

Stinsford Parish Council

**Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Monday 12 April 2021
at 7.15pm via Zoom**

Present: Mr George Armstrong (Chairman), Mr Michael Clarke (Vice-Chairman) – In the Chair, Ms Liz Crocker, Ms Susan Escott, Mrs Julie Martin and Ms Sarah Jane Pattison

Also in attendance: Mr Luke Rake (Principal, Kingston Maurward College) Miss Kirsty Riglar (Clerk) and one member of the public (Ms Sally Cooke)

40. Apologies for Absence

40.1 No apologies for absence were received.

41. Declarations of Interest

41.1 There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interest.

42. Kingston Maurward College update

42.1 The Principal of the College provided the Parish Council with an update on current matters. This included:

- (i) the re-opening of College to students in March but with lessons delivered in a hybrid manner which reduced the amount of time students spent on campus for non-practical aspects of their courses;
- (ii) the rest of the academic year would be challenging and students would not be sitting exams in the usual manner;
- (iii) whilst the Estate had been accessible to local residents throughout the pandemic, this was now open to the general public and entrance to the animal park and gardens was currently free, which had generated a lot of interest;
- (iv) it was intended to refurbish the visitor centre and shop and re-open it as a farm shop which would be a social enterprise for students with disabilities;
- (v) it was also planned to open up some of the rooms in the main house to provide a tearoom;
- (vi) a bid for Salix grant funding as part of the public sector decarbonisation scheme had been submitted and, if successful, would aid the installation of a new renewable heating system for the main house;
- (vii) the Thomas Hardy Society were now leasing some rooms as its headquarters; and
- (viii) the strategic plan for the next five years was being drawn up, which would include the activity required to achieve carbon-neutral status.

42.2 The Parish Council thanked Mr Rake for his update and for keeping the Estate both open for local residents and in such good condition over the past year.

43. Planning Matters

43.1 P/FUL/2021/00272 – Kingston Maurward Agricultural College, Stinsford Farm, Stinsford Farm Lane, Stinsford DT2 8PY – Erection of a university hub and incubation centre

Further to receiving further information from the Principal of the College about this development, including the full business case for the proposed university hub, and further information about the aspiration for the addition of a building on the proposed site to be sensitive within the space and in relation to the Conservation Area and listed buildings. It was noted that this would be shielded from the parkland by existing trees

and it was anticipated that the building would include 'living' walls and would be on the same elevation as the nearby buildings to prevent over-massing or overlooking.

Consequently, it was **resolved** to inform Dorset Council that the Parish Council now supported the application.

- 43.2 WD/D/21/000091 - Applegate, Slyers Lane, Waterston, DT2 7SL – Internal and external alterations and repairs. Single storey extension to east elevation and conversion of double garage to single garage and hobby room

It was **resolved** to support this application.

44. Finance

44.1 Expenditure

The following items of expenditure were **resolved**:

- Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd – Neighbourhood Plan consultancy support (March 2021) - £807.70
- Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd – Neighbourhood Plan consultancy support (Regulation 14 consultation and additional activity) - £1,130.40
- Normtecrdb – Materials for refurbishment of Bockhampton Cross white fingerpost - £400.00
- HMRC (PAYE) (Quarter 4 2020/21 - £81.00
- Miss K Riglar – Clerk's salary and expenses (Quarter 4 2020/21) - £606.00

- 44.2 As the work invoiced for by Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd had been completed during the 2020/21 financial year, it was **resolved** to back-date this expenditure to 31 March 2021 to comply with the requirements of the Groundworks grant for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 44.3 The Vice-Chairman reported that a further quote for the addition of a roundel to the Bockhampton Cross fingerpost and the need to replace the recently damaged arm and bracket would be brought forward in due course. However, Kingston Maurward College's blacksmithing and welding department had confirmed that they would provide support for the refurbishment of the fingerpost free of charge. The Parish Council welcomed this offer of support.

45. Preparation for Audit

- 45.1 The Parish Council considered a number of documents prepared by the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, in readiness for the annual audit of the financial year 2020/21.

- 45.2 It was **resolved** that:

- (i) the Council's risk assessment document be approved for consideration by the internal auditor;
- (ii) the Council's Asset Register be approved;
- (iii) the Internal Controls be noted; and
- (iv) Paula Harding of Barker Fox Associates be appointed as internal auditor for the year 2020/21.

46. Declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergency

- 46.1 Following its declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency at its last meeting, the Parish Council considered the next steps in developing possible actions to address this. It was recognised that some organisations made a declaration and then used generic statements to set out how they would respond and that the Parish Council did not wish to take this approach. It was acknowledged that, as it did not deliver services, the role of the Parish Council would be to encourage local residents and businesses to make changes and provide signposting to information and services which could assist them in doing this. It was also noted that in making a declaration, the Parish Council was ahead of many parishes in Dorset and examples of activities following this were sought elsewhere.
- 46.2 It was recognised that Kingston Maurward College had made a commitment to be carbon-neutral by 2025 and the Parish Council hoped that it would be possible to work with the College on data relating to the carbon footprint of the parish and actions that could be taken to address the emergency and identify how this could be progressed.
- 46.3 The Parish Council agreed that the first step should be to seek the initial views of local residents about next steps in addressing the emergency via an article in the June edition of The Pilot to launch this. It was noted that the public meeting initially planned to take place in March 2020 to launch this could take place in the future, when such meetings were safe, to encourage engagement.
- 46.4 It was **resolved** to:
- (i) continue to gather more information about the activities of other local councils following a declaration;
 - (ii) place an article in The Pilot to seek views on next steps from local residents and businesses; and
 - (iii) approach Kingston Maurward College about participating in its work to become carbon neutral.

47. Urgent item – Call for evidence on virtual meetings

- 47.1 The Parish Council noted the request from Chris Loder MP for its views in relation to virtual meetings to help inform his submission to the current call for evidence. It was **resolved** to respond with the following positive points:
- (i) Remote meetings have encouraged greater engagement and participation in democratic decision-making meetings of local councils than has been the case for many years.
 - (ii) Many parish councils are based around a single or central village which has a village hall at the centre. In rural parishes like Stinsford that are comprised of a number of dispersed settlements, there is no central point of focus and remote meetings have enabled residents from across the whole parish to attend meetings instead of those who live in the settlements closest to our venue which has tended to be the case.
 - (iii) There have also been positive environmental implications from reducing the need for councillors and officers to travel to a specific location to attend meetings. In most rural parishes, where local councils meet in the evening, there is no public transport and private cars are required for transport. Remote meetings have negated the need for all those attending a meeting to get in their car. Stinsford Parish Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and therefore wish to reduce use of private car journeys as much as possible.

48. Date of next meeting

- 48.1 It was noted that the Annual Parish Council Meeting would be held on Monday 24 May 2021 and in-person unless the expected High Court judgement allowed virtual meetings to take place then.

The meeting concluded at 8:35pm.

Chairman..... Date.....