

The Minutes of the Stoughton Parish Council Meeting on **Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 7.00pm in Stoughton Village Hall**

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

239/22. Welcome, Introductions and Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

240/22. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Tracey Mee (TM).

241/22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

242/22. Parishioners Comments

Two parishioners were present to discuss the flooding their properties have been experiencing from the water which runs down from the fields opposite. The water previously drained away underground, but this is no longer the case, and it is now coming back up through the drainpipe and out onto the roof. The parishioners wondered if potentially an underground pipe had collapsed to cause this issue. The water in the ditch reached to over 6ft in depth when the floods were at their worse.

Action: VW to contact LCC in relation to this and request this to be investigated.

The Coppice planning application to infill the ditch on Stoughton Lane was raised as a potentially big issue in relation to this flooding as the parishioners have seen an increase in excess water and filling in the ditch will only make this matter worse. The Coppice itself pumps water into the ditch when there is excess water on their land.

BB proposed we object strongly to this planning application on the grounds of severe flooding due to LCC giving approval of filling in ditches and we want instant attention to rectify this. This should be sent to LCC and HDC. TR and JS approved this.

Action: VW to write to LCC and HDC.

243/22. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of 9th January 2024

Approved as a true and accurate record.

244/22. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting of 9th January 2024

No matters for discussion that aren't on tonight's agenda already.

245/22. 42 Gaulby Lane – Reinstalling Chimney

The chimney has not been reinstalled yet.

Action: Add to the agenda for the next meeting.

246/22. 23 Gaulby Lane

No further progress has been made. It was proposed that the Parish Council write to the owner again by recorded delivery and copy to HDC. Write on the outside that if Mr Limb no longer lives at the address to please inform the Parish Council. All Councillors agreed to this.

Action: VW to draft a letter to Mr Limb

Action: Write to Simon Galton about his responsibility as our representative in relation to this ongoing issue.

247/22. To consider what the council can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the area
The Parish Council strongly believe they already fulfil this. There are daffodils throughout the village, a wildflower area, many trees and hedges and every house have a garden. There are two unmown areas in the church yard, bats in church, badgers in the area, allotments, pine spinneys and a pond. We are a completely green Parish, surrounded by farmland.

248/22. Overgrown Land at 1 Charity Farm
BB previously spoke with owner who agreed to cut this area back, but this is yet to happened. BB has obtained address of the owner to enable the Parish Council to write to him. If this land is not maintained soon, the Parish Council will take it further to the District Council and request an Enforcement Order.
Action: VW to write a letter to the owner of this land.

249/22. Parish Council Website and Email Provision
The company who previously maintained the software for the Parish Councils website, are no longer able to offer the software to us. However, the company who own the software are able to offer it to the Parish Council under that same contract details and cost. All Councillors agreed to the change to Cuttlefish.

250/22. Parish Council Logo
This has been designed by KV who visited the local archives to identify when the Parish Council was established. It was deemed to be 1960. All Councillors agreed to the use of the logo presented. This will now be used for the website, letterhead, and official documents.

251/22. Community Speed Watch Scheme
This scheme is only available in 30mph and 40mph areas and Stoughton is 20mph. TR contacted the team who run the scheme and they have confirmed this. TR will raise this issue with the Deputy Police Commissioner on the 14th March.

252/22. Increase in Procurement to £30,000
The amount to procure or award a public contract has increased from £25,000 to £30,000 as per NALC guidelines.

253/22. Internal Audit Service Provision
Does the Parish Council wish to continue to use the LRALC audit service for their 2023-2024 audit? All Councillors agreed to remaining with the LRALC.

254/22. Dog Walkers in Stoughton
No further issues to report. The issue appears to be rectified.

255/22 Parish Council Notice Board
This is in need of a face lift. All Councillors agreed for JS to get the necessary work carried out.

256/22 Report from Cllr Richardson following the Parish Council Event at Enderby Police HQ on 19th February
The event was heavily statistic-based with the overriding message of the importance of Neighbourhood Link and encouraging residents in Stoughton to sign up. This is the main method of communication with local Police. Any problems, don't ring 101, report it via the Neighbourhood Link website. The Beat Officers prioritise there work through the

Neighbourhood link comments. There are 40,400 households in this area and only 293 residents are signed up to Neighbourhood Link. Further details can be found here: www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk

It was reported that Harborough is the safest area in Leicestershire and one of the safest in the UK to live. Reported crime is down by 6.3%. The road safety Team encouraged concerned villagers to report issues through Neighbourhood Link and liaise with local Beat Officers. The team also confirmed they would try to arrange speed operations in villages. Rural Crime is up by 30% in the area with tractors and machinery being stolen the most and then sent to Eastern Europe. The Fire team want to maximise road safety and stressed the four main causes of accidents are speeding, alcohol, being distracted by phones and drugs. Electrical cars are very dangerous and the fire team have seen an increase fires caused by them.

Stoughton's two beat officers are James Monahan and Amy Stokes, and they cover Wellen Park, Harborough to Scraftoft and 23 other villages.

257/22 Communication Strategy

This was distributed to all Councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed the Parish Council adopt this. All agreed to adopt this.

258/22 Services from the County Council and District Council in Decline

Potholes were previously identified in the village almost a year ago with yellow paint, but they have remained unaltered and the County Council have visited the village again and remarked the same potholes. We wait in anticipation if they will be repaired this year.

The Parish Council feel let down by LCC's response to our concerns about Thurnby Lane. TR reported that speeding was put at the top of every village's list as their main priority when the Police asked villages what their main concerns are. The Police confirmed it would cost 150 million pounds to put appropriate road markings etc in all areas of concern in every village and that this is just not possible. The Parish Council should continue to send the accidents spreadsheet to Adam Cooling as these happen.

259/22 Blocked Drains on Church Lane

Unsure if these remain blocked. There are blocked drains on Stoughton Lane which have now been reported twice by TR.

260/22 Actions by the Police arising from meeting with the Police Commissioner

These are still be actioned due to holidays. The Commissioners response was all issues should be logged individually as the Police are obliged to respond.

261/22 Contact with our MP and her responses

The MP is very pro-active, and the response received from her following questions raised by the Parish Council recently, have been distributed to all Councillors.

262/22 Parish Council Cheese & Wine Evening

This should be held following the distribution of the next flyer so it can be advertised in there. A date of the 25th June at 7.00pm was suggested. Villagers will be asked to RSVP to the Parish Council to allow for catering. This can be discussed further at the May meeting.

263/22 Update on National Grid

The National Grid previously carried out maintenance work and the area was left messy and dangerous. All the wires are open behind the temporary fence that has been erected. It was felt they are unsafe.

Action: VW to report this to National Grid/Western Power

266/22 The Coppice, Stoughton Lane – Ditch Filling Planning Application

As discussed above

265/23. Accounts

a. Approve the Schedule of Payments

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

1. Victoria Webster	£604.71
January and February salary and expenses	
2. HMRC	£12.00
Tax for Victoria Webster February salary	
3. K. Volpe	£30.00
Stoughton Flyer Printing	

Payments agreed and paid outside of Parish Council meeting

4. Waterplus	£49.52
Community gardens	
5. LRALC	£200.00
2022/23 Audit	
6. M&BG	£220.49
Grounds maintenance for the village	
7. Harborough District Council	£210.00
2023 Election	
8. J.S.Brown	£140.00
Fix gate post	

b. Councillors to review and approve the bank reconciliation.

All agreed to approval. Signed by the Chair.

266/22. Matters Arising

A car went through the fence down at Gartree Road a while ago and now looks as though further damage has been caused. It is directly next to a public footpath. The Parish Council are unsure who is responsible for this area.

Action: VW to contact Oadby & Wigston Parish Council and potentially Bidwells.

A parishioner has asked if the Parish Council know who the land opposite the church belongs to as they are looking to sell their house and questions may arise in relation to the land. It is known that it can't be built in. The owner lives in Clapham. The land was recently put out for rent.

The question was asked what the conditions are for having a bonfire in a residential area. It is legal for any individual to have a bonfire, but if it annoys anyone and they approach the individual concerned, the bonfire must be stopped.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm

Mrs Victoria Webster

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