

MINUTES OF THE 2015 ANNUAL MEETING OF STOKE GOLDING PARISH COUNCIL

The annual meeting of Stoke Golding Parish Council was held in the village hall on Thursday 23rd April 2015.

Present: Parish Councillors Mr R Ward (Chairman), Mr R Brown, Mr D Mayes, Mr C Pegg, Mrs R Fisher, Mrs S Beale and Mrs Theresa Case, and members of the public.

Cllr Ward opened the meeting at 8.00pm and thanked everyone for coming.

1. Formal Apologies for absence: Mrs R Terheege (Vice-Chairman), County Councillor I Ould and Mrs S Mitchell.

2. Minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting

The Chairman confirmed the minutes are published on the Parish Council Notice Board, Stoke Golding and Co-operative websites and a copy is provided in the Post Office. Proposed: Alan Taylor. Seconded: Les Broome.

3. Reports for the year ended 31st March 2015

a) Chairman's Report :

The Parish Council continues to spend wisely on community projects and this year has spent over £100,000 and still finished the year in roughly the same financial position as last year. This has been possible through match funding on large projects. The Audit Commission states that the Parish Council should maintain a reserve of one and a half times the precept which is usually around £28,000. This accounts for the current reserve of approximately £50,000, of which most is already allocated to further projects. The financial position of the Parish Council is, therefore, very healthy and it is considered that the money has been well spent.

The Parish Council is also hoping to work with all groups; both sport and community, to further improve sporting facilities at the recreation ground including a new pavilion. We would like to call the project 'Sport in Stoke Golding'. Although these projects might not directly benefit all residents, they do contribute to the village economy by bringing in trade to the pubs and club. The gym equipment has also been well received. Cllr Brown has been heading a project to renovate or rebuild the tired pavilion. The £10,000 from the solar panel farm has been allocated to employ architects to draw up plans for this project to enable further grants to be sought. There will be approximately £45,000 to come from the 106 agreement for the Morris Homes development. This will need to be spent on the recreation field site.

In addition, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has been contacted to initiate the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan. This follows a presentation on the subject from John Preston of the Rural Communities Council. Cllr Beale has been heading this initiative and will be working with the community. It will require a lot of work and will take some time to complete and furthermore should there be a change of government in the future it may no longer carry weight.

Development continues to be of serious concern to all members of the community and the Parish Council. The Parish Council recently met with five other parish councils to discuss the Barwell SUE development and formulate a letter, to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council and all candidates of the election, highlighting the highway issues and the under-estimation of traffic on rural roads. A service road from the development to the northern perimeter road has also been requested.

Cllr Ward and Roy Mitchell attended the ceremonies at Fenn Lane and the Battlefield for the reburial of Richard III on 22nd March 2015. Cllr Ward also attended the service at the cathedral which was very moving. The cost of the reburial will undoubtedly be returned many times over through renewed interest in the region and the impact on local businesses in the area.

On behalf of the Parish Council, Cllr Ward would like to thank Les Broome for his continued work in serving the community by opening/closing the gate at the recreation field and so ensuring the security of the site. His work is appreciated.

b) Financial Report – Parish Clerk :

Receipts –

This year the precept included a Council Tax Support Grant of £2717.00. A New Homes Bonus was also received. Cemetery receipts were up on previous year. Recreation ground fees were down on previous year. Grants were received from the Community Parish Initiative Fund, the Environmental Improvement Programme and from the Section 106 monies. A donation was made by the solar panel farm developers. A donation was also made by the Village Hall Management Committee for a piece of playground equipment. A sum of £50 came from H&BBC towards the annual Christmas Fund. The Woman's Hall interest was used towards the gym equipment.

Payments –

In the current year the Parish Council has spent a total of £53,197.81 on three large projects: the gym equipment, the cemetery renovation and the recreation ground pathways. Smaller projects were the removal of poplar trees from the recreation ground, turfing under the swings and a netball ring. The installation of the remaining street name plates is imminent.

c) Planning Report - Parish Clerk:

Since the 1st April 2014 the Parish Council has consulted and offered comments where appropriate on 36 planning applications. These were for nine erection of new buildings, eleven extensions and alterations to dwelling, one conversion, three change of use, six for work to trees, two for erection of fences, one for extension to a car park and one erection of a wind turbine. Two applications were also received in relation to a proposed development of new dwellings: outline for 75 dwellings and reserve matters for 80 dwellings. Five applications were withdrawn.

d) Cemetery Report: Cemetery Administrator - Mr. Ray Tunks:

THE OLD CEMETERY, HINCKLEY ROAD, STOKE GOLDING.

In Hinckley Road Cemetery in the last 12 months (April 2014 – March 2015) there have been four full burials, one burial of ashes and one scattering of ashes. Some of these were in pre-purchased plots. Permission was granted to erect six memorials. There was one grave plot purchased. These transactions resulted in £3110.00 going into Parish Council funds.

THE NEW CEMETERY, WYKIN LANE, STOKE GOLDING.

In Wykin Lane Cemetery in the last 12 months (April 2014 – March 2015) there have been two full burials and three burials of ashes. Permission was granted to erect six memorials. Five grave plots and three cremation plots were purchased. These transactions resulted in £6348.00 going into Parish Council funds.

e) Village Hall Management Committee - Mrs. R Fisher:

The Village Hall continues to provide an excellent venue in Stoke Golding for community groups, dance, upholstery and Pilates classes and private parties. We hosted five well-received Centre Stage productions this season: She 'Koyokh, Northanger Abbey, Rumpelstiltskin and Spoonface Steinburg (both performed in the round), and Rag Mama Rag. We have been informed that funding for Centre Stage Events has been cut, but hope to continue providing live entertainment independently.

We are currently exploring the possibility of installing hand-dryers in the WCs, which will cut down on paper waste. Disposal of waste is a continuing problem for the committee and we rely on hall users taking their rubbish away with them, which we realise, isn't satisfactory. We haven't as yet found a solution to the problem. We are also considering improving our stage lighting, and are looking at options available.

Thank you to all members of the Management Committee for your hard work over the past year

f) Heritage Warden Report – Mrs S Mitchell:

Part of the woodland in the Wykin Lane conservation area has had a few of the nursery trees including some silver birches, removed to allow for the developing canopy from the surrounding deciduous trees. The grass verges did not give such good displays of wild flowers last year probably because of mismanagement by the contractor and dog fouling which spoils the soil conditions. Appropriate weed control could also help to improve this area. Damage has occurred to the outlet pipe in the pond. Part of the top woodland was used for den building last summer. Unfortunately damage was done to surrounding young trees.

This winter the river and canal trust had to be contacted because of fallen trees across the towpath prohibiting access. The state of the towpath in places continues to be a problem in wet weather.

The Heritage group continues with talks on issues of local and heritage significance. It supported the idea of Stoke Golding being recognised as being part of the Richard III cortege route and Tony Collett wrote to the Diocese representing the Heritage Group's view which sadly was rejected.

g) Report From The Parish Council Sub-Committee To Promote The Convent Site Community Land Development – Pauline Goodsell:

This project has made some significant progress over the past year and we are hoping that in the very near future Mar City will hand the land over to the Parish Council. This would mean that the Parish Council can begin to consult with the community. A possible model could then be to involve people in 'sub-groups' developing the different areas such as a Community Orchard, woodland and flower meadow. Recent attendance at a Leicestershire County Council event demonstrated that there are grants available from a number of sources to promote environmental developments.

Raglan Housing Association (RHA) continued to support residents of Convent Drive and hosted several events. Residents, Parish Councillors, allotment holders were invited to the celebration of the completion of the RHA properties. Highlights included the viewing of Tom Hare's superb willow sculpture of giant apples - now in storage until its final position can be decided - and the inauguration of the fantastic composting toilet! The village gates have been renovated and are also in storage. The RHA grants funded a new shed for use by the Allotment Society and future users of other sections of the ground. And just before Christmas mulled wine and mince pies were served to residents at a property on Convent Drive. We sincerely thank the Raglan Housing Association and its employees for all the efforts put into the development of the land for community use.

Young apple trees grafted and planted by students from St Martin's Academy and pupils from St Margaret's Primary School continue to make good progress. The long term aim of the apple trees to be planted in a Community Orchard on the donated land now seems a bit closer! The Allotment Society now has a several new members and, possibly as this is written, a waiting list for an allotment. An interesting development is that some allotments have been split into half giving a more manageable size of plot. Evidently as Mar City hand over the land to the Parish Council arrangements will need to be agreed regarding links between the Parish Council and the Allotment Society.

The Parish Council would like to thank Mar City for consent to place items such as the composting toilet and new shed on the land for community use and for allowing the Parish Council to insure them. Mar City has promised to provide a water supply for the use of the Allotment Society and Community Orchard.

For the past four years work by the Parish Council Sub-committee has continued: - to secure the development of the land behind the houses for community use - including the allotments, a Community Orchard, possible meadow, marsh area and woodland. We now hope that in the very near future this exciting opportunity for the village to provide community land, for current and future generations, will come to fruition.

Pauline asked if the Parish Council could chase Mar City to begin negotiations in relation to ownership of the community land.

Cllr Ward commented that Mar City are behind in the completion of the development and will only begin talks once the building is complete.

4. Observations from the County Councillor Ivan Ould: The following report was read out by Cllr Ward:

1. David Tredinnick, following local concerns about housing planning applications, arranged a meeting with Brandon Lewis, the Planning Minister, last Autumn. I attended the meeting as well but there were two planning applications that the Minister could not discuss, one concerning Market Bosworth and the other concerning Stoke Golding. He would not discuss either specifically as he had not yet given his viewpoint.

2. The problems of inaccurate information loaded in to the Traffic Planning Model are well known. Thanks to the foresight of Stoke Golding Parish Council, there is unequivocal evidence that the original figure is only one third of current actual vehicle movements, and that the model outcomes do not take into account any traffic movements arising from the Barwell SUE. Ongoing negotiations are currently taking place and there is an e-mail on record that I sent to Laurence Fallon to which he replied that in the event of heightened traffic problems arising from the SUE, they would go back to developers to fund additional mitigation measures.

Cllr Ward added thanks to the team of volunteers involved with the VAS devices.

3. Every child at a state funded school in Leicestershire has shared an increase in funding for schools from 1.04.15 of £20.5M. It is the work of the F40 Lobby Group, that I have chaired for the last 6 years, that has led to this windfall. The Conservative Party have promised in their Manifesto that this will be an ongoing amount if they are returned to power after May 7th. The Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrat Party have both given an undertaking to change the current unfair funding formula. However Labour have given no such commitment.

4. Child safeguarding has a very prominent place in the vast majority of families priorities. I remain the County Council's designated Lead Member for Children and Families. This requires me to work to a statutory job description defined under the Children Act 2004 and redefined in 2010. You will not be surprised to learn of my very great concern at the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service not to prosecute Lord Greville Janner, the former Labour M.P.. This decision removes justice from those abused and from Lord Janner.

5. The Boundary Commission have called in the County Council Divisions to examine both the number of county councillors required, and how large their current Divisions are. The Boundary Commission will not accept any Division greater or smaller than a 10% difference from the average. The Market Bosworth Division is currently 16% above the average and will be downsized by the removal of one of the Parishes.

6. The Boundary Commission have also accepted that the average weekly workload for a County Councillor is 23 hours but this figure does not distinguish between executive and non-executive members. The figures I was asked to submit were accepted by the Boundary Commission as being 41 hours per week.

7. I have tried to attend most Parish Meetings over the last year but cannot always manage every one, as there are thirteen parish councils making up the Division. A monthly report is now submitted by me as well as attendance when possible.

8. I visited the headquarters of EMAS on Monday 13th April to attend their Patients Forum, as I have raised 6 examples of unsatisfactory delays in ambulances responding to urgent calls. Please continue to let me know of any difficulties residents in your Parish experience.

9. The County Council have continued to appoint me as their representative on the George Eliot Hospital Patients Advisory Forum. I attend these meetings regularly and have been asked by the Hospital to look into bed blocking.

10. I am pleased that so many people from Stoke Golding contact me on a regular basis, and would like to thank them for their ongoing interest.

11. My report finishes with a request. Due to Data Protection and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, I no longer accept e-mails on my private e-mail address. All Parish and Constituent business should be via my county hall e-mail address of ivan.ould@leics.gov.uk.

5. Observations from the Borough Councillor, Reg Ward: Cllr Ward commented on his work on the planning committee. He does not always agree with the decisions and the overload of housing developments in our rural communities. He also hoped that the money spent in Hinckley would be of benefit to the town; both Castle Street and the Crescent.

6. Observations from:

a) The Charity of Thomas Barton: Mr P Spokes read out the following report:

The interest from the investment portfolio and the rent from the property owned by the Charity continue to fund the many projects in the village which the Charity undertakes.

During the year the Charity has provided funds for the following:

Village Web Site Expenses

Donation to Gardener for Old Cemetery Maintenance

Replacement Lawnmower for the Cemetery

Best Kept Front Garden Competition Prizes

Donation to Village Garden Society Show

St Margaret's School Awards Certificates

St Martin's School Awards Scheme

Village Christmas Lights and Switch on Ceremony

Donation to Adult Learners Week

St Margaret's Church Lighting Costs

Production of the Webster Collection

Repair of Headstone for G. Wright

Donations to Church Flower Festivals

Refurbishment of Methodist Church

Over £10,900 has been spent on village projects since the last report. Since the last report the Charity has sold No 4 Blacksmith's Yard. The Charity will also consider applications for a grant from any organisation or suggestions for projects that meet the criteria of the Charity namely that it is: 'For the general benefit of the inhabitants of Stoke Golding for which provision is not made out of rates, taxes, or other public funds'

b) The Mistress Hester Hodges Foundation: Mr P Summers, read out the following report:

Two meetings were held during this year 2014. One in May and one in October. At the May meeting the audited accounts for the year 2013 were presented and accepted. The interest from shares totalled £511.08. No expenses were deducted and 50% was due to St Margaret's School and 50% was due to students grants. The school requested a grant to obtain bibles for year 2; this was granted. At the October meeting one applicant was granted a sum of £125: the highest award made to date. The remaining money will be added to next year's allocation for students. Report dated January 2015.

c) The Stoke Golding Boys' Charity: Mrs R Fisher read out the following report:

The income of the Charity, after payment of expenses, is about to be distributed to boys and young men of Stoke Golding under the age of 25 years. The amount available for distribution this year is £5,500. Eighteen applications have been made, the same as last year.

7. Parishioners Questions:

Q1-Pauline Goodsell submitted the following questions:

1. What grants have been sourced for the work to the football pitches and the new pavilion?
2. What arrangements have been made with the sports groups regarding their contributions to the works?
3. What arrangements are to be put in place for the on-going maintenance and running of these facilities including rental fees?

A-Cllr Ward stated that the 106 contribution from Morris Homes was still to be determined. Work with both the football and cricket clubs was on going. The PC hoped to form a sports committee called 'Sport in Stoke Golding'. This will give access to funding from sports organisations such as the FA and also ensure the continued involvement of the sports teams in any future improvements. In addition, if facilities are improved they will need to be properly maintained and managed.

Q2-Roy Mitchell commented that the trustees for the Stoke Golding Boys' Charity need to review their policy of making awards only to boys, as this is out dated. Was there anyone that he could write to about this?

A-Paul Spokes suggested that the PC and individuals might write to the Charity Commission.

Q3-Graham Vallis suggested that more needed to be done in the village to make information more readily available online.

A-Cllr Ward stated that since joining the PC, Cllr Beale had worked on improving communication.

Pauline Goodsell thanked Cllr Mayes for ensuring public notices were displayed on the Stoke Golding and Dadlington Co-Operative website.

Q4-Janet Broome asked why the signs asking dog owners to keep dogs on leads, at the recreation field, had been removed, as she considers this would help prevent dog fouling?

A-Cllr Ward replied that these had been erected without due consultation and were, therefore, removed. They would not be put up without proper consultation with residents.

Q5-Graham Vallis asked if any consideration had been given to an improved village centre? Could the land necessary be gained by moving the wall of Park House as was previously discussed in relation to the War Memorial? Perhaps the Neighbourhood Plan could look at how it could be funded?

Roy Mitchell asked if 106 money could be used?

A-Cllr Ward stated that negotiations to gain this land had previously failed, so it was unlikely that this would be an option. This is something that could be looked at through the Neighbourhood Plan. However, 106 money must be used at the recreation field, so would not be available.

Q6-Paul Spokes asked whether the NSB account could be better invested to gain a higher return?

A-Cllr Ward explained that the PC funds need to be available to apply for grants and are, therefore, constantly moving in and out to fund large projects, it would be too restrictive to tie up funds to gain more interest.

Cllr Mayes also commented that using the funds to match fund grants was more financially beneficial.

Q7-Andrew Clover commented that PC seemed relaxed about waiting for the 106 money from Morris Homes. Could they be made to pay earlier? What if they do not honour the agreement?

A-Cllr Ward replied that the law states the 106 money is paid at half-occupancy and this agreement is bonded by HBBC, so Morris Homes must pay.

Before the meeting was closed Cllr Mayes made a short speech and presented Reg Ward with a plaque in thanks for his many years of dedicated service to the village and the Parish Council.

Cllr Ward thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.