

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STURRY PARISH COUNCIL HELD VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 13TH 2021**

Cllr Bubb opened the meeting at 19.00 hours.

PRESENT -Parish Councillors Ashley Bubb (Chair of the meeting), Carole Birch (was able to see and hear the meeting but could not be heard so communicated via text), Heather Taylor, Steve Birch, Sharron Hogben, Ann Davies, John Hogben, Trevor Pilbeam (joined the meeting at 17.15 hours), County Councillor Alan Marsh, District Councillor Louise Harvey-Quirke, Jo Hitchcock (Cemetery Superintendent), Anne Stevenson (Clerk to Sturry Parish Council/minutes taker) and six members of the public.

7039. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Ben Davies who has no internet access at present, Cllrs Georgina Glover and Peter Wenham who were both unable to access the meeting after several attempts and Alan Webster.

Public questions.

Dr and Mrs Ogilvie spoke about their proposal of running a refreshment kiosk in or near the play area in Park View stating if the toilets are to be built, with the possibility of this being run from their garden ,this would add to the use and footfall in the park. This to be discussed in more detail as agenda item 7051.

A member of the public mentioned parking and damage to cars in Park View.

7040. To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests and Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests on any agenda items and a reminder to think of any changes to the DPI register held at CCC such as change of job or home.

Cllrs Carole Birch and Steve Birch declared an interest in item 7051 as the Ogilvies are neighbours.

Cllr Davies declared an interest in item 7049 as she had helped distribute some leaflets.

7041. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held December 2nd 2020 and the Extraordinary Meeting held December 21st 2020 (*and to note that these will be signed by the Chairman at a later meeting when face to face meetings can resume*).

Proposed as a true record by Cllr Bubb, seconded by Cllr Taylor, all agreed.

Resolved – minutes of the meetings held December 2nd 2020 and December 21st 2020 approved.

7042. Matters arising not agenda items.

A letter has been received from the Guides and Scouts regarding the electricity supply to the MUGA court.

A site visit to the park regarding the toilets took place before the latest lockdown, plans circulated by Cllr Ann Davies.

7043. Chairman and Councillors' reports.

Cllr Steve Birch reported on the death of Jackie Moran, a former Parish Clerk.

Cllr Sharron Hogben reported Hersden Parish Council are in full support of Sturry Parish Council's stand against the planned large development.

Cllr Ann Davie reported she had been working on a response to the planned Sturry application.

7044. County and District Councillors' reports.

District Cllr Harvey-Quirke reported that Serco were experiencing serious staffing problems due to illness and isolation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and advised that any bins not emptied on the due day should be left out and they would be collected as soon as possible. Also due to Covid, the car parks in St Radigans and Castle Street were closed.

County Cllr Alan Marsh reported that he had attended a meeting of Hersden Parish Council earlier in the week and confirmed what Cllr Sharron had reported earlier, that Hersden Parish Council were in full support of Sturry Parish Council in the matter of the planning applications.

Cllr Marsh reported that he had been copied into a letter to Simon Thomas head of CCC Planning from SPC asking why their submission on the original planning application for the large development had been removed from the planning portal. On receipt of the letter, Cllr Marsh stated he had contacted CCC and insisted this should be reinstated with immediate effect, Cllr Marsh asked Clerk to check this had been done and to contact him if this was still missing.

JTB had met and the 20MPH limits for the village had been agreed, but the signs were not yet available.

On Brexit, Cllr Marsh reported that 2,340 approved access permits had been issued with 25 lorries remaining in Manston due to 41 drivers being quarantined after positive Covid results. 93 offences had been discovered with fines of £300 each being given.

Cllr Marsh concluded with a warning that the infection and death figures for Covid in the county were still very high and that we were facing a really serious situation, adding that he would help wherever he could and that £15 food vouchers per child were now available via KCC and anyone wishing to access these should contact the Clerk.

7045. Community Warden and Police Officers' reports.

None available.

7046. Village Caretaker's report.

In the absence of Alan Webster, Clerk read out the following report –

Good evening,

Happy New Year to you all, this is my report for January.

Things have been extremely quiet due to Christmas. I have been keeping myself busy with various jobs and chores.

My main job has been taking down the Christmas lights along the High Street and I have taken down all the trees as well. I would say approx. 60% of the lights have been removed though there are still some remaining. I will not be able to remove those without the cherry picker and I am waiting to hear from The King's School maintenance team as to when they will be able to assist with this but to date, there are no definite arrangements.

I have weeded and removed greenery which was growing on the pavement all the way from Bakery Green to the dentist and the rail crossing on the A28. Both sides of the High Street have been done and I have had good feedback about removal of weeds etc. on the pavements.

Other jobs I have been doing are mainly within the cemetery. I have topped up a couple of graves which had sunk substantially due to the amount of rain we have had recently and I noticed that further recently dug grave have sunk and will need topping up when they have dried out.

That is the end of my report for this month, very short and sweet and I wish you all good health and will speak to you again at next month's meeting.

Thank you

7047. Cemetery report to include to discuss and decide on improvements to the entrance, purchase of new equipment and to decide on quote for tree work to be done. Also to confirm toilet facilities.

Cllr Ann Davies stated that the three quotes received for work on trees in the cemetery did not seem to be for the same work and asked if the tree surgeons had been met on site, Jo Hitchcock confirmed Alan Webster was present on all three occasions and Clerk confirmed all three companies had been given the same brief.

Cllr Steve Birch stated he thought one quote was for another piece of work and that the quote under discussion from this firm had been submitted to council at an earlier meeting but felt the work needed doing as soon as possible.

Cllr Taylor thought none of the quotes mentioned the same job but Cllr Bubb said they did just with different wording.

Clerk stated that they had waited for a considerable time to get three quotes and that Jo Hitchcock had been contacting firms to try to get quotes.

Cllr Ann Davies stated the quotes for the work to the Douglas firs were very similar and to discount the quote that mentioned an Ash tree.

Cllr Taylor proposed accepting the quote from Tree Tek at a cost of £474.00, seconded by Cllr Bubb. All agreed on a show of hands.

Jo Hitchcock reported there had been no funerals held over the Christmas period but that the ground was very wet causing some issues with graves sinking. There had been some monuments erected recently.

Jo continued by asking if replacement watering cans could be purchased to replace the current ones in use which had become very battered and tatty. All agreed.

Cllrs reported that over the Christmas period, the cemetery had been used as a playground for families with children riding their bikes or running around seemingly with no respect and that this behaviour had upset some families visiting graves. It was agreed that notices regarding cemetery etiquette and behaviour should be displayed on the noticeboard.

Cllr Taylor stated her disappointment that the Christmas tree had not been advertised.

The toilets in the cemetery had been agreed at a previous meeting but due to the lockdown, these have yet to be installed. Clerk to liaise with Cllr John Hogben to try to move this forward with a porta-loo type toilet being placed in the turning circle near the minibus.

The situation with the work to the driveway has been made more difficult with Community Payback being suspended until after the current lockdown is over and some of the growth they have cleared is re-growing and there are stumps that need to be removed.

Cllr Bubb stated there was work needed on both sides of the entrance but felt that part of the beds on the right-hand side could be used to create extra parking. Cllrs agreed more parking would be a good idea. Cllr Ann Davie stated that parking would be good and that outstanding work would include removing the stumps, ivy and bramble roots.

Cllr Bubb suggested a site visit when this was allowed.

Resolved – Tree -Tek to do the works required on the Douglas firs

Jo Hitchcock to purchase replacement watering cans

Notices regarding etiquette and behaviour to go on the noticeboard

Clerk to liaise with Cllr John Hogben regarding porta loo

Site visit when allowed.

7048. Clerk's report.

Not having been back long after the Christmas/New Year break, there is not that much to report.

The food bank has been topped up by Asda with this time some non-perishable goods which are much more suited to this and within minutes of my putting on Facebook that we had food to offer, we were contacted by a family in need and were able to deliver a food parcel to them that day.

Since then, we have made deliveries to 2 more families and 3 of our more elderly residents.

Jo is keeping a record on who receives donations so that we run a fair system to ensure food parcels are not always going to the same families unless they are in severe need, similar to how the

Canterbury Food Bank operates and I would like to thank her and Alan for their continuing work on this, collecting and delivering the food with me acting as admin to receive and look into requests before sending the details out to them, and this system seems to be working quite well.

A special vote of thanks must go to Trevor and his wife Doreen. Doreen has been making face coverings and has donated the profit from these to the food bank and has told me that she will continue to do so throughout the current crisis and Trevor has negotiated with Broad Oak Farm Shop to give vouchers for up to £5 worth of fresh fruit or veg paid for by the face mask profits and has arranged for Brogdale Butchers to donate meat at the end of trade on Sunday that still has a few days to go before it's last use by date which will be donated to families or individuals on a Monday.

Alan is also to be thanked for working so hard in some really pouring rain to take down as many of the Christmas lights as he was able to reach, leaving only what are above the dentists and Franklyn House. The staff at Junior King's who helped him put them up have been furloughed as the school is closed so at the moment, we don't have access to the cherry picker to take these down, hopefully this can be done in the spring, fingers crossed. Jo has been looking at replacement lights and we will agenda this at a meeting in the future.

Sandra is back at work litter picking and I think we could all see the difference over the Christmas break when she and Alan were off how quickly the litter built up so it is good to see her back.

Community Payback have been stood down due to the pandemic so work in the cemetery has come to a halt, I just hope that they will be back before everything they have cleared regrows and they have to start again!!!

The complaints I have received regarding the state of our pavements and open spaces where dog walkers are failing to clear up after their dogs is absolutely staggering following the original comment I put out on our Facebook page, so I think regular reminders and posters are needed to remind dog owners of their responsibilities under legislation and to be mindful that the pavements are for people to walk on safely without the risk of stepping on or slipping in something left behind by a dog with a negligent owner.

Cllr Bub handed over chairing this section of the meeting to Cllr Taylor, Chair of Planning.

7049. To discuss planning application CA/20/02826 – outline application (with all matters reserved) for the development of up to 630 houses and associated community infrastructure comprising primary school, community building, public car park and associated amenity space, access, parking and landscaping and detailed/full application for the construction of part of the Sturry Link Road and a local road from the Sturry Link Road to Shalloak Road and to decide on the response from Sturry Parish Council. Last date for objections 22/1/2021.

Cllr Taylor reported that the residents actively involved with this application had delivered leaflets around the village and were to be commended for this. Cllr Taylor asked if the cost of printing was known as she felt SPC should contribute to this. Clerk to contact a member of the group and ask for printing costs along with a receipt and report back to council.

Cllr Ann Davies reported that the timing of the amended application was difficult as most of the public consultation period was during both the Christmas break and newest lockdown.

Cllr Taylor stated that in her opinion, nothing much had changed from the last application except a small reduction in the number of houses.

Cllr Ann Davies continued that she was working on the formal response to the application from SPC and confirmed she had asked Clerk to contact CCC and ask for their original response to be reinstated on the planning portal. Cllr Davies continued by saying the current application did not appear to have a Certificate D without which no application should be accepted and Cllr Davies will send full details on this to Clerk so she can challenge CCC.

Only half of the site in question was mentioned in the Local Plan despite CCC claims to the contrary and there was no site assessment carried out to the entire site now in question.

Most of the points raised by SPC for the original application are still valid so a copy of that will be attached to the new representation for this amended plan.

The developers questioning the validity of the Planning Committee's decision to refuse the original application will be answered on policy grounds, the Hillborough application being refused setting a precedent.

Sports facilities are sadly lacking with the expectation of the developers being that the proposed primary school facilities could be used not likely to gain KCC approval and funds for off site facilities should come to Sturry and not to Hersden as planned.

Cllr Davies continued that the Local Plan needed a viability study which hadn't been carried out and there had been no community engagement carried out for this amended application and that open spaces should be done as an audit which SPC had carried out but did not appear in the application. Cllr Davies also expressed concerns over things missing from the design code which she stated may have been deliberate plus concerns over the viability and land acquisition with the cost of the land at Sturry believed to be £22.5 million which was felt to be excessive.

Cllr Davies also voiced concerns over a letter reputedly sent to the Planning Committee from CCC Leader Ben Fitter-Harding reminding the members of the committee of their responsibilities, Cllr Davies being firmly of the opinion that the Planning Committee should agree on what is right for the residents and the local area rather than developers and profit.

Cllr Davies stated she would circulate a draft response to all Cllrs and asked for their comments to be sent back to her as soon as possible.

Cllr Taylor thanked Cllr Davies for all her hard work and asked if Cllrs had any comments. Cllr Steve Birch mentioned the lead pollution on the Greenfields site and stated he would look up the research he had done earlier and send to Cllr Davies.

Cllr Taylor stated she thought SPC response should be similar to their response to the original application and to ensure that people speaking at any planning committee hearing should all cover different aspects of the application so that nothing was repeated and all aspects were covered. Cllr Pilbeam agreed and added that the utilities at the proposed site would be an issue as the water pressure in the parish was already a concern.

Cllr Taylor stated that affordable housing should include council housing to enable local young families to buy them, all agreed.

Cllr Carole Birch sent her thanks to Cllr Davies for all her hard work.

Cllr Taylor again thanked Cllr Davies and asked for her thanks to be sent to the residents who produced the leaflet.

Resolved – Clerk to contact residents regarding printing costs

Cllr Steve Birch to submit research on polluted land on Greenfields site

Cllr Davies to circulate response with Cllrs sending to her comments as soon as possible

Cllr Bubb resumed as Chair for the rest of the meeting

7050. To discuss and decide on the reinstating of the Planning Committee with a view to holding regular meetings again.

Cllr Bubb stated that as there were many planning applications being received, the planning committee should be reinstated with Cllr Taylor remaining as Chair and Cllr Davies as Vice Chair and Cllr Taylor stressed the planning committee were always part of SPC, this was not to decide on a new committee and continued by saying not all Cllrs needed to be on the committee but those that were needed to be proactive and be prepared to do the work, read applications and reply to emails.

Cllr Ann Davies stated that the committee would also cover the new Local Plan, responses to general planning, the footpath issue by the river among other things, not just planning applications.

Cllr Bubb proposed reinstating the planning committee with Cllr Taylor as Chair and Cllr Ann Davies as Vice Chair, Cllr Sharron Hogben seconded, all in favour on a show of hands.

Cllr Taylor felt 5 Cllrs would be the best number and it was decided that Cllr Taylor (Chair), Cllr Ann Davies (vice chair), Cllrs Pilbeam, Sharron Hogben and Steve Birch would form the committee with Cllr Wenham as first reserve and Cllr Bubb as second reserve.

Resolved – Planning committee to be reinstated with Cllr Taylor as Chair, Cllr Ann Davies as Vice Chair and Cllrs Pilbeam, Sharron Hogben and Steve Birch making up the rest of the committee. Cllr Wenham to be first reserve and Cllr Bubb as second reserve.

7051. To discuss and decide on the suggestion of a kiosk either in or close to the play park in Park View.

Cllr Taylor informed the meeting that something similar had been suggested some years ago and that if the toilets were to be built, something like this could be added to the side of the building.

Cllr Bubb agreed and added that if this was to be run from the garden of the proposer, there would be risks with children crossing the road from the kiosk to the park, therefore a safer option would be to incorporate this into the build of the toilets and that SPC would work with the proposers.

Cllr Carole Birch messaged that if the proposer wanted to use the green space at the corner of McCarthy Avenue, KCC would need to give approval.

Cllr Ann Davies stated that wherever the kiosk is placed, it would create a litter problem and that both options should be explored as this would be an asset, but if the option of running it from the garden/green space, CCC would need to approve change of use for the property.

Cllr Taylor recommended the proposer contact CCC who have a pre-application service to give advice on whether applications would be viable.

Cllr Bubb asked the proposers to keep in touch with SPC and to let Cllrs see plans when they are ready.

7052. To discuss and decide on the on any Easter event that may be able to take place dependant on local guidelines at the time.

All agreed to defer this until lockdown restrictions have been lifted.

Deferred until lockdown has been lifted.

7053. To discuss and decide issues regarding the footpath towards the river and how Sturry Parish Council can improve and protect this, deferred from December meeting.

Cllr Bubb reported that Fordwich Town Council were to discuss this at there meeting taking place at the same time as SPC meeting and suggested deferring this until they had informed Clerk of any decision they may have made.

Cllr Ann Davies stated she thought SPC had made a decision to carry this forward and were only asking Fordwich Council whether they would support it. Clerk read from the minutes of the December meeting that had been approved earlier in the meeting , “ SPC had at a previous meeting agreed they would like to make this a public right of way but recommended before this is taken forward, SPC should contact Fordwich Town Council to see if they would support this both financially and practically”. Under these circumstances it was agreed to defer this item until February meeting to give Fordwich Town Council the opportunity to report their decision.

Deferred awaiting decision from Fordwich Town Council.

7054. An update on Brett’s land and to discuss and decide how to take forward the proposal ton have this area designated as green space. Deferred from December meeting.

Cllr Bubb reported that Sturry Football Club were still waiting written confirmation of the 10 years lease renewal but that he would like to see the land protected.

Cllr Ann Davies stated that District Cllr Glover had advised contacting Ashley Clark as he had experience in this field and that although she had drafted and circulated a letter, not enough Cllrs had responded to have a majority decision. Cllr Davies offered to send round the letter again as some Cllrs stated they hadn’t received the original but stressed decisions needed to be made.

Cllr Taylor expressed concerns over SPC contacting Ashley Clark given his position on CCC Planning Committee and suggested contacting him for an informal chat rather than with an official letter. Cllr

Davies disagreed, but Cllr Taylor then suggested contacting him as an individual and not in anyway connected to CCC and Cllr Davies agreed.

Cllr Carole Birch messaged that if Ashley Clark was contacted, CCCC would be made aware of the land, but Cllr Bubb pointed out the land is privately owned so this should not be a problem.

Cllr Steve Birch asked if there was any update on the position with the model railway, Cllr Bubb replied that there was nothing definite but the indications were that their land would be safe.

7055. To discuss and decide on Parish Council magazine.

Cllr Taylor reported that she had asked for this to go on the agenda with a view to discussing a possible merger with the church magazine but having spoken to one of the church wardens, it was clear that the church magazine is online only at present so asked for this to be deferred until after the pandemic was over. All agreed.

Deferred until after pandemic is over.

7056. To discuss and decide on improving the dog walking area of Park View.

Cllr Steve Birch reported he had been concerned as to how wet and muddy this area had become recently and expressed concerns that someone could slip over and asked if an area of Centenary Woods could be opened for dog walkers.

Cllr Bubb replied that this had been discussed previously and when the pandemic allowed for people to meet in public and Community Payback had returned, a working party could open part of the woods but that wasn't possible under the present circumstances.

Cllr Pilbeam agreed that recently this area was in a really poor state and that the gates had been closed for 2-3 days which had resulted in people trying to access the dog bins throwing filled bags over the gates instead of disposing of them elsewhere. Cllr Pilbeam asked if the cost of a path was known?

Cllr John Hogben stated that type 3 would be best as this would let water seep through and Cllr Ann Davies thought a previous quote had been £800 for 20 tons and recommended not using any loose material as this would cause problems for the contractor when it came to mowing the grass. Any path would need to be properly laid as in the church yard and would need a good base.

Cllr Hogben stated this quote would now need updating.

Cllr Davies stated any work agreed could not be carried out until the ground had dried out sufficiently and that she was in favour of opening part of the wood when circumstances would allow.

Cllr Bubb suggested keeping the gates locked and Cllr Pilbeam suggested adding more signage to this effect.

A conversation then followed regarding whether dog walkers were using this area in the rain and whether the area should stay open or close for a short while until the weather improves and many opinions were voiced.

Cllr Bubb called for a vote on whether the dog walking area should be closed or open and there was an overwhelming majority in favour of keeping it open on a show of hands.

Cllr Davies asked if Cllr John Hogben could continue to price up the costs of putting in some kind of path, all agreed.

Resolved – dog walking area to remain open.

Cllr John Hogben to price up materials for possible path.

7057. Finance

a) To approve payment of accounts presented at this meeting -John Caddick December invoice £1153.98, ADM £5,340.68.

Proposed by Cllr Bubb, seconded by Cllr Taylor, all in favour on show of hands.

b) To report on monies received -£1,000 funeral charges.

Resolved – all finances agreed.

7058. Any other matters of an urgent or special nature.

Cllr Bubb reported he had received a letter thanking parish staff for the litter picking.

7059. To discuss and decide date and format of next council meeting.

Full council Wednesday February 3rd, Planning Committee Wednesday February 17th, both via Microsoft Teams and to commence at 19.00.

There being no further business, Chairman closed the meeting at 21.28 hours.

Signed

Dated

