

STALISFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Stalisfield Parish Council Meeting held in Stalisfield
Village Hall
on 16th March 2022

Present: Cllr Cat Horn (Chair), Cllr Tracy Dove, Cllr Chris Norwood and Cllr Nina Williams;
and Cllr Jerry Brown

Also present were Ward Member David Simmons and Stephen Weeks, Kent Wildlife Trust
and 15 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Councillor Rich Lehman and Parish Clerk Wendy Licence apologised for their absence.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Jerry Brown declared an interest in the planning to be discussed of 22/500556/LBC as
he had already submitted a personal objection to the plans.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting Held on 17 January 2022

Cllr Horn read the minutes.

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes as a true record with a couple of minor
alterations which were hand amended by Cllr Horn and then signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Ref: 21/503842/FULL

Address: Former Stables and Wagon Lodge Woodsell Farm Hillside Road Stalisfield
Faversham Kent ME13 0JF

Proposal: Change of use of disused stables and Wagon Lodge into holiday-lets

SBCllr Simmons confirmed that a bat survey needed to be carried out ahead of the proposal
going to committee. This survey will be carried out in Apr/May/Jun and it was therefore unlikely
that the proposal would go to committee before the Autumn.

A member of the public queried the deadline for comments to be made officially and it was
indicated that 31st March 2022 was the final date.

Litter bin

It was confirmed that next to the bench would be the most appropriate location, Cllr Norwood
queried who would be emptying it and it was confirmed that Swale would be responsible.

Broadband Update

Apparently the system has now altered so that any house with a lower than 30MB speed will
receive a voucher but it does not appear that enough houses will be under that threshold to
enable to the project to go forward. The question of broadband for the village hall was raised
and Cllr Horn indicated that the village hall is not currently allocated a post code. SBCllr
Simmons indicated it was mandatory to have a post code to obtain planning permission and
offered to follow this up with the appropriate department.

5. Presentation by Stephen Weeks on the ash dieback works in Spuckles Wood

Stephen Weeks gave a full presentation on the development of ash dieback from Asia and
moving throughout Europe as an introduction to the works in Spuckles Wood. They have
been monitoring the stages of progression of the disease and unfortunately due to a lot of the

mature trees now having up to 70% of the crown dead and numerous other branches affected by the disease which makes them much more brittle than usual, the standard methods of chain sawing and other conventional means are not appropriate in these circumstances. Heavier machinery has to be brought in for health and safety reasons. Apparently to contain and control is now too late and the current advice is to maintain ash in the hope that some will grow back. Although unfortunately not a lot of re growth is expected based upon the level of disease. A member of the public queried the use of sprays but SW said that again this is what not recommended, if the tree has natural immunity then it will not contract the disease and that is what they are working towards. Replanting will be considered once the works are complete and where necessary. Timing was queried with regards to wildlife etc and SW indicated that best practice was to wait until dormice were out of hibernation.

Cllr Horn asked when footpaths would be reinstated and SW indicated that there would be two rounds, once when these works were complete and then again when the wood is extracted.

SW did indicate that they may have to close some permissive paths where they go too near dangerous ash and that they need the canopy to close back over to kill bramble etc.

A member of the public raised the question of trees overhanging fields etc and SW agreed that the Spuckles should go back into coppice rotation – he said he would plan to discuss it with local farmers after the ash dieback works are complete. When questioned why it shouldn't be done at the same time to reduce the impact SW indicated that chestnut/other coppicing had much less risk attached to it so could be done using more conventional means without the need for heavy machinery and therefore could be done at a later date – as it hasn't been done since the 1940s it will hopefully be made a priority. A certain amount of dead wood will be left to encourage wildlife in deadwood habitats but hopefully other wood will be sold off to go towards the £80K that this current round of works is costing. A member of the public indicated that the farmer Richard Baker may be interested and SW said that they were already in contact with him.

Works are expected to be complete by end of the month. A member of the public raised the issue of losing orchids/hellebores/bluebells etc and Cllr Brown queried as to the possibility of these being raised and replanted. SW indicated that this has not been successful in the past and there were no plans to do this. Another member of the public indicated that the works do look very tidy and well done.

At this point Cllr Horn thanked SW for his presentation and he and his colleague left the meeting.

6. Public Time

The meeting was adjourned for the Public Time

A wide ranging discussion was held on the original plans for Woodsell. Members of the public were very worried as to future plans with discussions about possible development of a conference centre, increased traffic etc and it was thought that if the owner was willing to meet the village to discuss the plans then it may ease worries which to date are being based upon rumour. Members of the public felt it would be of benefit to have an awareness of the whole proposal.

It was mentioned by a member of the public that once some planning permission is received then it is likely planning applications will continue.

Also suggested by a member of the public that as many residents as possible should write individual letters on any planning applications from this property to ensure that it is clear that

the village consensus is objection to the redevelopment. A member of the public asked the question that if an objection letter had already been written would it still apply against a second application, SBCllr Simmons indicated that it depended upon what revisions had been made and that it was always of a benefit to write a second letter emphasising any objections.

Cllr Brown indicated that the plans on the Swale website were incorrect with inaccurate revision numbers, documents not uploaded etc.

A member of the public asked SBCllr Simmons whether the Woodsell planning was likely to be supported in committee, he indicated that the results of the bat survey would have to be received first but he had had no indication either way. It was suggested that if a site visit could be encouraged it would be helpful.

A member of the public asked that the Parish Council strongly object to the proposal, Cllr Horn indicated that the Parish Council would discuss the proposal and a response would be sent based upon this discussion.

A member of the public raised the point that if planning permission was not received then what would happen to the buildings in the long term.

SBCllr Simmons said that three people could speak at the committee meeting which will be held in the Autumn, a parish councillor, the applicant and an objector – they would each get three minutes.

It was suggested that Cllr Lehman be asked to raise the Woodsell planning with the Highways Agency to see their view on the potential increase in traffic.

A member of the public raised the query re a conservation plan – apparently Stalisfield is on the list to have a conservation plan, but there are a number of plans awaited. It was suggested that SPC try to get moved up the list, especially as Thowley have recently received their plan. Cllr Simmons will discuss with the conservation officer and report back.

Public time ended and the meeting resumed.

7. Planning Matters

Ref: 22/500550/FULL

Address: Land West of Church Road Stalisfield Kent ME13 0JG

Proposal: Change of use of grazing/agricultural land to a natural burial ground, including creation of associated access and car park.

Cllr Horn had suggested postponing this item via social media to the next meeting as there was a lot on the agenda to cover. A member of the public indicated that they were unaware of this postponement as the item had appeared on the formal agenda. Cllr Horn indicated there had been some confusion on the agenda and again said that a further meeting would give more time for discussion. A meeting would either be held within the time to submit responses or a request for an extension would be made. A member of the public was concerned that if an extension was not granted then it may appear that the Parish Council was in favour of the plan without any discussion being held. Cllr Horn indicated that on the odd occasion an extension to the response time was requested it had always been granted. This planning matter was held over to the next meeting.

A member of the public did indicate that they believed the planning maybe withdrawn with the next few days as the plan is within 250 metres of a private water supply. Cllr Horn asked if they received any further information to forward it to the Parish Council.

Ref: 22/500556/LBC

Address: Former Stables and Wagon Lodge Woodsell Farm Hillside Road Stalisfield Faversham Kent ME13 0JF

Proposal: Listed building consent for the change of use of stables and Wagon Lodge into holiday-lets, with erection of single storey extensions and insertion of rooflights.

A discussion was held and councillors felt that the Wagon Lodge proposal is awful and does not preserve the integrity of the building. It is not within the vernacular of the village and looks more like a Western Coach House. The potential light pollution from the stable block is exacerbated by no shutters on the skylights and the shutters that are available on other are unlikely to be used all of the time leading to a large increase in pollution. The council **UNANIMOUSLY OBJECT** to the proposal.

8. Finance

Councillor expenses

There were none.

Invoices

Two invoices were signed off for village hall rental, cheque to be raised.

Invoice for replacement batteries for the defib was submitted by Cllr Horn, invoice was agreed and signed off, cheque to be raised.

Request for a donation for the Kent Air Ambulance has been received, it was discussed and agreed that £150 would be donated, proposed by Cllr Horn, seconded by Cllr Norwood. This will leave £50 in the budget for any other requests.

9. Any Other Business

As a member of the public had raised the question of speed limits in the village it was agreed that Cllr Horn would request a presentation by Kent Highways at the Annual Meeting in May.

A member of the public raised the possibility of a family bench on the green. As the Parish Council have ultimate responsibility for the upkeep / potential liability issues with any damaged benches and to avoid needing to restrict too much furniture on the green at a later stage a suggestion was raised that a two new "chunky" oak benches replace the existing benches (Mick Ball / Sparky). There has been no upkeep on these in recent years and long term they will become a liability. Cllr Dove suggested that the Parish Council supply plaques to go onto these new benches for memorial purposes to those in the village as this will maintain consistency. It was suggested that KWT be approached to donate the oak and a local craftsman asked to produce them.

10. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the APM/AGM would be held on 16th May at 7.30pm at Stalisfield Village Hall.

Another meeting needs to be set to discuss the natural graveyard and any other business and a date will be circulated as soon as councillors have availability to their diaries.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.12pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

Date 31 March 2022