

STRETE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF STRETE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2023 IN
STRETE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT COUNCILLORS:

Peter Hales (Chairman), Kate Gill (KG), Helen Darch (HD), Ian Cumberlidge (IC), Ralph Clark (RC),
Graham Campbell (GC) and Laurel Lawford (LL)

Also in attendance: Hannah Iles (HI)

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Julian Brazil

No members of public present

DISTRICT COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Laurel Lawford

A new recycling schedule starts week commencing 20th November 2023, with new dates for grey bin collections which will continue to be on a fortnightly basis. As a result, some South Hams residents may experience a three week gap in collections as the new schedule is introduced (in fact Strete residents will all see a three week gap for the grey bin from Wednesday 7th to Wednesday 28th Nov, but most residents have received a letter explaining it). Problems can be reported on the SHDC website. SHDC appreciate feedback from residents. For residents living on private lanes, containers should be collected from the normal collection point but emails can be sent to the waste department to clarify.

Recycling and waste food collections remain on a weekly basis on Wednesdays in Strete.

SHDC now has a unified system for waste collection across the South Hams, with all residents using recycling containers rather than plastic bags for enhanced waste stream separation including glass, plus weekly recycling and food waste collections

Garden waste subscription (brown bin) collection days to stay the same except for four week break over Christmas. There is a roadshow to see the new vehicles for anyone who would like to attend.

A further meeting on the Slapton Line Partnership is due to be scheduled before Christmas.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Councillor absent - none received

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM:

No members of the public were present

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH OCTOBER 2023

These were agreed by the meeting and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting. The Chairman will consider any requests for the grant of dispensation to speak as appropriate.

HD declared an interest in Parish 24/25 budget consideration due to employment at SDHC. IC declared an interest in buddle hole maintenance on the PC budget, due to being employed to maintain the buddle holes.

3. PLANNING AND PLANNING MATTERS

Reference: 2957/23/HHO

Description: T1: Prunus – Crown height reduction by 2.15m and lateral reduction by 2.5m on all sides to inhibit growth into BT lines & over car park & T2: Prunus – Fell due to proximity of trunk to existing LPG tank

Site: Pipers Cottage

Address: Strete TQ6 0RS

IC had visited site and saw no problem in crown height or lateral reduction of T1. T2 is inches from a gas tank and rotten. The PC discussed the proposal and unanimously resolved to support this application.

4. FINANCE

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Current account balance as at today: | £12,690.10 |
| b) Reserve account as at today: | £11,770.84 |
| c) Monitoring/ spend to date | £19,879.00 |

The basic position is that the PC is overspent approximately £9873, but approximately £7403 is expected to come back in s106 grants money for the new roundabout in the childrens playground. The current account cash balance can withstand the temporary shortfall.

If grant money is received before the tax year end (31st March 24) a deficit of £2838 is currently forecast. £3705 shortfall was budgeted for, so this will be a better position than anticipated. However, there are 4 months still to go in the financial year and hence there is a degree of uncertainty on the final out-turn.

- d) Lloyds bank transfer update

HD read an email from Linda Fox (LF, previous Clerk) stating Lloyds have confirmed that they have received and are processing the application to provide the PC with online banking.

- e) HMRC Gateway

A cheque has been raised to cover the liability. LF is attempting to get a password from a previous clerk in order that the PC may have online access to HMRC.

- f) To approve payment of the following cheques. Invoices have previously been circulated.

C Ellis various strimming work (annual)	£210.00
Ian Cumberlidge (lengthsman)	£793.50
Ex Clerk six-month expenses April to October 2023	£273.87
Strete Parish Hall (October Hall Hire and 50% WiFi cost)	£78.75
Wreath for Manor Farm (awaiting invoice)	£25.00

Cheques were raised, signed and approved.

ACTION POINT: HD to check with LF if we can access HMRC gateway.

ACTION POINT: HD to confirm with Lloyds Bank that account is up and running and check access and then close the Natwest account and transfer balances.

5. SLAPTON LINE PARTNERSHIP

KG and GC attended meetings at Follaton House on 20th October and 3rd November. IC attended one of the meetings. The revised SLP strategy was approved on 3rd November after challenges put forward over wording were resolved. The strategy has moved from 'managed decline' to 'hold the line'. GC highlighted a lack of public knowledge amongst residents in the area regarding what is happening and pointed to a lack of focus on new updates on the SLP website, which are lost amongst historic information. PH asked for updates to continue to be recorded in Parish Council meeting minutes, added to the newsletter and published on the Strete website. GC also queried what has happened to the SLP adaptation manager role since the last incumbent left in the summer of 22. He does not believe that SHDC have re-advertised the role and as a result there is no one at SLP in a position to co-ordinate. No update on this was provided at either meeting, but a further SLP meeting has been promised before Christmas.

ACTION POINT: PH to contact Julian Brazil and LL outlining concerns about progress and asking them to intervene and influence moving this forward.

7. S106 LAND MATTERS

a) Play Park

S106 funding from Blindwells building project to be spent on village amenities has been partially allocated to a new roundabout in the Playpark. The Roundabout needs to be ordered by the PC, with delivery expected six weeks after order and fitted as soon as possible. All monies are claimable from SHDC covering the roundabout, rubber matting and delivery.

All councillors were in agreement to raise an order for the roundabout.

ACTION POINT: GC to request a pro forma invoice from the roundabout supplier and Clerk to raise order for councillors to sign-off at December meeting.

b) Blackbird Wood

Pam Wills has requested the PC to consider an annual funding allocation. Councillors noted that a grant of £250 was made this year from PC funds, plus about £5,000 from the s106 funding for the capital improvements. For next year a similar figure has been included in the draft PC budget.

Further maintenance is still needed. Matting needs to be removed and the gate repaired. The new gravel level makes it difficult to open the gate for access. Further to the last meeting, the cost of an additional dog waste bin has been included in the draft budget, but the PC is waiting for SHDC to confirm if they will empty it before proceeding.

c) Village Green

Footpath survey - deferred

8. PLAYPARK MAINTENANCE

A further Inspection had taken place. IC confirmed that work has been carried out as per his report.

9. ARCHIVING

KG has two books of vintage council meeting notes that will be archived in the locked filing cabinet.

10. ROAD SAFETY

- a) Offer of road safety training from Sgt Neil Powers has been advertised in Ralph's newsletter. No responses to date.
- b) SHDC offered to assist with flooded property, following the exceptional rainfall across the South Hams which led to flooding in some areas. No help has been needed or sought in Strete to the knowledge of the Parish Council.

11. CORPORATE STRATEGY

PH to complete and send to SHDC, circulating to all Parish Councillors. Thanks to HD for taking the time to draft some comments. Zoom session next week on the update to the strategy if anyone wishes to attend

12. PC BUDGET FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 – DETERMINE PROPOSED PRECEPT

Following the October meeting, the Chairman had circulated a second pass proposed budget 2024/2025 circulated to Councillors. The members present at the meeting carried out a line-by-line review of the draft, adjusting the provisions as they went. The Chairman explained that for comment purposes a notional draft precept increase had been set in the circulated budget, but this was adjustable depending upon the outcome of the discussions.

Notes:

Receipts:

- VAT claim-back figure was projected from 2023/24 budget.
- Receipts Include a grant application of £300 for the defibrillator from national fund (waiting to hear back).
- Other income of £500 assumes share of locality grants.

Payments:

Adjustments and clarifications were made to a number of elements including:

Clerk wages: figure presumes a further NJC wage increase in April 2024.

Audit fees & Insurance & Election Exps: RC challenged insurance fee prediction of 5% increase, suggested 20% more appropriate. Election fees (as advised by SHDC) needs to be added - HD listed what election fee covers. Central government send a grant for the Police and Crime Commissioner. RC did not agree that Parish Council should be re-charged election fees and it was suggested that he should take this up with SHDC (Andy Bates - Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, Drew Powell - Director of Strategy and Governance or Helen Jarvis - Election Manager).

Grants and donations: PH asked if anyone wished to challenge the proposed donations, which were proposed at the same level as this year. All Councillors were in agreement with the

proposed donations. In addition, a Kingsbridge based care charity had requested a donation - PH to share details with GC and discuss the validity of the request.

Playpark: RC queried grass mowing costs for playpark, grass needed to be mown more times this year than was budgeted for. PH will increase budget.

Village Green: Councillors agreed that current year spend for cutting village green was unduly high. No more than £2500 should be allocated.

Website compliance: increase to £140, to cover ICO payment in addition to site hosting

Outcome for the precept: With the adjustments discussed, the precept required to meet the expenditure would amount to a substantial increase on last year of about 25%. This would amount to about £1 more per household per month for a Band D property.

Councillors debated if this is acceptable. PH asked if donation amounts should be maintained at same level as previous year. It was decided that as the village were asked about donations and the Parish Council received a mandate for it in 23/24 donation amounts should stay the same. Due to the dire situation with capped local authority funding, it was noted that the Parish Council are paying for lots of items that are no longer covered by the district council, essentially shifting the burden out of capped district funds to un-capped Parish council costs. The Devon Association of Local Councils have been encouraging Parish Councils to re-think the traditional approach to setting Parish Precepts low, and the Parish and District Councils have both advocated greater local control of local services. PH will produce a third pass draft and recirculate numbers for further discussion and sign off at the December meeting.

13. CLERK VACANCY

The Chairman welcomed Hannah Iles from Stokenham to the meeting. Hannah has been appointed as the new Parish Clerk

14. November 13th ROAD CLOSURE A379 EAST CHARLETON + BUS SCHEDULE

Ongoing

15. ONGOING MATTERS IF NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

Village pump (historic site) maintenance. KG will look into.

16. CLERKS REPORT – None

17. CHAIRMANS REPORT – Appended

18. COUNCILLORS REPORTS - Appended

In addition to reports:

- IC received an email from resident who feels harassed by multiple neighbours regarding hedge height. There are no applicable covenants enforcing hedge height. HD will look at agreement but believes that it is out of the Parish Councils hands.
- RC sweeping planned for 5th December 2023
- HD announced carol concert on 19th December 2023 at St Michael's with refreshments

19. CORRESPONDENCE

Circulated electronically

20. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday December 21st at 7pm in the Village Hall

Strete Parish Council Chairman's report – November 2023 Peter Hales**Bus Services and Road Closures**

Some service 93 bus journeys through the village are currently diverted via Totnes Road due to the daytime closure of the A379 road at East Charleton for drainage works between 0900 and 15.30. A shuttle service is operating between Strete Kings Arms car park and Frogwell during these times. The work is scheduled to continue until Friday 8th December.

The Parish Council also has advance notice that the A379 through Stoke Fleming will be closed for three months from early January to allow for the rebuilding of the collapsed wall in the narrow area on the hill.

Also, the A379 road through Modbury will be closed for a similar period of time starting in January to allow for rebuilding of underground sewers in the main street there. These works were due to start in January 2023 but were postponed for 12 months.

Both of these road closures are likely to cause disruption to traffic movements in the area, particularly in respect of HGV deliveries. No details are currently available for bus arrangements during the closures.

The Park and Ride bus service at Dartmouth is now suspended for the winter and will re-open in March 24.

Slapton Line

Two meetings of the Slapton Line Partnership have taken place in the past month, on 20th October and 3rd November, both chaired by Anthony Mangnall MP. At the second meeting a revised management strategy document was adopted, marking a shift away from the previous policy of 'Managed Retreat' towards 'Hold the Line', a necessary pre-cursor for further defensive action and funding from local and National Government to maintain the A379 road across the Line. A new economic study has been presented by Consultant specialists at the behest of SHDC, and an updated Vulnerability Study is available from Plymouth University. The Parish Council holds copies of all these documents and associated correspondence and can provide copies for resident's information upon request – please ask any Parish Councillor.

There is nothing further to report regarding the re-location of the Slapton Line Memorial, however, the updated Vulnerability Study seems to suggest that there is no immediate credible threat to the present location. The area of the Line most at most immediate risk appears to be that which runs for about 400 metres opposite the Tank car Park at Torcross.

Remembrance Sunday

The Parish Council provided a commemorative wreath on behalf of the residents of Strete at the Service of Remembrance at St Michael's Church on Sunday 12th November.

Parish Clerk

Efforts continue to find a replacement Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer with advertisements in local retail premises and Parish Magazines. Two applicants have come forward and are being interviewed.

Ralph Clark PC Report – November 2023**Planning**

Nothing to report.

The Kings Arms

SCPL have appointed Jon Ward as General Manager following interviews with a number of applicants. The search for a chef continues.

Friday Bar Night Draw had three consecutive rollover weeks until Friday 10 th November when there was an £80 winner in the bar to pick up the winnings.

Strete Village Lunch on Thursday 26 th October was a huge success with 29 guests. This will be followed up with lunch on Thursday 16 th November with a new menu.

Strete Village Hall

There was no meeting on 2nd November due to Storm Cieran.

Christmas Market Coffee Morning on 11th November between 10:30am and 2:30pm was a success.

Village Sweeping and Road Works

Next village sweep will be in December.

Temporary traffic light control will be in place on the A379 near Seacliff Cottage, between Strete Village and Strete Gate, on 15 th November until 22 nd November for National Grid works. This could

cause delays as this is a narrow section of the road.

Daytime road closures are in place from 13 th November until 8 th December on the A379 in East Charleton for drainage road works. Diversions in place along with a temporary bus timetable.

Graham Campbell PC Report – November 2023**Playground**

We can order the roundabout and it will be delivered early in January. The Ellis's will unload roundabout from delivery lorry and deliver to field. Due to delays in their work schedules due to the bad weather they will not know exactly when they can do the fitting work, all being well in January if they catch up on the workload. GC has the S106 form filled in, ready to be signed by the chair at the meeting. Once delivery of roundabout has been made we can receive money from South Hams and can then pay the supplier. GC will arrange with Alexis at Shams the detail of this.

Slapton Line Partnership

Summary from meeting was circulated last week.

Village Field

Village field was cut as requested but grass is still growing.

Fuel Vouchers

Parishioners should be aware that there is availability of fuel vouchers at Citizens Advice and from Dartmoor Energy for those who are struggling to make ends meet. This can be between £100 and £300. Contact Citizens Advice by phone or in at drop in, in person on Tuesdays in Dartmouth, Flavel in the morning, Health and Well Being centre in afternoon.

Ian Cumberlidge PC Report – November 2023**Footpaths/ bridleways**

All very soggy at present, but fairly clear, and useable. A few posts have been replaced along the coastal path, but a couple more to do.

Stete Estate farm manager, is having a problem with dog-walkers NOT keeping their dogs on leads where there are livestock. Some folk do not realise that you are supposed to keep dogs on leads, where "stock" are present, and Brendan Spokes DID write a polite letter a while back, asking for walker's co-operation. I personally think that it's pretty thoughtless NOT abiding by this law, (and it IS the 'law'..!). A dog was allowed to stray into a field where there were 240 sheep this last week, & the sheep (+ manager" were "NOT amused"..! They are now a bit "spooked" and now try to escapethrough "diligent Electric fencing", since the incident.

Play Park

The ingress of grass/turf onto the swings & climbing frame areas has been cut back, and removed. The fixings on the skate-board ramp have been replaced, and the gates have their spring closers fitted. There is still a bit of woodwork to repair. Grass needs a cut, as it is STILL growing.

Strete Gate

Car park is fairly "Autumnal", i.e. leaves & pine needles everywhere, and a couple of branches had split in the gales, & were hanging down (now removed). SHDC are fairly good at carrying out a car park clean-up now & again, so this may happen soon.

Tree warden

To be reported at the meeting this evening.