

# STRETE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Helen Darch

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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STRETE PARISH COUNCIL (PC) HELD ON ZOOM ON THURSDAY 18 June 2020 AT 7.00 PM

### PRESENT

Cllr Kate Gill, Chairman (KG); Cllr Ralph Clark (RC); Cllr Louise Newman (LN); Cllr Ian Cumberlidge (IC); Cllr David Rothwell (DR); Cllr Graham Campbell (GC); Cllr Peter Hales (PH); Cllr Julian Brazil, County Councillor, Kingsbridge Division (JB); Cllr Richard Foss, District Councillor, Allington & Strete Ward (RF); Mrs. Helen Darch – Clerk.

### PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public attended the meeting.

### COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

**Devon County Council [DCC]** has their annual meeting of Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. JB had attended a few children's scrutiny meetings. Unfortunately, DCC failed its Children's Services Ofsted just before lockdown. However, Cornwall CC has an outstanding Ofsted in children's Services so DCC intend to learn from them as to how they do it. DCC needs to improve this service in particular for our very vulnerable children.

**Report on the District council [SHDC].** The Executive met this morning and received reports from other committees: Overview and Scrutiny and the Development Management Committee. SHDC is looking at a way to 'Bring it back Better'. To this end there will be workshops from now until early September when there is another round of committee meetings leading to the Full Council. Hopefully by September if COVID doesn't come back there should be a clearer picture as to what the finances of the District council look like. The main places where SHDC is losing quite sizeable amounts of money are parking, and planning. There is concern about the collection rate of Council Tax because people are struggling even if they are getting furlough payments. There is going to be a lot of financial pressure on the Council and how they deal with it. **The report was received.**

### DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

**SHDC** is slowly sending out the latest tranche of monies to local small business applying for grants. A list of those eligible is on the website. Of course, people who paid business rates should have had a fair sum of money [*unless their RV was above £51,000*]. Judy Pearce has put a piece in the local press to encourage people to shop local to support the local businesses. This has ground to a halt in recent times.

SHDC is trying to get all the carparks and all the toilets up and running. Strete Gate and Torcross were among the first with all the problems down there. JB and I made it clear we were very unhappy with the mess we've had on Slapton Line. There is talk about issues with toilets and I am certain it will come up again.

We will have another budget in September when we are more certain about what is going on. The approved budget is now out of date. Fortunately, our 's151 officer' [*officer responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs*] is very good at finding spare funds. Because of the way the council has been run in recent years we are in a good financial state. And our council tax is not high compared with other councils. So, the efficiencies we made in the past two or three years were painful but we were able to work remotely during the pandemic.

The last joint scrutiny meeting expressed the need for recognition on how hard parish councils and all the local groups had got together and helped those that weren't so well off and make sure that people were looked after. The community came together fantastically well everywhere. It was really impressive. JB and I were part of a group in this area to sort out any problems and most of the problems were sorted out very much locally which was brilliant. So that's worth mentioning and minuted just how well people pulled together. **The report was received.**

**0620/1 APOLOGIES** – No apologies were received.

**0620/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2020**

The above minutes were AGREED as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**0620/3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Parish Councillors were invited to declare any unregistered or other interest, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting. **None were declared.**

**0620/4 PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS**

**1467/20/HHO. Householder application for loft conversion. 41 Start Bay Park Strete TQ6 0RY.** The Council was **consulted** on this application prior to this going to SHDC for decision. Councillors debated the application and considered a number of aspects. RC wanted to ensure the development took place in accordance with the submitted and approved plans. It was agreed to make this a comment on the consultation when it was submitted. **It was resolved to support the application [5 in support and two abstained] with the comment as noted.**

**0620/5(a) FINANCE**

The Clerk supplied the meeting with a list of cheques for payment. Invoices had been scanned and sent to all councillors electronically before the meeting.

1720 – Clerk salary June £249.	1721 – Reimburse Mr N Backwith costs for obtaining accounts in connection with The Kings Arms £28.80.
1722 – Reimburse Clerk for payment made by card for annual insurance renewal £336.83 to BHIB as agreed under minute 0520/06.	1723 – Mr CML and Mrs CMK Toll Strete Estate annual rent for playing field at Strete £1.00.
1724 – Greenspace for grass cutting November 2019 to May 2020 inclusive £713.30.	

**It was proposed and AGREED by all present to authorise payments as enumerated above.**

**0620/5(b) FINANCE**

A monitoring report for 2020/21 had been circulated already along with a cashflow projection. The projection to the end of July 2020 gave CR8,514.60. It was agreed the latest monitoring should be published on the website. **Resolved the Clerk would provide the monitoring statements for the website.**

**0620/5(c) FINANCE**

Cash at bank – £11,194.85CR Current account at 08/06/20, £10,297.30CR Business Reserve account at 08/06/20.

**0620/6 CLERK'S REPORT**

**The report had been sent round before the meeting.**

a. **Audit 2019/20. The accounts for 2019/20 had been sent to the Internal auditor to review procedures.** He had signed them off and reviewed the other two sections of the AGAR completed by the Clerk and RFO [Responsible Financial Officer – the Clerk for Strete]. The Council was requested, if happy, to approve [in order] the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 (AGAR Section 1 [p5]) and Accounting Statements 2019/20(AGAR Section 2 [p6]). **Resolved to approve the AGAR sections as described and arrange for these to be signed by the Chairman, RFO and Clerk. The Clerk to confirm if the Samsung Galaxy tablet had been written off.**

b. **Meeting platforms.** A free platform simwood.com had been trialled by a number of councillors and the Clerk. After discussion it was decided councillors were used to Zoom now. **Resolved the Council continue to use Zoom as the meeting platform as long as it was necessary to meet online.**

c. **Public Space Protection orders [PSP].** The Clerk had passed on an email from SHDC which invited individuals to respond to consultation on the existing PSP orders which govern the handling of dogs. Views could be made by the **31<sup>st</sup> July on the following link. <https://www.engagement.southhams.gov.uk/pspo>. This was noted.**

d. **Councillor advocate scheme.** Information had been circulated on the opportunity to nominate a councillor to meet with the local police on a quarterly basis. This would be to discuss local policing issues and also have access to the Commissioner's Office. **Resolved: KG to take on the role.**

e. **Coming out of lockdown.** The Clerk reported on the latest government advice on the pandemic and permitted activity dated 15<sup>th</sup> June. It was noted the playpark had to remain closed until further advice. The Village Green had remained open during the lockdown under cautionary guidance. **The report was received.**

**0620/7 UPDATES ON COVID-19**

**A report was submitted prior to the meeting.** An email was received from the Council for Voluntary Service on behalf of DCC enquiring local needs for PPE over the next few months. The Village Shop confirmed a need for 100 face masks and 100 pairs of disposable gloves. With more people visiting from outside the area it would be wise to wear face masks in the short-term whilst taking daily exercise, visiting family or collecting goods from the shop.

Ongoing support for the community from the team at the Village Shop continues. The shop has seen an increase in visitors and has a screen in place at the counter. They are also able to now take contactless payment. Nick Shepherd and Anita McCoy continue to deliver newspapers to customers in the parish seven days a week. The South Hams area is amongst the lowest in the country in terms of people needing treatment for Covid 19.

National and local news items are uploaded to the website regularly to help keep everyone informed of the latest situation regarding restrictions. Interpreting the restriction changes continues to be a challenge. The community must use their own judgement to interpret government guidelines and what restrictions they consider necessary for their own safety. 'Think Twice'. Is it necessary, is it safe? Personal responsibility is key to beating Covid 19. Local feedback suggests more visitors have arrived in the area. Lifeguards are back on our beaches and toilets are now open. However, cafés and restaurants remain closed. It's important we continue to undertake appropriate social distancing measures and comply with any new recommendations as they are released. **The report was received.**

#### 0620/8 CHAIR'S REPORT

**This report was submitted prior to the meeting.**

Chair's Report Stretre Parish Council 18.06.20. Coronavirus - The advice as before still applies – RISK ASSESS – look around – STAY ALERT even though restrictions are not quite as draconian. We are now required to wear masks on public transport and any visit made to a hospital and continue to social distance. The leisure world is anticipating opening up during the first few days of July – so we wait for the go-ahead. I understand that the R value will be discontinued. Here, we have been lucky in the low number of cases we have had in the South West.

Public - thoughtless behaviour. Since our last meeting we have had some very dangerous situations to deal with. I have been fortunate enough because of my occupation to drive around legitimately. I have taken the opportunity to check out items around the village, checking into the information hub Stretre Post Office and at Stretre Gate. During the hot weather on one of my tours at Stretre Gate, the car park was totally rammed with vehicles of all shapes and sizes; with 4x4's parked on the banks and others double parked preventing legally parked cars from exiting their spaces.

Added to this on 3<sup>rd</sup> June we had a spike of rubbish deposits some of which were potentially very dangerous. The rubbish consisted of half used barbeques, waste food and strings of fishing line with hooks. I consequently contacted Anthony Mangnall our M.P. and Julian Brazil for advice - help and information. Both of whom responded magnificently.

I'm sorry to say I was reminded of the day in 1976 when someone lit a BBQ at the bottom of Old Road which ignited the whole of the lane and the field above it. At the time Colin and I owned Homelands which was in direct line of the fire. Sufficient to say we were all evacuated and my father's race horse which was in the burning field had to be rescued. Eight fire engines attended the blaze. That particular day returned to haunt me with a potential vision of vehicles catching fire and exploding fuel tanks. Fortunately, we have had some rain since then and the immediate re-occurrence of such an event has receded. Subsequently I have been in contact with Denise Vigers who has provided me with contacts/advice. Last night I received a telephone call from Anthony Mangnall who kindly thanked me for the concerted efforts the Parish and Parishioners are making to keep everyone safe.

The Play Park – has remained locked and will be until we have notification that we can open it again. The fact that it is locked does not stop youngsters from climbing the fence for access to the skateboard ramp. 'Naughty'! The grass has been cut again by the contractor.

Thanks. I now take the opportunity to thank Helen our Clerk for the wonderful job she does. I received an email from our internal auditor Nick Shepherd informing me that he had completed the audit for us for 2019/2020. I quote with his permission from his email: - "I would like to pay tribute to Helen for keeping such good records and in particular the work she has done on the Fixed Asset register. Well done Helen!" I would also like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for being up to the mark especially in these weird times. Thanks also go to all the helpers who have enabled us to keep safe – by checking on those who have been in lockdown, delivering food orders, collecting prescriptions and being mindful of the social distancing if making direct contact. WELL DONE EVERYONE – Thank you. **Resolved the Clerk to ask SHDC to empty the bins down at Stretre Gate on a more regular basis particularly in the high season. The Chair's report was received.**

#### 0620/9 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

**A report was submitted prior to the meeting.**

**NP Report for PC – June 2020**

At the Parish Council meeting in May councillors expressed concern with the details provided by Strete Estate in connection with costs provided by Western Power Distribution for moving the electric sub-station near the A379. Concern was expressed as to its safety as the sub-station housing appears to have been left to deteriorate and shows no sign of recent entry for routine maintenance, etc.

In addition, the location map provided by WPD identifies a sub-station near the access to The Ark property in Hynetown Road that is linked to the sub-station in CFF near the A379. It was suggested that the sub-station may no longer be necessary. It was agreed that contact be made with WPD to arrange a site meeting to inspect the sub-station for safety and the necessity of its use. It was also agreed that Mr Dixon be informed of the concerns and the intention to write to WPD as he is in negotiations with them.

In addition, Mr Dixon was to be advised of previous correspondence with the Senior Highways Development Management Officer for Devon County Council, when it was suggested that the current A379 access would be wide enough for normal traffic without the need to move the substation as it could be used as a private road together with the required visibility splay for safe access onto the A379. However, the access would not be adopted by Devon C.C. This forms part of the evidence requested by SHDC to support Policy SNP8 in Strete Neighbourhood Plan.

Email correspondence was sent to Mr Dixon on 11/06/2020 detailing the above.

A reply was received on 12/06/2020 requesting sight of any proposed correspondence between Strete PC and WPD before sending. After contacting Duncan Smith (SHDC) and SNPG members this was sent to Mr Dixon on 16/06/2020.

Mr Dixon responded with the following:-

“At a recent Parish Council meeting, councillors expressed concern as to the safety of the sub-station (WPD ref 34/2614) which WPD own within land owned by Strete Estate managed by Savills in land accessed by the private pub carpark in the centre of Strete, near Dartmouth.

The housing of the substation appears to have been left to deteriorate with significant overgrowth and shows no sign of recent entry for routine maintenance, etc. Please see attached photographs.

In addition, the attached map provided by WPD identifies a sub-station (WPD ref 34/3807) near the access to The Ark property in Hynetown Road. This sub-station is in a more modern, substantial housing and, from the map provided, appears to be linked to the sub-station on Strete Estate land near the pub carpark.

Parish Councillors are promoting a development scheme on Strete Estate private land through the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Savills have recently been in touch with you about the costs of moving the substation in order to satisfy the Councillors wish to have two road access routes into the new development.

However, Parish councillors wish to investigate ways of reducing the costs of moving the substation 34/2614 and wish to enquire if the sub-station on land owned by Strete Estate near the former pub carpark is still required. Representatives from the Parish Council would be prepared to meet with you in the village to discuss their safety concerns.

As this enquiry concerns land and property in private ownership please can you copy your reply to Savills as agents for the owners of the land concerned. Please advise by return.”

It is hoped this will assist Mr Dixon in his negotiations with WPD and that this will enable the viability assessment he is undertaking to be completed before the 31 July 2020.

In Mr Dixon’s opinion the suggestion that the access onto the A379 could be used as a private access to the development and proposed car park is not workable. SHDC advise the choice of whether the road is private or adopted lies with the developer and will be part of the viability calculations. Devon CC Highways views need to be taken into account to do this. **The NP report was received.**

**0620/10 ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

**A report was submitted prior to the meeting.**

SHDC have indicated that they are minded to approve the issue of an extension order for a period of a further five years. The freeholder now has a period of 8 weeks in which to object, before the order is made.

However, SHDC informed us the application which the PC made for this extension inadvertently excluded both the flat above the pub and the car park. SHDC have pointed out that the previous ACV included the car park with the pub and have asked if there is an error, and how we wish to proceed. I hope that Councillors will agree with me that this is an error, and that we wish that any ACV should protect both the car park and the pub. The pub needs to have the car park in order to attract trade from customers using vehicles as well as locals. There is also the thought

that if there is no ACV for the car park it might be offered for sale to a developer. I ask that we all vote to make the necessary change to our application so that the car park is included in the ACV.

It will be necessary for SHDC to carry out a further 8-week consultation in order to make this change, but this period will run concurrently with the freeholder's objection period and so will have little overall timescale effect. As disclosed last month, a group of interested parties are continuing to discuss the formation of an organisation capable of taking a lease and operating the pub. I understand that this is most likely to result in the formation of a Community Benefit Society, which will allow a public offer for investment in shares by villagers, a say in the operation of the venture by community shareholders and the ability for volunteers to come forward and help. It is likely that the group will shortly formally approach the Parish Council for community support and assistance. Having participated in the early discussions of this group I have now stood down from the emerging organising committee. **Resolved: the carpark to be included in the application. The Clerk to confirm with SHDC what next steps were required to resubmit.**

#### **0620/11 PROBLEMS WITH LITTER, FLY TIPPING, BEACH FIRES**

**A report was submitted prior to the meeting.**

Since lockdown came in there have been persistent issues with rubbish piling up at the recycling waste banks outside Manor Farm which have become full on a regular basis, more so than before lock down. In relation to the litter problem and the recent relaxation of lockdown, SHDC put out a number of social media messages on taking rubbish home and not leaving it behind. Fly tipping has also taken place with rubbish bags strewn all over the area by the two banks. A number of locals have kindly reported full banks and fly tipping.

KG wrote to JB on the Council's concerns and the Community Response Team at SHDC responded with a number of useful contacts [dated 5<sup>th</sup> June] and an update on services. All recycling centres have reopened. Also fly tipping can be reported on <https://www.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/fly-tipping/>. SHDC is responsible for household waste and recycling collections, including bulky item collections, missed collections and replacement containers. reporting litter collections and full banks. <https://apps.southhams.gov.uk/webreportit>. The Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service provides useful advice on their site on outside fires and how to prevent wildfires. **The report was received.**

#### **0620/12 UPDATE ON CONTRACTS**

**A report was submitted prior to the meeting giving a quote** from Brooking Hire dated 10 March 2020 with an update on negotiations in June 2020. The original quote had been for £2160 + tipping costs. RC spoke to Brooking Hire on 12/06/2020 to advise a budget of £1,500 and to confirm availability around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July. A schedule of works was listed to include the A379, Totnes Road and the main estates. **Resolved: RC to reply to the contractor and arrange a date for works to be done. RC to arrange a letter drop to parishioners to let them know when the sweeper would pass through and to have cars off the road.**

#### **0620/13 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

**Reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.**

**KG (Chair) Playpark.** Reported on in 0620/8. **Resolved: The Clerk obtain quotes for new signage at the playpark.**

**LN Transport and Roads.** A parishioner had emailed his concern at the removal of a 'No Through Road' sign at the top of the lane down to Hansel and Orestone. DCC wanted the sign to be removed as the road was public access. Councillors agreed due to the poor state of the road it would be inadvisable to remove this sign. The road between Dartmouth and Halwell from Gardentime to Woodlands is closed therefore there is no access onto this road from the Totnes Road out of Strete. LN also reported on the benches and recently checked the one going out of Strete and it is fine. There is another beside the oak tree on the A379 below the village green, the one at the top of Old Hill was due to be repaired. The 3 milestones had been inspected and were all fine.

**DR Health and Safety.** Nothing to report.

**IC Rights of Way, tree warden and Strete Gate. Strete Gate. Rights of Way.** The footpaths/bridle-ways were 'fairing' pretty well despite being busy. The majority of users were clearing up after their dogs. **Tree warden.** The Sycamore on the roadside bank adjacent to the Tannen land, had caught up, leaf-wise, with the other trees nearby. Most trees are 'happier', now that they have had some rain. **After discussion it was resolved IC/The Clerk confirm if there was a tree preservation order on the trees at the Old Coach House [Tallis Rock].**

**Strete Gate.** There had been considerable activity with beach-users, campers, campervans, excessive numbers of dogs, and litter-droppers. IC noted the vast amount of rubbish generated by users of the car park. IC gave an

update on the possible replacement of the access steps below the car-park entrance where he was in 'discussion' with the agent for the Strete Estate, and the appropriate section of S.H.D.C.

**The seat at the top of Old Hill.** IC had looked at replacing the missing seat with PVC timbers but decided hardwood was more durable. He offered to acquire prices of timber replacement for the PC's approval.

**RC Planning and Neighbourhood Plan.** Councillors briefly discussed the recent Planning Performance Agreement [PPA] entered into by SHDC with a local developer. It was noted the PPA followed the National Planning Policy Framework guidelines on streamlining the planning process. RC also signalled his intention to send SHDC the draft letter circulated in May to councillors which expressed concern over planning decisions made by SHDC which concerned Strete Parish. **Resolved: RC to update the draft letter and send to the Head of Planning at SHDC.**

**PH The VAS sign and local transport liaison. VAS Monitoring.** Nothing to report. The unit is operating at the preferred location opposite Manor Farm. **Local transport liaison.** Stagecoach service No.3 reverted to normal from 14th June, with an approximately hourly service in each direction on weekdays.

**Parish Benches.** PH gave a brief report on the condition of all the benches in the Parish following an email from a parishioner reporting on the state of the bench at Skerries. He suggested maintenance work on nearly all the assets, to be found from the present budget. The location of various assets was discussed. The location of the seat at Old Hill was discussed with a view on its position and road traffic. It was decided this was not a dangerous location but the seat did need to be replaced. **It was resolved IC obtain costs for the repairs and report back.**

**GC Village Green** The village field is in good condition and being cut well. There have been a number of suggestions re flattening Prideaux Lane after the damage of the winter. We are still waiting for Greenspace and others to come back with offers of equipment to push the soil back into the ruts, a planer attachment to a tractor seems to be the best option. Signs have been put up near the locked barriers in the lane giving contact details for the Parish Clerk in case of an emergency need of the key.

#### 0620/14 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk observed the majority of emails received continued to focus on the ongoing COVID-19 emergency.

#### 0620/15 REPORTS

DR expressed concern over a blind corner opposite The Old Vicarage where walkers on the coast path could not see the road traffic on the A379. A number of solutions were discussed including signage and mirrors. **Resolved: The Clerk approach Paul McFadden the Rights of Way Officer to discuss this. Also, the wall breach for works at the Old Vicarage will need to be monitored.**

The poor state of guttering and slates on the bus shelter was raised. **Resolved: The Clerk get quotes for repairs.** A brief discussion took place on the 'S' bend down at Landcombe and road safety. **Resolved the Clerk go back to Highways on the speed limit at the bend out of the village.**

PH asked for confirmation on whether a programme of works would take place on the benches. **Resolved: DR to approach Phil Cruse to ask him to quote on the works required.**

#### 0620/16 THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JULY 2020 AT 7.00 PM ON ZOOM UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED.

**THE MEETING WAS CLOSED** at 8.40 p.m.

Signed: ..... Cllr Kate Gill (Chair)

Dated: 16 JULY 2020

**ACTION POINTS:** The Clerk to provide the monitoring statements for the website; to arrange for the AGAR to be signed by the Chairman, RFO and Clerk; to confirm if the Samsung galaxy tablet had been written off; to ask SHDC to empty the bins down at Strete Gate on a more regular basis particularly in the high season; to confirm with SHDC what next steps were required to resubmit the ACV; to confirm if there was a tree preservation order on the trees at the Old Coach House [Tallis Rock]; to approach Paul McFadden the Rights of Way Officer on the blind corner opposite The Old Vicarage; to look at quotes to do these repairs to the bush shelter; to obtain quotes for new signage at the playpark; to go back to Highways on the speed limit out of the village toward Landcombe. KG to take on the role of police liaison.

IC to obtain costs for the repairs to the bench at Old Hill and report back.

RC to reply to Brookings and arrange a date for sweeping works to be done; to arrange a letter drop to parishioners to let them know when the sweeper would pass through and to have cars off the road; to update the draft letter on local planning applications in relation to the parish and send to the Head of Planning at SHDC.

DR to approach Phil Cruse to ask him to quote on a programme of works to the benches required. All: keep an eye on the wall breach at the Old Vicarage.