

STRATTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair Matt Garner

Clerk Mr Wayne Lewin

Minutes of the Meeting of Stratton Parish Council held on Tuesday 09th January 2024 at 7.00 pm in Stratton Village Hall

Present:

Cllrs Andy Aylott, Matt Garner, Cheryl Hobbs, and Simon Joslin.

8 members of the public.

Cllr David Taylor (Dorset Council)

24.81 Co-option of Parish Councillor for Stratton Parish Council

Beth Cooke was proposed, seconded, and duly co-opted as a Councillor for Stratton Parish Council.

24.82 To receive apologies of absence

All members were present.

24.83 To receive any declarations of interests on agenda items

No declarations were given.

24.84 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 14th November 2023

These were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting, with one minor amendment, and subsequently signed by the Chair.

24.85 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair was pleased to see so many community events over Christmas, especially using the community facilities.

It was noted that the Parish Council elections were in just 16 weeks.

24.86 Update on Councillors actions (refer to attached Action Log) and general update on areas of responsibility not covered by Agenda items

Cllr Hobbs confirmed that the telephone box would not be listed by Historic England.

The Clerk stated that a new bin for general and dog waste would cost around £350.

The Chair mentioned the laptop was in 'hibernation' – and would get it looked at.

The Microsoft 365 package had been extended until Mar 24.

Cllr Aylott confirmed that packages 5/6 of the tree works had been completed.

On a separate note, as to regards tree works, the tree surgeon would look at the trees outside the church and provide a free report and recommendations.

The fence work around the small play park had been accepted by Rolls landscaping, although a date had yet to be set.

The bug hotel was still on the radar but not in the short term.

Cllr Aylott was completing the final actions on the ROSPA report.

Cllr Hobbs requested a photo and biography for the Cllr Cooke.

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24.87 Update from Dorset Council

Cllr Taylor provided a lengthy update on the major issues of the pedestrian safety and flooding on the A37.

This included:

Unprecedented rainfall over the last 3 months

Full team from the Highways were out fixing problems

Southwest Railways had committed £2M for fix issues on their land. A bid had gone in for funding to sort out guttering at the bridge. A meeting had been scheduled for 11 Mar 24

The accident on the A37 was deemed driver error due to speed

It was agreed that that the ice warning signage was poor and was being addressed

The flood defence system was indeed working, in conjunction with frequent clearing of the drains and gullies

Farmers had been advised (and were now complying), to plough the fields the correct way, thus avoiding run off

Health and safety issues on the pathways and been sorted, as the vegetation growth had been cut back

Three new pumps had been installed to push the water back into the river. However, as the river was full these just came back into circulation.

Safety team of Highways were looking at measures at both Stratton junctions

Resolutions

That an onsite meeting be held with all parties to establish options to review pedestrian safety on the A37 and to agree any further actions.

It was agreed that a meeting should also be held, but separately, to look at solutions at the railway bridge.

Cllr Taylor was requested by the Chair to lead and coordinate these meetings.

24.88 Public Participation

24.89 Finance

A total of four payments have been made since the last meeting. An amount of £916.99. No income was received. Total funds currently held by the Parish Council is £55,658.95.

24.90 Planning

There were no new planning applications to discuss.

24.91 Purchase of BT phone box

BT offered the Parish Council to adopt the phone box for the price of £1.

This was unanimously agreed.

24.92 Future use(s) of BT phone box

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It was agreed to consult the community and come back to the next meeting to look at the most viable option(s).

24.93 Review of insurance policy (payment of excess)

The Clerk briefed members that the likely cause of the high premiums was the excess (set at £100), as opposed to other policies with excess (set at £250).

Members were happy to discuss at the next meeting, by contrasting the two quotes.

24.94 Speeding and safety through the village

Cllr Hobbs explained that the Community Speed Watch had been tried but stopped, and that speed wires proved that the average speed was on or around the speed limit – notwithstanding the occasional vehicle.

It was previously felt the Speed Indicating Device was too expensive.

Other options to be considered in the future included Pedestrian in road signs and Village Gateways.

24.95 Pedestrian safety on A37

This had been discussed in detail under 24.87.

In confirmation, it was requested that Cllr Taylor to set up a meeting with all stakeholders to discuss the issues and solutions.

24.96 Procedures and protocols for May 24 election

It was agreed for Cllr Hobbs to publish the election date, along with the opening and closing dates for nominations for Parish Councillors.

It was agreed that any costs associated with the administration of the election would be borne from the General Reserve.

24.97 Initial discussion on any potential underspend for 23/24

It was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.

24.98 Budget setting for 24/25

After careful consideration Councillors agree that the Precept for 2024/25 should be set at £12,600.

Councillors carried out a policy review of the investments held by the Council and after discussion it was agreed that the two One-Year Fixed Bonds would be rolled over when they mature, to ensure that interest is received in the future to fund maintenance works. While the Six-Month Fixed Bond will be called back into the Council's current account. If opportunity arises during the coming year, then a further short-term fixed bond might be taken up.

As part of the precept discussion, Councillors agreed that the long-standing aim of replacing the last piece of equipment in the Junior play area be started by setting aside £3,000 in the Parish Plan reserve, so that funds can be accumulated ready to pay for new equipment in a few years' time.

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24.99 Correspondence update

There was no further correspondence that required members attention.

24.100 To confirm items for the next meeting Tuesday 12th March 2024

Future of BT phone box

Review of insurance policy

May 24 elections

Underspend for 23/24 financial year

24.101 Public participation

Cllr Taylor stated that a Local Transport Plan presentation would be published soon

It was asked about the purchase / donation of the Unknown Tommy.

A defibrillator awareness session was to be held in due course.

There being no further business the meeting closed at **8:49pm**.