

# STRATTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair A Aylott

Clerk D Northover

## Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 7.00pm at Stratton Village Hall

### Present:

Cllrs A Aylott, C Hobbs, S Joslin and D Northover (Clerk) and six members of public.

### 22-18 To receive apologies of absence

Apologies were received from Cllr M Garner and Dorset Ward Councillor, David Taylor.

### 22-19 To receive declarations of interest on agenda items - None

### 22-20 To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Councillors agreed to the accuracy of the minutes of the Annual PC meeting.

### 22-21 Public participation

Gill Slade asked if there had been any response from Highways, Dorset Council to the letter submitted by the PC. The Chairman confirmed that no response had been received and that the PC was not going to chase for an immediate answer. The Chairman considered that at best a feasibility study might be undertaken rather than practical action, and that takes time to occur. However, the PC would follow this issue up if there had there been no response over the next few weeks so that any update could be reported to the next meeting.

The issue of the inconsiderate bonfires was raised by a member of the public; citing nuisance and health concerns during the summer months when more outdoor activity took place. The PC considered an article could be put in the Chalk Stream magazine to request parishioners to be considerate and responsible in this regard. Cllr Hobbs to arrange.

### 22-22.1 Queen's Jubilee Celebrations – Review

Gill Slade was pleased to report the success of the Jubilee celebrations within the village and what participation there had been in the events held. The occasion had been marked with community events such as the Beacon lighting and the Street party – which moved to the Village Hall because of the adverse weather and had been so well attended: with up to 200 parishioners for the party. The commemorative mugs had been or were in the process of being distributed to the children, with any spare being sold for £5 apiece. The PC thanked the Organising Group for the arrangements they had made and were pleased to hear of the success and the benefits it had brought the community.

It was explained that the sale of mugs had generated some surplus funds and the organising Group was determining how this might be best used to benefit the parish. It was established that having taken all income and expenditure into account, a small sum was left. How this sum should be accounted for was discussed, with the Parish Council agreeing that the funds - £500, it had supplied to purchase the mugs should be considered as a grant, and for the

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Organisers to allocate any surplus in the most appropriate way to benefit the parish.

- 22-22.2** The Chairman commented that although it was appreciated that, in recognition of the Parish Council's support of the event, Councillors should be given a mug as a token of appreciation, He did not feel because of his position, that this was appropriate, and that he wished to pay for his mug – as others had to. Cllr Hobbs expressed the same view. Both Councillors would make a donation of £5.00 to Parish funds.

## 22-23 Finance

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

To acknowledge the necessary payments made

#### Accounts to 12 July 2022

*Monies in the Village Green account cannot be used for any other purpose*

Account	Parish	V/Green	Parish Plan	VAT	Balance
Balance b/f	17,778.05	39,249.47	1,698.06	159.99	58,565.59
Receipts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments	441.51	0.00	0.00	43.50	485.01
Balance c/f	17,336.54	39,249.47	1,698.06	203.49	58,080.58

#### Receipts

Total £ 0.00

#### Payments

##### Parish

RoSPA – Playground Inspections 168.00

DAPTC – Annual subscription 224.02

Haskins – plants 74.99

Poundbury Gardens – plants 18.00

Total £ 485.01

### b) To receive the Budget Monitoring report

The budget monitoring report was received and noted.

### c) Transfer of investment and Funds

Chairman led a review of the current investment position and explained the most likely scenario that was going to occur at the next Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee when national bank rates were to be discussed in early August. If, as likely, Bank Interest rates increase, then the PC needed to move quickly to change funds from the NS&I account to attract higher interest. Especially, as at current the NS&I rate was still only 0.01%.

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Any decision on where to invest would wait until the Bank of England's interest rate announcement before determining what the best rate was. For the PC to gain income this financial year a Three- or Six-month fixed bond might be best.

Given the time it would take to withdraw and re-invest assets, it was considered that this process should start shortly getting forms and letters in place ready to withdraw funds from the NS&I. The Chairman and Clerk would begin the facilitation of this process and keep Councillors updated by an e-mail exchange before any final decision was made.

Councillors decided and agreed with this course of action and that the NS&I account was to be closed, and all funds moved to the Parish Current Account in the first instance before reinvestment.

## **d) To publicise S137 grants to be considered for 2022-23**

The Council on an annual basis publicise the process for applying to the Parish Council for S137 grants which may be awarded to any group club or registered charity which is based in Stratton parish, based jointly in Stratton and another of the Chalk Stream parishes or based in another of the Chalk Stream parishes and attended by the residents of the parish of Stratton. Any project within the parish of Stratton may be supported that would benefit, in the opinion of the Council, the residents of the parish. Any group, club or registered charity based outside of the parish which provides a direct service to/for the benefit of residents of the parish are applicable to.

The PC agreed to publish a notice on the website and Facebook to publicise the opportunity to submit bids for S137 grants so that this could be duly considered at the November meeting. Cllr Hobbs to arrange.

## **22-24 Planning – To consider the following planning application in circulation: -**

- P/HOU/2022/03604 -15 Church View Stratton Dorset DT2 9WD - Erect raised decking with glass balustrade

Responses had already been made by Councillors and the PC had made no objection, and this would be duly submitted to Dorset Council by the Clerk.

Chairman confirmed that the three planning applications mentioned at the last meeting, still appeared to be under consideration and no decisions had been made.

## **22-25 To receive reports on General Maintenance**

### **a) RoSPA reports on play equipment**

The report had expressed some concerns and maintenance work necessary to rectify problems highlighted had been identified. Wooden slats were being replaced where necessary around the play area, and some work was required on the gate to the playing field.

The condition of the goal posts on the playing field was discussed with this needing some maintenance given its condition, or possibly should be considered for replacement.

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## **b) New Play equipment**

A quote, from Huck Teck, of £6,950 (including VAT) had been received for the provision and fitting of new play equipment – a double swing unit and the ride on horse. This was without new safety matting as the PC considered that the current matting was still satisfactory. Councillors agreed that the quotation should be accepted and that there was sufficient funding available. The Chairman and Clerk to contact the company and place an order for the works to go ahead.

## **c) Other maintenance requirements**

Some of the posts on the Village green were beginning to rot and were in a state of disrepair, Councillors accepted that about 10 posts needed to be replaced. The annual cleaning of the gully around the playing field also needed to be put in place. Chairman to arrange for this work to be done.

Cllr Joslin confirmed that the bus shelters had all been spruced up now and cleaned out to improve their condition and look.

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

It was mentioned that it was three years since the last tree report had been received looking at the safety of the Council's trees. Councillors agreed that a further safety review be undertaken. The Chairman would check what information was held and pass it to Cllr Joslin (as Tree Officer), so that a request could be made to Alan Goldsmith, tree consultant, to carry out a review, this would include looking at trees around the village green.

The Chairman confirmed the arrangements for the Queen's Canopy and how this was intended to be managed, which was to occupy about a quarter of the playing field, at its southern end. Mention would be made at the September meeting – to coincide with an article in the Chalkstream - asking for villagers willing to help in the planting of the saplings. Cllr Joslin was keen that a woodland walk trail might be established if possible.

An offer had been received from a villager of an oak tree sapling to go with the other saplings on the playing field.

## **22-26 Highways and Rights of Way**

### **a) Ice Road signs**

It was reported that the ice signs had been collected by Dorset Council but would be returned to the village in time for the winter months at which point Dorset Council were happy that they could be stored within the village and used as necessary.

## **22-27 Correspondence**

### **a) Defibrillator**

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Councillors took the opportunity to again discuss arrangements for the Defibrillator: how it should best be managed, the responsibilities it entailed and who by and what arrangements should be put in place for its future management.

The principle of the benefits of the defibrillator was accepted by all and it was recognised that it was in the interest of all that it was managed and maintained correctly. However, as at the previous meeting, before any commitment be made by the Parish Council assuming responsibility, Cllr Hobbs considered there to be need for an assessment of its costs, how it would be managed and maintained, who could be authorised to maintain it and what training was needed to do this and what any long-term commitment meant for the Parish Council. After considerable discussion it remained that the Parish Council was still not able to make a decision on the level of responsibilities Councillors would have to undertake to be sure this could be readily achieved.

Colin Jackson confirmed that there were ready and willing volunteers available to assume the direct management and maintenance of the device on an ongoing basis, over and above his current colleague's commitment. He considered the management to be a minimum commitment: a visual check once a week to ensure it was in working order and available for use, as necessary.

Despite their Group being committed to ensuring this was the case for the foreseeable future, their Group wanted to ensure this device could be retained on a more formal basis: with the only way of realistically achieving this was by a formal body i.e., the Parish Council, to assume that responsibility.

Cllr Joslin had spoken to Charminster Parish Council on how they managed their device, for which they had assumed responsibility. Their experience was that it was a readily achievable commitment. However, it was recognised that Charminster had a larger pool of parishioners from which to identify willing volunteers for that purpose.

The Parish Council considered there was still a need for them to assess in more depth what such a commitment would mean for Stratton and how any future management could be applied before the Council assumed responsibility.

In now understanding that there were volunteers available to fulfil this commitment going forward, the Parish Council were encouraged that a satisfactory and sustainable solution could be found. It was in the interest of all to find a solution

It was suggested by Gill Slade, that a public meeting be held specifically about the defibrillator to see what parishioners' views were; what value they placed on it; and what initiatives there might be to manage it. The Defibrillator Group agreed to organise, and they could explain what the practicalities of managing the device were and what the issues were in terms of responsibility. This might well address some misconceptions about how it was currently managed. The Parish Council agreed that it would pay for the cost of the meeting.

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## b) Electric charge points

Further information had come from Dorset Council on installing more electric charge points in rural location. Cllr. Garner had previously investigated this. It was not known if this new information changed any of the previous findings.

## c) DAPTC Survey

The Chairman informed the meeting that a DAPTC survey had asked for updates from the parish on how it was run, by whom and what governance arrangements they had in place to meet the needs of the parish. This survey would be duly completed by himself and the Clerk.

## **22-28 Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 13 September 2022. However, as there were to be several absentees that date, making the meeting inquorate, it was agreed that the meeting should be held the following week - Tuesday 20 September starting at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.

## **22-29 Public Participation**

The meeting asked the Parish Council that there should be a reminder for dogs to be kept on leads if possible in public places and for dog owners to act responsibly in their picking up of their own dog litter.

Meeting ended at 20:45.