

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 17th December 2020 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

Cllr Kate Gill (KG) (Chairman); 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); Mrs. Helen Darch {Clerk}.

PUBLIC FORUM

No Parishioners attended.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Devon County Council (DCC) had an end of year meeting last week and South Hams District Council (SHDC) held one today. JB has tabled a motion about children's Social workers as DCC has a high turnover of children's social workers. This is one reason DCC fails its OFSTED in respect of vulnerable children. DCC is still in Tier 2 so three households can meet up [*at the time of the meeting*]. He observed one reason why DCC is in Tier 2 is a lack of hospital amenities. This includes the Nightingale hospitals where there is a struggle to staff them. The Royal Devon and Exeter hospital is on its highest alert [OPEL 4] as it is close to capacity.

JB also touched on the road closure opposite the Old Byre booked for 23rd February to 1st March with a diversion route. The works are to instal a new water supply. *After the meeting JB sent the road closure notice to the Clerk and RC.* JB confirmed this is not a night closure. RC asked who decides if a closure is day or night. JB said we could make representations but DCC and contractors aren't keen on night closures in residential areas. He also appreciated the Hynetown road would be busy that week. The official diversion is round by Totnes Cross. The reason for this route is any lorries that use the A road will not be able to travel via Strete.

GC touched on the road closure at Stokenham booked to start 11th January for around six weeks which the Clerk had passed on that day. The works were to replace a collapsed retaining wall. GC thought the six weeks closure was excessive. JB promised to visit the site on the first day of works and ask for more information. He said it would probably take a week but the contractor needed to build in some leeway. He also suggested the councillors could speak to the contractor as well by way of being parish councillors.

JB forewarned councillors that there will be a series of works along the A379 toward Kingsbridge in March 2021. These include works along the bottom of Coleridge Lane [2 weeks], and extra water at Langholm which might take a week [last house out of Chillington].

RC brought up the potholes on the Totnes Road by Blackwell Cross which DCC Highways averred were not on the highway. The Clerk had asked Stoke Fleming PC if they could deal with it but they said it wasn't on their list. JB confirmed if it wasn't on the highway DCC wouldn't deal with it. He suggested to get some bags of cold tarmac and patch it ourselves. IC offered to have a word with the landowner and see if anything might come out of that.

GC asked for an update on the Public Space Protection Order [PSPO] discussed at the last meeting. The Clerk noted Strete was to confirm with Steve Mullineaux of SHDC that we wanted to go ahead with the PSPO. RC asked what was happening with the Monument and plans to move it. JB had spoken with Alan Denbigh of the Slapton Line Partnership and Peter Chamberlain [DCC Highways engineer] and there was no progress from March. He will pass on any updates to the Clerk. KG confirmed the grant monies [£44k] were still available.

Finally, JB informed all that Richard Foss had family circumstances which meant he was indisposed and JB would be happy to deal with district matters. He then wished everyone a happy Christmas. **The report was received.**

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The District Councillor was absent so no report was given.

1220/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19 November 2020

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

1220/3 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. PH declared an interest in Blindwells [2954/20/VAR] if this was to be discussed.

1220/4 PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS

RC updated the meeting on a complaint which had been submitted to SHDC by the Parish Council on the matter of 24 Start Bay Park. SHDC had not responded by a promised date of 30th November and RC has reminded them a response is owed. The application for Blindwells [2954/20/VAR], which the Parish Council had objected to, was still undecided and RC would ask JB and RF if they could be involved in any decision on this application. Councillors were keeping an eye on the application and noted the applicant had resubmitted minor drawings at the request of the planners. RC observed there appeared to be no notes on any discussions between the planning department and the applicant on record. RC suggested the Clerk contact the planners to find out what is going on. **Resolved the Clerk contact Jacqueline Houslander to confirm the status of this application.**

1220/5(a) FINANCE

Two cheques were listed for payment and invoices sent to all Councillors before the meeting. An additional cheque, 1750, was added to the list of payments at the meeting and approved.

1748 – Clerk salary December £261.	1749 - Clerk for printer supplies for parish printer £50.98 plus VAT.
1750 – Mr R Clark £36.16 plus VAT for printing and stationery toward Neighbourhood Plan.	

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

1220/5(b) FINANCE

A monitoring report for 2020/21 had been circulated already along with a cashflow projection to the end of March 2020 of CR6,333.20. The Clerk brought up changes in the revised budget for the bench contract [now £663 in 2020/21] and Carbon Neutral initiatives of £1,250 taken to 2021/22. IC noted there might be more work on the buddle holes in January and February mainly the Totnes Road. He asked for more budget [£170 left to spend out of £650]. The Clerk suggested unspent monies from the Greenspace contract [£203.80] could be moved to the buddle holes. **Resolved the monitoring statements would be put on the website.**

1220/5(c) FINANCE

Cash at bank – £9,537.96CR Current account at 08/12/20, £10,297.82CR Business Reserve account at 08/12/20.

1220/5(d) FINANCE

To set the precept for 2021/22. The Clerk outlined underspends in 2020/21 which could be carried forward to the next year so it would be possible to build up cash reserves to the start of 2021/22, requiring a lower precept. **Savings at December 2020** at that point included an underspend on the Greenspace contract [around £200], and on the playpark [possibly £700]. The Climate Emergency budget of £1,250 was put back to 2021/22.

RC thought it wouldn't be popular for the parish to set a high precept. PH reminded councillors that he objected to an increase on the precept last year and also this year as people are hard up and under pressure. Maybe a cost-of-living increase would do. 1% [CPI/RPI Sept 20] according to the Clerk would give £130 on £13,000. RC thought with COVID the Council had an obligation to act responsibly. The Clerk advised some increase by way of little and often so there was some headroom in case of an emergency. She suggested £500 in her report as a half-way between £13k and £14k as the parish is doing works.

PH thought £10k in reserves was enough as the Council had not drawn on its reserves in 2020/21. The Clerk said the current year was unusual but in normal years the Council would spend more and had drawn on its reserves in recent years. DCC in John Hart's budget briefing on 14th December said parishes should take on more duties.

RC noted when he joined as a councillor reserves had been over £20k and were spent over time on projects. IC asked about a parish referendum. The Clerk explained that the government revisited this legislation annually and it

could be enacted at some point whereby parishioners could vote out a precept if it was too high. IC thought a little increase would be acceptable.

Another option is to seek grant funding especially if the Council is dealing with more highways matters. PH moved for a cost-of-living increase of 1%. LN asked confirmation of what the increase would be in tax-terms. 1% would be £13,130 or £45.78 on a Band D charge payer compared with £44.75 in 2020/21. Councillors voted in favour of £13,130 though IC thought it could be a bit higher. PH asked about the 2021/22 draft budget figure for the Playpark and the Clerk explained what this comprised. **Resolved: The Parish council set the precept for 2021/22 as £13,130 which is an increase of 1% on the precept for 2020/21.**

1220/6 CLERK'S REPORT

Report submitted before the meeting. Unused bus shelter roofing. Phil Cruse has some unused roofing from the bus shelter works. **DR confirmed he had the materials in safe storage.**

Avian flu. New regulations received November 12th from DEFRA through DCC concern keeping poultry birds indoors because of Avian flu. These have been sent to farmers and others to take note. **This was noted.**

Loan for purchase of Rose Cottage. In November [Minute 1120/12] RC asked the Council to research financing options for Rose Cottage; for sale by Heavitree for £225,000. It was resolved the Clerk would report back. The Clerk reported that the UK government recently forbade local authorities from borrowing from the PWLB [Public Works Loan Board] for property investment. An article in the Financial Times [25/11/20] gives reasons which include high levels of Council indebtedness and vulnerability to a downturn in the property market. **This was noted.**

Public Space Protection Order. It was resolved the Clerk contact Steve Mullineaux to arrange a conference call to put in place a PSPO.

Memorial tree. The Clerk has received correspondence from a parishioner on the Village Green and its status. She passed this on with the Management Agreement to DCC to obtain advice on planting a tree as the landowner. The Clerk and GC are dealing with this. The Clerk asked if there was a particular deadline to obtain a tree and arrange its planting. She was informed this could be flexible but she would continue to chase DCC. **This was noted.**

Coronavirus updates. After the last lockdown Devon was placed in Tier 2. The DCC website continues to update and inform on local Coronavirus matters. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/coronavirus-data/>. **The report was received.**

1220/7 CHAIR'S REPORT

Report submitted before the meeting. Chair's Report Strete Parish Council 17.12.20

Coronavirus –The current government slogan remains - HANDS – FACE – SPACE, however with the lifting of lockdown and the freedom to mingle during the Christmas days we are being urged to dare I say it -RISK ASSESS and STAY ALERT. With a Covid variant in our midst it is even more important that we take extra care.

Christmas. Please excuse a personal aside. Half my close family live in Exeter and would normally come to stay with me. This Christmas we will be meeting for Lunch only – for a picnic of festive goodies with extra bits, in our own vehicles. No guesses who is doing the cooking! Even though we are allowed to have 3 households meeting; it makes sense to me that we should stay apart. My daughter is a community psychiatric nurse who might at short notice be called in to work at the Nightingale Hospital. She also has children who attend Exeter College.

The South Hams has been very fortunate to have a very low rate of cases. Please let us all keep it that way!

Strete Gate and Slapton Line. Strete. The kiosk has applied for an events licence which has been granted. It will run from 20th Dec through to 27th Dec - less Christmas Day. The same Covid rules and regulations will apply to them as any other establishment serving alcohol with food.

Torcross. As you know the weather has been rather wet. It has caused serious problems with the Ley flooding at Torcross. Today the flooding near Prideaux House has been so high that the water has been two thirds across the road. The extra water has backed up so badly that massive tankers have been pumping out the tanks etc in/from the old Torcross Hotel car park. The tankers have been working under the jurisdiction of SWW.

The normal solution has not been available i.e., a digger to excavate the shingle from the tunnel; from the Ley to the sea. The reason is the digger has apparently not been able to access the entrance to the tunnel because of the

absence of shingle in the right place. The Field Studies Centre/Council are now organising the unblocking of the tunnel with work starting tomorrow 17th December.

Play Park. The moles are seemingly having a big Christmas party! This month we have had the usual inspection by Helen Hardwicke, this time complete with some photographs. I have examined the equipment extra thoroughly. Her photographs mostly show superficial problems with regard to patches of 'soft' wood which require relatively minor attention to preserve the main body of the structure.

The large stump of wood – part of the chain walk (at the field end) is wobbly and could simply be removed with the hole filled with earth to match the other end. Some new studs are required for the skate ramp – this again does not require immediate attention – it is simple maintenance. The picnic table also has some minor soft patches on one of the top planks. GC asked if IC, KG and himself would meet to inspect the playpark. **The Clerk offered to send the monthly localities report to GC so he could see what the state of the equipment was. KG then offered to meet with IC and GC to get round and inspect the playpark.**

Kings Arms. Open Wednesday to Saturday 5pm until 9pm Sundays 12 until 4pm. Order at 07742 473 266 or <https://kastrete.touchtakeaway.net> Cards or Cash accepted. Please enquire about Christmas opening times and menu using the above email address or telephone number. The Strete Village Christmas Draw in aid of the Parish Hall will take place at the pub on Friday 18th December 2020. **The Chair's report was received.**

1220/8 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

A report was submitted prior to the meeting.
Neighbourhood Plan Report – December 2020

The regulation statutory six-week consultation for the Revised Strete Neighbourhood Plan concluded on Monday 30/11/2020. One comment was raised by a resident in the community who was looking for up to date versions of the SEA/Environmental Report and the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Submission Version 2020 of the NP. As required under the regulations any response to comments that may be required, at this stage of the NP process, is dealt with by SHDC.

SHDC's response to the comment received was as follows: -

'Your comments have been added to the Regulation 16 responses that will be passed to the Examiner who will consider Strete Neighbourhood Plan.

As you are aware the Strete NP is currently subject of a second round of Regulation 16 consultation since the NP has been amended to remove the allocation for housing development originally proposed on the Cox's Farm Field site (Policy SNP 8).

Furthermore, the settlement boundary has been redrawn more tightly into the settlement in recognition of the removal of the Cox's Farm Field allocations. Both of these alterations reduce the environmental impact that would result from the NP. As such it was not considered necessary to revise the SEA or indeed carry out a new SEA since if the NP had originally contained these amendments then a SEA would not have been required.

HRA was not required in any event for the originally submitted NP and is not required for the version currently being consulted upon. Similarly, the amendments included in the current NP reduce any Sustainability issues that may arise from the NP. '

It was not, therefore, considered necessary to revisit the sustainability aspects of the NP. On 09/12/2020 SHDC advised that the NP had been submitted for a delegated decision with a request for responses by Wednesday 16/12/2020. Assuming responses are received as requested, SHDC have advised that all applicable documentation will then be forwarded to the Examiner (Deborah McCann) on Thursday 17/12/2020 with a request to start the Examination. It is anticipated that examination will commence soon after the Christmas Holidays in January 2021. This is two years after the initial examination started.

Email confirmation was received from Duncan Smith at SHDC that the delegated aspect has been passed through and he was sending all the information on to the examiner [Deborah McCann]. RC hopes to hear soon [around Christmas] what the timetable will be. He thought as the examiner had seen most of the plan previously and amendments requested had been included the hope was the plan would be passed through quickly and the recommendation for a referendum. Once the examiner does the recommendation then this confers 'almost' 100% weighting in future planning applications. **The NP report was received.**

1220/9 UPDATES ON PREVIOUS AGENDA ITEMS.

No updates were received. Strete Gate, the playpark and the memorial tree are dealt with elsewhere.

1220/10 UPDATE ON CONTRACTS

Report received before the meeting. PH presented a report on a contract to let for doing works to the benches and picnic tables in the parish. This follows an earlier report into the state of the benches and picnic tables in the parish at the June meeting and subsequent updates. Three quotes had been received as required under financial regulations and details were provided in the report. PH recommended the contract be let to Chris Ellis who had submitted the lowest price and on the basis of the work being completed by the end of April. The total cost quoted of £1,326 including variations would be split equally across two financial years to aid cashflow: booked as 50% in March and 50% in April. RC asked about the £200 provision [variation] for Sadolin added into the cheapest quote. PH explained this was in case of extra treatment needed for the benches. However, it did not change the decision on which contract to approve as the cheapest contract price of £1,326 remained below the next cheapest quote of £1,681. GC confirmed that he would deal with the bench/picnic table in the playpark which was £59.50 in the cheapest quote. IC asked what material was being used on the benches. PH confirmed it was Sadolin [external wood stain]. GC said Sadolin was unsuitable in the playpark because it had a 'slippy' texture. He would use wood preservative instead. **It was resolved to let the contract for works to Chris Ellis in the sum of £1,326 as stated less £59.50 for one bench to be done by GC.**

1220/11 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

KG (Chair) Playpark. Reported in 1220/7.

LN Transport and Roads. LN had been away since the end of November so she didn't have a report. Some trees down by Asherne/ Old Byre had been felled. IC had visited the site and reported back. An ash had been taken down from the end of the copse which belonged to Roger Sinnott. According to another tree surgeon the tree had been ailing. IC observed in general ash trees were being taken down as if it were 'open season'.

Trees down at Strete Gate were raised again after last month. IC commented that any ash tree that might impinge on the highway down there had been cut down. GC mentioned the number of ash trees being felled at the moment on the highway. LN explained that landowners had to do tree surveys and if trees were brittle [as ash can be] they would have to be cut in case something happened, which led to an insurance claim. The Clerk confirmed that Philip Knight had cut his hedges.

DR Health and Safety. All is quiet on the defibrillator front with regular checking of the site and follow up reports logged with S W Ambulance. This is necessary so first responders know the defibrillator is available and where it is. During the next week, DR will visit all the salt bins to access their contents and replace where necessary.

IC Rights of Way, tree warden and Strete Gate. IC reported verbally. The Rights of Way are in a good state. Strete Gate carpark has been cleared of growth and brambles ready for the spring. The fence at the carpark which belongs to SHDC has come down in places and it needs to be replaced. IC informed Adrian Dayment of this as he has cows pastured there which could stray into the carpark. IC wondered if the open licence [seven days] at the coffee shop down at Strete Gate was advisable especially under COVID restrictions. KG noted the licence had to comply with the rules for restaurants and takeaways. GC commented that people were being 'COVID-aware' when they queued down there.

RC Planning and Neighbourhood Plan. The latest planning proposals in a white paper 'Planning for the Future' were objected to by MPs and the government was now revisiting the drafting of the paper.

PH The VAS sign and local transport liaison. VAS Monitoring. Nothing to report. Operation continues at the Totnes Road location. **Local transport liaison.** Bus timetables have been issued for Christmas and have been published on the website. Nothing new to report.

Climate Change Emergency. Devon Carbon Plan. PH attended the webinar launch event for the public consultation stage of the Devon Carbon Plan on 8th December. The Plan will consider the earliest, credible date which should be set for net-zero emissions, together with the recommended ways to get there. All citizens are encouraged to become involved during the public consultation.

At Councillor Hart's budget setting consultation webinar for South Hams on Monday 14th December PH asked what proportion of the 21/22 budget had been assigned towards dealing with Climate Change initiatives. Cllr Hart was unable to give an answer and spoke in generalities about how they had seed-funded the group to Develop the Devon Carbon Plan in the current budget, Cllr Hart said he would get back to PH. He also noted SHDC was offering budget monies toward climate change initiatives in 2021/22 and wondered what detail of this was. PH offered to

continue to research grant funding toward climate initiatives as there is £1,250 lodged in 2021/22. He observed the Pub could instal a charger but without grant money available at the moment.

Strete Residents EV Survey. Results from the survey were analysed and a commentary was distributed to Councillors at the November meeting. The following action items were proposed based upon the responses received:

- 1. Maintain a watching brief on the development of the public charging infrastructure in the local towns of Kingsbridge, Totnes and Dartmouth.** Schemes have been announced but have not yet been implemented. Status – ongoing.
- 2. Maintain a watching brief on the availability of grant monies to support rural charging infrastructure.** Status – ongoing. As discussed in the November meeting it is highly likely that additional public funding will be made available in the coming months for charging infrastructure if national Climate Change targets are to be achieved.
- 3. Insert a provision of £1250 into the Budget for the 2021/22 financial year to fund a public charging facility, with an intention of having it up and running by the end of Q1 2022.** Status – briefly discussed at the November meeting. Timing is crucial - we need to have budgeted funds available to take advantage of grant matching opportunities.
- 4. Suggest to Strete Community Pub Limited that a business case for the acquisition of a public fast Charging Unit should be carried out, with a view to it being located in the Kings Arms car park and operated as a revenue stream for the pub.** The business case should take into account the benefit of any future grant subsidies which might be announced which would help to make the venture viable (no subsidy is currently available). Status – ongoing discussion. However, enquiries to date indicate that grant money is not currently available to support this if a revenue stream is to be provided. Continued research required.
- 5. Share our survey and results with local neighbouring Parishes and look for synergies in approach.** Status – ongoing.
- 6. Provide a facilitation service to offer a conversation between prospective BEV purchasers and existing owners,** with the aim of providing education about electric vehicles allaying fears about investing in this new technology. Status – available upon request (PH).
- 7. On a wider Climate Emergency point, carry out similar resident surveys aimed at raising the awareness of the availability of new technologies with grant subsidies,** for example the phase-out of oil and gas fired boiler systems and their replacement with ground and air source heat exchangers, the widespread availability of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) schemes for heating and power and the availability of home insulation schemes. The PC could play a major role in assisting DCC and SHDC to achieve the aims of their Climate Challenge Declaration. Status – to be discussed further as part of our response to the climate change emergency. There needs to be wider publicity in the village of the green initiatives being promoted by Devon CC e.g., the recent collective purchasing scheme for Solar photovoltaic panels, and the shift towards heat pumps as a source of home heating, with grants available.

Parish Benches and picnic tables. Discussed in 1220/10.

GC Village Green. Very little to report. Greenspace are sending a credit note for the cut they missed. They hope to do a final cut for the year as soon as it is dry enough. GC has fixed a substantial post to restrict vehicles from bypassing the barrier in Prideaux Lane. **Reports were received.**

1220/12 CORRESPONDENCE

Minor Injuries Unit. GC reported on the outcome of the open letter to the local NHS trusts, local MP and the Clinical Consulting Group (CCG) on the subject of the closure of local minor injuries units [1120/13]. He noted Teignmouth Hospital may be reprieved as the CCG had failed to consult adequately. **This was noted.**

1220/13 OTHER BUSINESS

GC informed the meeting the CAB has an energy support system in place accessed by telephone or at Townstal Community Centre on Fridays. This will provide an energy analysis with aid for inefficient energy systems. In the short term the CAB can authorise fuel vouchers. GC asked for this to be communicated. Kingsbridge Foodbank also offer to top up vouchers and charge electricity keys. **This was noted.**

1220/14 THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY 2020 AT 7.00 PM. THE VENUE IS LIKELY TO BE ON ZOOM UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED. THE MEETING WAS CLOSED at 8.15 p.m.