

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD 4 MAY 2021 AT 7.30PM (by Skype)

Present:	Stevie Bezencenet – Chairman (SB) Sean Fry (SF) – Vice-chairman Adam Sedgwick (AS) Martin Nielsen (MN) (7.30-9.00) Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Apologies:	Rosemary Emeny (RE)
In attendance:	James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD), SCC councillor James Finch (JF) (7.30-8.45), BDC councillor Melanie Barrett (MB) (7.30-8.45), one member of the public (7.30-9.40)

21.5.1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

SB was re-elected as chairman. SF was re-elected as vice-chairman.

21.5.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above

21.5.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

None.

21.5.4 PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public raised concerns over increased traffic, traffic speed and noise on Polstead Street including noise caused by traffic crossing drainage covers and speed monitoring equipment. She asked for an update on actions to mitigate it. Councillors advised that:

- SCC had been surveying traffic speed at the Parish Council's request as a potential pre-cursor to speed restraints being installed.
- Speedwatch activity had ceased during lockdown and was due to resume shortly, although there was a need to recruit new volunteers.
- The resident could contact Anglian water regarding the drainage issue and that the company had a good record in responding to such concerns.

JF was asked to investigate whether a pilot of ANPR speed monitoring could take place in the village. He responded that he would make enquiries, but the process of identifying pilot locations was at an early stage.

21.5.5 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN/APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

21.5.5.1 Planning and environment committee

MN was re-elected as chairman. SF was elected as vice-chairman. The committee's terms of reference were confirmed.

21.5.5.2 Recreation Ground Management Committee

It was noted that the Recreation Ground Management Committee's make-up had changed and was no longer made up of representatives of village organisations.

Action: It was agreed that RE, as a committee member and councillor, would be asked at the next meeting whether she would agree willing to report to the Parish Council on relevant RGMC matters.

21.5.5.3 Village Hall Management Committee

It was noted that: the Parish Council did not have a representative since Isabelle Reece's

resignation from the council; and that it was not necessary for the representative to be a councillor.

Action: Given the current shortage of resource on the Parish Council, it was agreed that the Clerk would ask IR, at an appropriate time, if she was willing to act as the Parish Council's representative and provide reports to the council.

21.5.5.4 PCC

AS explained that the Parish Council does not have a representative on the Parochial Church Council in the sense of nominating a member. PCC members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting from those on the church's electoral roll.

21.5.5.5 Primary School

VK reported that there was no provision on the governing body for a representative to the Parish Council. Although she was expecting to step down as a primary school governor, she considered that she would remain in a position to provide reports to the Parish Council on relevant matters relating to the school. She agreed to continue carrying out this role.

21.5.5.6 LAWC

It was noted that AS and Nicki Bray had been appointed as trustees on the Parish Council's nomination for a fixed term and remained in post. AS agreed to continue reporting on relevant matters.

21.5.5.7 BAPTC

MN agreed to continue as the Parish Council's representative.

21.5.5.8 Public transport

SB agreed to continue as the Parish Council's representative.

21.5.5.9 Police liaison

SF agreed to continue as the Parish Council's representative.

21.5.6 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021 and 22 April 2021 were approved. (These would be signed at a date agreed by the Chairman and Clerk).

21.5.7 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO BDC & SCC COUNCILLORS

21.5.7.1 District Councillor's report

The written report was noted and oral updates provided.

MB reported that the Thorington Street Conservation Area appraisal was still not completed.

MB was informed that the District Council's planning team was consistently failing to implement the Parish Council's recommendations on planning applications when making determinations. It was not clear why the recommendations were not being accepted by BDC as no explanations had been received. In addition, councillors pointed out that there had been cases where District Council planners appeared to have made wrong decisions as site visits are not being carried out at present. MB indicated that planning officers would be prepared to discuss the reasons for their decisions if requested.

Action: MB agreed to ask: (1) the planning team whether there is an obligation to inform statutory consultees why recommendations have not been accepted; (2) the BDC Leader to require the planning team to resume site visits. MB to report back to the Parish Council on these issues.

MB was asked how many garages in the village are owned by the District Council and how many are occupied. MB said BDC is currently carrying out a review of these issues.

Action: MB to advise the Parish Council on the BDC contact for reviewing garage usage in the parish.

Parish councillors alerted MB and JF to congestion caused by parking at the centre of Stoke village by the crossroads, and the inconvenience caused and potential safety issues. SB indicated that the Parish Council would consider raising this matter again if current issues persisted when exacerbating factors including building work are no longer having an impact.

21.5.7.2 County Councillor's report

The written report was noted and oral updates provided.

JF and MB were asked whether funding could be provided for mobile A-frame signs to alert traffic when volunteers are carrying out litter picking on roadside verges. JF said he would investigate and report back by 14 May.

JF reported that SCC Highways had not provided information in response to his enquiries on why traffic restrictions had been in place near Thorington Street for several months despite no apparent work being carried out to repair damage to a bank.

21.5.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

21.5.8.1 Annual accounts 2020-21

The accounts were reviewed. It was noted that SB had paid personally for NHP materials and a defibrillator due to project timing requirements and that these purchases had been listed under councillors' expenses. It was agreed that the accounts should be amended to allocate the sums paid by SB to NHP and project expenditure.

It was noted that insurance payments, BDC refuse collection payments and SCC streetlight running cost payments were significantly over budget. The Clerk explained that this was due to (1) the payment of the Recreation Ground's insurance costs during the year; (2) the timing of bills from SCC and BDC which meant annual payments for 2019/20 and 2020/21 had been made during the year. It was agreed that a note to this effect should be included in the performance against budget section of the accounts.

With these changes agreed the accounts were approved. (These would be signed at a date agreed by the Chairman).

Action: Clerk to make the agreed amendments to the accounts.

21.5.8.2 External audit exemption certificate

The certificate of exemption was reviewed. It was noted that income and expenditure for 2020-21 had been placed in the wrong boxes. With this correction agreed, the certificate was approved. (This would be signed at a date agreed by the Chairman and Clerk).

21.5.8.3 Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

The Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was reviewed and approved. (This would be signed at a date agreed by the Chairman and Clerk)..

21.5.8.4 Accounting statements 2020-21

The accounting statements for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return were reviewed and approved. (These would be signed at a date agreed by the Chairman and Clerk).

21.5.8.5 RFO's report

Members received the RFO's report and were satisfied it was a correct record of the PC's financial position. The appointment of the grasscutting contractor with a rate increase of £20 per cut was approved. It was noted that this was the first rate increase for six years.

21.5.8.6 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve orders totalling £1,823.57.

21.5.8.7 Exercise of Public Rights

It was agreed that the Exercise of Public Rights would start on 14 June or at the RFO's discretion, in compliance with regulations, should the internal audit be completed after this date.

21.5.8.8 Audit

The Clerk recommended that in future years an extraordinary meeting should be held in April to approve the previous year's accounts. This would enable the parish council to consider the internal audit report alongside other statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the annual meeting in May. This recommendation was agreed.

21.5.8.9 Litter picking signage

A request for funding for A-frame signs from the parish litter picking volunteers, if the group could not obtain funding from another source, was noted. It was agreed that:

- The Parish Council would fund costs estimated by the group at up to £300 for four signs should the District Council or County Council indicate that funding would not be available within a reasonable timeframe to be determined by the Clerk and Chairman
- MN would approach suppliers to see if signs could be purchased for a lower cost than indicated by the volunteers.

Action: Clerk to inform the volunteers of the decision; MN to approach the company for a quote.

21.5.8.10 Archiving Neighbourhood Plan documents

It was noted that the Chairman of the NHP Working Group had requested funding for the Parish Clerk to act as archivist for digital NHP documents. It was agreed to allocate funding for up to 10 hours of the Clerk's time for this purpose over the next two months, although the expectation was that the actual time required would be below this cap.

21.5.9 REVIEW OF POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND INTERESTS

21.5.9.1 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Clerk recommended an amendment to the Standing Orders relating to the definition of a majority vote, and that the meeting should consider whether to adopt SALC/NALC's Model Standing Orders in view of this. It was agreed that:

- The amendment recommended would be made
- The current Standing Orders would be retained given the thorough research into requirements carried out by the Working Group that had written them.

Action: Clerk to amend the Standing Orders.

21.5.9.2 Roadside advertising policy

An update proposed by MN in view of actions by an estate agent was agreed.

Action: Clerk to update the policy and send it to local estate agents.

MN left the meeting after this item

21.5.9.3 GDPR

The Clerk reported that the policies adopted by the council were model documents supplied by NALC, and that the internal auditor would give an opinion on the Parish Council's compliance.

21.5.9.4 Adequacy of land and asset insurance

Provisions were considered appropriate.

21.5.9.5 Register of interests

All members present confirmed their register of interests was up to date.

Action: Clerk to request confirmation from MN and RE who were not present for this item.

21.5.10 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

AS reported on correspondence with the District Council on potential conflicts between site allocation in the District Council's Local Plan and the Parish Council's NHP work. A reply had been requested to a letter setting out the Parish Council's concerns.

21.5.11 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

21.5.11.1 Arrangements for future Parish Council meetings and the APM 2021

The Clerk reported that regulations that allow virtual meetings would expire on 6 May. As things stand, future meetings would need to be in person, and could be held from Step 3 of the Government's Roadmap out of lockdown scheduled for 17 May. SB and SF said they would be very unlikely to attend in person meetings in the current circumstances for reasons related to professional caring responsibilities for vulnerable people. It was agreed that the Clerk and Chairmen would consider arrangements for holding future committee and full council meetings after the date for Step 3 of the Roadmap out of lockdown was confirmed.

With regard to the Annual Parish Meeting, it was noted that the APM is valued by parish organisations, but members considered that a number of representatives would be reluctant to attend an in person meeting on or before the June 1 statutory deadline due to vulnerabilities. After considering the situation it was agreed that the APM would be a virtual meeting on 1 June at 7.30pm.

Action: Clerk and councillors to publicise the APM on parish noticeboards and social media.

21.5.11.2 Recreation Ground

AS reported that maintenance work to allow the playground to reopen fully had started. The Recreation Ground Management Committee was also considering installing rubber speed humps at the entrance to the Recreation Ground. The primary school would be consulted before any decision is taken.

21.5.11.3 Grit bins

The Clerk reported that a decision on installing grit bins in any new locations, including where former heaps used to be, would be needed at the next parish council meeting to meet the SCC deadline. Any bins installed outside the Conservation Area would need to be yellow to meet SCC requirements. It was noted that a new bin is required on Clipt Bush Corner where a grit heap had previously been located and also that a number of existing bins are in need of repair.

Action: Clerk to contact the Chairman of the Recreation Ground Management Committee for details and costs of:

- Sourcing plastic wood to make new grit bins
- Labourers to repair existing bins and construct a new one for Clipt Bush Corner.

21.5.12 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

SB reported that she had received a request from a parishioner and the Recreation Ground Management Committee to use the Village Green for sales on May and August Bank Holidays to raise funds for parish amenities. It was agreed that these requests were acceptable.

21.5.13 TO AGREE ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- Roadside advertising policy
- Annual Parish Meeting

21.5.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 6 July 2021 at 7.30pm – venue TBC.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40pm.