

STOKE SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL

MRS. SARAH MOORE, PARISH CLERK. 24 High Street, Stoke sub Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6PS
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MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3RD MARCH 2021 VIA ZOOM REMOTE MEETING APP

21/031/a **PRESENT:**

Members: Mrs Barbara Brooks, Mr Hugh Donovan, Mr Andy Dawe, Mrs Lyn Foley, Mr Graham Middleton, Mrs Suzanne Nelms, Mrs Alex Schellenberg and Mr Bill Southcombe

Others: Mrs Sarah Moore (Clerk), Mr Mike Hewitson (District Councillor) and two members of the public

21/031/b **APOLOGIES:**

Mrs Rebecca Merrick and Mr Neil Bloomfield (County Councillor)

21/032 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST:**

Cllr Brooks declared an interest in the Hamdon Youth Group, the Hamdon Youth & Family Centre, and the Memorial Hall

Cllr Donovan declared an interest in the Hamdon Youth & Family Centre

Cllr Foley declared an interest in the Community Shop.

Cllr Nelms declared an interest in Friends of Ham Hill

Cllr Southcombe declared an interest in the Hamdon Community Arts Project

21/033 **CO-OPTION:**

Cllr Brooks introduced Mr Paul Jeffery who has expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council.

It was RESOLVED for Mr Jeffery to become a parish councillor.

As the meeting was being held virtually, the Clerk arranged a meeting with Mr Jeffery to sign the Declaration of Acceptance and to hand over the Register of Interests and other council paperwork.

21/034 **PUBLIC SESSION:**

The member of the public listened in on the meeting and raised no comments.

21/035 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

It was RESOLVED to approve and sign the Minutes of the February meeting.

21/036 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:**

The Clerk reviewed the items on the Action List:

- i. Overhanging trees between Co-Op and Loder's Corner: There has been no response from Highways. **Action Clerk**
- ii. Parish Council Website – This item is still ongoing. **Action Clerk**
- iii. Provision of Bus Shelter – The Clerk said she has contacted Highways who stated that permission would be needed from SSDC, so the Clerk said she has sought advice from Cllr Hewitson. **Action Clerk**
- iv. Litter Pick – The Clerk said there has been a very good volunteer response. This information has been passed onto the co-ordinator and the PPE has been received. The risk assessments and guidance has been forwarded to co-ordinator.
- v. Refurbishment of telephone kiosk (West Street) – Cllr Southcombe said he will do the refurbishment once the lockdown period has finished. **Action Cllr Southcombe**

21/037 **DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS:**

21/037/a Mike Hewitson – District Councillor

Cllr Hewitson's report had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

21/037/b Neil Bloomfield – County Councillor:

The Clerk read out Cllr Bloomfield email which mentioned that the unitary debate was still ongoing and that Somerset County Council elections were not taking place so existing county councillors would be continuing for another year.

(Cllr Hewitson entered the meeting)

21/038 **SPORTS & LEISURE:**

21/038/a Hamdon Youth Centre:

Cllr Brooks reported there has been some delays with the refurbishment due to the pandemic. The flooring materials for the main hall had now been delivered but needs to climatise before it can be laid, and the new heaters have yet to be delivered. Councillors and the Clerk volunteered to clean the centre and dispose of the rubbish prior to the flooring being laid.

21/038/b Hamdon Youth Group:

Cllr Brooks said there was nothing to report as the group will not be able to meet until April.

21/038/c Memorial Hall and Grounds:

Cllr Brooks said there was nothing to report as the hall cannot open until April.

21/038/d Play Areas:

No report given.

21/038/e Sports and Recreation Trust:

A recreation ground inspection report had been circulated to councillors.

21/038/f Any Other Issues:

21/039 **VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT:**

21/039/a Allotments

The Clerk said she had received much of the allotment rent and deposits. Unfortunately, there had been some complaints from a few Stonehill allotment holders about the new deposit charge. There are 4 vacant plots at Stonehill, and the main concern raised was whether the parish council were going to keep these plots free from weeds on a regular basis. Also, there is still a problem with a tenant who has not cultivated their plot enough and, a resident had complained about the access trackway who feels that the council should pay maintenance costs for the trackway.

The Clerk explained that the residents of the properties in East Stoke jointly own the trackway but when the properties were sold by the Duchy of Cornwall, they gave the parish council and its tenants right of access.

It was agreed to write to the resident stating that the responsibility does not lie with the parish council as they only have right of access, and it is the owners of the land who has an obligation to maintain the trackway.

The Clerk said there was a good response to the article in the newsletter with people taking up allotments. The only sites with vacant plots were at Stonehill and a couple at Furlands.

21/039/b Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:

No report received.

21/039/c Footpaths:

No report.

21/039/d Ground Maintenance:

i. Groundsman

The vegetation has now been cleared from around the signs in North Street and the buddleia and dog rose has been removed from the boundary wall of the North Street allotments.

The groundsman has taken the advice of a tree surgeon regarding the Holly tree in the youth centre grounds prior to carrying out any work. The surgeon has recommended removing the tree. There are some high voltage cables running through the branches of the tree and if the tree is pruned back there would only be a large stump due to the way the branches are growing. It was agreed to get a written report from the tree surgeon.

Action Clerk

ii. Parish Lengthsman

An Action report had been circulated to councillors. The Clerk confirmed that the lengthsman had started working for the parish two days a month and these days have been taken up with weed clearance in East Stoke and Ham Hill Road. He has also been checking the drains and cutting back the vegetation around the seat near the church. The Clerk said she had asked him about clearing the gutters at the Youth Centre but for safety reasons this is a 2-man job and would incur an additional cost. It was agreed that this would not be cost effective.

Cllr Schellenberg asked if the lengthsman could clear the drain in Great Field Lane opposite Cole Lane. **Action Clerk**

Cllr Donovan said the road sweeper has been through the village and it has made a marked difference.

The Clerk said she has asked Streetscene if they are able to repair the damage to High Street Bank, but this could incur an extra cost. The Clerk said she had received an email from Highways and both the Highways Authority, and the Duchy of Cornwall have said it is not their responsibilities. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Brooks would investigate this as it would not be right for the parish to pick up the cost.

Action Cllr Brooks & Clerk

21/039/e Highways and Transport:

i. Speed Indicator Device

The Clerk reported that the new SID should arrive week commencing 15th March.

Cllr Donovan said he had completed the Chapter 8 training.

The Clerk questioned where the SID was going to be stored as the original packaging needs to be kept.

Cllr Schellenberg asked if we had received the SID data from Martock Parish Council.

The Clerk said there had been some technical difficulties with downloading the data.

ii. Pavement in Great Field Lane

The pavement in Great Field Lane reported last month has now been repaired.

iii. Road Closure

Ham Hill Road will be closed 22nd March to 25th March between the hours of 00.00 to 23.59. This to enable Wales & West Utilities to lay a new gas connection.

iv. Potholes & Drains

The Clerk said she has reported a couple of potholes which are in the middle of the road near the junction to Windsor Lane going towards Highway and a hole around a drain near St Mary's Church. The Clerk said she has yet to report the potholes in Castle Street and the Avenue. **Action Clerk**

Cllr Foley said there is a dip in the speed bump in North Street.

The Clerk said she has reported four severely compacted drains going from the old cattle grid in Ham Hill Road to the bottom of the hill.

21/039/f Street Lighting

Nothing to report.

21/039/g Defibrillator Report

Both defibrillators have been checked and cleaned. The defib at the Prince of Wales will need new pads as they expire at the end of March. It was agreed to accept Hamdon First Aid offered to order some more. **Action Clerk**

21/039/h Community Shop

Cllr Foley said it was the shop first anniversary and the shop is holding a celebratory tombola. The shop is working with Priory Coffee to hold an Easter Egg Hunt subject to current guidance. Cllr Foley referred to the news of the disbanded Pop-In sessions and wondered if there was anything that could be done for the older members of the community. Also, some residents were feeling vulnerable especially in respect of the recent news where dogs are being stolen. Cllr Foley wondered if personal alarms could be purchased. Cllr Nelms said there was an app called the 'Holly App' which emits a high-pitched noise when the phone is shook. Cllr Brooks said it would be a good idea if the Befriending Scheme could restart.

Cllr Foley said some younger people have been trying to buy sim cards which could potentially be used in burner phones. Cllr Brooks said it appears that they may have been some drug dealing going on at the back of the Memorial Hall car park and the CCTV footage will be sent to the police.

21/039/i Any Other Issues:

Cllr Brooks had prepared a COVID Roadmap relating to what can be done in the village now that the lockdown rules are easing. The Clerk suggested putting this information in the newsletter each month as and when the rules change

Action Cllr Brooks

21/040 **FINANCE:**

21/040/a Matters for Report

i. The Clerk gave the monthly bank reconciliation report as of 28th February 2021.

	£
Lloyds Current Account	17,021.06
Lloyds Reserve Account	82,825.29
Melton Building Society	33,198.97
Cambridge & Counties	22,442.12
Total as Cash Book	155,487.44

Less Ring-Fenced Amounts:

	£
Pavilion Reserve Account	22,442.12
Asset Management Reserve Account	48,098.97
Allotment Deposits	200.00
Bequest – Plants	150.00
Hamdon Youth Centre	16,242.76
Total	87,133.85

Budget Working Capital

68,353.59

ii. VAT Reclaim

The Clerk reported that the VAT reclaim for 2020/21 was £3,304.49.

The Clerk reported the VAT reclaim amount on work carried out at the Hamdon Youth and Family Centre over the past few years totals £4,621.20. It was agreed to move this amount into the HYFC reserves.

iii. Duchy of Cornwall

The Clerk reported that the Duchy of Cornwall was increasing the land rent for the recreation ground from £1,100 p.a. to £1,200 p.a. excluding VAT with effect from 25th March 2021. The next rent review date for the recreation ground will be March 2026.

21/040/b Matters for Resolution.

i. Invoices Payable:

		£	
Sarah Moore	Expenses for February	213.90	BACS
Stable Print	March Newsletters	195.00	BACS
Evis Ground	February Ground Maintenance	666.66	BACS
Maintenance			
SSDC	Parish Lengthsman Dec & Jan	346.32	BACS
Coram	Chapter 8 Training for S.I.D	265.54	BACS
Construction			
Training			
Duchy of Cornwall	of ½ Yearly Land Rent for Allotments & Recreation Ground	816.00	BACS

P A Higgins	HYFC Electrical Works	4,270.00	BACS
Electrical Ltd			
	Total	<u>6,773.42</u>	

It was RESOLVED to pay the invoices.

ii. Other:

21/041 PLANNING:

21/041/a Planning Information:

Cllr Hewitson said SSDC have approved a 'Phosphates Calculator' so that developers can calculate what their phosphates burden would be and what amount of land they would need to offset. Land is graded from arable to artificial wetland so, for every 1 acre of development land 160 acres of arable land needs to be offset. Unfortunately, until there is some government intervention this issue is likely to cause hold-ups with planning applications. Cllr Hewitson said SSDC have changed their Scheme of Delegation to allow officers to determine householder and listed building applications.

21/041/b Parish Planning Working Party Feedback on Applications:

21/00619/TCA – tree surgery to one tree, removal of one tree in Conservation Area – 51 High Street, Stoke sub Hamdon TA14 6PR - Parish Council is not required to consult.

21/041/c Planning Decisions and Reports:

Reports

20/03624/TCA – notification of intent to carry out tree surgery works to no. 1 tree within a Conservation Area – Rag Cottage, 27 High Street, Stoke sub Hamdon TA14 6PR – no published progress.

20/02274/DPO – application for the modification of section 106 agreement between South Somerset District Council, Abbey Manor Developments Ltd and Blue Cedar Houses Ltd attached to planning approval 16/03872/FUL dated 22 December 2016 and approval 17/00186/FUL dated 24th February 2017 to remove the age restriction attached to the approvals. – Land and Buildings, Greatfield Lane, Stoke sub Hamdon TA14 – No further published progress.

20/00991/OUT – outline application with all matters reserved save for access for the residential development of land for up to 30 no. dwellings - Land at Masons Lane, Montacute – No further published progress.

20/01831/FUL – the erection of a detached chalet style dwelling and associated access and parking - Land rear of Princes Close Car Park, Stoke Sub Hamdon – further amended plans submitted. No published progress.

Decisions

20/03491/HOU – erection of a single storey rear extension and new dormer window to rear of dwelling – 29 High Street, Stoke sub Hamdon TA14 6PR – Permitted. Householder and SSDC accepted Parish Council's request that the building material for the walls of the extension should be hamstone to match the house and neighbouring properties as evidenced by the Parish Council's Built Environment Survey 2017.

20/03310/LBC – removal of conservatory and alterations to form window opening in place of doorway in west elevation – The Well House, 17 Windsor Lane, Stoke sub Hamdon TA14 6UE – Permitted.

21/042 GOVERNANCE:

i. Grant Policy

Although the Parish Council have been awarding grants as a council using a formal Grant Application form to evidence the request, there is no policy in place setting out the criteria clarifying who and what is eligible to receive a grant. This criterion is as follows:

- Support community involvement with adequate facilities for clubs, groups, societies, associations and cultural events
- Enhance education, wellbeing and skills of local people.

- Reduce crime and drug abuse and community safety.
- Address social exclusion and enhance opportunities for the disadvantaged.

The Clerk said the only change would be to update the LGA 1972 s.137 rate for 2021/22 which is £8.41 per electorate.

It was RESOLVED to approve the wording of the new policy.

ii. Unitary Consultation for Local Government in Somerset

Cllr Brooks said a formal consultation process is taking place, organised by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Feedback from the Parish Council and individuals needs to be in by 19 April.

The Government is proposing to change the structure of local government (above the parish council level) to a Unitary status. This would mean abolishing the County Council together with the five existing District Councils in Somerset and replacing it with one form of governing body. It invited Somerset County Council and the group of 5 District Councils to submit proposals for the unitary structure.

- The County Council is supporting a 'one organisation' unitary council. District Councils would be abolished. Decisions are made centrally.
- The District Councils' alternative suggestion is to abolish the County Council and to have two unitary bodies called East and West Somerset. These would be based on the existing geographical areas of the five existing District Councils to two Council. This would ensure more local representation into issues, rather than a 'one size fits all' solution.

This potential change will have significant implications to the effectiveness of local representation for local area issues and all existing District Councils are united in saying that this 'one-stop shop' solution is not appropriate for Somerset. The county is very large with diverse interests (agriculture, manufacturing, tourism etc); it is not an area like some of the existing unitary bodies which are primarily urban and manufacturing based. Somerset's population will be more than 600,000 people within 10 years. Somerset is also very large - 1331 square miles - which means our population is dispersed, with 48% of residents living in a rural area (compared to 18% for England at the last census). It takes people in Somerset 50% longer than average in England to access key services.

The proposals may also change the role of parish councils: either to pass down more responsibility to them; possibly take some decisions away particularly in their role of consulting on individual planning applications; and possibly changing their role to have some 'parish council representation' on strategy groups.

All individuals and parish councils are strongly encouraged to take part in this process by accessing the website link where the Consultation Document will also be found along with the two sets of proposals.

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/>

It was agreed that councillors would consider all the information so that a response could be made by the parish council as a whole. Everyone's comments will be discussed at the next parish council meeting.

Action Whole Council

iii. Potential Return to Face-to-Face Meetings

The Clerk reported that the regulations that allowed parish councils to hold virtual meetings come to an end on 7th May 2021. This means that, without any further action from the government, parish councils must return to face-to-face meetings from 7th May. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is working with a number of national bodies to press the government to extend these regulations beyond this date and will continue to stress the urgency and importance of this issue. However, at this time the

government has no plans to extend this regulation, so parish councils have been advised to start preparing for the real possibility of returning to face-to-face meetings.

NALC's position remains that meetings should continue remotely while the regulations are in force but have passed on guidance should remote meetings become unlawful from 7th May.

A discussion was held, and it was agreed that situation would be reviewed after the May meeting.

21/043 CORRESPONDENCE:

No correspondence received.

21/044 MEMBERS' & CLERK'S REPORTS:

Cllr Brooks asked the Clerk to email councillors an updated contacts list.

Action Clerk

21/045 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:

None declared.

21/046 DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20.43pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 7th April 2021 at 7.00pm.