

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 16 July 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); three members of the public.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mr and Mrs Singleton [TS] and Dr Potter [DP] attended the meeting to speak on 41 Start Bay Park. TS outlined the difficulties experienced by the neighbours of the applicant over the application. The letters of notification from South Hams District Council [SHDC] came around June 3rd. This was the first he knew of the application. The Parish Council met and discussed the application before the neighbours knew this meeting had taken place. He felt therefore he had no voice in that discussion. In his opinion the Parish Council failed to respond to his repeated requests to explain the process behind the decision. The minutes stated the decision but not the supporting discussion. The planning portal gave a 'support' decision by the Parish Council but without an explanation.

He observed that it would have been very difficult to lodge any comments by the time the Parish Council met to discuss the application. It took a week for the objection raised by TS to be uploaded onto the portal so it gave him very little time to consider the application in any detail. The Parish Council had advised him they looked at the planning portal before they considered the application and had seen no comments by the date of the meeting on June 18th. Then he wondered why the Parish had waited until the 10th July to make their comment on the portal which suggests they could have waited to see what objections came in before the deadline.

TS noted a number of approaches had been made to ask the Parish Council to consider the concerns of the neighbours. A petition had been organised and correspondence sent to promote the views of the neighbours. The Parish Council advised the decision could not be revisited within six months. TS was surprised this was the case during the time of COVID and all the communication issues going on.

He also noted that none of the communication was ever aimed at the Clerk whom he felt was 'somebody who is between a rock and hard place'. So, he understood that and thought he had made that clear but he was really sorry the Clerk was upset by this. He had apologised to the Clerk. But he also wanted to make clear he was under considerable stress by this application. And the lack of 'voice' added to this stress.

TS acknowledged lockdown had caused a problem with communication. The noticeboards had been not been updated since 23rd March [*on advice of the Devon Association of Local Councils in respect of the risk of infection*] and these were a source of information on parish matters.

DP then spoke. He had commented with SHDC, he believed fully, on the effect of the application on his property. He then expressed frustration on how exceedingly difficult it was to find out when the Parish Council meeting was taking place. Neighbours had tried to find out when the Council was meeting and had looked at the website and on the noticeboards. So, the meeting had taken place before he was aware of what was happening. Hence his initial comment to say he would have really appreciated it if there had been a site visit.

He outlined the particular effect of the proposed application on his property. He was concerned about the likelihood that he would lose all his privacy and be overlooked. And in particular he would lose a considerable amount of afternoon sunlight which he liked to sit out in and enjoy.

DP raised precedent if this particular application went ahead. He cited a High Court [2009] ruling on a planning application which stated consistency leads to good administration and comes from general principles of fairness and the treatment of citizens. A consistent treatment of applications might mean if one applicant has approval to do a conversion of this nature then others could argue for the same outcome. He then noted the tightness of the bungalows and the low roof lines in Start Bay Park. DP acknowledged councillors Cumberlidge and Campbell visited the site but he wished this had happened prior to the meeting. And it still troubled him that the Parish Council can make decisions on plans that will have a serious impact on parishioners.

KG thanked the parishioners and responded to their comments. She noted the Parish Council meetings are always held on the third Thursday of the month. The Parish Council only makes suggestions as they have no powers to make decisions. The comment lodged by the Parish Council goes to SHDC to consider but they still make up their own mind. In fact, in a number of cases the Parish Council made one recommendation and SHDC came to a different decision. KG confirmed the councillors had checked the portal to see if anything had been put on it but nothing had. She asked if the neighbours had received the notification letters from SHDC which was confirmed.

Concluded that SHDC might want to look at the updating of the portal and how long members of the public have to respond to applications. They had found difficulty in getting their comments together and uploaded in time.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

JB briefly explained for the benefit of the parishioners the role of SHDC in the planning process whereby SHDC has responsibility for making planning decisions. He also introduced himself as the Chair of the Development Management [planning] committee and that he was very interested in planning issues.

JB met today with the Health Board which looks at all the local hospital trusts and their plans to deal with a local outbreak of COVID-19. DCC had an Local Outbreak Management Plan <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/lomp/> which sets out how they would deal with a sudden spike in cases. He explained there were a number of scenarios of which the least desirable would be to return to the strict lockdown imposed from the 23rd March. There are other contingency plans to control a local outbreak, depending on circumstances.

DCC Cabinet last week agreed the latest round of pothole funding. Lisa [Edmonds] has funds for this work so **to let Lisa or JB know of any works that need to be done. The report was received.**

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

RF reassured the parishioners that the application for 41 Start Bay Park would be looked at properly by SHDC and their comments seen by the officer who is reviewing the application. JB and he are the Chair and Vice Chair of the Development Management Committee which handles planning applications. They have vast experience handling difficult planning applications.

He knew Start Bay Park quite well and had visited it a number of times. Certain factors would be taken into account with the application because of its location, and the way it looks so it is a particular street scene. As it's in the AONB, that's a protected landscape. He also mentioned some policies in the Joint Local Plan [JLP] that would apply to the decision. For instance, DEV 24 [Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast] on the landscape, DEV 25 [Nationally Protected landscapes] and DEV 27 [Green and Play spaces]. So, it will be rigorously looked at. He asked the parishioners to contact him with any questions and he would make sure these were passed on.

RF reiterated the application had a fair way to go with a lot more processes for it to go through. It may go to the full committee but this depends [partly] on what the planning officer says. Overlooking would be considered and light as well but a view isn't considered in the decision-making process.

RF noted he understood the frustration felt by the parishioners. But he also understood the Parish Council too. Having come through COVID 19, officers and members have spent a lot of time in front of a screen trying to communicate with people as best they could to keep things moving. And it has been a very difficult time.

The Development Management committee hadn't met during the pandemic and there had been no site meetings. They were using mediation and meeting online to resolve some planning issues that are outstanding.

SHDC had paid out a lot of money during the pandemic and they have had funding from central government but not enough. So, finances are a bit ragged, though fundamentally sound, and it will take some time to recover. There will be another budget in September. SHDC is also looking at how the council works and whether that can be greener. For instance, since the lockdown there had been 300,000 fewer miles travelled so that has helped with global warming. Meetings could be held online but RF noted he did like to meet people. **The report was received.**

0720/1 APOLOGIES – No apologies were received.

0720/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2020

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

0720/3 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. **LN declared an interest in item 4.**

0720/4 PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS

1836/20/TCA T1 Horse Chestnut fell, T2 Sycamore fell. Trees are within close proximity to buildings posing health and safety issues. School House A379 Strete Village TQ6 ORW. IC spoke as the tree warden. He suggested to crown reduce the central sycamore and sacrifice the other two trees which are small and growing out of a wall. All councillors [except LN] were asked their views and all agreed the analysis. PH observed the health and safety aspect might refer to the position of oil tanks though he wasn't certain. RC noted as it was in the AONB and the Conservation area the planners should take that into account. **Resolved a crown reduction of the main sycamore tree and lose the other two trees [a horse chestnut and a small sycamore].**

RF asked if the trees had TPOs on them. IC said he thought the large sycamore did. *[TPO 887 is on a large sycamore on Land adjacent to School House].* RF stated then the order should come through to full committee now.

0720/5(a) FINANCE

A single cheque was listed for payment and an invoice had been sent to all councillors before the meeting.

1725 – Clerk salary July £249.	
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It was proposed and AGREED by all present to authorise the payment as enumerated above.

0720/5(b) FINANCE

A monitoring report for 2020/21 had been circulated already along with a cashflow projection. The projection to the end of September 2020 gave CR11,539.60. It was agreed the latest monitoring should be published on the website. **Resolved the monitoring statements would be put on the website.**

0720/5(c) FINANCE

Cash at bank –£9,865.92CR Current account at 08/07/20, £10,297.39CR Business Reserve account at 08/07/20.

0720/6 CLERK'S REPORT

The report had been sent round before the meeting.

a. Councillor interests. The SLCC had confirmed that the councillors involved in the pub working group should declare and update their interests. This is RC and DR. **For action.**

b. Coast path exit (s) on A379 and general signage in that area. LN and the Clerk had met to consider the safety aspects of the exits from the Coast path down by Asherne after last month's meeting [Minute 0620/15]. LN was also concerned about the safety of pedestrians on the stretch of road by Asherne Cottages toward the village. It was felt more signs should be put up to notify traffic of pedestrians in that stretch between the bend at the bottom of Hynetown Road and the village on the A379. Also, that the stone pillars by the coast path exit on the bend should be cut into to improve the line of site on that bend. LN had cut the hedges on her side of the road.

A general discussion took place. RF counselled that if the parish wished to put their own signs up these would be tolerated by Highways on practical grounds. However virtual footpaths which were discussed are now illegal. RC also observed there is a large amount of vegetation along the road from the cottages at Asherne up to the Kings Arms Car Park. **Resolved KG approach Lisa Edmonds to get this cut back.**

DR asked about putting a convex mirror he had opposite the exit from the coast path. The risk was from cyclists who were silent but speedy along that bend. **Resolved the council approach the landowner [The Old Vicarage] to request permission to have a mirror on their land.** LN also explained the gateposts obscure the line of sight at that corner. If highways would pay, she would be happy to discuss how to have the corner altered so it was clearer for pedestrians at that point. **Resolved: the council to contact Lisa Edmonds via JB and arrange a visit on site.**

c. Samsung Galaxy tablet. The asset was to be written off. **To carry forward.**

d. Website accessibility requirements. Regulations require public bodies with websites to have these compliant with accessibility standards by 23rd September 2020. These accessibility standards are defined on the Directgov website by reference to the international WCAG 2.1AA accessibility standard. **For note and action.**

e. Coming out of lockdown. The playpark was reopened on Monday 6th July after an inspection arranged with Helen Hardwicke the mobile locality officer. KG enrolled Terry Hallett to cut the grass. Allianz has inspected the site as insurer. The HM Government Gov.uk website was updated 9th July with information. **The report was received.**

0720/7 UPDATES ON COVID-19

No report was received prior to the meeting. A number of reports include updates on the pandemic including the County Councillor, the Chairman and the Clerk.

0720/8 CHAIR'S REPORT

This report was submitted prior to the meeting. Chair's Report Strete Parish Council 16.07.20

Coronavirus - The advice as before still applies – RISK ASSESS – look around – STAY ALERT even though restrictions are not quite as draconian. It seems we have to prepare ourselves for living with COVID-19 for a considerable time. We will be expected to wear face coverings in shops as well as other public places on top of the existing places. Other services are being added to the list of businesses we are now allowed to patronise. This is to support the business world which is in dire need of assistance. Although the daily death toll is declining it is anticipated that it will rise again during the colder winter weather. **It seems that the pandemic is having a bizarre effect on the population.** Lack of human contact and kindness is disturbingly disorientating on rationale. My elder daughter who is a community psychiatric nurse in a Devon city is under extra pressure as a result!

Strete Gate and Slapton Line - Now there is more freedom of movement people are rushing to our beaches. Slapton Line/Memorial Car Park has been the biggest failure in social distancing I have witnessed. Motorhomes of all sizes have been parked so closely together that there has hardly been any room to exit or enter them. Last weekend there were over a dozen tents on the beach at Strete Gate some were huge family ones. There were several open fires surrounded by large groups of people below Asherne. There was also a huge amount of noise – which was extremely loud and prevented residents from sleeping properly. It would be great if the powers that be could enforce our existing bye laws. **The byelaws notice is fixed to the wall of the Public Toilets at Strete Gate.** We also had issues with parking at Strete Gate where there were too many cars for the car park and people were parking on the clearway from Strete Gate corner towards the hair pin bend at Gull Corner. Cars were also parked thickly on the double yellow lines at Strete Gate. They received parking tickets.

Play Park – has now been opened after Helen Hardwicke did her inspection on 6th July. I was with her at the time. I noticed that she tested out the strength of the equipment by climbing on it. She was happy with everything, including the grass cutting and gave it her seal of approval. It is being very happily used by lots of youngsters. Helen suggested that it would be a good idea to treat all the wood with a preservative to enhance its life. So, if there is anyone out there interested in helping please let me know.

Kings Arms – by now everyone should have received their invitation card for 'A Call to Arms – The King's Arms'. If you are able to help please do so - all assistance in whatever form will be greatly welcomed.

Thanks again to all the helpers who have enabled us to keep safe. Stay safe. The Chair's report was received.

0720/9 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

A report was submitted prior to the meeting. A link to the full report is here on the 'Where are We Now' page within the Neighbourhood Plan section of the parish website under 'July 2020 Neighbourhood Plan Update'.
https://strete.org.uk/rw_common/plugins/stacks/armadillo/media/59NotesofNPforJuly2020.pdf

NP Report for PC – July 2020 .RC reported to the members of the Strete Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group [Group] on 14th July on Cox's Farm Field [CFF] and its inclusion in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. His report outlined events, with recent correspondence, and asked the Group to indicate their choice between two options. The choice would be reported back to the Examiner after the Parish Council meeting.

Option 1 – Remove CFF site from the Plan and tighten the boundary to be outside the Settlement Boundary. It is suggested this mirrors the boundary of CFF owned by Strete Estate provided by Mr Dixon. Duncan has advised that he will help us tighten the policy wording in the Plan especially SNP9: Principal Residence Requirement. Regulation 15 for this change is not expected to require an extended period for consultation and the current Examiner is expected to be able to conclude the examination process with minimum delay.

Option 2 – Identify another site for development. There might be one alternative site in the village that, in my opinion, could be considered. However, it was unknown if the owner would be willing to release the land for development and it would require more negotiations as well as Regulation 15 consultation and a new Examination.

RC reported that everyone supported Option 1. **Resolved: RC will recommend this to Duncan Smith who will follow it up with the examiner.** It may take around a month before some of the wording in the policies is amended to incorporate this new adjustment to the NP.

RF observed an agreed NP does weigh with planning decisions when these are made. RC suggested there is a risk that the developer makes plans which don't fit in with the original intentions for that site when it was in the draft NP. RF observed it would be difficult to advise what the approach would be at that point but that it was more likely to be developed if it was inside the NP than outside the NP. He also noted that with the situation within the AONB, a five-year land supply as well this as an exception site would be less likely to be looked on for development within the current policy framework. **The NP report was received.**

0720/10 UPDATE ON CONTRACTS

RC updated the meeting on the contract with Brookings to perform a sweep along the A379 and in the Village at the end of the month. Brookings are contractually obliged to perform another contract delayed due to the pandemic. So, they are unable to do the works they originally agreed to do for the village at the end of July. PH asked when the sweep was likely to take place now. RC thought this would be September.

RC also raised the issue of the SHDC road sweepers and the frequency of sweeping in the village. He also commented that the sweeper used by SHDC [or its contractor] was rather tiny for the task. RF replied that SHDC don't use the big sweepers now. **He said he would chase this up to get some action on road sweeping.**

0720/11 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

KG (Chair) Playpark. Reported on in 0720/8.

LN Transport and Roads. There were a lot of cars parked last Sunday on the side of the road from Strete Gate going up the hill, this caused quite a bit of congestion and difficulties for cars passing both ways as it was not easy to see and the road basically became one lane width. The 3 milestones had been inspected and were all fine.

DR Health and Safety. DR met with Kevin Bowyer, the new Assistant Community Responder Officer, for South West Ambulance, where the Community Defibrillator was checked over. All relevant information and records were updated. A community training evening in the use of the defibrillator would be held back until it is known if Covid-19 reoccurs, and the implication of holding such events. This will be discussed again in September.

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. **Tree warden.** This had been discussed in 0720/4.

Strete Gate. IC noted that this had been covered by KG. He observed that the behaviour of a number of beach visitors had been bad and was likely to get worse as summer went on. **The parish has no powers to deal with bad behaviour. This resides with the police.** The replacement of the steps was taking some time as it was somewhere 'in the system'. There may well be a case for putting up a prominent new sign at Strete Gate, informing visitors that there is to be NO camping on the beach, as it is a S.S.S.I. However, it may do a small amount of 'good'.

GC picked up on the missing steps down at the beach which had been removed around 20 months ago. He commented on the dangerous aspects of the new access down to the beach via the bank or on the road and how messy the area was. The parish could do the work to reinstate the steps if they had permission to do so. **RF promised to go back to the officers and stress how dangerous the area is.** RF also mentioned he had got the car park wardens to clear the mess at the middle carpark and asked them to do this at Strete Gate as well.

KG asked how the parish council could make the new byelaws at Strete Gate stick. RF replied responsibility lay with the police and the carpark attendants, and Highways for the double parking. KG and LN referred to the tents, bonfires and noise on the beach. RF advised this is for the local authority and the police to deal with. He promised to get officers at SHDC onto matters and advised LN contact Ian Luscombe in Environmental Health at SHDC.

IC asked about portaloos on the toilet block. RF replied that unfortunately the portaloos would not be allowed on environmental grounds. The Environment Agency noted as this is in a SSSI the chemicals in the portaloos might damage the environment. However, he was keen to put toilets along the Line probably at the memorial car park.

RC Planning and Neighbourhood Plan. RC had nothing to add.

PH The VAS sign and local transport liaison. VAS Monitoring. Nothing to report. Operation continues. **Local transport liaison.** The summer bus timetable has been issued. There is an additional early morning No. 3 service on weekdays which is designed to get people to work in Plymouth from Dartmouth and Kingsbridge:

	First bus	Last bus
Dep. Dartmouth Pontoon	05.10	17.15
Dep. Strete Kings Arms	06.32	17.37
Arr. Plymouth Royal Parade	07.20	19.35
Dep Plymouth Royal Parade	06.25	17.45
Dep. Strete Kings Arms	08.22	19.11
Arr. Dartmouth Pontoon	08.51	19.35

On weekdays there are about ten around hourly services in each direction. Sundays have only two services each way, which start and finish in Kingsbridge, so there is no through service to Plymouth. The Park and Ride car parks at both Salcombe and Dartmouth remain suspended. With more visitors there will be a lot of pressure on car parking spaces in Dartmouth town.

Parish Benches Nothing to report. Action is with IC to repair Old Hill seat and for DR to engage Phil Cruse to arrange for a quote for maintenance of the remainder, all as resolved at the June meeting.

The Kings Arms – renewal of the ACV. As discussed last month, the application has now been revised to include the car park and has been resubmitted to SHDC. We await developments. PH mentioned a **webinar at DCC on electric vehicle charging** circulated by the Clerk and he offered to attend.

GC Village Green The village field has been cut twice. We are no further on finding a planer and tractor to flatten Prideaux Lane. It may be necessary anyway to wait until the ground is softer in the autumn.

0720/12 CORRESPONDENCE

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

0720/13 REPORTS

KG noted there may need to be a meeting in August and councillors would be notified. LN had nothing to comment. DR had met Phil Cruse to discuss works on the bus shelter and the benches as in the report by PH last month [0620/ 13]. Phil Cruse will provide a quote to do the works. IC had nothing more. RC mentioned his letter to SHDC on the interpretation by SHDC of the JLP policies in relation to two recent planning applications and the appropriate use of delegated powers to make the decisions. SHDC planners [Ms Stansbury] had replied to confirm the planning decisions made were in line with the JLP and that delegation had been correctly used. RC suggested we have a checklist of things to do when a planning application comes in. He also noted for the benefit of the parishioners for the application for 41 Start Bay Park JB had informed councillors precedent was not relevant.

PH asked about recruiting a new clerk. KG said a meeting in August could be convened to discuss this and she also explained how this recruitment took place last time.

GC referred to an email from a visitor sent to the Devon and Cornwall Police on problems at Strete Gate. This had been passed on to Strete Parish Council for information and action. After discussion it was decided that signage on the beach was clear so that visitors were aware there was a nudist section on the beach. The police had visited the beach incognito in the past but had not taken any action as it was not deemed necessary. The situation will be monitored and councillors do visit the beach daily. **It was resolved not to respond to the initial email at the moment but keep an eye on the overall situation at Strete Gate as outlined earlier in the meeting.**

RF suggested when the parish council submit reports on planning applications, to focus on particular polices in the JLP rather than write a screed in response to the consultation. He also observed that local knowledge is important with applications. Councillors asked for a copy of the JLP. RF said they weren't readily available in printed form but are on the website. RF offered some training on planning policy once things were back to normal.

0720/14 THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON EITHER THURSDAY 20th AUGUST or THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 IF BUSINESS REQUIRES AND AT 7.00 PM ON ZOOM UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED.

THE MEETING WAS CLOSED at 8.10 p.m.

Signed: Cllr Kate Gill (Chair)

Dated: 20 AUGUST 2020