

# STRETE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Helen Darch

Homer Park, Strete, Dartmouth TQ6 0SJ streteClerk@gmail.com 01803 770018 www.strete.org.uk

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STRETE PARISH COUNCIL (PC) HELD ON ZOOM ON THURSDAY 20 August 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 Richard Foss, District Councillor, Allington & Strete Ward (RF); Mrs. Helen Darch (Clerk); three members of the public.

### PUBLIC FORUM

Two members of the public attended to speak on the application **2394/20/TCA T1 Ash fell and remove. Tree is hollow, dangerous and dropping branches onto neighbouring property. Land at SX 839 468**. IC responded to questions on the health of the tree and whether he thought it suffered from Ash dieback. In his opinion, and after studying the tree, he didn't feel it was a victim of Ash dieback and had shown some healthy regrowth. However, he **could not warrant** that the tree would not fall down. South Hams District Council [SHDC] had not done a site visit and would not issue a preservation order [TPO] due to the report by Charles Dixon, the land agent for the Strete Estate, into the tree's condition. IC then suggested the residents who supported the tree being kept write to Charles Dixon and state a case that the tree was a lovely visual break. The Strete Estate would then decide if the tree might be kept or felled. **Resolved: residents write to the land agent to argue for retention of the tree.**

Andy Edwards [AE] attended to represent the Strete Community Pub Limited [SCPL] a Community Benefit Society [CBS] which had FCA approval to issue shares. They wrote to the Parish Council to request we consider a grant and a possible loan toward the new pub venture at the Kings Arms. The SCPL submitted an account of costs to date on the preparation toward opening the pub in September. These costs included professional fees and registration of the CBS. A number of future costs due prior to opening had also been identified. In total just over £6,000 was itemised. **Resolved: the meeting to be closed for agenda item 4 if AE needed to respond to Councillor questions.**

### COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

**The County Councillor was absent and did not send in a report.**

### DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

RF said he thought he had said most of what is going on in his reports and emails. He had been involved with Strete Gate nearly every day chasing officers on the problems there. Action had been taken at Strete Gate which included ticketing overnight stays and moving campers off the land going up to Homelands. He had asked JB to bring Highways down to deal with road parking. People have been moved on. If land can be found a toilet will be put in the central carpark though it won't be on the east side of the road and there was little on the west side.

He also observed that SHDC had dealt with some of the problems but couldn't deal with all of them. There was a lot of discussion on how to go forward but it was complex and had been building up for a number of years. RF had been raising the problem over that time and now finally it has got really bad SHDC has woken up.

IC asked why the toilet block was taken down in the middle carpark originally. SHDC justified this on environmental grounds but the current state of the beach was equally disgusting. RF explained the septic tank had been uncovered by the sea and couldn't be replaced because of the SSSI designation. The block was fine but the waste disposal was a problem. As already noted, there is no land available to erect a permanent toilet block. RC wondered if some of the underspend on the £2.5m government grant given in 2018 to replace the road could be used toward the toilet. It remained there was still no site for the toilet. LN asked why porta-loos couldn't be put in. RF explained that it would take considerable cleaning to keep them in a good state. **The report was received.**

**0820/1 APOLOGIES** – Cllr Julian Brazil, County Councillor, Kingsbridge Division (JB).

**0820/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2020**

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

**0820/3 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. **RC and DR declared an interest in item 4.**

**0820/4 LETTER FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FROM THE KINGS ARMS PUB WORKING GROUP**

AE said he would receive questions. Councillors were then canvassed on their opinions. PH thought this was an important initiative toward giving the community vibrancy and for the future of the village. He had read the Clerk's note on the options available. He thought a grant could be made under s137 (*see below*) and a loan if that was of use. A fixed term loan to be repaid in say a year's time.

A number of Councillors noted that the Council needed to consider the whole community and whether they would support the pub. But they were in favour of supporting it. They also asked what would happen if a loan was made and the project failed. It wouldn't be repaid presumably. A general discussion took place on what terms would be relevant if a loan was advanced. **Resolved: The Clerk offered to speak with the Plunkett Foundation to get some ideas on structure and terms for a loan. She would then report back on this.**

PH asked about the other charity earmarked under s137. GC confirmed this was the CAB in Dartmouth (£50). KG suggested the matter be deferred to a later meeting after a closer study of the costs submitted by the SCPL. AE noted they had to secure all their finances in the next two to three weeks and get the pub ready to open by the end of September. KG then said the Council could offer £1,000 under s137. **Resolved: That the Council in accordance with its powers under section 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area of its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with expenditure:- £1,000 toward the pre-opening expenses of the SCPL as detailed in their account of costs to date.**

**0820/5 PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS**

**2394/20/TCA T1 Ash fell and remove.** This was discussed in the Public Forum. IC had spoken with SHDC to ask for a deferral of the response date of 26<sup>th</sup> August. This would allow people more time to speak with the land agent.

**Resolved: The Clerk to speak to Tracey Webb at SHDC about deferring the date.**

**0820/6(a) FINANCE**

Two cheques were listed for payment and invoices sent to all Councillors before the meeting. An additional cheque, 1728, was added to the list of payments at the meeting.

1726 – Clerk salary July £249.	1727 - Clerk expenses April to July £100.66.
1728 – Greenspace June and July £407.60.	

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

**0820/6(b) FINANCE**

A monitoring report for 2020/21 had been circulated already along with a cashflow projection to the end of September 2020 of CR10,528.84. RC asked for £500 to be lodged toward the Neighbourhood Plan [NP]. He also pointed out the quotes received today for the benches and bus shelter superseded the existing lodgements of £500 each. **Resolved the monitoring statements would be put on the website. £500 to be lodged toward the NP.**

**0820/6(c) FINANCE**

Cash at bank – £9,616.92CR Current account at 07/08/20, £10,297.48CR Business Reserve account at 07/08/20.

**0820/7 DISCUSSION OF PAPER ON PLANNING AND PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

**The report had been sent round before the meeting and is on the website under Councillors' reports.**

GC took the paper. This paper had been drafted by GC, PH and RC. He noted the need to keep the Clerk from aggravation. The paper also looked at planning and general functioning of the Parish Council. He asked if there were any queries or disagreements with what was in the paper.

**A number of Councillors expressed an opinion that planning should be handled by the whole team.** In particular that site visits should be undertaken by as many Councillors as could attend. The circumstances of the pandemic had made site visits difficult to undertake but the need to see a planning application 'in the round' was recognised.

**RC explained the idea of a dedicated team [PH, GC, RC] to manage planning applications from initial submission to final response to SHDC.** The team would handle paperwork for applications. As part of this process, neighbours would be sent a letter which explained the planning process. The letter would invite them to a Council meeting to represent their views. It would contain resources [for instance links to Joint Local Plan [JLP] policies] and references [for instance a link to the SHDC website on planning applications] and the opportunity to investigate

and make comments. This would also be on the village website. The team would then visit the site. After the site visit, they would do a report and make recommendations which would go to the full Parish Council for decision.

GC noted this was also with the intention the team would develop knowledge of planning policy and terminology to draft responses to the applications that were in the language used by planners. At the last meeting RF had stated the Council should refer to the JLP in drafting our response to any planning. RC noted the planners would take more notice of a response that referred to planning policy. He added the PC had whittled down around 60 JLP policies to 20 [ish] that potentially apply to Strete.

RC suggested that Councillors put forward any amendments they required to the document but there was an application in train [Falloden] and he suggested the letter might be useful to put out to neighbours at this point. Maybe in the letter suggest people contact 'any of the Parish Councillors' rather than the three named in the draft.

**Resolved: Councillors agreed on the paper and polices subject to any amendments fed back. So, a final draft of the planning paper would be circulated for comments before it was adopted. RC to send out a version of the letter for the application at Falloden. All Councillors to make site visits as necessary before the Council meeting.**

PH reminded Councillors that a performance appraisal system for the Clerk was part of the review. His wife [a qualified HR assessor] was happy to consult with the Clerk. **Resolved: The Clerk would talk with Karen Hales.**

The final part of this paper covered communication issues. **Resolved: a notice would be made up for the noticeboards and website with roles and responsibilities and photos of the Councillors. Also, the Clerk to get the draft minutes ready for the boards and website within ten days. Photos would be taken at the next meeting.**

#### **0820/8 AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL TO MANAGE THE PLAYPARK AT STRETE.**

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

The Clerk ran through the agreement dated 5<sup>th</sup> August. A number of comments were made about the contract. RC noted the insurance only covered the equipment and safety surfacing. Also, there was no remedies if SHDC doesn't perform. Councillors agreed the inspection arrangements were too vague in particular the timescale for SHDC to perform their obligations. Several observed there was no penalty against SHDC under the contract. IC was concerned that SHDC do pick up on strange things and he was concerned the PC could find itself out of contract in a fairly arbitrary way. KG agreed and said we weren't getting the proper report. IC felt we would look after it better ourselves. GC noted though if we do it ourselves, we would have a liability that we don't have at the moment.

**Resolved: Clerk to respond to SHDC with comments as expressed.**

#### **0820/9 CLERK'S REPORT**

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

**a. Samsung Galaxy tablet. Resolved: to write off the tablet. It was missing since the departure of the last Clerk.**

**b. Coronavirus updates and coming out of lockdown.** The Clerk had consulted the Parish Hall chairman and the Parish Council may be able to meet in the Hall in September under their guidance. A risk assessment has to be done for the Parish Council. We have the risk assessment for the Parish Hall already. We also have 'rules of play' done and the risk assessment will be done before September. **Resolved: Clerk update budget and send round for the next meeting for comment. The report was received.**

#### **0820/10 UPDATES ON COVID-19**

**A number of reports include updates on the pandemic including the Chairman and the Clerk.**

#### **0820/11 CHAIR'S REPORT**

**This report was submitted prior to the meeting. Chair's Report Strete Parish Council 20.08.20**

**Coronavirus** –Boring though it may be - the advice as before still applies – RISK ASSESS – look around – STAY ALERT. After the bizarre behaviour of some of our visitors last month I was wrong in assuming that things would get better: it is still with us. The Memorial Car Park seemed to be fuller than ever and sadly visitors did not take into account that there were no public toilets. This has left us with some discussion today – on how to proceed. **Strete Gate and Slapton Line.** The parking at Strete Gate gained momentum and volume. Larger quantities of motorhomes visited the Memorial Car Park and Strete Gate. SHDC did a night time visit to the Memorial Car Park and told them to move on. I understand that the next night they made a visit and ticketed those who were there again. On one of my journeys I counted 66 vehicles badly parked along the clearway: half and half on the shingle and the highway. The field was opened next to the car park at Strete Gate for which a fee was charged. Some

people were so late returning to their cars that they were locked in. The beach gained some publicity as it was featured on BBC Spotlight. Not a good move in my opinion at it showed tents along an inviting stretch of beach. Lisa Edmonds of DCC has had a request for free disabled spaces along the wall at Strete Gate. We have discussed this at length – we both agree that one space at the A379 end would be best, but considering the above traffic **mayhem - policing it might be problematic. She has put it on her 'HATOC' list for consideration next year.**

**Play Park** – is being enjoyed as usual. The grass is being cut regularly. Helen has kindly put up social distancing notices and has ordered a permanent change of contact notice. Thank you, Helen,

**Kings Arms** – The Community is gathering together - with social distancing in mind - to bring the King's Arms back to life. There will be an event held at the Kings Arms this weekend. Further info will be found on [www.facebook.com/kingsarmsatstrete](http://www.facebook.com/kingsarmsatstrete). Please support the effort by buying a share in the enterprise.

**Policing** – I am happy to report that I saw a Police patrol vehicle which checked out the situation at Strete Gate on Tuesday this week.

**VJ Day** – 15<sup>th</sup> August. The Beacon at Manor Farm was lit by Ian in celebration on last Saturday. It was socially distanced with mainly campers from on site in attendance. A verbal tribute was made by a camper. **Best wishes everyone - thank you for your help and support in these trying times. Stay safe.**

GC noted there are two tubes in the playpark which are potentially a hazard as children can shout into them and the risk is there is spit and other residue left behind. He felt these should be sealed. He suggested black plastic bag and gaffer tape to seal each end. **It was resolved these would be sealed up. The Chair's report was received.**

#### 0820/12 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

**A report was submitted prior to the meeting. The full report is also be found on the 'Where are We Now' page within the Neighbourhood Plan section of the Parish website under 'August 2020 Neighbourhood Plan Update'. NP Report for PC – August 2020**

Following my email to the Examiner and Duncan Smith of SHDC on 17<sup>th</sup> July formally requesting that CFF site be withdrawn from the Neighbourhood Plan, I have had subsequent discussions with Duncan Smith regarding the way forward. As a result of removing the CFF there are three options for proceeding as follows: -

1. Remove the CFF site and leave the boundary as is
2. Remove the settlement boundary altogether.
3. Adjust the settlement boundary to take account of the removal of CFF.

If option 1) is chosen, the Plan can proceed to Referendum. If Options 2) or 3) are selected the Plan would need to return to pre-regulation 15, a choice made, the Plan amended to take account of that choice and Regulation 16 consultation period of 6 weeks carried out in advance of a re-examination of the Plan. It is considered that, in the light of this, that it would serve the residents of Strete best that the NP is withdrawn and full consideration is given to the options outlined above before resubmitting at Regulation 15 and seeking re-examination.

RC reported that seven responses from the Neighbourhood Plan Group had settled on Option 3. If this is acceptable then Option 3 will be put forward to the examiner who will be informed that Strete have decided to remove the plan from examination. A meeting will happen next Wednesday on skype between Duncan. Lee and RC to redraft the aspects of the plan which now exclude Coxes Farm Field. The plan needs to be resubmitted under Reg 15, then immediately to a six-week consultation period under regulation 16. SHDC handles this part of the process. The Parish puts up publicity for the consultation period. When that ends it will go back to examination again. **It was resolved that Option 3 should be put forward to the Examiner.**

The objective is to start on the recommended amendments, new maps and policy wording with immediate effect. Zoom meetings are being planned with Duncan Smith and Lee Bray to liaise on the requirements and wording before returning to the NPG for approval. **The NP report was received.**

#### 0820/13 REPORT INTO ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS IN STRETE

**A report was submitted prior to the meeting. The full report is on the website under Councillors' reports.**

PH reported on a webinar he had attended organised jointly by the Transport division of the Energy Saving Trust (is a government-funded body) and Devon County Council on electric vehicles and local charging arrangements. The report outlined the growth in plug-in battery electric vehicles in the UK which stood at 7.2% of new cars at May 2020 up from 2.1% in 2019. Prices are falling and use will rise. Also, there is a developing second-hand market and the relative [to petrol] lower running costs of battery electric vehicles. There are also environmental air quality benefits. **Public charging will apply to those who have to street park, and visitors with battery vehicles.**

In Devon provision of **public charging facilities** is low and concentrated on trunk roads and in major cities; funded by private industry. **There is little public charging availability in the local area.** Some towns have them but there is nothing in Dartmouth, nothing in Kingsbridge or in the villages in between. The nearest public charging point due west is Tesco Extra at Lee Mill. DCC's approach has been to enter into private partnerships to get public facilities installed in Council owned car parks in urban areas. DCC has no definite plan to spread facilities out to the rural Parishes. **So decision-making is up to Parish Councils. DCC is not interested in owning or operating charge points.**

**Funding through the On-street Residential Charge point Scheme (ORCS) grant money gives 75% match funding,** and Parishes in rural areas are being encouraged to identify and promote suitable sites. DCC will assist with support to collate data and promote grant applications for suitable sites. **The current grant allocation for the scheme ends in March 21.** It is not known what will replace this scheme after that date.

KG asked what the cost of the charging points would be. PH said it depends on the connection charge [Western Power [WPD]] though there are electricity boxes in the pub car park already. **The average cost of a new charger is about £4,000.** PH explained it could be a revenue generator whomever ran it eg the hall or the church. He proposed the Council consult with site owners over a suitable site for a public charger and any income, remitted to the site owner, would be collected through a credit card payment facility to use the charger. There are a variety of costs which depend on who runs the plant and some are cheaper than others. WPD will have views about the practicality and connection costs of different sites, and PH could discuss this with them on behalf of the PC.

**Resolved: PH will put together a survey for the next time a mailshot goes out. RC to pass on the information to Tim Fowler who advises on grants for the pub to see if we can get any grant funding for the charging points.**

#### 0820/14 STRETE GATE

This had been initially discussed under the District Councillor report. Signage was needed to discourage overnight camping. SHDC parking wardens had visited the site on a few occasions to move campers on. However, KG informed all that the police can't move campers. The landowner [Strete Estate] through the agent Charles Dixon had been approached by SHDC to seek assistance and their views. They would need to be copied in/consulted on all decisions and correspondence. **The land is leased by SHDC from Strete Estate.**

Councillors discussed approaches which included the Parish Council keep onto SHDC as leaseholder for instance by passing on comments from the public, but also to acknowledge what RF had done. Publicity such as press might prompt the landowner into action. Another route might be to get a court order regarding a breach of byelaws.

Blackpool Sands was discussed and that they employed a warden after hours. IC observed that the access to Strete Gate was at multiple points and not through a single entry as at Blackpool Sands. GC said a warden needed to be on site to supervise the activity taking place for instance if people didn't have toilet facilities in their camper vans. This needs to be constant during the day. He felt this was SHDC's responsibility.

LN asked about music and whether the police would act. The Clerk said Environmental Health was the first point of contact and passed on some weblinks. GC felt the local police couldn't do anything but in a city they would attend. Parking was then discussed. GC stated the police can fine people for parking on the clearway if the person is there to have the notice served on them. It counts against licence points so the person must be served the notice.

IC informed all that the waste collection had been pretty prompt and they had worked weekends to clear away litter. He had thanked them when they turned up to do the clearing. GC asked if the two wheelie bins opposite the car park were public. KG informed him they were owned by the café. He established then that there were just two grey bins for the entire site. **Resolved: GC draft a letter/email to SHDC on the matter of litter etc at Strete Gate and circulate it to all for comment. The email would draw on that sent by Slapton Chairman recently to SHDC. KG will speak with Charles Dixon on this and copy him in on correspondence.**

#### 0820/15 UPDATE ON CONTRACTS

RC informed all the revised dates for the road sweep were now 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> August. **People would be notified by leaflet on car windscreens on Monday night.**

#### 0820/16 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

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

**KG (Chair) Playpark.** Reported on in 0820/8 and 0820/11.

**LN Transport and Roads.** The roads have been very busy. Giles Halliwell has been in touch with Lisa Edmonds as vehicles are still coming down his lane and getting stuck and then having difficulty getting out and one went into the wall at the edge of the road. Signage in this area has to be carefully considered.

**DR Health and Safety.** There is nothing to report on the defibrillator front. DR as snow warden had checked our salt supplies when the garage at the hall was being cleared out and sorted, and decided that there is no need to arrange for additional supplies to see us through this winter.

**IC Rights of Way, tree warden and Strete Gate. Strete Gate. Rights of Way. Rights of Way** have been trimmed/cut back to a degree and are being used thoroughly. As usual, not all dog-walkers/owners are as diligent about picking up "Doggies-Download" as others. Footpaths are being 'worn down' in places, and may need to be assessed in the late Autumn, when maybe the foot-traffic has eased a bit.

**Tree Warden.** The two trees in the "ex-pub garden" adjacent to the bus stop, were felled, as per requested permission. Plans to fell the Ash tree on the hedge below The Plat were discussed in the Public Forum.

**Strete Gate.** The usage of Strete Gate and surrounding area WILL be discussed at PC meeting on Thursday.

**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.** I issued a separate report regarding electric vehicles and public charging arrangements, following attendance at a DCC webinar on 22nd July. Otherwise nothing to report.

**The Kings Arms – renewal of the ACV.** The application for the ACV to be extended (including the car park) is still under consideration by SHDC. As noted already the Community Pub group has formed and has registered a community business name and intends to reopen the premises on a leased basis. SHDC has been kept up to date on the developments with the pub, and we should expect to hear the outcome shortly.

**Parish Benches.** Action is with IC to repair Old Hill seat. DR has obtained a quote from Phil Cruse for maintenance of the remainder, all as reviewed at the July meeting. GC informed the meeting that the two large benches [three or four seats] on the Village Green were maintained by Chris Ellis using money from The Captain Pearson Memorial Fund. It was decided the two benches were probably not owned by the Parish and so would be taken off the list of Parish Council inventory [and put on a separate list of general assets in the village]. **Resolved: PH will meet with Phil Cruse to ask him to amend his quote to take out two of the benches in the village green.**

The bus shelter quote was accepted in the sum of £282.60 inc of VAT. Under financial regulation 3.2.4 the quote was acceptable [this permits the Clerk to spend up to £500 on essential works]. **Resolved: The Clerk to contact P Cruse to confirm acceptance of the quote in the sum of £282.60 inc VAT. The Clerk to contact Chris Ellis to ask for a quote on the benches [as amended]. One other quote for benches is required under financial regulations.**

**GC Village Green** The village green is in good condition. GC expressed reservations about the contractor who has on a number of occasions submitted invoices for grass cutting work he has not done. The latest was in July 2020. The annual contract had ended so we have to consider whether to change who does the grass cutting or just to monitor his work very closely. GC asked about how to go about getting another contractor to deal with the grass cutting. Cuts are done on a needs basis either when the contractor thinks it needs to be done or GC contacts him. **Resolved: GC to ensure the contractor processes paperwork more efficiently, in accordance with actual work done. GC to enquire of Dartmouth Golf club if there is any spare capacity for their equipment to visit Strete.**

Chris Ellis has finally obtained a gate post, so now just has to find a slot in his schedule to fit it. GC had been given the name of a plant contractor who might be able to get Prideaux Lane back flat subject to suitable weather conditions and will follow it up. The Prideaux Lane barrier system is working OK according to users.

#### **0820/17 CORRESPONDENCE**

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

#### **0820/18 OTHER BUSINESS**

LN suggested a litter pick in the village sometime in September. She was unsure whether the equipment was available from SHDC at the moment. **Resolved LN look into a litter pick in September sometime. Probably after the 17<sup>th</sup> September when the Council next met.**

**0820/19 THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.00 PM. THE VENUE IS TO BE THE PARISH HALL SUBJECT TO PARISH HALL COMMITTEE CLEARANCE.**

**THE MEETING WAS CLOSED** at 9.20 p.m.