

STOKE FERRY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on
Wednesday 3 March 2021 at 7.05 pm, Virtually online via Zoom

Present:

Cllr Sue Lintern (Chair)

Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Stuart Collins

Cllr Andrew Hayward

Cllr Gail Reeve

Cllr Janet Taylor (From Item 44/21 – 60/21)

Cllr Trudy Mann

Cllr Donna Stocking

Helen Richardson (Parish Clerk and Financial Responsible Person)

Also, in Attendance

Public – 15

Cllr Martin Storey, Norfolk County Council

Cllr Colin Sampson, BCKLWN

Stephen Ward, Chair and Alan Lury of the Bluebell Pub Campaign

41/21 Openness and Transparency Notice

The Chair read the notice.

42/21 Aggressive and Abusive Behaviour

The Chair read the notice.

43/21 To Receive and Consider Acceptance for Apologies of Absence

There were none.

44/21 To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members

It was noted that Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey; Cllr Sue Lintern; Cllr Janet Taylor; Cllr Stuart Collins; Cllr Trudy Mann and Cllr Andy Hayward had received dispensations regarding the Blue Bell at item 47/21 and 48/21 where shares had been open to the whole community had been purchased. Though expressed during item 48/21, it was noted that Cllr Trudy Mann shared a declaration of interest in regard to this item being regarding a land issue and noted on the minutes under this item and would abstain.

45/21 To Approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 3 February 2021 and matters arising (Clerk's report)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 3 February 2021 be approved. (Cllr Andrew Hayward proposed, Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey seconded, all were in favour, one abstained as they had lost connection throughout the February meeting).

Clerk's Report (Matters Arising)

Buckenham Drive Land Transfer – The Clerk had discussed with a BCKLWN officer who advised that they would chase up the Property Department mid-January. The Clerk has it on her action list to chase up again in March if nothing heard.

2Agriculture Mill – The Council awaited responses in regard to a Mill Liaison Committee meeting date and noise survey from the Mill as promised. The Council also awaited an update from the Breckland District Council Planning Officer dealing

with the Mill's application in Snetterton as it has slipped past the determination date of 22 February 2021. Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey reminded the Council that the BCKLWN had advised that the Committee meeting was an essential way to keep the village up to date as the Mill progressed their plans and the last meeting had been held in August 2020. He shared that the noise report by the Environment Agency who license them had included various actions required by 2Agriculture to undertake because of environmental noise nuisance. Cllr Colin Sampson agreed to email the Mill on behalf of the Parish Council to try and escalate the fact that a response was required on these matters as well as getting in touch with representatives at Breckland District Council.

Parish Partnership Fund – The Clerk emailed Norfolk County Council the invoice for the perch bench in the St Margaret's Hill bus stop to apply for a refund of 50% of the costs minus VAT and will monitor until funds received.

Planning Applications February PC meeting – The Clerk emailed the two objections on two different applications received for consultation at the February Parish Council meeting to the Planning Department on 10 February and asked to be kept up to date. No further information has been received to date. The Clerk copied in Cllr Colin Sampson to the responses when they were sent.

Internal Auditor 202122 Accounts – The Clerk confirmed this work with the Internal Auditor after the February meeting.

Grounds Maintenance Contract – The contractor confirmed the contract with the Clerk after the February meeting where it was approved.

Extension of Regulations for Online Meetings – The Clerk emailed Elizabeth Truss MP to convey on behalf of the Parish Council the views around the need to extend the online meeting regulations for Councils beyond 7th May 2021 and further updates will be awaited on this matter.

Action Sheet – The Clerk emailed the Council an updated Action Sheet on 16 February, one item carried over and anything new will be presented post 1st April for approval.

Village Signs – Wretton PC advised the Clerk that the signs and permissions were that of NCC to grant in order to place a Stoke Ferry Sign on the reverse of the Wretton one on Wretton Road. The Clerk received approval from the Senior Highways Manager to place a Stoke Ferry Sign on the reverse using existing posts. The Clerk will therefore purchase four signs as agreed. The Clerk has chased Highways up for a date to install the remaining gates for Furlong Drove, but this has likely been affected by covid working arrangements.

Planning Applications Decisions Received.

21/00015/TREECA Stoke Ferry Hawthorn Lodge 10 Bridge Road Stoke Ferry King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 9TB - T1 Silver Birch - Crown reduction by 1/3rd and removal of one limb crossing through the centre of the crown. Tree Application - No objection

Cyber Crime Webinar – A summary was added into the village pump and the website on combatting cybercrime.

46/21 To Adjourn the meeting to allow for public comments (in accordance with standing order 3(j) and 3 (k) item shall not exceed 15 minutes).

The Chair adjourned the meeting and reconvened at its conclusion.

47/21 To Receive an update on the Bluebell Campaign.

The Chair of the Bluebell Campaign Stephen Ward attended to provide an update as follows:

- There had been much progress in the past year.
- They had run a survey at the beginning of the project to seek support for the pub and 90% of those who responded were in support of a community pub.
- The campaign group developed a business plan that looked to run the Bluebell as 'more than a pub' facility and to be a true community asset based on what the village said it wanted through the survey.
- The pub would have a positive impact on other businesses locally.
- The events last year gave people a taste of what a village pub could do and provided more indications of the public's views since the survey conducted last March.
- In March 2020 153 took part in the survey at that time, the latest survey conducted in February 2021 shows 252 have responded. This number is close the numbers who engage in Parish council elections and is a good bar to attain.
- Press interest had raised the profile of Stoke Ferry in a positive way.
- There was lots of support from local business, the village shop who raised £105 for the campaign, including Tesco's and Morrison's in Downham Market who are collecting prizes for the Easter egg hunt.
- The campaign had engaged with the community amid the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The business plan key fund The Plunkett foundation who run the 'more than a pub' campaign have provided lots of good feedback to the campaign and have funded £100k towards the £280k needed.
- The share standard was created and rolled out which raised £115k in share sales, but there has been a need to secure zero interest loans from locals who want the bluebell to succeed.
- Those who had bought shares in the pub would not make any money as an investment, though there would be dividends in due course these would not be in next three years. Those who have purchased shares have taken steps to support the community.
- The campaign has tradesmen coming forward, a management committee and more volunteers coming forward to help all the time.
- The owners have agreed to sell the pub to the campaign group and the legal process was now underway.
- The campaign group recently discovered flooding from the heating system in the loft, and they were in conversation with the owners on how to deal with the issue. The plan has always involved stripping the walls, rewiring and redecoration etc.

48/21 To Consider/Approve a Request for Grant Funding from the Bluebell Campaign Group

The Chair of the Campaign advised that a report had been issued to the Council in application for a grant of £10k which included results from a recent survey they had carried out with the village, there had been a note on the background to the request for a grant published online. He shared that the Government had been very clear in the recent budget statement that pubs and community centres were at the centre of their budgeting and they were making funds to support these, though they were not available to the Bluebell fund specifically as would not be available until the summer. He shared that the investment of £250k transposed into a commitment to bring people together and the campaign group were looking to request £10k from the Stoke Ferry Parish Council which was just 3.6% of the overall start-up cost to get the Bluebell up and running.

The Chair of the Campaign advised that the group could seek additional borrowing for the gap, however borrowing had to be paid back, even with zero interest, so that would limit the services to the village if they must cover these costs in the short or long term. He shared that the grant would therefore reduce the borrowing need and increase the cashflow available to plough back into the community.

The Chair of the Campaign Group shared that 81% taking part in the February 2021 survey supported the grant, and there had been an overwhelming response, and though you could say people could have completed the survey in twice, this could have happened whether you were for or against the project. It was not possible to vote twice online as the survey indicated if you had already submitted your response.

The Chair of the Campaign Group shared that if the Parish Council supported the request for a grant of £10k it would help the project in the most practical way to assist with the opening, and as a result the rebuilding of the village and the local economy. A monthly update on the project would continue to be provided to the Parish Council. He added that there would be members meetings ongoing where all shareholders were invited, including an AGM in the next six months to present the accounts and elect a management committee. He shared that this mechanism was transparent, and a community benefit society constitution was very strict, for example, some aspects covered specifically what surpluses could be spent; if the business had to fold and what happened to assets etc. This is also noted in the share prospectus. He shared that any project had its objectives and risks, and the Bluebell was in a strong position with a business plan that was supported by the 'more than a pub' scheme and showed the impact it would have on the community. He lastly shared that the support offered by the Parish Council would speak volumes for other funds they had and might receive in the faith from local leaders.

The Chair of the Parish Council wished to state that there had been a lot of speculation about the grant fund the Parish Council had received totalling £10k from the BCKLWN, but she wished to make it clear when this was received last August 2020 by the Parish Council, the criteria was very simple, you had to be a business or entitled to rural rate relief as of the 11 March 2020, and the Parish Council have checked and double checked the criteria of the fund with a senior member of staff from the Revenues and Benefits Team at the BCKLWN who confirmed in a recent email that there was no requirement to return any of the £10k if not spent and there was no specific requirement on how to spend the grant. The Chair advised that this therefore was not money raised through the Stoke Ferry precept or tax and was an additional windfall

and lump sum that many other businesses and Parish Council's had received with a rateable business in 2020. The Chair of the Parish Council also wished to clarify that there were no 'secret business people' that were going to benefit from this project, and that the Bluebell Campaign Group were a community benefit group, as described in their prospectus on page 9 where it states this fact.

The Chair of the Parish Council clarified that the survey by the Campaign Group was sent to every household in the village as well as being online, and this was a survey not a referendum and was an indication of how the village felt about the project. She further added that this was a normal process for any grant application, and it was usual for the grant applicant to provide evidence of their request to a grant giver, and it was not the grant provider's responsibility to search out the evidence to prove their worth for funding, and this needs to be understood and clear due to the incorrect statements on social media that had recently been shared within the public domain.

The Councillors shared the following:

- This project drew attention to the community, and it was important for the Parish Council to be supportive of community groups.
- The Parish Council £10k received in August 2020 was an ideal grant to be used for a community pub.
- Stephen Ward's conduct in leading the campaign group had been done with much integrity.
- The opening of a community pub would be a good solution in post covid recovery as it benefits the whole community and surfed the wave of community spirit that has resulted from this project and had been lacking for so long.
- The Parish Council could invest £10k in many different projects but they would not provide the good result and payback that it could provide to the community.
- The report provided by the campaign group had been put together very well and had helped the Parish Council greatly in making this decision of grant funding.
- It was noted that a member of the public had written to the Council in support of the grant, as well as those who had attended the meeting to express their support for the campaign earlier in the meeting under public participation.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £10k be approved to the Bluebell Pub Campaign. (Cllr Sue Lintern proposed, Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey seconded, six were in favour and two abstained one due to a land issue and another for personal reasons.)

The Chair of the Campaign Group thanked the Council for their faith in them and for the generous grant being awarded.

49/21 To Receive a Neighbourhood Planning Working Group Update

Cllr Andy Hayward shared an update as follows:

- Version four of draft policies has been completed and was awaiting feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.
- Non heritage assets had been discussed.

- They had been listing the historic walls and milestones around the village and if anyone had anything of interest to let them know.
- The Character appraisal was now complete, and documents were being put together in support of the neighbourhood plan.
- The project had been awarded the full grant funding for design codes at £5k by Locality and was to be paid directly to AECOM who advise the group.
- Consultants that had been contracted for the project had put invoices in to be paid out of this years' funding and any money not spent by end of March 2021 would need to be returned to Groundwork UK. The Neighbourhood Working Group would then be reapplying for funding early April and this would be the third time they had applied for funding to cover the project.
- The Draft Neighbourhood Plan is aiming to be ready by July 2021.
- In quarter 2 there will be a public consultation and the group would need input from people who live in the village to complete the neighbourhood plan. Input from the people in the village would help as far as non-designated heritage assets which are things that some see as important, but others might not see that as being the case, so there was a need for more people to share their opinions.
- Any land bequeathed and green space is incorporated into the plan.
- The Stoke Ferry Neighbourhood Plan has a website, and a link was available from the Stoke Ferry Parish Council website.
- The Neighbourhood Working Group would submit the draft plan to the BCKLWN for comments.

50/21 To Discuss/Approve Receiving the Limehouse Common as Parish Council Land

The Rights of Way Officer directed the Council to the Legal Orders Team at Norfolk Council for advice and shared that Common Land also comes under Natural England. It can be sold on or placed within a Will, but the right for people to use the common would remain forever. There were currently no rights for grazing animals, and the land was protected from development. Although it is registered as common land the owner could fence off a portion but must still allow the public to have a right of access across most of it. The landowner could grant access to vehicles if they wanted to, that was the landowner's decision.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council agree to progress the acceptance of the gift of the Common Land from the current owner, unless there should be costs or substantial obstacles that occur as a result. (Cllr Sue Lintern proposed, Cllr Janet Stocking seconded, all were in favour.)

51/21 To Discuss/Approve a Parish Council Memorial Bench Policy – Stoke Ferry Cemetery

The Parish Clerk shared that it would be ideal for the Parish Council to have a policy and plan regarding any requests received for memorial benches within the Stoke Ferry Parish Council as standard.

Cllr Trudy Mann agreed to draft a plan of possible placements in the cemetery and the Clerk agreed to draft a policy for approval.

RESOLVED: That a Memorial Cemetery Bench Policy and Placement plan be drafted for approval. (Cllr Donna Stocking proposed, Cllr Andrew Hayward seconded, all were in favour.)

52/21 To Approve Amendments to the Cemetery Management Policy

The Clerk circulated amendments to page 3 and 11, the Council's had no comments.

RESOLVED: That the amendments presented within the Cemetery Management Policy be approved. (Cllr Trudy Mann proposed, Cllr Janet Stocking seconded, all were in favour.)

53/21 To Consider/Approve a Planning Application Received for Parish Council Consultation: 21/00194/F Demolition of rear porch, erection of single-storey rear extension and first-floor side extension. At 10 Oxborough Road Stoke Ferry King's Lynn Norfolk PE33 9TA

The Parish Council noted that the Environment Officer had mentioned within the information available on the public online portal that it was not in keeping with the area, though it had no other comments.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved along with the planning officer recommendation as detailed within the online portal. (Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey proposed, Cllr Andrew Hayward seconded, all were in favour)

54/21 To Approve the Annual Review of the Risk Management Scheme YE 2022

The Clerk agreed to amend the reconciliation item to include mitigation being Scribe Accounts software. The Council had no other comments or amends.

RESOLVED: That the Risk Management Scheme YE 31.03.22 be approved with one minor amendment. (Cllr Donna Stocking proposed, Cllr Trudy Mann seconded, all were in favour.)

55/21 To Approve Payroll Costs 2021/22

The Payroll provided had advised an increase in their fees of 3% for the next years' services.

RESOLVED: That the payroll costs of £293.55 be approved for 2021/22. (Cllr Sue Lintern proposed, Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey seconded, all were in favour.)

56/21 To Approve Payments to date

The following payments were presented for approval:

Payee	Payment for	Net	VAT	Total
Clerk	Clerks Wages and Expenses -Feb 21	299.54	0.00	299.54
HMRC	Feb-21	71.60	0.00	71.60
Westcotec	Streetlight Maintenance 3 Months	46.32	9.27	55.59
Handyman	Empty 4x Bins; Pick up leaves Garden Lynn Road; Litter Pick 2 hrs; Move bins on playing field 3hrs	56.00	0.00	56.00
Norfolk ALC	Clerk Training EROB	10.00	2.00	12.00
Compass Point Planning and Rural Consultants	Consultant Advice in respect of SFNP - Drafting of the NP	920.00	0.00	920.00

NP Consultant Rachel Leggett	Payment for Stage 2 (b) Developing an evidence base (6 days)	1920.00	0.00	1920.00
EON	Streetlights - January	80.60	4.03	84.63
	Total	3404.06	15.30	3419.36

As at 3 Feb 2021	Business Account	27106.58
As at 3 Feb 2021	Community Account	20988.63
As at 2 March 2021	Unity Trust Bank	5776.48
		53871.69

The Chair shared that the Neighbourhood Plan consultants' payments were covered by the Groundworks UK grant money received for the project in 2020/21.

The Chair shared that there had been a query regarding a bin sited on the playing field and the bin had been installed too high for children to reach and put their litter in, so it had been redone. The Council agreed to monitor jobs and give clear instructions.

RESOLVED: That the payments be approved as presented. (Cllr Kit Hesketh-Harvey proposed, Cllr Andrew Hayward seconded, all were in favour).

57/21 Urgent Matters – Chairman

There were none.

58/21 To Receive Urgent items of concern & matters to be included on the next agenda from the Parish Council and note forward items.

- The Clerk to report the wall opposite the mill entrance as it had some cobbles coming loose and it was felt potentially dangerous particularly where left unchecked.
- The Clerk agreed to contact Derek Hales and ask them to cut back the hedge at the Old Railway Station site and see to the fencing which needed tidying.
- The Clerk agreed to contact the landowner of Bridleway 9 off bridge road to ask that the fencing be maintained as was broken along the corner and the riverbank.
- The Clerk agreed to also report the ground being 'claggy' at Bridleway 9 to Norfolk County Council and to ask for the surface to be looked.
- The Clerk agreed to contact the landowner regarding weeds next to Indigo Road and check whether the Harris Fencing required planning permissions.
- Cllr Trudy Mann wished to update the Council on the village map, and they were currently looking at what material to print it on.
- The Clerk agreed to report to Highways overhanging trees at the Furlong Road junction with the A134. The hedges and trees needed cutting back to a suitable height for lorries and tractors.
- The installation of the new bin on the playing field was delayed but would be done in the next month. The bin emptying schedule would be looked at later in the year.

59/21 Cllr Colin Sampson (BCKLWN) and Cllr Martin Storey (NCC), if in attendance

Cllr Martin Storey

- NCC held their Budget meeting on 22 February and more information is available on the website. The council agreed an 3.99% increase. A band D would increase by £56 per year. It was noted that savings would also be made.
- His fund for discretionary spend within parishes for Highway or environmental matters had increased from £6k to £10k.

Cllr Colin Sampson

- BCKLWN Council tax increases were £4.50 per year band D household a month, less than some of the other increases.
- The Panels and Committees were still meeting via Zoom and fits in with other work going on and were only dealing with items that are time sensitive or to do with the budget or safety issue, and other issues are not currently being dealt with as a priority. Therefore anything that is referred to the Borough Council would take longer to resolve
- The BCKLWN were still helping the QE Hospital.
- If there was any issue it was important to get as much detail as possible so that when it gets to the Borough Council, they have less research to do initially.

60/21 To Confirm the Date of the Next Ordinary Meeting – Wednesday 7 April 2021 at 7 pm.

Closed at 9.20 pm.