

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STURRY PARISH COUNCIL HELD VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2ND 2020.**

PRESENT – Councillors Ashley Bubb (Chair of the meeting), Peter Wenham, Heather Taylor, Carole Birch, Trevor Pilbeam, Sharron Hogben, Steve Birch, John Hogben, Ann Davies, County Councillor Alan Marsh, District Councillor Georgina Glover, Anne Stevenson (Clerk to Sturry Parish Council/minute taker), one member of the public.

Cllr Bubb opened the meeting at 19.00 hours.

7015. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Ben Davies who has no IT access at the moment, Alan Webster, Jo Hitchcock and Cllr Louise Harvey-Quirke.

Public questions.

None received.

7016. To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests and Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests on any agenda item and a reminder to think of any changes to the DPI register held at CCC such as change of job or home.

None received.

7017. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held November 4th 2020 (*and to note that these will be signed by the Chairman at a later date when face to face meetings can resume*).

Clerk reported an error on item 7003 where the minutes should read Cllr Steve Birch and not Cllr Steve Bubb. Proposed by Cllr Sharron Hogben, seconded by Cllr Peter Wenham to accept the minutes once this amendment had been made. All in favour except Cllr Bubb who abstained not having attended this meeting.

Resolved – minutes of meeting held 4th November 2020 approved following amendment.

7018. Matters arising not agenda items.

None.

7019. Chairman and Councillors' reports.

Cllr Bubb stated that Alan Webster and the team from Junior King's School had done a fantastic job erecting the Christmas lights in the High Street and offered his thanks to them and to other Cllrs who had also helped.

Cllr Taylor reported that the new tables had been installed in the play park and that there were people playing on them most days with all the footballs purchased for the football table having been given out. Cllr Taylor stated she was hoping to post pictures on line or on social media to show young people playing on the tables but was waiting for parental consent to do so. Cllr Taylor

continued by saying other parishes had shown an interest in the tables having seen them in situ and that it may be possible in the future for SPC to purchase more.

Cllr Davies reported that she had attended the KALC area meeting but that it had not been very successful due to problems with the link meaning she missed CCC Leader Ben Fitter-Harding's presentation and that Cllr Taylor had not been able to access the meeting at all. Cllr Davies reported that Ben Fitter-Harding had apologised for the way the Rural Forums had been abolished and for the way that concurrent funding had been dealt with but the apology was not for the outcome, just the way it was done. Terms of reference for a new Rural Forum were underway and concurrent funding had been secured at the current rate for the next 2 years during which CCC will carry out an audit in consultation with Parish Councils.

Cllr Davies continued to state that following the refusal at Planning Committee of the Sturry development, it was clear CCC were anxious not to go to appeal and newer working with developers to make changes to the current application which would then be re-submitted. This was an opportunity for SPC and residents to put forward suggestions and recommendations to satisfy their concerns. Cllr Davies said she would continue to concentrate on the lack of green space and sports facilities either as a resident or on behalf of SPC. The only sports provision on the application at present is on the school site and there is no off- site contribution for the Sturry site. The Broad Oak site will have an off- site contribution of £328,000 but this is understood to be earmarked for Hersden play area, not Sturry. Cllr Davies concluded by asking Cllrs to send their thoughts and comments either directly to her or via Clerk.

Cllr Carole Birch reported that along with other Cllrs she had attended the Remembrance Day service in St Nicholas closed churchyard and also along with Cllr Taylor, Clerk and Jo Hitchcock had also observed the 2 minutes silence on November 11th on Bakery Green. Cllr Birch also reported she had contacted the resident who was hoping to decorate Dengrove Wood for Christmas but had no response to date.

7020. County and District Councillors' reports.

Cllr Alan Marsh reported that the Sturry Relief Road funding had been extended for the 6th time following the refusal of the development at CCC planning. Cllr Marsh stated that the road was KCC responsibility but that they will do nothing until CCC have approved the plans. He confirmed that CCC officers were preparing a second version of the application which will be presented to Planning Committee in due course.

Cllr Marsh continued that Brexit was very close and that KCC had identified 4 areas for holding vehicles entering Kent and that all vehicles must have a green pass to enable them access. Vehicles with an amber pass would be stopped but would be able to apply for a green pass and if granted would have access, vehicles with a red pass would be stopped, banned from further travel and fined.

Cllr Marsh reported there were issues over fishing rights which may cause the French to once again shut everything down which would cause major knock on problems.

The situation in Kent regarding Covid-19 is very complex with twice the number of people aged 21 or under testing positive and Cllr Marsh hoped when students left the county over the Christmas

period, this would help to bring the local case numbers down but he was not sure the relaxation of guidelines over the 5 days at Christmas were a good idea.

Cllr Marsh reported the 20 MPH scheme in the centre of Sturry was going well and confirmed this had already been funded and was not reliant on the planning applications being granted. It was hoped the speed restrictions would be in by Christmas or very shortly after.

Cllr Marsh stated that he would work with Cllrs Taylor and Davies as chair and vice chair of SPC Planning Committee respectively as under the new CCC guidelines, planning applications can only be called in via District Cllrs, but as Cllr Marsh is Chairman of KCC Planning, he suggested SPC contact him in his official capacity if they felt he could help.

Cllr Taylor thanked Cllr Marsh for the clarification over the speed restrictions and informed him that his reply to her email had been sent to all SPC Cllrs. Cllr Taylor confirmed that SPC would keep him informed of any planning issues and asked that he would inform SPC on any Sturry related issues that come to his attention.

Cllr Marsh agreed he would do this, wished the meeting a Happy and safe Christmas and left the meeting at 19.27 hours.

District Cllr Georgina Glover reported that CCC Cllrs had received Brexit and Covid-19 briefings. Cllr Glover continued by saying there was to be a CCC concurrent funding meeting later in December when funding agreements were to be discussed. CCC will have severe budget issues over the next few months as the revenue normally accrued from car parks would not be forthcoming given the lockdown and Tier 3 restrictions.

Cllr Glover stated that CCC Head of Planning, Simon Thomas, had been told to go back to the developers regarding the Sturry application to discuss with them all the comments made at the planning committee meeting both by Cllrs and members of the public. Cllr Glover stated the application will be re-submitted but there was no date as yet.

Cllr Taylor stated it was good news that the application had been rejected and praised the hard work done by SPC and local residents. Cllr Taylor reported she had contacted District Cllr Ashley Clark to congratulate him on his presentation at the planning meeting, stating it was proof sometimes local people can beat CCC and developers. Cllr Taylor congratulated those residents who spoke at the meeting and put across some very good points and also thanked Cllr Glover for her support at the meeting. Cllr Glover replied that she was aware District Cllrs Clark and Spooner had attended a meeting and stated that if the planners and developers do not make necessary changes, the application would be refused again.

7021. Community Warden and Police Officers' reports.

None available.

7022. Village Caretaker's report.

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

Once again it has been relatively quiet, but a few things have been happening.

Firstly, I received the new tables in the park along with the Clerk and Cllr Taylor and I would like to thank them for staying and helping with the siting of the tables on what was a horrid, cold, damp day. I understand from Cllr Steve Birch that these tables are proving to be very popular which is good news; however, it would seem that some children think the tables are a mini dance floor judging by the amount of muddy footprints I have seen on top of the tables. People must be motivated by “Strictly Come Dancing” at the moment, which is good as it seems to have reduced the amount of drug paraphernalia around the park.

There has also been a reduction in the amount of glass etc. normally strewn around the play equipment and I hope this situation continues, but only time will tell.

Playdale were due this week to do some repairs to the equipment, but as yet, they haven’t turned up, although Clerk will be chasing this up.

My major issue this month has been erecting our Christmas lights and trees along the High Street and I am really glad that it was decided to have the lights up as this year has been really awful for everyone and a little normality and Christmas cheer is definitely needed. I have received some good comments from residents saying how nice to see some Christmas spirit being spread around the parish.

To say actually putting the lights up was interesting is a bit of an understatement. It was challenging as I had to get all the lights and trees out of storage and check they were all in working order and even when we were in the process of actually installing them, nothing was straightforward as we found missing components from some of the boxes, but overall, things went to plan and I am happy with the end result. I must say a big “thank you” to the maintenance staff of Junior King’s School who were such a big help in all of this and also to some of the parish council, namely Ashley, Steve, Trevor and John for their efforts at the start of this endeavour, particularly for their traffic control which was greatly appreciated. The only issue we had really was when a resident complained about not being able to park outside the chemist’s and then decided to vent his displeasure all over Facebook, which I believe backfired on him big time when other parishioners gave their thoughts on his “bah humbug” attitude.

On this note, I will wish you all a good evening.

Thank you

7023. Cemetery report.

In the absence of Jo Hitchcock, Clerk read out the following report –

There was a burial in the cemetery last Monday that I attended in Jo’s enforced absence, it was we believe our first Jewish service with several of the mourners stating they were unaware the cemetery existed.

We have another burial on December 11th which hopefully Jo will be able to officiate at.

We have asked 3 tree surgeons to quote for work to the trees that back on to the houses as there have been some concerns raised that they are overhanging the gardens too far to be safe. I haven’t seen the quotes that have come in as Jo has been dealing with this in her role as Cemetery

Superintendent, but when we have received all 3, I believe she will send them out to you for a decision to be made on who to offer the work to.

As we are now in the darker, winter months, we will only accept funeral or interment of ashes requests for services that will finish by 2.30pm as after that, it gets very dark and the gravedigger needs to be able to safely complete the grave work before he leaves. This is common practice in cemeteries such as ours and Chartham do the same but state their services must end by 2pm.

We are still having to complete a weekly questionnaire from KCC regarding our capacity, spaces and availability of staff in case we have a dramatic rise in Covid deaths in the county and we would be powerless to refuse any requests to use our cemetery should the need arise.

We are hopeful that Payback will be with us again soon and can help Alan keep the area tidy over the winter months with clearing leaves, fallen acorns, keeping the paths swept and generally maintaining the site.

Cllr Bubb stated the quotes for tree work had been circulated to Cllrs but too late for this meeting so would need to be an agenda item for a later meeting.

7024. Clerk's report.

A big thank you to Alan Webster and the staff from the Junior King's School for putting up the Christmas lights, residents will surely appreciate a little Christmas cheer during what will be a very strange Christmas this year. Alan has however reported that the lights are about on their last legs and may need replacing next year, something that will be an agenda item next year to discuss and decide on what to do. They are hoping to take them down as soon after January 4th as possible when Alan and the King's School staff are back after the Christmas holidays which brings leads to a gentle reminder that the parish staff will be off over Christmas with the last working day being December 23rd and back on January 4th. All staff have taken the time as annual leave as agreed by Council back in February.

The new website is up and running, we just need to ensure everything that needs to be available is on there, no mean feat when you look at meeting agendas and minutes etc. we are working with Highways over this but it may take some time.

Given we are now in tier 3, it has been agreed that both Jo and Clerk will continue to work from home with Alan accessing the office and delivering any mail that comes in as he will still be able to work as he is outside. Sandra will also be able to work litter picking but there has been a question asked about the cleaning of the disabled toilet as that can still be accessed by anyone who has been issued a Radar key. Sandra has confirmed that she is checking it and cleaning on a weekly basis.

Community Payback have asked if there is any work in the cemetery for when they have finished at the Guide and Scout Hall so it has been agreed they can clear the paths, clean up the fallen leaves and acorns and generally keep the place tidy over the winter. The area they have cleared can also be kept clear ready for planting when the time is right.

Our rough sleeper has been admitted to a secure psychiatric unit as she is very ill and vulnerable. Alan has moved her tent into the backyard at the office for safety and Catching Lives have been

informed. They wanted to offer SPC and the parish in general their thanks for the support, food and warm clothes this lady received during her stay on Bakery Green but asked if she is seen in the area that either they or the police are informed as this would mean she had absconded and given her current state of health, would pose a considerable danger to herself.

Playdale are due to come down sometime this week to carry out all the repairs on the play equipment identified by the ROSPA report, but to date, there has been no sign of them. They cancelled the original date due to a lack of then parts they needed caused by Covid.

7025. To discuss and decide on Sturry Parish Council budget for 2021/2022.

Cllr Bubb felt there was no need for any changes to the current budget and precept amount as SPC were financially sound and CCC had budget restraints due to Covid .

Cllr Taylor recommended the date needed to be changed on the budget spreadsheet and Clerk agreed but explained what Cllr Taylor was referring to was the current budget for comparison.

Cllr Taylor requested the budget for the play equipment be kept at £4,000 and not reduced to £2,000, that the income from purple sacks should be removed and asked if the amount for Christmas lights could be increased as there was a need to purchase new ones for the future.

Cllr Bubb stated he thought given the financial restrictions CCC were facing, SPC should move money around in their budget rather than increase the amount requested.

Cllr Taylor agreed and stated this proved the need for SPC to have a separate Finance Committee so that issues such as budget fell on them and not just on Chairman and Clerk.

Cllr Bubb agreed and stated this could be discussed in the New Year and asked Cllr Taylor to send to him her comments and suggestions for the budget as to where money could be moved around.

Cllr Davies stated there seemed to be a discrepancy in the amount of precept received which Cllr Bubb said he would look into.

Cllr Davies continued that the current grass cutting contract was for a 12 month period so costs for that should stay the same unless the new contract reduces the amount of work to be done and stated there was no need for SPC to have money held for election expenses.

Cllr Steve Bubb asked if Cllr Bubb had taken his honorarium this year, Clerk confirmed he had not.

Cllr Taylor offered to help set out the budget and send figures to Cllr Bubb. Cllr Bubb agreed this would be a good option and stated once the new figures had been received, he would call an EGM to agree the budget and precept.

Budget decision deferred to enable new figures to be presented to an EGM.

7026. To discuss and decide on plans for building toilets in Park View play park and Sturry cemetery.

Cllr Davies presented 3 options to the meeting for consideration-

Option 1 – 3 cubicles only, 1 male, 1 female and 1 disabled/baby changing.

Option 2 – 2 female cubicles, 1 male cubicle plus 2 urinals and 1 disabled/baby changing.

Option 3 – 2 female cubicles, 1 male cubicle plus 2 urinals, 1 disabled/baby changing and 1 storeroom.

Cllr Steve Birch thanked Cllr Davies for her hard work on the plans and stated in his opinion, option 3 would be the best.

Cllr Wenham gave the meeting some advice on plumbing issues with each option and stated that properly drawn up plans would give more exact measurements to see what issues the location of the soil pipe would cause.

A discussion followed on whether a disabled toilet was necessary given CCC had declared the park would never be disabled friendly due to the topography but most Cllrs agreed that the access to the proposed site would be flat and therefore wheelchair accessible and that the disabled toilet could also be used by mothers with prams/buggies who also required the extra space. Cllr Pilbeam and Cllr Sharron Hogben also reminded the meeting that not all disabilities required a wheelchair but felt we should have a disabled option.

Cllr Steve Birch asked if the plan was still to build this ourselves with help from the parish as a community project. Cllr Bubb replied that an agreement on which option was needed first so that planning consent could be sought and then a decision could be taken on who would build the agreed toilet block.

After another brief discussion on options, Cllr Taylor proposed option 1, Cllr Wenham proposed option 2, Cllr Steve Birch proposed option 3.

A vote was taken with the following result –

Option 1 – Cllrs Taylor and Bubb.

Option 2 – Cllrs Wenham, John Hogben, Sharron Hogben.

Option 3 – Cllrs Steve Birch, Trevor Pilbeam, Ann Davies and Carole Birch.

Following the vote, Cllr Davies requested a small group of Cllrs should go to the park and maintaining social distancing, measure out the plot more exactly before planning consent is sought and decide on finishings etc, Clerk to arrange.

Resolved – Option 3 chosen by 4 votes to 3 from option 2. Cllrs to meet in park to carry out measurements.

7027. An update on the Brett's land and to discuss and decide how to take forward the proposal to have this area designated as green space.

Cllr Bubb reported that Sturry Football Club have been offered a new 10 year lease from Bretts which will hopefully be signed in the New Year.

Cllr Davies felt 10 years wasn't very long and there was no information as to whether the model railway had been offered a similar deal. Cllr Davies stated CCC needed to be involved to advise on how to apply to make an area designated green space. District Cllr Glover recommended speaking to Cllr Ashley Clark who had experience in this area.

Cllr Bubb asked if any actions could be deferred until the football club had received and signed their new lease and for this to be an agenda item for January SPC meeting.

Cllr Carole Birch stated she thought that Cllrs Taylor and Davies should work together on this as Chair and Vice Chair of SPC Planning.

Deferred until January SPC meeting

7028. To discuss and decide issues regarding the footpath towards the river and how Sturry Parish Council can improve and protect this.

Cllr Davies stated 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.

Resolved -Clerk to contact Fordwich Town Council regarding the footpath

7029. To discuss and decide on ADM recommendation on iPads for Cllrs and to agree on replacements.

Cllr Bubb reported that ADM had recommended 3 possible devices, an Amazon Fire, Samsung Galaxy and Apple iPad mini all of which would sustain Cllr's emails etc.

Cllr Bubb recommended the Samsung Galaxy but Cllr Steve Birch asked if the Apple iPad mini would be better. Cllr Bubb stated that all such devices eventually had technology that became dated so the Apple would be no better than either of the other 2 options.

Cllr Bubb proposed purchasing the Samsung Galaxy, all in favour except Cllr Davies who abstained.

Resolved – SPC to purchase Samsung Galaxy Tab for Cllrs use.

7030. To receive a report on the food donations and distribution.

In Jo Hitchcock's absence, Clerk read the following report-

Jo Hitchcock and Clerk, but mainly Jo have been continuing with the food bank from the office with donations from Asda coming in on occasional Friday afternoons; however, these donations have become worse and worse if they are offered at all and they have found themselves in the position of having to either dump the food because it wasn't fit for human consumption, either very out of date or things such as potted herbs so nothing that could be used to make a meal or donating it on to animal parks/sanctuaries so it is taking us longer to dispose of then distribute.

Added to that, nobody since half term has been in touch to request any food even though we do still have tins and dried food available to give out and the office has been open recently, Jo hasn't had anyone asking for donations at all. When SPC were contacted by the Rector regarding possible

Salvation Army donations, Jo and Clerk discussed it and neither of them could come up with anyone in the Sturry parish that would need anything and that was why Cllrs were approached to see if anyone came to mind.

We are in the position at the moment with Asda offering us £600 towards food and goods to be donated within the parish, but Jo and Clerk are wondering whether we need to take them up on this given what we have been experiencing recently or whether we donate what we do have left either to Salvation Army, Hersden Neighbourhood Centre if they need it or the Canterbury Food Bank or to wait and see what happens when the children are off over Christmas and whether we receive any requests then.

Some of the families we originally helped have had a change in circumstances and are now supported by the Statutory Bodies and some of the newly bereaved are now in a position to begin to move forward and so families have thanked us for the donations but now feel they are not needed. Another family with children who came in for food and were also given quite a large donation when Clerk was doing the Friday run had a big Asda delivery while she was still leaving their premises and they haven't been in touch since either so we need to see how if at all we take this forward. Parish staff are still happy to do it and know that there must be families that may need help, we just don't seem to be able to identify them so any thoughts or suggestions would be welcome.

Cllr Pilbeam reported that he had offered to approach Brogdale Butchers and Broad Oak Farm Shop to ask for donations to make up 3 Christmas dinners to be donated to families in need and that his wife would like to donate some of the proceeds of her profits from making face masks to the SPC food bank but that these were on hold until a decision by Cllrs is made.

Cllr Taylor stated that anything SPC decided not to use should be sent to the Canterbury Food Bank.

Cllrs Taylor and Davies both suggested seeing how things were over the winter and the approaching Christmas holidays when children would be at home and to keep the donations coming in if possible. All agreed.

Cllr Bubb stated that Cllr Pilbeam's donations would be very welcome.

Resolved – to keep the food bank going over the winter and Christmas period and re-visit in the spring.

7031. Finance

a) To approve payment of accounts presented at this meeting.

ADM for mailsafe, ATP and archiving the 3 Microsoft accounts - £156.84

John Caddick for grounds maintenance in November - £1153.98

Trade UK for caretaker's equipment -£14.00

Proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Bubb, all in favour.

b) To report on monies received

£1,000.00 from Gore Brothers for funeral.

7032. To discuss and decide on a possible Christmas event socially distanced in the village should this be allowed under the latest Covid-19 guidance.

Cllr Davies reported that she had asked for this as an agenda item in case restrictions meant that something could be organised but as Kent is now Tier 3, this would not be possible.

7033. Any other matters of an urgent or special nature.

Cllr Carole Birch asked if all Cllrs had received the email she forwarded from a resident who would like SPC support in building a refreshment kiosk near the park. With a possible donation towards a zebra crossing as well.

This will be an agenda item for January's meeting with an invitation being extended to this resident for them to attend.

7034. To discuss and decide date and format of next Sturry Parish Council meeting.

Wednesday January 13th 2021, 7pm via Microsoft Teams unless restrictions have been lifted.

Chairman closed the meeting at 21.11 hours.

Signed

Date.....

