

The Minutes of the Stoughton Parish Council Meeting on **Tuesday 11th July 2023 at 7.00pm in Stoughton Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Bob Battey (BB) (Chair)
Cllr Tom Richardson (TR) (Vice Chair)
Cllr June Sparrow (JS)
Cllr Tracy Mee (TM)
Cllr Kirsty Volpe (KV)
Victoria Webster (Clerk)

144/22. Welcome, Introductions and Chair's Opening Remarks

BB welcomed all to the meeting.

145/22. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from District Cllr Peter Elliott (PE).

146/22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

147/22. Parishioners Comments

A request to cut trees that are overhanging their properties from two parishioners was received. They asked the Parish Council if there are any plans going forward for cutting the hedge and trees in question. Sap continuously drops on their cars etc. and it can be difficult to remove. The parishioners noted that the trees and hedge are only very occasional trimmed to hedge level. The parishioners can legally cut the trees that are overhanging on to their property and asked how the Parish Council would want them cutting if this was the outcome.

BB and TR have looked at the trees in question and confirmed the Parish Council are responsible for both the trees and hedge. The issue with cutting the trees in the village is that they fall within the conservation area and the Parish Council may have to seek permission to cut them. It was proposed the hedge and trees are trimmed by the Parish Council as it has been around 5 years since this was last done. The Parish Council can raise the level of the branches without obtaining permission and trim the umbrella of branches. It was agreed by all for the trees to be trimmed.

A parishioner has reported that they experience noise from their neighbours throughout the summer and most weekends, especially on a Sunday and are seeking assistance from the Parish Council. There is no law that governs this, but it was felt that parishioners should try and be considerate to their neighbours where possible but the Parish Council also appreciate that some people only have the weekend to carry out jobs. It was proposed that the Parish Council include an article in the next village flyer asking for people to be considerate of others when carrying out jobs at the weekend and not to be too noisy where possible. The Parish Council should also suggest parishioners attend the Parish Council meetings to discuss these issues during the parishioner's comments section. All agreed to this.

Action: KV to write a draft for the flyer and distribute to all Councillors for approval.

The Parish Council received an email in relation to a noisy BBQ with loud music that was held in the village a couple of Fridays ago. This was investigated and it was identified that this a one-off event and no further action was required.

A parishioner has requested additional signs in the recreation ground and a no parking sign on the gate that leads to the community gardens due to someone continuously parking

there and leaving litter. The additional signs in the recreation ground have already been installed. The vehicle that regularly parks in front of the gate has now been reported using their number plate number which will hopefully stop the individual continuing to do this. It was suggested a CCTV sign be erected to help further incidents.

Action: KV to look into this.

148/22. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of 16th May 2023

All agreed to the accuracy of these minutes, and they were approved.

149/22. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting of 16th May 2023

No matters arising to be discussed.

150/22. Internal Auditors Report

The report that was received from the Internal Auditor was misleading and misrepresented. LRALC was consulted about the report, and they confirmed that the items raised by the auditor were only recommendations and that a number of the recommendations were inaccurate. They commented that additional training would be required for the auditor in certain areas.

151/22. 42 Gaulby Lane – Reinstalling Chimney

Harborough District Council made contact with the owner of the property, and they have confirmed the chimney has been ordered and will be reinstalled at a later date. This needs to be checked regularly and return to planning enforcement if this work isn't carried out. Harborough District Council have confirmed that the chimney must be replaced.

Action: Include on the agenda for the next meeting.

152/22. Dog Attack

The Parish Council reported the incident to both the police and the dog warden. There have been no further incidents from the dog in question since.

There has been an additional dog attack from another dog in the village where the loose dog attacked another parishioner's dog and bit the ear. The owner of the loose dog promised to keep their dog on the lead going forward but this has not happened as they have since been seen and the dog was not on the lead.

153/22. Litter Bin Request – Layby Thurnby Lane

A request has been received for an additional bin in the Thurnby Lane layby. The layby already contains two bins, but it has been found that these are not adequate. However, it has been witnessed that even when the bins are empty, rubbish is still thrown on the ground so it was felt an additional bin would not solve the issue. It was suggested that surveillance signs could potentially assist with this issue.

Action: KV agreed to look at this and report to the next meeting.

154/22. Play Area Inspection

Harborough District Council contacted all Parish Councils notifying them of the annual ROSPA play area inspection at a cost of £114 including VAT. The Parish Council currently use Wicksteed at a cost of £144 including VAT. It was proposed that the Parish Council use ROSPA for an inspection this year as a second opinion could be useful. All agreed to trying ROSPA this year.

JS reported that some slats on the top of the climbing frame have broken and there is now a hazardous hole. These need replacing as soon as possible. JS has put a temporary cordon across the area to stop children using that piece of equipment until it is fixed. A contractor is coming to look at the climbing frame later this week.

155/22. Bonfires

A bonfire was recently lit and left to smoulder with the smoke blowing across the village. The location in question belongs to Coals and TR spoke to the owner who has received several complaints about it, and he was mortified that this has happened. They confirmed the issue was from a particularly big bonfire and unfortunately during the course of the fire the wind changed direction which led to the smoke coming across the village. Coals will only light a bonfire when the wind direction is the southwest to ensure they miss the local villages. Coals were very apologetic. It was proposed this matter has been dealt with. All agreed.

156/22. 23 Gaulby Lane Update

No progress has been made with this. It was proposed the Parish Council contact the District Councillors and request they contact the Environmental Officers for an update as we are not permitted to do so. It was reported that the outside of the property is now overgrown and there are signs of internal damp on the exterior walls of the building. All agreed to this proposal.

Action: VW to write to the District Councillors to obtain an update from the Environment Officers and include Diane Peacock (email re playground inspection).

157/22. Parish Council Communication Strategy

KV recently attend a New Councillor training course and they asked if the Parish Council have a Communication Strategy. It was suggested that communication with parishioners could be improved if the Parish Council had further way of sharing information. If the Parish Council increase/adjust methods of communication, the Parish Council could see better engagement from parishioners. The current methods for communication are via the village flyer, the Parish Council website, the notice board, and parishioners time during the Parish Council meetings. The issues the Parish Council face are that content in the village flyer can sometimes be lacking, some parishioners don't visit the end of the village where the notice board is and there is a village divide with the older and younger generation with those who don't engage with social media.

The two parishioners who attended the meeting were consulted and they agreed with all points and felt that additional information was needed for the village to engage better as they themselves didn't fully understand the role of the Parish Council, what they do for the village and how they can help.

It was proposed a public event could be held where the Parish Council could launch a Communication Strategy, parishioners will have the opportunity to meet the Councillors and generally share as much information as possible.

Action: KV to take the lead on this event.

Action: Include on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss further.

158/22. Painting of Village Benches

The benches are currently being refurbished and repaired.

A section of the support on the half-moon chair has rotted away but needs to be returned to the person who made the bench for a proper repair.

Action: TM to contact the bench designer.

159/22. Accidents on Thurnby Lane

The Parish Council contacted Harborough District Council to express their concerns about the continued accidents on Thurnby Lane following yet another recent accident.

Harborough District Council reply confirmed they only consider evidence from the police, they felt the speed limit on the road was appropriate for the road type, they only have 2 incidents reported over the last 5 years and that the majority of cars traveling along this road are under the speed limit. The Parish Council know there has been additional accidents which they are not aware of. It was proposed the Parish Council contact the police to see if accident reports can be obtained for the section of the road just past the layby around the corner section. All agreed to this.

Action: VW to try and obtain data from the police about road incidents.

Action: Include on the agenda for the next meeting.

160/22. Recent Village Road Works and Road Signs

The dragon's teeth still haven't been replaced despite this being promised in previous correspondence with LCC. It was proposed the Parish Council contact LCC and make them aware. All agreed to this.

Action: VW to contact LCC to notify them of this.

161/22. Backing of the Notice Board

The backing on the notice board needs replacing as the cork is falling away. A new magnetic backing has been ordered and will arrive later this week. The notice board will also need varnishing again. All agreed to this.

162/22. Social Media Training Courses

KV asked if it would be appropriate for her to attend such a course. All agreed to this.

163/22. Blocked Drains and Overgrown Hedges

There is a general issue throughout the village with overgrown hedges. All hedges on Church Lane have now been cut apart from the hedge at number 3. Bidwells have been contacted about this and photos of the hedge in question were sent following their request, but no action has been taken.

Action: VW to chase Bidwells again in relation to number 3.

The blocked drain on Gaulby Lane was reported on Fix My Street and this has now been fixed. The blocked drain outside They Byways has been replaced again.

164/22. Church Lane Speed Humps

This issue remains unchanged despite sending a recorded delivery letter to Michael Thornton. It was proposed that the Parish Council start afresh and request a new assessment of the humps in the village and request that they are measured against their standards. All humps in the village are not effective and one set on Church Lane are completely missing. They must meet with a member of the Parish Council when they come to the village for the inspection. All agreed to this.

Action: VW to start a new request.

165/22. Speed Watch Scheme

The scheme runs March – October, 12 volunteers are required to run the scheme and either 200 signatures or 20% of the village population (whichever is lower) need to be obtained. Whilst all agreed the scheme should be run in the village, it was felt at this time it would be difficult to get everything in place quick enough, so it was proposed we request a deferral to next year. All agreed to this.

Action: VW to request the deferral.

166/22. Overgrown Land at 1 Charity Farm

BB submitted a request to the owner of the land to find out what is happening with this land as it is grossly overgrown. A response was requested in time for tonight's meeting, but

no response has been received yet. There is no legislation that governs this and has to be maintained on good will. However, Brambles across a public footpath or seeds that transport into neighbour's garden can be reported to the environmental agency.

Action: To be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Manor High School have submitted a planning application for an additional teaching building. The school itself does not fall within our boundaries but the new proposed addition does fall within our boundaries. It was proposed we comment stating we have no objections on the basis that the addition doesn't fall within the green wedge.

Action: VW to submit a comment on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Barn renovation. The owners are taking the asbestos out the roof out of the barn and installing a new roof. A planning application is not required to do this. The conditions of the original application only apply for the original 3 houses build.

167/23. Accounts

a. Approve the Schedule of Payments

This was approved by all Councillors and cheques were signed for the following payments:

1. Victoria Webster	£599.75
May and June salary	
2. HMRC	£44.60
Tax for Victoria Webster salary	
3. Waterplus	£11.59
Community gardens water	
4. Victoria Webster	£15.99
Printer ink cartridge	
5. 2commune	£372.00
Annual subscription, website, and email	
6. M&BG	£220.49
Grounds maintenance	
7. Inside & Out	£465.00
Bench refurbishment and repaint	
Payments agreed and paid outside of Parish Council meeting	
8. M&BG	£220.49
Grounds maintenance	
9. Waterplus	£11.29
Community Gardens water supply	
10. LRALC	£50.00
Training course, new Councillor training	
11. M.A. Evans	£11.98
Community gardens items	

b. Councillors to review and approve the bank reconciliation.

All agreed to approval. Signed by the Chair.

c. Councillors to accept the Internal Auditors Report for 2022-23.

Formally accepted. Thank you to the Clerk.

d. Council to resolve to amend the AGAR based on comments made by the Internal Auditor

i. Annual Governance Statement

The statement was approved by all and signed by the Chair.

ii. Accounting Statements

The statements were approved by all and signed by the Chair.

iii. Council to certify themselves exempt from a limited insurance review

It was proposed that the Parish Council certify themselves exempt from a limited insurance review due to neither their incomings nor outgoings exceeding £25,000. All agreed to this exemption. The exemption certificate was signed by the Chair.

168/22. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Meeting closed at 8.38pm

Mrs Victoria Webster

The Clerk, Stoughton Parish Council, 22 Rockingham Road, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire LE12 7UJ