

**Minutes of a Meeting of Stoke Hammond Parish Council held by video conference on
Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr Greg Noble (Chair), Cllr Karl Johnson, Cllr Geoff Lane, Cllr Stephen McNally, Cllr Malcolm Newing, Cllr Mike Robinson, Cllr David Venn, Joanna Simonds, Clerk & RFO, and 10 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Newing declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda and whilst he did not believe there to be any pecuniary interest, confirmed he would not vote on the application but would appreciate the opportunity to speak on the matter if necessary. The Clerk granted a dispensation to speak on matters of fact.

3. Public Participation Session

The Chairman opened the floor to members of the public to raise any items they may have, kindly requesting that any matters be raised now rather than interrupting the meeting later.

- Sheralee Johnson referred to the recent feasibility study for the Bragenham Side land and asked whether it would be made available to the public. The Chairman confirmed this report had only recently been received and whilst it would be made public in due course, Cllrs would first like the opportunity to review it, that way they are better placed to answer any parishioner questions. He added however, that Cllr Newing was producing a parishioner document on behalf of the PC which would cover the history of the land since purchase to the current day. In addition, Zoom briefing dates to update parishioners would also be included in that communication document.
- Sheralee also asked whether there was any update on getting the village speed limit reduced. The Chairman confirmed this was covered during last month's meeting, the outcome being that for now, this was not something Transport for Bucks were considering, and it would be far too costly an expense for the Parish to consider funding.

4. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February 2021.

Proposed: Cllr Newing

Seconded: Cllr McNally

Agreed unanimously

The draft minutes circulated were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

5. Finance

a) Approval of the March payment run

STOKE HAMMOND PARISH COUNCIL - PAYMENT RUN 2nd March 2021		
Payee	Detail	Amount
Mrs J Simonds	Clerk salary and any related expenses	£876.00
Mr G Noble	Expenses: February 2021	£10.57
Broadbase PM & QS Services Ltd	Feasibility study	£3,377.50
	Total	£4,264.07

Proposed: Cllr Robinson

Seconded: Cllr Venn

Agreed unanimously

b) To agree the accounts to 31st January 2021

Proposed: Cllr Johnson

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

Agreed unanimously



- c) To agree the appointment of John Marshall as Internal Auditor
Proposed: Cllr McNally
Seconded: Cllr Newing
Agreed unanimously
- d) To agree the updated Standing Orders
Proposed: Cllr Venn
Seconded: Cllr McNally
Agreed unanimously
6. **Planning:** To discuss planning applications and make recommendations on any planning applications received after this agenda is published, if urgent.

21/00353/APP – Stoke Hammond

Land Off Mount Pleasant, Stoke Hamond MK17 9EX - Erection of two Over 55's Bungalows

The Chairman asked Cllrs for comments and having already submitted a letter of support from the PC, it was clear Cllrs were minded to OBJECT to this application on the following grounds:

- Two previous applications to build on this land were rejected on appeal by the planning inspectors, who concluded development of this space would have a detrimental impact on the character of the village. They further concluded the open space was clearly designed to be a Village Green and should be maintained as such. Sections of the local development plan GP35 and RA14 were referenced, and this is supported by the emerging VALP in policy sections D2, BE2 and BE3
- In Section 3 of the VALP, Stoke Hammond is classed as a medium village. The latest VALP submission has shown that Stoke Hammond has made the second largest completions and commitments in this category amongst 19 villages and has no specific future allocation in the plan. There is no identified shortfall in housing for any age group in the village, which has grown considerably in size over the last 5 years and consequently this green space is an increasing asset to village residents.
- Reference, to support the application, is made to sections 5.53 and 5.37 of the VALP which relate specifically to assisted living and nursing homes and therefore has no relevance to the application., The development has been categorised as "market housing", with no special age-related category and in any event, there is nothing in the emerging policy that references "People of 55 or over".
- The applicant has regrettably overlooked all the guidance in the NPPF Open Space and recreation section, the development plan GP86, the VALP section NE7 and the councils strongly worded commitment to Green Infrastructure in I3. None of which has been taken into consideration when assessing the green space in this application.
- This piece of land is currently subject to an application (submitted in Dec 2020) to be designated with Village Green status which the Parish Council supports.

In conclusion, this loss of valuable green space that residents have enjoyed for nearly 30 years would have a hugely detrimental effect on the village. For this, and the reasons outlined above, Cllrs believe the harm caused by this application massively outweighs its benefits and strongly recommend the application be refused.

Proposed: Cllr Venn

Seconded: Cllr Robinson

All in favour – Cllrs Lane, McNally and Noble with Cllr Johnson abstaining from voting.

Cllr Newing asked whether Cllr Johnson was prepared to share why he was abstaining from this vote. Cllr Johnson said he was under no obligation to give a reason and did not intend to do so.

7. **RAF Stoke Hammond at Dorcas Lane**

Following last month's presentation, the Chairman asked Cllrs for their thoughts on potential next steps. Cllr Lane suggested the erection of a plaque on the base of the village green sign to commemorate this important landmark. He also suggested St Luke's may like to put something up in the church to sit alongside the Remembrance Day plaque and finally, Nick Ellins might like to pull some words together which could be uploaded to our PC website. Cllrs agreed these were good suggestions adding that once Covid restrictions are eased, consideration could be given to a presentation session in the Sports Club or Community Centre. Cllr McNally suggested it might also be nice to organise a



small group out onto the site if we are able to get access at some point. Cllr Robinson said if there were enough points of interest in the village, we could consider a more general plaque on the green showcasing all the points of interest in the Parish.

Cllr Newing praised Nick for his fantastic work to date and said it would be amazing if we could find somebody who actually worked there to present the plaque to before it gets fixed into place. The Chairman suggested next steps as follows: (i) Cllrs to vote on a budget for the purchase a plaque (£500 was agreed), (ii) Nick to work with the Clerk to source a plaque and suggest appropriate wording and (iii) make contact with St Luke's to gauge their interest in displaying something alongside the Remembrance Day plaque in the church. **Action Clerk**

Proposed: Cllr Newing

Seconded: Cllr Lane

Agreed unanimously

8. Buckinghamshire Council Town & Parish Charter

The Clerk advised an extension has been granted to the consultation and we now have until 31st March to submit comments. Cllrs agreed to submit any comments they had to the Clerk by 17th March to give her time to complete the document and submit before the deadline. **Action All**

9. Highways, Footpaths & Footways, Lighting

- *Update on the Stoke Road layby*

Phil Gomm referred to the productive social distancing meeting he'd had with the Chairman and Mr Kessler on 17th Feb, where they discussed parking issues on Bragenham Side down towards the bridge and how if the layby were to be shut, it would likely impact further. Highways have confirmed the boaters are breaching their licence as they are only supposed to be moored on the towpath side, so conversations are taking place with the Canals Trust, but for now, the layby will remain open, whilst further investigations take place. Cllr Johnson commented that he drove past the layby today and the grass verges have been badly churned up.

- *Update on new village entrance signs for Newton Road*

The Clerk confirmed she now has direct contact with the Local Area Technician following an introduction via Phil Gomm, however, no further progress has been made, due to Highways other commitments. The Clerk confirmed she would endeavour to get some commitment from the LAT in time for the April PC meeting. **Action Clerk**

10. Solar powered speed sign quotation

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her investigatory work, and the quotation previously circulated to Cllrs. At just under £3K per sign, this includes supply, installation, Bluetooth for data logging and a 12-month warranty. The data logging would give information which could potentially be used in future if we were to try and pursue a speed limit reduction in the village. The Chairman asked whether Cllrs had any questions or thoughts. Cllr McNally said that if we are able to secure any funding from the Community Board, as previously looked into by the Clerk, he would be in favour. Cllr Newing agreed, saying this has been a problem for a long time now and whilst this would a big spend for the PC, if we were to get some assisted funding, his view was it would be better to do something, rather than nothing.

Parishioner David Smith raised his hand and commented that these signs always make him slow down and his view was it would be of great benefit to the village, slowing more people down than not. Cllr Venn agreed that people regularly raise the issue of speeding vehicles and his view was this would show that the PC have listened and are actively doing something about it.

Cllr Johnson said he would like a little more clarity on the ongoing maintenance costs. Cllr Lane said that his reservations here were that Thames Valley Police do not use the statistics produced by these cameras and his belief was that once people got to know where they are in the village, whilst they may slow down initially, as soon as they go past them, they would speed up. He asked whether the Clerk could reach out to TVP and some other Parishes that have these systems in place, to get some feedback before we commit to such a large sum of money. It was agreed the Clerk should do some further research as follows: (i) reach out to the Community Board to see what level of funding might be available, (ii) determine what the maintenance charge would be once the 12-month warranty expires, and (iii) obtain feedback from TVP and some other parishes who have experience of these signs. **Action Clerk**



11. To report on matters regarding the land off Bragenham Side

As briefly mentioned in item 3, the Chairman reported that Cllr Newing has been working hard on producing a document that will be circulated to the whole Parish around the beginning of April.

Cllr Venn proposed that consideration be given to opening up the land for recreational purposes so parishioners can make use of it until such time as a decision is made on what to do with the land long term. Having been sat idle for a number of years, he suggested that for relatively little cost, and with the warm weather coming, it would surely be appreciated by parishioners, and, our insurance provider have confirmed that any land the PC own is covered by our Public Liability Insurance. Following some preliminary investigation, Cllr Venn said the costs associated with this would be in the region of £2,500 which would include a public pedestrian entrance at the rear of the Community Centre, increasing the grass cutting to fortnightly, conducting a desktop land contamination survey and an additional dog poo bin.

Cllr Newing commented that finding a way to utilise the land seemed a sensible idea and whilst there may be issues to overcome, as a first phase, he was in favour of Cllr Venn's proposal.

Cllr Johnson asked that it be noted that in his view this was a bad idea and that opening this area up would raise too many concerns, not least the amount of glass that is on the land. He added that he would no longer be prepared to advise on this piece of land should this be pursued.

Cllr Lane raised concerns about dogs being walked around the back of the Community Centre to access the land as they should not be on that area. He also added that if Cllrs chose to go down this route we should look to get a quantity surveyor/project manager on board to give advice and help to move this forward. Cllr Johnson confirmed it was a geo technical surveyor that would be required, rather than a quantity surveyor or project manager.

To bring this item to a close, the Chairman asked whether another Cllr would like to work with Cllr Venn on this to make sure we are getting all the correct professional advice and information that we need to take this forward. Cllr McNally said he was happy to work together with Cllr Venn in this regard. Cllr McNally asked if the Clerk could dig out the risk assessment undertaken by Cllr Johnson last year and forward it to him and Cllr Venn. **Action Clerk**

12. To report on any Parish Improvements and Enhancements

- To discuss parishioner request to consider restoring the Old Pump on Newton Road

Following request from a couple of parishioners, Cllrs agreed to see what photos could be found in the archives and the potential costs involved in restoring the old pump. Ann Payne mentioned she had some old photographs she would dig out and the Clerk said she would reach out to the Newton Road resident who had contacted her in this regard. **Action All**

13. Community Centre

The Chairman confirmed that the Community Centre are planning to reopen to bookings in July, assuming the Prime Minister's road map does not change. They are also looking to hold their AGM in May via Zoom and plan to reach out to other organisations in the village to gauge appetite for holding some sort of parish event in the Summer, once lockdown restrictions ease.

14. To report on meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council

15. Re-confirm date of the next meeting - Tuesday 6th April 2021 at 7.30pm

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution and declared the meeting closed at 20:58.

Chair:  Date: 