

# STRATTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair A Aylott

Clerk D Northover

## Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7.00pm at Stratton Village Hall

### Present:

Cllrs A Aylott (Chairman), M Garner, C Hobbs and D Northover (Clerk) and seven members of public.

### 22-41 To receive apologies of absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr S Joslin.

### 22-42 To receive declarations of interest on agenda items - None

**22-43 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022**  
Councillors agreed to the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting. The Chairman took the opportunity to clarify which trees would be part of the Woodland Trust pack. He confirmed that what was reported at the previous meeting was incorrect in that the Woodland Trust list included Holly, Hazel, Crab Apple, Downy Birch, Hawthorn, and Goat Willow. There had been some concern that crab apples could be poisonous to dogs, but the Chairman confirmed that from investigations he had carried out, this was not such a high-level problem as indicated. Further mention would be made later in the meeting of the species and planting arrangements.

### 22-44 Public Participation

Gill Slade took the opportunity to circulate the photograph archive of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in the village and thanked those whose photographs had been used. The Council considered this to be an excellent keepsake of the events. Gill Slade also thanked the Council for what it had done to accommodate the new bench and for the help in situating it. It was considered to be a welcome asset for the village.

She also mentioned that a reply had been circulated to villagers who had raised concern on the A37 safety, this outlined the response which the Parish Council had received from Dorset Council Highways and the various points they had raised.

A resident raised the issue of the need for adequate directional signage of the footpath in Sawyers Lane, drew attention to the broken handrail leading from that footpath to the A37 and that there was evidence that some trees and foliage had been illegally cut back near the Playing field, presumably to be advantageous to certain residents own amenity.

The Chairman confirmed that the Council had previously been aware of such an activity and had taken steps to clarify the position with local residents. There was discussion as to what activity might have recently taken place. Knowing that a few branches and a tree had fallen in high winds in the last few weeks, the Chairman agreed to check the issues drawn to the Council's attention.

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A suggestion was made that if there were an availability of logs and branches then these should be utilised and offered to residents.

It was also brought to the attention of the meeting that branches arising from previous storm damage, had been stacked at the boundary of the playing field by Wrackleford Farms. The Chairman confirmed that some branches had been left at the end of the playing field blocking an exit into neighbouring fields, this being done to stop people and their dogs entering private farmland which usually housed sheep. If any new branches or trees had fallen, then details of these would be forwarded to Wrackleford Farms to deal with.

The Vice-Chairman suggested that the Clerk could contact Dorset Council Highways over the signage issue and refers the issue of the broken handrail next to the A37 as well.

## 22-45 Finance

### a) To consider receipts and payments due to be paid or paid since the last meeting

To acknowledge the necessary payments made and monies received.

#### Accounts at 8 November 2022

*Monies in the Village Green Account cannot be used for any other purposes*

Year to date totals

Account	Parish	V/Green	Parish Plan	VAT	Balance
Balance b/f	17,261.17	38,764.16	1,698.06	262.99	57,460.40
Receipts	3,851.45	2,300.00	0.00	0.00	6,151.45
Payments	996.31	0.00	0.00	199.27	1,195.58
Balance c/f	20,116.31	41,064.16	1,698.06	462.26	62,416.27

#### Receipts

Dorset Council - 2nd Tranche – Precept	5,500.00
Voluntary Group/ Summer Fayre - Donation	651.45
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£ 6,151.45</u>

#### Payments

Parish	(inc VAT)
TDP Ltd - Garden Table	781.74
123 Reg - Annual Website Renewal	115.06
123 Reg - Domain Renewal	28.78
AG Tree Services - Tree report	270.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£ 1195.58</u>

### b) To receive the Budget Monitoring report

The budget monitoring report was received and noted.

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## **c) To consider the S137 applications received**

The Chairman reported that the Council had met to assess, analyse, and determine proposed payments in respect of applications received for S137 grants. This fund totalled £500, with six submissions being received, all of which met the necessary criteria and received an allocation from the fund accordingly, these being: -

- Stratton (Dorset) Allotment Society - £100
- Royal British Legion - £25
- David Cartwright (Village Christmas Tree) - £100 (donation to final chosen charity)
- Chalkstream Magazine - £50
- Stratton Pop-in Group - £100
- Stratton Defibrillator Project - £50

These allocations left £75 in the grant fund – to be used as, and if, necessary.

**Agreed – That the S137 grants be allocated on the basis set out above.**

## **d) To consider the precept for 2023/24**

Councillors had a full and long discussion about the precept amount for 2023/24, examining all current budgets and likely areas of spend in the next year, taking into account interest rates.

After debate and bearing in mind the high national inflation rate of 10.1%, **it was agreed that a precept of £12,200 be set for the year 2023/24.**

**22-46 Planning** – There were no new applications to consider nor any updates to report.

## **22-47 To receive reports on General Maintenance**

### **a) Overgrowth encroaching on the tennis courts**

The Council discussed the maintenance arrangements for dealing with encroachment of overgrowth on the tennis courts and how this could be best dealt with.

### **b) New Bench**

The provision and siting of the new bench in the playing field had now been achieved and was seen as a valued asset to the village.

### **c) New Play equipment**

The new play equipment had now been installed, was working as it should be and would be a valued asset to the village. However, the Chairman had issues with the way in which the installation had taken place, given the expectation that the Council was responsible for the removal of any ground spoil, rather than this being part of the contracted works. There had been some residual damage to trees and the play area fence during the process.

### **d) Three Year Tree report**

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The tree report had now been produced and was to be analysed by the Council. Whilst a report on trees on the Village Green had not been included, this was being rectified and an update on findings would be provided shortly. The Chairman confirmed that the cost of the report had been accounted for under Insurance, as the matter related to the safety of the Council's property.

## **22-48 Highways and Rights of Way**

### **a) Publicity dial a ride scheme**

The Chairman made mention of a letter received from the Parish Councillor at Maiden Newton PC who helped liaise control with the Dial-a-ride bus scheme operated by Dorset Council. Evidence had shown that there had been little uptake of this facility within Stratton and the Council agreed to publicise this more extensively. Cllr Hobbs agreed to do this via the Council website, Stratton Active, and social media.

## **22-49 Correspondence**

### **a) An update on the defibrillator lease arrangements**

The meeting was informed that the lease arrangements for the defibrillator were still going forward. A draft lease was currently being prepared by SWAST with the Parish Council as the named party. This would be submitted to the Council shortly.

Colin Jackson confirmed that donations would be made by the Voluntary group at the appropriate time. A question was raised whether the lease cost should be included in the Parish budget and Precept. The Chairman confirmed that the lease cost could be included in the Parish budget going forward, but that there would be no effect on the Precept.

### **b) Planting Arrangements for the Queen's Canopy**

Confirmation was given of the species of saplings being delivered from the Woodland Trust, and their arrival was imminent.

What planting arrangements there would be and when this would take place was discussed, taking into account the configuration of the trees, how species be grouped, where particular species would be best placed and the actual planting techniques necessary. When the saplings arrived publicity would be given for the date of planting and asking for volunteers.

Following concerns over the danger to dogs of crab apples – as mentioned earlier in the meeting – it was agreed that the number of crab apple saplings to be planted be reduced from 15 down to 5. Given this, the Councils Tree Surgeon – AG Tree Services had offered to exchange the 10 crab apples for other species. This included Bird Cherry, Common Pear, Field Maple, Green Beech and Amelandier. Councillors were pleased to take up this offer.

## **22-50 Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 10 January 2023 starting at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.

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Items for consideration would be: - an update on the defibrillator lease arrangements, an update on the Queens Green Canopy planting session; the Tree survey; and the Improvements list.

## **22-51 Public Participation**

Colin Jackson again mentioned the arrangements for the lease of the defibrillator and looked forward to working with the Council in securing its long-term availability.

Meeting ended at 20:50.