

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 3 NOVEMBER 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) (7.35-7.50)

20.11.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above.

20.11.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

None declared.

20.11.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

20.11.4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2020 were approved. (These would be signed at a date agreed by the Chairman and Clerk). Actions from the minutes not scheduled to be discussed elsewhere on the agenda were reviewed. None remained open.

20.11.5 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO SCC & BDC COUNCILLORS

20.11.5.1 District Councillor's report

The written report was noted and oral updates provided. MB reported that she was continuing to liaise with officers to provide an update on the Thorington Street Conservation Area appraisal.

Following previous discussions on the matter, MB acknowledged that it is likely to be BDC's responsibility to cut back vegetation overhanging paths and gardens on Crossfields and requested pictures to pass onto officers.

Action: RE to assess whether there are issues with overhanging vegetation at present and send pictures to MB if there are. MB to report on action she has taken at the next meeting.

20.11.5.2 County Councillor's report

The written report was noted and oral updates provided. SF requested daily localised COVID-19 data. JF said he would request it from SCC officers but did not consider it likely that he would be able to provide it.

20.11.5.2.1 Highways and Traffic

JF reported that he had insisted to SCC Highways that 20mph roundels be placed near Blundens Corner the next time white lining work takes place in Stoke village. VK and SF reminded JF that two pairs of roundels are required and that these should be 50 metres apart in line with SCC specifications. JF noted this information.

JF confirmed that preliminary speed data gathering as an initial step in assessing the case for speed humps would cost c.£500 per survey spot. It was agreed that the parish council would provide match funding so that at least two sites could be surveyed.

Action: SF and VK to liaise with JF on setting up a call with SCC to discuss survey locations.

20.11.6 FINANCIAL MATTERS

20.11.6.1 RFO's report

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

20.11.6.2 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve orders totalling £2,233.94, including a payment for £400 not included on the RFO's report to St Mary's Church to support maintenance of the churchyard, principally grass cutting. The meeting considered a request from the PCC to backdate the payment to include four years of funding that was budgeted by the parish council but not requested by the PCC. It was agreed that one year's backdated payment plus a payment for the current year was proportionate and that in future the payment should only be made if requested by the PCC in the year for which it is budgeted. Before agreeing this payment the meeting considered a briefing from NALC on the legality of parish councils providing funds for this purpose including lack of legal consensus and the government's view that current legislation allows such payments.

20.11.6.3 Electronic banking

SF asked whether other members had contacted Barclays to set themselves up to authorise electronic payments.

Action: MN, AS and SB agreed to contact Barclays with a view to gaining the necessary equipment to authorise electronic payments. The Clerk confirmed he had received a form from Barclays to request online access to the account but without authority to authorise payments, and would return to Barclays requesting access for himself and other relevant PC members.

20.11.6.4 2021-22 budget and precept

The Clerk presented a report proposing a budget for business as usual spending in 2021-22, general reserves and reserves earmarked for previously identified projects.

In considering business as usual spending it was agreed that it was not necessary to budget for a payment to BAPTC in 2021-22.

In considering earmarked reserves, it was noted that the sum reserved for Well Housing was unlikely to be sufficient. It was further noted that the council was in the early stages of investigating the installation of speed humps and that grit bins in the parish are ageing. It was also noted that there would potentially be calls for funding in the near future for projects on the Recreation Ground. The timescale for this would be driven by the need for the Recreation Ground to make an application this year for Locality funding from the District Councillor.

It was agreed that the following items should be added to the projects/capital spending plan for 2021-22 onwards.

- Well Housing – increase sum reserved from £500 to £1,500;
- Grit bins - £750;
- Speed humps -£1,000 for speed monitoring (potentially to take place in 2020-21) , plus planning for sufficient reserves to fund installation should the project go ahead;
- Quiet Lanes – cost TBC depending on availability of grant funding.

Councillors noted information circulated before the meeting showing that annual streetlighting costs had fallen by c.£1,300 since completion of the streetlighting project.

Discussion of the precept took account of the projected year end financial position, the need to ensure reserves will be available to fund planned projects in the short and medium term and the reduced bill for streetlighting. After considering these issues, councillors agreed that the precept for 2021-22 should be frozen at £13,300.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his work on the budget report.

Action: Clerk to inform BDC of the precept decision; Clerk to provide an updated budget report, showing the decisions agreed, for approval at the January meeting.

20.11.6.5 Internal Auditor for 2020-21

The Clerk recommended that the council should appoint Julie Lawes, an experienced, qualified clerk local to the area, to carry out the internal audit for 2020-21. The Clerk reported that SALC had provided a good service but tended to follow a templated approach which did not always take full account of the way the parish council operates. In addition, the availability of the SALC team to discuss audit findings was limited by time constraints. It was agreed to appoint Julie Lawes as internal auditor for 2020-21 for these reasons.

Action: Clerk to arrange appointment of the internal auditor.

20.11.7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/COVID-19

SB reported that discussions with the parish volunteer network indicated that it provided coverage across the community. It was also noted that the church had set up a community foodbank in Nayland, and that the Stoke village shop was likely to be offering a similar service shortly. However, councillors reported that they were aware of some parishioners who were uncertain how to access support. Members considered that this could indicate a need to raise awareness of these services and extend their reach, and that the parish council may be able to offer assistance in this respect.

Action: SB to contact the volunteer network co-ordinator to discuss how the parish council could assist in maximising awareness of the network and supporting it.

20.11.8 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SB reported that the Landscape Appraisal had been publicised through the LSPN and published on the council website. The next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Group would be arranged in November.

20.11.9 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

20.11.9.1 Planning committee

The Chairman reported on the decisions at the meeting which preceded the full parish council meeting, focusing on the planning application for No.1 Butt Road. Full details are in the planning committee minutes.

20.11.9.2 Recreation Ground

RE reported on work by volunteers, farmers and local companies who had donated time and machinery to help with clearance and maintenance work, and plans to improve the RG entrance.

20.11.10 PLANNING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

MN presented a proposal to broaden the terms of reference of the committee to cover environment, conservation and landscape issues. It was noted that the council and committee are dealing with an increasing number of requests and issues related to this agenda and with a link to planning. Formally broadening the committee's remit would enable a more proactive approach and allow relevant issues to be considered in a timely manner.

It was agreed that the proposal should be accepted with the committee renamed the planning and environment committee and meetings scheduled for one hour on months where there is no full council meeting. On months where there is a full council meeting, planning applications would be the committee's priority. All budgetary and spending decisions would remain with the full council.

20.11.10 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that BDC's environmental protection team had requested contact details for the farmer of the land adjacent to Sudbury Road following complaints of a bird scarer sounding at very frequent intervals. The farmer's details were given to the Clerk by councillors.

Action: Clerk to put BDC in contact with the farmer.

20.11.11 ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- Precept to be frozen, funding reserved to support projects to improve parish assets
- Speed humps – discussions with SCC to agree speed monitoring sites as an initial step
- New remit for planning committee
- Quiet Lanes
- Community network (following SB contact with the co-ordinator)
- Vacancies for parish councillors
- Landscape Appraisal

20.11.12 OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

20.11.12.1 Quiet Lanes

Responses to the LSPN article on Quiet Lanes were noted. Following discussion of the potential benefits and limitations it was agreed that:

- The council would register an expression of interest with Quiet Lanes Suffolk;
- Martin Nielsen would act as the lead councillor.

Action: Clerk to register the parish council's expression of interest.

20.11.12.2 Boxted Mill Bridge

It was noted that Essex County Council was proposing to reconstruct the bridge for use by 40 tonne vehicles despite concerns about heavy vehicles using the route on narrow lanes and local organisations highlighting the importance of conserving the existing historical structure.

Action: AS to write to ECC registering concerns about the proposal and requesting that the parish council is formally consulted and informed about such plans in the future.

20.11.12.3 Future agenda items

- Neighbourhood Plan
- GDPR
- Speed monitoring
- Recreation Ground
- Thorington St Conservation Area appraisal
- Vegetation maintenance on Crossfields
- Boxted Mill Bridge works

20.11.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 5 January 2021 at 7.30pm – venue TBC.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm.