

STEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Stevington Parish Council Meeting to be held Tuesday 24th January 2023 at 7:30 in the Village Hall, Stevington.

Present: Parish Councillors: Andrew Lockwood (**AL**); Peter Fisher (**PF**); Janet Day (**JD**); John Strutt (**JS**); Richard Taylor (**RT**)

Borough Councillor: John Abbott (**JA**)

Parish Clerk: Kevin Papworth (**Clerk**)

In Attendance: Geoff Lawday (**GL**) – Stevington Traffic Action Group (**STAG**); Tricia Lennie (**TL**) – Friends of St Mary's (**FOSMS**)

Public Open Forum

GL agreed to roll STAG comments into discussion of item 5.

1) Apologies for absence

Mouritz Botha (**MB**) – family illness: James Lockwood (**JL**)

AL informed the Council that James Lockwood was stepping down as a councillor due to increased work commitments.

- Letter to thank James for his time on the council.

2) Declarations of Interest – note that any Parish Councillor should declare both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in items on the Agenda

- **JS** Declared that he is a trustee of FOSMS

3) Approval and signature of minutes of the last meeting (28th Sept)

- Proposed **PF**, Seconded **JD**

4) Planning matters –

a) Dane Hill update

- No decision at the time of this meeting.
- **AL** observed that other than PC members, no residents attended the appeal hearing.

b) Recent applications and applications requiring discussion – list circulated.

- No open applications
- Red Lion 106 variation still outstanding

c) EW rail consultation update

- Review meeting no. 8 scheduled for 8th Feb.
- Route decision (Route E, north of Bedford) has been approved and will be put to government in a paper later this year.

5) Traffic management update

a) Update and Extraordinary Parish Meeting (EPM)

- Wednesday 8th of February was chosen for the EPM. Councillor Charles Royden (Deputy Mayor & Portfolio Holder for Environment, Highways and Transport) and Andrew Prigmore (Manager for Traffic Operations at Bedford Borough Council) are available on this date. It was felt that this meeting needed to take place and that the benefits of taking this opportunity outweighed the relatively short notice.

b) Mobile Speed Indicator Device (SID) – installation and management

- Currently two poles are suitable for mounting the SID
 - One in Court Lane outside the playing field. We can rotate this through 180 degrees and use the SID in either direction.

- One in Silver Street outside Duck End Farm. The pole diameter needs to be checked (89mm diameter is required). SPC to send a email to BBC highways for clearance to use for the SID
- There is a Pole at West End (by Meeting Farm) with a 30 repeater sign on it. This needs to be straightened or possibly replaced with a larger diameter pole to mount the SID
- Suggested site on Park Road. Replace the pole at Park Farm with a larger pole
- There was nowhere suitable in Church Road where a pole could be mounted on Borough Council Land.
- AL suggested that two bracket be mounted on the pole in Court Lane so that measurements can be made of vehicles travelling in either direction.
- It was anticipated that the SID would be operational in Court Lane by the end of February.
- c) Installation of traffic awareness measures – Entry gates and road markings
 - Located by the 30mph signs. Roll to EPM.
- d) Stevington Traffic Action Group (STAG) – progress
 - Community Speed Watch training. 6 residents have passed vetting, 2 are awaiting clearance.
 - Owing to winter light restrictions and weather it is likely that training will be in March 2023.
- e) Incident tracking- recent additions
 - There was an RTA on Park Road involving a village resident. It was agreed that the residents identity be removed from the Traffic Incident Log **Action Clerk**
 - TL informed the SPC of an incident involving a resident that occurred in Silver Street. Residents with info please contact Becky Legg via Facebook. Add to incident log. **Action clerk.**

Parking outside the Red Lion

- Several residents have raised concerns.
- RT suggested that a single white line along the road edge might be possible. This could be raised at the EPM.
- AL observed that legislation prevents parking within 20m of a junction.
- It was suggested that SPC could write to residents and flyers could be put on the vehicles concerned.

General Traffic Observations

- RT observed that the 20mph limit is not working in terms of 20mph being observed but it has improved what was present within the previous 30mph limit.
- PF observed that there are now less trucks using Silver Street.
- GL inquired how traffic speed could be measured?
 - SID or by writing to the Borough Council and requesting a speed survey.

6) Vacant Clerk & RFO position

- The Clerk of Pavenham and Clapham, Rosemary Plum is willing to clerk for Stevington. It was proposed that amend the motion to offer Rosemary the role with a short probationary period. **Proposed AL; Seconded RT**

7) Venue and dates of future meetings

Review and formalise the memorandum of understanding between SPC and the VH committee (SPCC). **motion** - "SPC to engage with the VH committee in reviewing the current MU and updating it to provide a more robust legal relationship"

- SPCC would like a closer working relationship with SPC
- PF suggested that the memorandum of understanding that exists between the SPCC and SPC be reviewed after the May elections when Chairs for both organisations will have been newly voted into office.
- PF also observed that if the PC has to pay to hire a meeting venue the village effectively pays for this via the percept.
- AL offered to lead discussion with SPCC.
- JD observed that she found it hard to be both a trustee of the Village Hall and member of SPC. She agreed to continue until after the May elections when roles are reviewed.
- The general consensus was that clarification was need about the village hall status as a commercial enterprise and a community asset.
- AL suggested that the Parish Council should look to have a formalised programme (for example, to always meet on the first Wednesday of the month) an those meetings are always at the Village Hall. Additional SPC booking might be change with sufficient notice but would not be changed later that one month prior to the meeting date.
- Arrange an informal meeting with the SPCC executive **Action AL**

8) Review councillor roles.

- Review at next meeting **Action ALL**

9) Review action

See Actions list

Flooding in Farley Way

- JS observed that the track to Evening House was adopted by the Borough Council in 1987
- Damien Pell has offered to clear the ditch between the track and Foxbrook
- Houses at the bottom of Farley Way need protection from flooding from the field at the rear. It was suggested that a drainage ditch along the field boundary with Foxbrook might be a solution.
- Write to the land owner from a PC email address and attempt to establish responsibility and find a solution **Action JS**

10) Local Elections (4th May 2023) – Voter ID now required.

- Accepted forms of ID include a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport; a UK, EEA or Commonwealth drivers' licence; and some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card.
- Voters will be able to use expired ID if they are still recognisable from the photo.
- Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID online at www.voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/ or by completing a paper form.
- Encourage residents to use postal voting

An awareness campaign is required. **Action for March meeting**

- Parish Magazine
- Facebook
- Website

11) Coronation 6th/7th May (12k run 7th May)

JA observed that the coronation would be very different to the Jubilee

- Saturday 6th May: Coronation (**Would the V/H show the coronation**)?

- Sunday 7th May: Big Lunch/Street Party (**also Stevington 12k run – this will use the village hall and a marquee**).
- Monday 8th May: do something for the community. **Involve other organisations in the community?**
Action AL/PF to speak to SPCC.

12) Stevington Country Walk – update on current state/littering prevention (no motion)

- JA informed the meeting that something will be happening to address this but he wasn't able to give specifics at the present time.

13) Church Room

Access for all

- RT observed that the Church Room is a fantastic facility but the means of access is extremely challenging for several user groups. An increasingly older population of residents would benefit from better accessibility and this would increase use of the facility.
- JD commented that this has been an issue since the Friends of St. Marys was first set up. She first did research into it 10 years ago.
- RT proposed to FOSM Chair an access ramp solution on the R/H side of the entrance gate with entrance into the building via a converted window aperture.
- A ramp has already been approved in a different location. PF observed that a new planning application would probably be required.

A resolution was proposed that SPC are willing to support an application by FOSMS for a Partnerships grant (towards the cost of the link building between the main hall and the external toilets at the Community Hub) from The National Lottery Community Fund, by being a named partner on a grant application form.

PF Proposed that SPC will support the resolution and a new planning application for a ramp and entrance to the R/H side of the building

Proposed PF Seconded RT.

14) Financial matters

Budget 2023/24

a) Precept

- AL has checked expenditure for the previous 3 years and that there are no repeat items that have been missed
- JA observed that Pavenham PC has had 2 by-elections in a year and this has cost over £5k
- AL observed that Stevington PC is holding sufficient reserve to cover the cost of such an eventuality.
- There was discussion about funding for the replacement of play equipment. It was decided that £1100 be allocated from council reserves.
- The proposal was to increase the precept by 5% **Proposed PF, Seconded JD**

b) Grounds contract

- The proposal was to renew the contract with Court Lane Landscapes for a further 3 year at a cost of £4370pa. **Proposed JD, seconded JS.**

c) Churchyard grass cutting grant increase (£1500 to £1600).

- After discussion it was agreed that the grant would not be increased. **Action clerk to write to John Hurst**

d) Bank reconciliation and future payments

- **Approved and signed AL**

Reports from Councillors

a) Borough Councillor's Report

- 4.9% Council Tax increase
- 2% increase in adult social care precept (2.99% all together)
- 6.1% Police precept
- There is a £7m shortfall in revenue part of which will be covered by £5m from reserves
- The leisure contract is due for renewal.
- School places set to increase in Lincroft/Biddenham catchment – the increase most likely to be at Biddenham.
- Local plan has passed full council and has gone for inspection. No increase in housing numbers north of the A6 roundabout. Any increase will be centred on Stewartby and Wyboston.

JS (Environment)

- Feedback for the first draft of the environmental manifesto was positive although there were several comments that it was a long document. With this in mind the proposal is to split the manifesto into two documents, one for the council to adopt and one giving recommendations of residents to implement.
- The proposal for council is that: SPC will take into account the serious threat posed by climate change and will always consider the impact of the environment on the community.

PF observed that SPC can comment on the environmental impact of Borough Council plans but we cannot enforce.

JD observed that we could change the wording of paragraph 6 to say that we will hold the Borough to account on environmental matters.

It was agreed that paragraph be re-written and circulated for further comment.

Proposed JS. Seconded RT

- A second request is put a page on the SPC website to communicate with the village.
AL observed that there may be problems with sub-letting space on a .gov domain website.
An alternative would be to have a wix-website and direct those interested to this page from the SPC website

Action AL to create a template website for the Environmental group to use.

JS (Flood group)

- The group very well
- The main issue at present concerns flooding at the bottom end of Farley Way due to run-off from the field behind. We propose to write to the owner Mr Hammond to seek a resolution (possibly a drainage ditch along the bottom edge of this field).

RT (Highways and – in MD absence - Policing)

- The Police portfolio has been handed to MB.
 - Crime figures
 - November – a theft in Park Road
 - December – No crime reported.
 - The local rural police team are holding 'Coffee with a Cop' at Bromham Mill. JD added that this team had been invited to 'Coffee and Croissants' in Stevington recently.

JD (Good Neighbours scheme)

- The proposal is for SPC to support the setting up of a more formal scheme which JD will chair for the first 12 month whilst the scheme is being set up

Proposed JD Seconded JS

JD proposal to formally thank Damien Pell for clearing the ditch alongside the track leading to Evening House. **Action JD to email Damien thanking him for the ditch clearance.**

JS would like Damien to attend a meeting of the flood group.

PF (Council vacancy)

- With James Lockwood stepping down there is now a vacancy on the council. However with elections due in early May 2023 we can probably run with the vacancy until May. RT enquired about the implications of the May election for council members. AL observed that councillors needed to residents of the village to stand.

Commented [RT(1)]: Missing word somewhere? Not sure this makes full sense?

15) Correspondence – items discussed during the meeting.

16) Open session – no items raised.

Date of next meeting 28/03/2023

Clerk: Kevin Papworth.