provide further assurance and detail on how the issues identified by the PC will be addressed. MB agreed to investigate further on the grounds that the circumstances may indicate a strategic weakness in the DC's working arrangements, and as such the matter falls within her remit as a district councillor.

Action: Clerk to write to MB requesting information on how the district council will ensure contingency systems are in place so that case work is managed to a satisfactory and efficient resolution if pressures such as staff absence occur, both generally and also specifically in relation to 2 The Blundens. This action is complementary to those recorded in the September 5 planning committee minutes in relation to 2 The Blundens.

Boundary Commission review

AS raised concerns that the reduction in wards proposed by the Boundary Commission review could reduce democratic accountability. It was agreed to discuss the issue fully at the November PC meeting to determine whether to make a formal written response to the review.

17.9.5.2 SCC councillor's report

No report was received. It was agreed to reschedule the agenda to discuss items requiring the county councillor's input when JF arrived at the meeting.

17.9.5.2.1 Content of county councillor's reports

JF explained that his reports to all parish councils are designed as general updates to inform PCs on countywide issues. Specific local issues can be raised with him at meetings. The PC agreed to continue receiving SCC councillor reports on this basis.

17.9.5.2.2 Scotland Street drainage

JF and the parish council had received correspondence from a parishioner requesting that SCC clear debris from drainage gullies on Scotland Street every six months. JF told the meeting that the condition of gullies is a significant issue in many areas across the county, that SCC is not satisfied with its gully cleaning contractor and is seeking to improve the contractor's performance. JF had not previously been aware of there being an issue in Scotland Street and said that this was helpful information. His priority is to ensure gullies are cleared in areas where there is a risk of water flooding into houses. MN reiterated to JF that this is a potential issue in Scotland Street.

Action: MN to update JF on the number of gullies in Scotland Street and their condition - JF said he would welcome this feedback.

MN to report back to the parishioner on JF's comments.

17.9.6 FINANCIAL MATTERS

17.9.6.1 RFO's report

The PC was satisfied that the RFO's report was a correct record of its financial position. Members requested that future reports include an update on expenditure vs budget.

Barclays

Members noted that Barclays has not responded to the PC's written instructions to send statements to the clerk and that some statements have not been received by IR. This is causing some difficulties for the clerk in providing up to date financial reports to the PC.

Actions: IR to arrange a meeting with a Barclays business advisor to resolve the issues, including arranging access to online statements. No other online banking facility will be required. Clerk to provide a full briefing to IR on issues to raise with the Barclays business advisor. MN to recommend a business advisor for IR to meet with.

Insurance

The PC noted the update showing that additional assets are now covered by the policy, as agreed at the July meeting.

Transparency fund

It was agreed that it is not necessary to request funding for a printer/scanner.

17.9.6.2 Approval of orders requested for payment

Orders totalling £1082.99 were approved. In addition to the orders listed in the report, the PC approved a payment of £34.34 to CAS for an increase in the insurance premium to cover the additional items on the policy.

17.9.6.3 Budget Working Party report

The PC noted that quotes had been circulated for a replacement handrail on The Downs path south, superseding the recommendation in the report.

All other recommendations in the report, which was circulated with the agenda, were approved.

Further recommendations were made during the PC meeting to take into account latest developments in relation to:

- The Housing Needs Survey
- The streetlighting project

It was agreed that no action should be pursued in relation to Butt Road Bramble Patch. The matter will be considered again during future financial planning exercises.

17.9.6.4 Further financial matters arising

None were raised.

17.9.7 DRAFT ORDER FOR 20MPH ZONE IN STOKE BY NAYLAND VILLAGE

The committee noted that SCC had issued a draft order for the 20mph zone. Consultation closes on September 19. Subject to no objections being received, JF said work would begin on November 20.

17.9.8 PLANS FOR THE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

AS supplied correspondence from the district council showing that funding would be available for CAS to carry out survey analysis and produce the HNS report for the parish council. Funding would be obtained through an application to the Community Housing Fund. The PC would cover the £1 per household stationery and printing costs from its own resources and arrange distribution. To minimise costs, the PC would arrange for survey documents to be distributed with the LSPN or by PC members. Potentially, completed surveys could be returned to the village shop for collection.

Subject to CHF funding being confirmed, it was agreed that the PC would proceed with the survey on this basis with £350 allocated for contingency.

Actions: AS, IR & JB to produce proposals for next stage of project. IR to circulate latest Babergh HNS via email.

Members requested that the clerk locate the previous HNS which was carried out 10 years ago.

17.9.9 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN

SCC's emergency planning unit has requested information on whether the PC is continuing to progress a community emergency plan. It was reported that the plan is being developed by NB who has agreed to report at the January PC meeting.

Action: Clerk to reply to SCC to indicate work on the plan is in progress.

17.9.10 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

17.9.10.1 Matters discussed at planning committee

IR reported that:

- AS will look into further ways of opposing the Konings application
- AS has agreed to speak against the Konings proposals at the district council meeting where the application will be considered.

These matters are fully recorded in the September 5 planning committee minutes.

17.9.10.2 Traffic

VK had submitted a report to the parish council and JF covering highways maintenance issues that need to be addressed.

JF had taken particular note of VK's action to prevent white lining work on Blundens Corner being carried out incorrectly by the SCC team on site. JF explained that there had been a procedural error in works starting before a survey had been conducted to confirm where lines needed to be marked. The SCC system has now been updated so it contains the correct information on Blundens Corner. He thanked VK for her vigilance.

VK pointed out to JF that her report also contained many other examples of:

- Maintenance work that is needed on roads in the parish, including correcting substandard work
- Operational practices that need to be improved.

She asked JF if he could arrange for an SCC officer with appropriate authority to visit the parish, inform him/herself of the issues and ensure they are dealt with. JF replied that SCC is not structured to send a senior manager for a parish visit of this sort. Instead, JF said he would take VK's report to the manager of SCC's customer service team. The manager would contact VK to brief her on the action SCC will take to deal with the specific issues raised.

JF agreed that VK should update her report for subsequent meetings and highlight for his attention any issue where SCC had not taken the necessary action.

Action: VK to update her September 2017 traffic report for the November meeting and subsequent meetings, recording SCC remedies to address the issues raised and matters where SCC action remains outstanding.

19.9.10.3 School Street noticeboard

Members considered a letter from the multi-academy trust requesting that the School Street community noticeboard be replaced and either moved or incorporated within a new school sign. The school's concern is its shabby appearance and that parts of it are in poor repair.

VK, noting her position as a Governor of the school, reported that it is unclear which organisation owns the noticeboard, but it is used exclusively and extensively by residents.

The PC considered the trust's proposals. It was agreed that the site should be retained for a noticeboard but the trust's request for it to be replaced is reasonable given its age, appearance and proximity to the site for the school's new sign.

Action: AC to assess the condition of the noticeboard with VK who will attend in her role as a governor. AC will recommend to the BWP whether the sign should be renewed/replaced. The matter will be considered by the BWP with a view to recommending whether the expenditure should be incurred within the current financial year or next financial year.

17.9.10.4 The Downs - to consider quotes for replacing the south handrail

Three quotes had been received. The cheapest quote was ruled out as it did not meet the PC's specification. It was agreed that the second cheapest contractor should be selected subject to waiving a request for a £600 upfront fee.

Action: Clerk to contact the contractor to explain that it will not be possible to make a payment upfront, as this would contravene standing orders, and propose payment within two weeks of completion. Subject to the contractor agreeing these terms, it will be appointed.

Following the meeting, the clerk informed members that the cheapest quote had been for oak materials. The matter will be reconsidered in light of this information.

17.9.10.5 Streetlighting project progress

Members asked the clerk to contact SCC to clarify the potential works schedule. The clerk will establish how many 'unretained' lights the council can remove by the end of September. The clerk will circulate SCC's response. Members will then agree the works schedule and inform the clerk who will produce a works order and send it to SCC contracting it to carry out the project.

Action: Clerk to clarify potential timescale for removal of 'unretained' lights with SCC and draft works order after discussion with councillors.

17.9.11 PC COMMUNICATION WITH COUNCILLORS/TECHNOLOGY

Some members reported that they were having difficulties opening certain types of documents circulated by the clerk, particularly email messages sent as attachments. The clerk will send future documents in a format councillors can open.

17.9.12 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The PC had received a circular from the police on burglary awareness/crime reduction. VK noted that the police do not engage proactively with the parish council – for example the PC no longer receives reports from the police or information on any local incidents. The police did not attend the AGM.

Action: Engagement with the police to be included on the agenda for the November meeting.

17.9.13 TO AGREE ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

The chairman will consider whether there are any items to report and circulate a proposal to members.

17.9.14 OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Future agenda items - (November meeting)

- Potential response to the Boundary Review
- Engagement with the police
- Removal of the broken pole on Clipt Bush Corner
- District council's removal of the community bottlebank facility from the Angel car park
- Asset review
- No Parking sign for the village green
- New School Street noticeboard
- SCC action to address issues in the traffic report

Future agenda items - (January meeting)

- Community Emergency Plan

Actions: Clerk to ask the district council where the bottlebank has been moved to and whether a replacement will be provided.

17.9.15 TO CONFIRM DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday November 7 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.37 pm.