

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30PM (by Skype)

Present: Stevie Bezencenet – Chairman (SB)
Sean Fry (SF) – Vice-chairman
Adam Sedgwick (AS)
Martin Nielsen (MN)
Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Rosemary Emeny (RE)

Apologies: Isabelle Reece (IR)

In attendance: James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD), SCC councillor James Finch (JF) (7.30-8.05), BDC councillor Melanie Barrett (MB) (7.30-7.50)

20.9.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above.

The Clerk explained that IR had not attended a council or planning committee meeting since March. Therefore under the ‘six-month rule’ set out in S85 of the Local Government Act her absence needed to be approved by the parish council in order for her to remain a member of the council and planning committee. The Clerk summarised an email from IR explaining her reasons for not attending which related principally to her views that there should be a return to physical meetings as soon as practical.

It was agreed to accept the reasons IR provided for her absence and to review the situation in January if necessary. Therefore IR remained a member of the council and committee.

Action: Clerk to write to IR with the parish council’s decision.

20.9.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

None declared.

20.9.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

20.9.4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2020 were approved. (These would be signed at a date agreed by the Chairman and Clerk).

20.9.5 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO SCC & BDC COUNCILLORS

20.9.5.1 District Councillor’s report

The written report was noted and oral updates provided. Information that had been requested by the parish council at the previous meeting included:

- An update on the Thorington Street Conservation Area appraisal. MB said she would report further at the next parish council meeting by when she expected the report to be close to completion.
- An update on BDC’s responsibility for cutting back vegetation overhanging paths and gardens on Crossfields. MB said BDC had not yet assessed its responsibility for this maintenance. Councillors informed MB that this work had been done by BDC in the past and that faster progress in carrying out the work/confirming BDC’s responsibility for it was necessary. MB committed to follow up with BDC officers and requested pictures of the land concerned.

Actions: SB to provide pictures to MB. MB to report on these issues at the next meeting.

20.9.5.2 County Councillor's report

The written report was noted and oral updates provided.

JF further reported that he had met the SCC Cabinet member responsible for school bus policy and reiterated the parish council's concerns over the new policy. However, due to circumstances relating to COVID-19, SCC was not planning to make any exceptions to the policy at this time.

The Clerk reported that JF had still not responded to the parish council's letter sent in January regarding the impact of the policy on low income families. JF said he would request a response from the Cabinet member responsible if the parish council wished. He also claimed that SCC's exceptions policy may allow children from families in the parish who receive benefits to appeal successfully for free transport to a school that is not their nearest. He asked the parish council to inform him if any parishioners are in that position so that he could assist with a potential appeal.

20.9.5.2 .1 Highways and Traffic

JF reported that he had raised the parish council's request for correct placing of roundels in the 20mph zone with SCC officers again and was disappointed that no action had been taken.

Following discussion at the July meeting, AS said he would circulate to councillors some suggested sites for speed monitoring by SCC as a first step in selecting potential sites for speed hump installation. JF said that after receiving the list SCC officers would decide whether the monitoring would take place. VK requested that JF ensure SCC officers write to the parish council with their conclusion. JF said he would do so.

Action: AS to circulate a list of potential sites to councillors.

It was noted that the parish council had received information on designating roads as Quiet Lanes. Members considered that this could be beneficial for the parish but further research into the process, funding available and the implications was needed to inform discussion.

Action: MN to submit a paper providing further information on Quiet Lanes to the next parish council or planning committee meeting.

It was noted that c.30 patches at the junction of Butt Road and the B1068 are continually repaired by SCC and that this poor road condition can create risks to pedestrians.

20.9.6 FINANCIAL MATTERS

20.9.6.1 RFO's report

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

20.9.6.2 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve orders totalling £1,407.02, including invoices for £550 received after preparation of the RFO's report. In addition, the Clerk was given authorisation to pay for a new dog litter bin costing c.£120.

20.9.6.3 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Changes to the Financial Regulations to take account of latest updates notified by SALC and to allow for electronic banking were agreed. A minor change to the language in the Standing Orders proposed by SF was agreed.

Action: JD to make the changes agreed.

20.9.7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/COVID-19

SB reported that the parish volunteer network was receiving fewer requests for assistance compared to the initial period of COVID-19 and that the volunteers had worked proactively to provide help. It was noted that proactive engagement by the community as a whole would continue to be important to understand which residents need assistance, particularly as some may not be aware of the volunteer network or reluctant to request help.

Action: SB to approach the co-ordinator of the volunteer network to discuss ongoing action to minimise the risk of parishioners in need not receiving assistance.

Councillors discussed future meeting arrangements. A number felt that a return to face to face meetings would be desirable to assist in effective discussion and public participation, reflecting views expressed by IR, so long as arrangements could be made for social distancing and for those who did not feel comfortable to attend physically. Therefore, as a first step it was agreed that SB should approach The Crown to ask if the pub's tepee could be used for parish council meetings. This was on the basis that the tepee would be in range of The Crown's Wi-fi, sufficiently warm and that the health risks are acceptable to councillors.

Action: SB to approach the Crown to discuss the suitability and availability of the tepee for parish council meetings.

20.9.8 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

It was noted that a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Group should be held following the recent completion of the Landscape Character Assessment.

Action: SB to ask the NHP Group Chairman to hold a meeting.

SB asked SF to stand in as Chairman of the meeting as her Skype connection was unreliable.

20.9.9 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

20.9.9.1 Recreation Ground

VK reported that:

- The new Recreation Ground Management Committee expected to hold the AGM in October;
- RE was heading a group organising waste clearance;
- AS had been appointed Treasurer.

Potential sources of funding identified that could be pursued included remaining S.106 funds and the Sustainable Development Fund Recovery Grant.

20.9.9.2 The Downs

It was noted that a large branch had fallen from a tree on The Downs.

Action: MN and AS said they would dispose of the branch themselves or report back to the Chairman/Clerk if a contractor is required.

20.9.9.2 Footpaths

VK reported that debris on the pavement leading from the Community Woodland towards Stoke Village was making use of the pavement difficult.

Action: VK to ask the Community Woodland volunteers if they would agree to clear the pavement.

20.9.10 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that a resident had sent pictures of flytipping on the permissive path near the border with Nayland Parish. It was also noted that a large bag of waste had been left near the Community Woodland.

Action: RE to check whether the flytipping has been removed (after the Clerk requests its location from the resident) and contact the District Council to ask for its removal if this has not already been done.

20.9.11 ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- Recreation ground
- Request for Speedwatch volunteers

- Parish council vacancies
- New permitted development rules are in effect but do not apply in the AONB
- Availability of the Sustainable Development Fund Recovery Grant.

20.9.12 OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

20.9.12.1 Outstanding issues

It was noted that the budgeting process for 2021/22 was due to start before the November meeting. It was agreed that rather than hold a Budget Working Party meeting, the Clerk should prepare a report prior to the November meeting, on the basis of which it would be decided whether a BWP meeting is necessary.

Action: Clerk to circulate a budget report before the November meeting.

20.9.12.2 Future agenda items

- Neighbourhood Plan
- GDPR
- Observance of 20mph zone/speed monitoring
- Recreation Ground
- Thorington St Conservation Area appraisal
- Vegetation maintenance on Crossfields

20.9.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 7.30pm – venue TBC.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35pm.