

STRATTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair Matt Garner

Clerk Vacant

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting of Stratton Parish Council held on Tuesday 26 March 2024 at 7:30 pm in Stratton Village Hall

Present:

Clrs Andy Aylott, Matt Garner, Cheryl Hobbs, Simon Joslin, Beth Cooke and Bradley Pimm

5 members of the public & Dorset Councillor David Taylor.

24.108 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Simon Joslin declared an interest on item 9 of the agenda.

24.109 Approval of Minutes of meetings held on 9th & 22nd January

Draft minutes were reviewed, proposed & seconded for approval. Cllr Matt Garner signed the minutes as the approved record of the meetings.

24.110 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair reminded all present that this was to be the last Ordinary meeting of the current Parish Council before elections. It was noted that ownership of the BT telephone box outside the church had now transferred to the Council. And that the works to replace the fence around the children's play area on the village green had recently been completed by Rolls Landscaping to a good standard.

24.111 Action Log

The phone box – has now been bought for a sum of £1. Suggestions for its use will be discussed later in the meeting.

Bin by the bus stop – it has been considered too costly to replace this currently.

New Clerk – we await the elections and formulation of the new council, at this point we would look to appoint a new Clerk.

Election registers are now due – all councillors were asked to provide applications if they wish to stand.

IT computer – We are looking for a new solution as the current mailbox is limited of space. This will be explored on appointment of a new council.

Goal posts – we would hope to put these up in the playing fields and re-paint them when the good weather arrives.

Commemorative sign for the Tree Canopy – This is to be put up for us.

ROSPA report for play equipment – the slide in the small play area has been done, posts for the steps reviewed and a plan in place to fix this. The zip line has been reviewed. It is anticipated works will be completed in approximately 2 weeks.

24.112 Update from Dorset Council

Cllr David Taylor provided an update on discussions with Dorset Highways regarding the A37 and that there was a feasibility study underway to deliver improvements. Highways have

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confirmed willingness to meet with the Parish Council in order that we may understand the scope of the project and further update parishioners. Cllr Garner confirmed that he was in contact with Mr Neil Turner in Highways.

Cllr Taylor further advised that the investigation report into the accident which occurred on 6 March had not yet been received from Highways.

24.113 Public Participation

Questions were asked as to the status of the various issues regarding the A37. Updates so far as the Parish Council have them were to be given under agenda item 8.

Cllr Joslin was thanked for his support regarding resident's concerns over the condition of the trees on Dorchester Road, opposite the Old Bull. Mr Ken Hutchings confirmed that he has written to the Wrackelford Estate – the owners of the trees.

A question was asked as to the Council's position regarding the provision of 'Unknown Tommy' figures. Cllr Garner advised that this was not something the Council is actively perusing, but would be added to the Action Log to ensure it is not forgotten about – for the new (post-May election) council to take forward.

24.114 Finance

Cllr Aylott presented an update to the Council's financial position, which is summarised below.

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Accounts to 31th March 2024

(Monies in the Village Green Account cannot be used for any other purpose)

Account	Parish	V/Green	Parish Plan	VAT	Balance
Balance b/f	17,026.85	39,049.13	1,000.00	522.33	56,553.65
Receipts	-2,500.00	1,551.10	2,600.00	0.00	1,651.10
Payments	877.68	2,883.51	0.00	589.30	4,350.49
Balance c/f	13,649.17	37,716.72	3,600.00	1,111.63	53,854.26

PAYMENTS IN

Village Green

United Trust Bank – Fixed Bond Interest	144.68
United Trust Bank – Fixed Bond Interest	614.51
United Trust Bank – Fixed Bond Interest	791.91
Virement of Budget provision	-2,500.00
<u>Parish Plan/Computer Reserve</u>	
Computer Reserve – Contribution for 2023/24	100.00
Virement of Budget Provision	2,500.00
Total	£ 1,651.10

PAYMENTS OUT

Parish

Mr W Lewin – Salary	357.75
Mr W Lewin – Expenses	39.60
Computer Reserve – Contribution for 2023/24	100.00
S137 Grant – Chalk Stream Drive	80.00
S137 Grant – Julia’s House	50.00
S137 Grant – Weldmar Hospicecare	50.00
Jetpack – Website cover	75.54
Stratton Village Hall – Hire of Hall	87.38
S137 Grant – Charminster School	50.00

Village Green

Dorset Council – Village Green	1,689.16
Dorset Council – Playing Field	1,771.06
Total	£ 4,350.49

(New statement to be added)

The Chair thanked Cllr Aylott for stepping in, in the absence of a Clerk.

Cllr Aylott requested that Rolls Landscaping be chased for the invoice for the fencing works – **action MG**.

The likely balance of the Council’s current account at the end of the financial year was discussed. Councillors agreed to consider a further bond to maximise any potential interest from ‘surplus’ funds.

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24.115 A37

Cllr Garner reiterated that there had been very recent and more positive engagement with the Highways team and that a meeting was to be scheduled. Cllr Garner assured residents that they will be updated as this develops. Key concerns raised were; pedestrian safety, the rise in road traffic accidents, speed of vehicles, flooding and build-up of ice in cold weather. Cllr Taylor reported he had received reassurance from Dorset Council that they will be providing electronic signage at the forecast of icy conditions. The main concern from the A37 group remains pedestrian safety.

24.116 Section 137 Award – Charminster St Mary’s School

Cllr Joslin left the room.

After debate and following a majority vote in favour of 3:2, it was agreed to award a late S137 grant to the School of £50 for the purpose of acquiring equipment to support their gardening club.

Cllr Aylott to raise a cheque.

Cllr Joslin returned.

24.117 Future of (former) BT Phone Box

It was agreed that there should be a request for parishioners to volunteer to help look after the phone box and also for ideas as to its future use.

It was reported by a member of the public that the light is not functioning. Under the sale contract, BT are obligated to maintain the electricity supply but the Council is also obligated to have the installation inspected. Cllr Garner to contact a local electrical company to check it. **Action MG.**

Cllr Hobbs will draft an announcement to go out to the community via the Council’s website requesting their feedback. **Action CH.**

24.118 Election Arrangements

Cllr Garner outlined the Nomination Process. Any prospective candidate must complete a nomination paper and have it delivered, by hand, to the Elections office at County Hall. The candidate must be Nominated and Seconded by a resident, on the electoral roll for the Parish. Cllr Garner has a copy of the Electoral Roll and will make it available. An appointment must be made with the Elections Team to submit the Nomination. The absolute last day for this is 5 April.

Cllr Hobbs noted that there would also be a requirement for candidates to submit a statement of expenditure post the election date.

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24.119 Insurance Requirements 2024/25

The previous Clerk suggested that if the Council were to increase the level of excess, the policy cost should reduce. Cllr Garner to search email history to try to move forward & revert to Councillors. **Action MG.**

24.120 Confirm Items for next Meeting

The next meeting is confirmed as Monday 13th May at 19:00 in the Hall.

This will be the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council – both of which have a fairly rigid and full (statutory) agenda. It was agreed that business would be kept to a minimum, likely just an update on the A37.

24.121 Public Participation

Councillor David Taylor expressed his thanks for the Parish Council's support during his term of office.

There were no further questions from the public, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.

Meeting closed at 20:34