

# STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



50 Pepys Way, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3LL

## MINUTES

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Virtual Meeting ~ 7.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr B. Stone (Chairman) Cllr G. Blackman ~ Vice-chair  
Cllr J. Wallace Cllr R. Morrad  
Cllr R. Bridge Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: Three (3)

### **PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

A moment of silence was held to commemorate Mr J. Tungate, who was a Stoke Parish Councillor from 2015 to 2019.

#### **Part A. Public Discussions**

Ms T. Robb spoke to advise the members that she had been regularly checking the defibrillator casing, following previous conversations that the cabinet was letting in moisture.

She thanked Cllr J. Wallace and Ward Cllr M. Pendergast for all their help in re-sealing the unit and asked the Clerk to purchase a new label for the front of the cabinet, where it was acknowledged that the original sticker was all weathered and peeling away from the glass.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke in response to raise her concerns, that upon checking the repairs to the defibrillator cabinet, that she had noted the closest located street lamp did not fully illuminate the pathway outside the defibrillator.

A discussion ensued where Cllr R. Bridge suggested that the Parish Council could instal a lamp over the casing, where additional concerns were raised that the light could be vandalised if it was easily accessible from the roof. A discussion took place where the Clerk was instructed to go back to Medway Council to request a streetlamp be installed on the lamppost that supported the school warning sign nearby.

#### **Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items**

None.

Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, opened the meeting at 07.17pm and thanked all the members for attending.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Min 2086:21 None.

#### **2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

Min 2087:21 None.

#### **3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature**

Min 2088:21 None.

#### **4. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting - Appendix A**

Min 2089:21 The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on Wednesdays 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, as already circulated by the Clerk, were submitted.

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It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace and seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr G. Blackman, that they be approved as a correct record. This motion was carried with four (4) Councillors voting in favour and one (1) abstaining.

## 5. **Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

Min 2090:21 None.

## 6. **Parish Matters**

### **a). To receive an update on the Village's Power Shortages**

Min 2092:21 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, read the report she had received from Ward Cllr M. Pendergast, surrounding the recent power shortages and flooding. (Please refer to **Index A** for a copy of this correspondence).

Enquiries were raised as to why the Ward Councillor's report had been sparse in providing an update on the power shortages. The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke in response to advise that having bumped into Cllr M. Pendergast at the weekend, she understood that the whole electricity supply to the Peninsula needed upgrading and not re-patching, as had previously happened. She advised that she understood that an application for a new feed would take time.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke in support to advise that a new power supply could take up to two years and made recommendations for Parishioners to submit their complaints by means of the loss adjustment form available on the UK Power Network website, instead of writing complaints.

She informed the members that she would be posting a link to the claim form on the members webpage, where Cllr R. Bridge also spoke to ask if the link could also be uploaded to the Stoke Village Facebook page as a pinned notice.

The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone concurred and reminded everyone to keep sending in their damages using the UK Power Network loss adjustment form.

### **b). To receive an update on the Village Floods**

Min 2093:21 The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, invited Ms P. Haselhurst from Medway Council's Flood Risk Team to speak.

Ms P Haselhurst spoke to thank the Parish Council for inviting her to attend and to advise that she had been carrying out a lot of field work investigations in Stoke. She confirmed having examined the flood ditches located on the outskirts of the village that she had obtained a better understanding as to their dynamic and that there were presently no blockages. She spoke to advise that having studied the flow of the flood water situated along Cuckolds Green Road that she had established that the source of the flooding in Lower Stoke, which had been caused by a fault with the surface water drainage system that was leaking into the fowl water drainage system. Where it had been concluded that the influx of wate into the fowl water system had caused it to overflow and for the water to rise through the drains and onto the road.

She confirmed that Medway Council were already instigated various flood risk measures that had included, but were not limited to, the clearing of the gullies and the provision of sandbags to the worst affected properties.

She verified that a meeting with Southern Water to discuss the fowl water drainage system had been sought and that Medway Council and Southern Water would work in unison to try to resolve the issues raised as quickly as possible.

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She reported that she had established the drainage ditches fed into the surface water system, where a query over the responsibility of the culverted watercourse had been raised. After much back and forth it had finally been established that the culvert was the responsibility of Medway Council, where it had been identified that an upgrade to improve the flow of the water was much needed.

However, as Medway Council had not been previously aware this culvert was their responsibility, no funding had been allocated to increase its capacity, With the next financial year looming Ms P Haselhurst confirmed that this item had been added onto the Borough Council's expenditure for next year, where she hoped she could provide the members with a further update later in the year.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke to thank Ms P Haselhurst for her report and to confirm that she had been in receipt of two complaints. She confirmed that the first complaint she had received was surrounding the constant noise of pumping, which was seconded by another Parishioner sat in the public gallery. The second complaint Cllr J. Wallace referred to was from a resident who lived in Shepherds Way, whose downstairs toilet was constantly appeared backed up with water. Ms P Haselhurst thanked Cllr J. Wallace for her feedback and advised that she would pass these comments onto her team at Medway Council for further investigation, she also made recommendations that the Villager(s) concerns should also be addressed with Southern Water.

Cllr G. Blackman spoke in response to that Southern Water did not handle grievances effectively, and made reference to previous complaints he had made that remained unresolved. He spoke to address the flooding in Middle Stoke, which he suspected was unconnected to Lower Stoke and made reference to the flood water in Middle Stoke, which backed up into Burrows Lane. He spoke of a neighbouring property to his, whose garden was constantly overrun with sewage.

Ms P Haselhurst thanked the Vice-Chair for his comments and confirmed the flooding issues in Middle Stoke were not connected. She advised that the flooding in Middle Stoke had derived from the Lower Medway internal drainage board foul water system, which was also being investigated.

With permission from the Chairman a member of the public spoke to recommend that any complaints surrounding the lack of action from Southern Water be addressed with Ofwat.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, was invited to speak where she asked Ms P Haselhurst to request Medway Council to install flood warning signs along the A228 and Grain Road, where she had witnessed first-hand a motorist stranded in deep flood waters in the dark at the weekend.

Cllr R. Morrad also spoke to advise that the same issues with flooding had been discussed least 5 years ago where none of the members concerns had been addressed. He advised that he was shocked to hear that nothing had changed and that the flooding had only got worse.

The Chairman Cllr B. Stone spoke to confirm that the Environment Agency owner ditches were not being maintained and verified that the ditches below the village needed re-digging. Ms P Haselhurst spoke in response to advise that the various ditches were the responsibility of the land owners to keep clear and unfortunately Medway Council had no control over this matter She did comment however that the flood risk team were chasing the landowners to ensure this matter was addressed urgently.

Finally, Cllr R. Bridge made a recommendation for a trench to be built from the Old Grain Road / A228 to direct the flood water into the nearest ditch. He also spoke of the basin that extended from High Halstow where the pipe was thought to be 4 times too small.

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## 7. Planning- Appendix B

### a). Applications

Min 2094:21 None.

### b). Decisions

Min 2095:21 None.

### c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 2096:21 None.

## 8. Finance – Appendix C

### a). To agree financial performance against the budget for January 2021

Min 2097:21 Cllr R. Morrad spoke to advise that following communications between he and the Clerk that he now received the paperwork he required to agree to the financial performance against the budget for January 2021. He thanked the Clerk for her cooperation and assistance.

### b). Update of account(s) for 2020/21 including payments received.

Min 2098:21 The Councillors carefully reviewed the bank balances provided in Appendix C where they deemed the figures as acceptable.

### c). Accounts paid since the last meeting to be ratified.

### d). Accounts for payment.

### e). Payment requests to be discussed for approval and payment.

Min 2099:21 It was proposed by Cllr R. Morrad and seconded by the Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, that the tables below, as previously circulated, be noted and the payments confirmed. This motion was unanimously agreed.

| Payee                          | Refer-ence  | Payment Method | Amount         | Notes   |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| Mrs J. Allen                   | -           | BACS           | £247.21        | January 2021 Wages  |
| Mrs J. Allen                   | -           | BACS           | £35.00         | Use of home office – January 2021   |
| HMRC                           | -           | BACS           | £247.20        | Payment of Tax & NI   |
| Vodafone Telephone & Broadband | -           | DIRECT DEBIT   | £38.66         | Broadband & Phone line rental for January 2021                                    |
| Colin Davis                    | -           | BACS           | £168.00        | January 2021 Payment Inspections & Cleaning INV 3129                              |
| The People's Pension           | Min 1775:20 | DIRECT DEBIT   | £41.63         | Both Employer & Employee Contributions for January 2021                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   |             |                | <b>£777.70</b> |   |
| High Halstow Parish Council    | -           | Credit - BACS  | £21.56         | 50% contribution from High Halstow PC towards the Vodafone Communications package |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   |             |                | <b>£21.56</b>  |   |

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## **f). To appoint an Internal Auditor for the 2020/2021 Audit**

**Min 3000:21** Cllr R. Morrad spoke to propose that the members looked to appoint a new internal auditor not only to help prepare a report at the end of this financial year but also to compile a report at the half year mark. He recommended the members spoke to KALC to obtain a list of auditors names, where he confirmed he would be happy to assist and to obtain quotes from some of their recommended contacts. This proposal was seconded by Cllr J. Wallace and unanimously agreed.

## **g). To appoint a 3<sup>rd</sup> signatory for the Parish Council bank account**

**Min 3001:21** Cllr R. Morrad spoke to advise that owing to the fact that he was currently shielding from the COVID-19 pandemic that he had decided against becoming a 3<sup>rd</sup> signatory for the Parish Council.

Cllr J. Wallace spoke in response to volunteer herself to become the 3<sup>rd</sup> signatory which was unanimously agreed.

## **9. Management of the Council's land and property – Appendix D**

### **a). Playparks**

#### **i Allhallows Road Playpark**

#### **iii Upper Stoke Playpark**

**Min 3002:21** The Play Park inspections from the month of January were accepted, where the report received confirmed that the play equipment in Allhallows Road and Upper Stoke appeared to be in good order, that all the touch points were being regularly disinfected and that the relevant COVID-19 advice signs remained in place.

#### **ii Heron Way Playpark**

**Min 3003:21** It was noted that some of the COVID-19 advice signs had been removed from the Heron Way Play Park and that one of the swing seats was splitting and required replacement.

The Clerk, Mrs J Allen spoke to suggest that the Parish Council considered using the seat from the adjacent swing (that had been removed owing to social distancing measures) as a temporary solution, whilst a replacement seat was sought. The Chairman approved of the Clerk's idea and asked her to arrange for the contractor to telephone him to arrange for its collection.

### **b). Notice board in Lower Stoke**

**Min 3004:21** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that she was waiting for the finalised quotes in writing before presenting the figures to the members at the next meeting.

## **10. Highways & Transportation**

### **a). Footpaths**

**Min 3005:21** No report.

### **b). Lighting**

**Min 3006:21** As previously documented in Part A. Cllr J. Wallace had raised concerns that the street lamp located nearest to the defibrillator cabinet did not fully illuminate the pathway. The Clerk had been instructed to report back to Medway Council to request a street lamp be installed on the lamppost that supported the school warning sign to assist with its illumination.

### **c). Highways and verges**

**Min 3007:21** Following a feed on Facebook it had been identified that there was a drain cover, close to the Indian takeaway, had been left open.

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With permission from the Chairman, a member of the public spoke to confirm that she too had seen this post and that she had closed the 'drain cover'. She confirmed that this cover had actually turned out to be a meter pick cover that had accidentally been left open.

**Min 3008:21** Cllr J. Wallace reported that she had noted the edges of the A228 from Middle Stoke heading towards Upper Stoke were missing.

## **d). Pot holes**

**Min 3009:21** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, received various reports of pot holes and the general poor condition of the A228 Road extending from the village up to the Turkey Mill Farm.

The Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, raised his concerns that there were still rickety manhole/BT covers along the same stretch of road that moved when driven over.

## **e). Fly tipping**

**Min 3010:21** No report.

## **f). School Warning Signs**

**Min 3011:21** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, advised that she had nothing new to report.

## **11. Communication**

### **a). Update on the Parish Council's new webpage and associated email addresses**

**Min 3012:21** Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise the members that she was still having a few teething problems with the security certificates. She advised however that upon receipt from the Clerk she had uploaded Agendas and Minutes dating back from 2018.

Cllr R. Morrad spoke to raise his concerns that the webpage showed different levels of security on different devices. Cllr J. Wallace thanked Cllr R. Morrad for his feedback and confirmed that she would speak to Hugo Fox (the website providers) to establish why this was occurring.

### **b). Parish Council owned tablets**

**Min 3013:21** It was acknowledged that the members were now in receipt of their Parish Council owned tablets and that there were still a few technical queries surrounding the access to their Parish Council emails that needed to be ironed out alongside SSL certificates.

## **12. Lower Stoke Car Park Lease – Appendix E**

### **a). To discuss the proposed conditions for the new Medway Council Lower Stoke Car Park lease**

**Min 3014:21** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise that since she had sent Medway Council a letter addressing the members concerns regarding the new proposed lease, that she had received no response. She confirmed that she had chased the Valuation Surveyor earlier that day by email and that she was now awaiting his response.

## **13. External Contractors**

### **a). J R Brickwork**

**Min 3015:21** None.

### **b). Eastborough Landscapes**

**Min 3016:21** None.

### **c). Colyn Property Services**

**Min 3017:21** The Clerk Mrs J. Allen, was reminded asked to speak to Mr Davis concerning a quote to install the new noticeboard, once agreed.



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## 14. Village Voice Publication

**Min 3018:21** It was recommended that the Clerk should apply to place an article in the next Village Voices Publication to urge the Parishioners to claim for loss of their electricity supply via UK Power Network website.

## 15. Correspondence

**Min 3019:21** The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to inform the members of two (2) emails she had received. The first concerning the HIF Bid presentation, which the members had previously declined and the second regarding the KALC Annual Planning Conference (a virtual meeting) due to take place later that month, which again the members turned down.

## 16. Reports and Circulars

**Min 3020:21** Cllr J. Wallace spoke to advise that she would like the members to discuss the installation of a Christmas Tree and festive lighting to in the High Street. Accordingly, she requested that the Clerk added these items onto the next month's agenda.

## 17. Date of next meeting

**Min 3021:21** The Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would be held via a virtual forum on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 at 7.00pm..

**He thanked the members for attending and closed the meeting at 08.41pm**

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

|                                       |               |                      |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| <b>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March</b> | <b>7.00pm</b> | <b>Virtual Forum</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|

## Index A

**6a). To receive an update on the Village's Power Shortages** **Min 2092:21**

**6b). To receive an update on the Village Floods**

My team and I continue to work on the above issues as well as others currently of concern including COVID-19 Vaccinations.

There is no quick fix nor magic wand one can simply wave to resolve everything.

As part of our work on the flooding issues Chris Spalding reviewed Medway Council's plans, strategy and assessments, finding them to be woefully out of date.

This was brought to the attention of the portfolio holder, Councillor Filmer and a formal question was asked by myself at the last full council meeting.

The reply advised these were updated and undergoing further review as part of the local plan process which has to take into account various development scenarios.

Copies of these updated documents have been requested.

We continue to work with council officers and other local competent knowledgeable people including undertaking location and site visits.

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I can also confirm that following representations it has now been confirmed the bridge that links Grain to the rest of us, that stoke residents and business owners use daily is to be taken back to the membrane and completely resurfaced in order to eradicate to continuing pothole problem that occurs every time there is significant rainfall.

Finally, some people may think it is a good idea to have everybody contact or email particular council officers, departments or indeed outside bodies as some way of reminding them matters need resolution.

All this does is clog up mail boxes and requires people to spend time replying to emails when they should be working on the issues that are the subject of said emails.

It is counterproductive and can possibly cause confusion.

Regards

Mick Pendergast  
Peninsular Ward Councillor.

DRAFT