

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Wednesday 4th November 2020

Virtual Meeting ~ 7.00 pm

Attendees: Cllr G. Blackman ~ Vice-chair Cllr R. Morrad
Cllr J. Wallace Cllr R. Bridge
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: Four (4)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

Two members of the public spoke to ask that the Parish Council seek permission from Medway Council, to place a Christmas Tree in the Lower Stoke Car Park (opposite the Naggs Head Public House) and for Christmas lights to be hung from the lamposts in the High Street in Lower Stoke.

Another Parishioner also spoke to confirm that she was there to that she wanted to observe the meeting.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, opened the meeting and thanked all the members for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 1979:20 Two (2) apologies for absence were received from Cllr G. Barron, who had prior commitments and from the Chairman, Cllr B. Stone, who was stuck in traffic.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 1980:20 None.

3. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 1981:20 None.

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

Min 1982:20 The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting, held on Wednesday 7th October 2020, as already circulated by the Clerk were submitted.

It was proposed that the Clerk should amend the minutes as per Cllr R. Bridge's suggestions and re-submit them for formal approval at the next meeting.

5. Information arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Min 1983:20 None.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

6. Vacancies - Appendix B

a). **To discuss an application received for Co-option from Mr T. Hookway**

Min 1984:20 The Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, invited Mr T. Hookway to speak.

It was acknowledged that owing to a query surrounding anonymity that Mr T. Hookway's application for co-option would be deferred until December.

7. Planning- Appendix C

a). **Applications**

Min 1985:20 It was acknowledged that there were no new planning applications received since the last meeting.

Cllr R. Bridge however spoke to confirm that following the applications submitted for MC/20/2340 and Mc/20/2342 (Coningsby, 15 Grain Road) that he did not have any objections, succeeding his absence at the last meeting.

b). **Decisions**

Min 1986:20 The members acknowledged that there had been no new planning applications acceptances since the last meeting.

c). **Appeals and Other Matters.**

Min 1987:20 None.

8. Finance – Appendix D

a). **To agree financial performance against the budget for October 2020**

Min 1988:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, presented the members with the financial performance figures (that included the budgets set at the beginning of the year as a comparison) ranging from April 2020 through to October 2020. The Councillors evaluated these figures and after careful consideration the details were deemed as acceptable.

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

Min 1989:20 The Councillors also carefully reviewed the bank balances provided, where Cllr R. Bridge spoke to ask the Clerk why the internal auditor had recommended transferring the majority of the authority's funds into their reserve account.

He advised that he did not understand why the members had been asked to do this as the interest rates on reserves account were negligible. He asked the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, to speak to the auditor to establish the purpose of this and to report back to him with her findings.

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 1990:20 It was proposed by Cllr R. Bridge and seconded by Cllr R. Morrad that the tables below, as previously circulated, be noted and the payments confirmed. This motion was unanimously agreed.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£227.21	October 2020 wages
Mrs J. Allen	-	BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – October 2020
HMRC	-	BACS	£247.20	Payment of Tax & NI
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	-	DIRECT DEBIT	£33.60	Broadband & Phone line rental for October 2020
Colin Davis	-	BACS	£88.00	October 2020 Payment INV 3086
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£41.63	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for October 2020
TOTAL			£672.64	

9. Management of the Council's land and property – Appendix E

a). Playparks

i Allhallows Road Playpark

ii Heron Way Playpark

iii Upper Stoke Playpark

[Min 1991:20] The inspections from the month of October confirmed that the play equipment, in all three of the play parks, appeared to be in good order and that the relevant COVID-19 advice signs remained in place.

It was acknowledged however that one of the COVID-19 advice signs within the Heron Way playpark had to be replaced, after the original had gone missing.

[Min 1992:20] Cllr R. Morrad spoke to express his concerns that the Risk Assessments, which the members obtained in order to keep the Play Parks open (under the Government COVID-19 regulations), were not being adhered to. He pointed out that he was especially concerned about the following points:

a). No 'Social Distancing' controls

Cllr R. Morrad suggested that the members should consider removing one of the swings, which were situated next to each other.

b). No control of the numbers of children entering

Cllr R. Morrad called for the members to help limit the number of persons allowed to enter each playpark at any one time and to place notices to advise as per the correct numbers at each of the entry points.

c). No regular cleaning routines with disinfectant or antibacterial substances

Cllr R. Morrad highlighted that the members only needed to consider regularly cleaning the touching points leaning. He suggested that the members agreed to have the play equipment disinfected at the same time the play equipment was being regularly inspected.

d). Removal of the enclosed tunnel at the Button Drive play park

Cllr R. Morrad asked the members to consider removing the play tunnel at Button Drive. He advised that this item of apparatus was dangerous and always had a very poor report.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

He also advised that he was concerned it would be considered as an enclosed space, which was not permitted to be used under the current strict COVID-19 regulations.

Cllr R. Morrad read out an extract from the latest government guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms. He advised that failure to complete a 'Risk Assessment' which takes account of the COVID-19 virus and to put in place sufficient measures, was a breach of health & safety laws. He advised that serious breaches and failure to comply could constitute to a criminal offence with serious fines or up to 2 years imprisonment. He stressed that based on his findings that the members must put measures into place the support to social distance by removing items close together (such as swings)

Min 1993:20 He closed his report in advising that if he was unable to change the Parish Council's mind in keeping open the play parks. That he wished for it to be recorded that he disassociates himself with the keeping open of play parks and the liability of such actions. Unless some precautions were taken with regards to the members Risk Assessment.

Min 1994:20 The members collectively discussed the removal of the enclosed tunnel at the Button Drive play park, where Cllr J. Wallace and the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, agreed with Cllr R. Morrad's recommendation.

Min 1995:20 Cllr R. Bridge spoke in support of Cllr R. Morrad too. He advised that he would like to see evidence that the members were covered individually, under the Parish Council's 'Public Liability' insurance. He also asked the Clerk to confirm if the cover in place provided protection for both Civic and Criminal Liability.

He advised that should he not receive satisfactory answers to his questions that he would tender his resignation as a Parish Councillor. He recommended that the playparks should be closed and that an exclusion clause should be clearly displayed.

It was agreed that he would email the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, with a list of his questions, in order for her to raise these with the insurance provider as soon as possible.

Min 1996:20 The members also asked the Clerk for an update in removing the covering of moss on the playground surfaces, where the Clerk advised that she would chase the contractor again to confirm his availability to carry out the works as soon as possible.

Min 1997:20 The Clerk, Mrs J Allen, suggested that the members should consider calling an extraordinary meeting to discuss the playpark, once the answers to Cllr R. Bridge's questions had been sought. She recommended that all the members should attend, in order to ensure a full Parish Council vote was recorded.

10. **Highways & Transportation**

a). Footpaths

Min 1998:20 No report.

b). Lighting

Min 1999:20 No report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 2000:20 No report.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

d). Pot holes

Min 2001:20 No report.

e). Fly tipping

Min 2002:20 Cllr R. Bridge spoke to report that there fly tipping of black sacks and builder's rubble down both Cuckolds Green Road and Hoppers Lane.

Min 2003:20 The members also collectively discussed a car, that was considered to have possibly been dumped close to the Lower Stoke Car Park. It was contemplated that this car might have been connected to the car sales forecourt, located close by.

f). School Warning Signs

Min 2004:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise the members that she understood that two of the three school warning signs had now been reprogrammed and that the third sign was undergoing repairs by 'Solagen', as arranged by Medway Council.

Cllr J. Wallace & Cllr R. Bridge spoke in agreement, to advise that they had both seen at least one of the School Warning signs working and in operation.

11. Communication's

a). Update on the operation and usage of the Parish Council's existing website.

Min 2005:20 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to confirm that she had written to Medway Council to remove the members old webpage and that she was now waiting for her request to be actioned.

Cllr R. Morrad spoke in response to ask the Clerk to continue to chase Medway Council. He advised that Medway Council currently did not hold his written consent to display his contact details on their page, and as such this was a breach under the new GDPR act.

b). Update on the construction of the Parish Council's new webpage

c). Update on the creation of new Clerk and Parish Councillor email addresses

Min 2006:20 Following a decision made at the last meeting, ref [Min 1965:20](#), Cllr J Wallace advised that she was now waiting for the details of a professional webpage developer to assist her with the creation/maintenance of the members new website and associated email addresses.

The Clerk, Mrs J Allen, spoke in response to confirm that she had been liaising with KALC and that she would pass the details of their recommended contact onto her.

d). Use of members personal computers

e). File locker encryption

Min 2007:20 A discussion ensued in relation to the members use of their personal computers. They unanimously agreed that they would prefer to use a tablet supplied on loan, by the Parish Council instead.

The members discussed a report prepared by the Clerk, where she had sourced prices for a 10-inch android tablet (with extras) at a cost of £106 each. Cllr J. Wallace spoke to stress the need for a larger sized tablet, where Cllr R. Bridge advised that he did not see the need to install the Microsoft Office suite on each tablet, where the members could use Library Office instead, which was a free programme.

An enquiry was also raised by Cllr J. Wallace for the Clerk to source a further quote for some Bluetooth keyboards to use alongside the proposed tablets.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace to provide the Clerk with a budget of £1,500 to source a 10-inch tablet, with a Bluetooth keyboard for each member. This proposal was seconded by Cllr R. Morrad where both Councillors R. Bridge and G. Blackman abstained from voting.

Cllr G. Blackman advised that as he was unfamiliar with technology that he felt it was inappropriate for him to use his own vote, however as Chairman he had the casting vote where he permitted the Clerk an allowance of a £1,500 to purchase seven (7) Stoke Parish Council owned tablets and corresponding keyboards.

12. External Contractors

a). **J R Brickwork**

Min 2008:20 No further requests for works were discussed.

b). **Eastborough Landscapes**

Min 2009:20 The members discussed if a quote from Eastborough Landscapes, to cut back the wild limb that was protruding over a neighbouring garden at Heron Way, could be sought.

It was agreed that if Eastborough Landscapes had the relevant legal impediments and proper insurances in place then a quote could certainly be considered.

c). **Colyn Property Services**

Min 2010:20 The members reminded the Clerk to follow through with the removal of the moss on the playground surfacing as soon as possible.

13. Village Voice Publication

Min 2011:20 The Clerk, Mrs J Allen, advised the members that she has submitted the details of the next meeting to be published in this month's edition of the Village Voices publication. She confirmed that she would be happy to do the same again or this month and to wish the Parishioners a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

14. Correspondence

Min 2012:20 None

15. Reports and Circulars

a). **To receive a report on the latest update of the Doctors Surgery, situated at the Village Hall**

Min 2013:20 Cllr R. Bridge spoke to advise that he believed the Doctors Surgery had been taken over by another firm, a third company. He reported that he had already personally seen improvements in their services, especially in speaking to a Receptionist and the booking of appointments.

Min 2014:20 On a final note, the Clerk Mrs J. Allen, advised the members that she had been copied in on an email sent by Ms T. Robb, surrounding the recent fatality of a pedestrian on Four Elmes Hill. She suggested that the members considered sending an objection to the HIF bid, as she was concerned that there, they would see a large increase in traffic, which could potentially contribute to more accidents.

A discussion ensued in regards to the use of red-light cameras and temporary speed limits, where it was agreed that the members would raise this point at the next Rural Liaison meeting.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

16. Date of next meeting

Min 2014:20 The Vice-Chair, Cllr G. Blackman, spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would be held via a virtual forum on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 at 7.00pm.

He thanked the members for attending and closed the meeting at 08.36 pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 2nd December 2020	7.00pm	Virtual Forum
---	---------------	----------------------