

STOURS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the West Stour Parish Annual Meeting held at 7.45pm on Friday 21st May 2021 in East Stour Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs P Gould (Chairman) and Mrs P Sealy. Also, Mrs R Jacques, (Temporary Clerk), 5 members of the public.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr P Gould was proposed by Cllr Mrs P Sealy, seconded by Mr J Parker. Elected unopposed.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - were received from Mr D Amlôt, County Cllrs Jane Somper and Belinda Ridout, Mr and Mrs Howard, John Jeffrey.

3. MINUTES of the meeting of 8th December 2020, previously circulated were **agreed** and were signed as a correct record. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Sealy, seconded by Mrs West.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- Noise from the Water Turbine. Cllr Mrs Sealy reported that the noise had continued for a while but is not so noticeable now.
- Cllr Mrs Sealy raised the ongoing issue of the Showground lights and asked if the previous Clerk had received any correspondence from the Enforcement Officer. The Temporary Clerk agreed to look in the files and will forward any relevant documentation to Cllr Mrs Sealy.
- The road sign for Lynch Lane has been erected and the overall cost was £184.19.
- Cllr Mrs Sealy reported that the SID deployment will be carried out by Guy Gilding at a cost of £72 per year. A member of the public asked if the cost would be paid for from the village budget. The Chairman confirmed that it will be.
- Cllr Mrs Sealy reported that the new noticeboard had been installed. A member of the public asked if the white noticeboard could be painted a different colour. Discussion followed regarding the merits of various colours or leaving it white and it was decided that it would remain white as it stands out and is clearly visible. The member of the public added that it needs a roof of sorts to enable the rain to run-off. The Chairman agreed to find a strip of metal that he will secure to the noticeboard to create a small lip. The member of the public asked if the noticeboard could be updated as the information regarding the current Council Members is out of date. The Temporary Clerk agreed to update the noticeboard.

5. ELECTION OF RIGHTS OF WAY LIAISON OFFICER AND TREE WARDEN

Martin Hibbert had agreed to continue the role of Rights of Way Liaison Officer. Proposed by Mr J Parker, seconded by Cllr Gould.

Tree Warden - vacant. It was agreed that somebody with knowledge of trees should fulfil this role. A member of the public suggested approaching a resident in the village, who has such knowledge, about taking on the role and will approach the person. It was asked if there is a job description for the role in the Clerk's records. The Temporary Clerk agreed to search the files and forward the description to the Chairman if successful in finding it.

6. DORSET COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The reports from Belinda Ridout and Jane Somper had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. The Chairman commented that the reports clearly summarise the activities of Dorset Council. He noted that the refuse collection day is changing and affected households should have been contacted directly by the Council.

7. CURRENT PLANNING MATTERS

There were no Planning Applications to discuss.

8. HIGHWAY MATTERS

- The Chairman asked the members of the public if the Lynch Lane sign had made a difference. No-one at the meeting could answer the question but there were several comments regarding delivery drivers being unable to locate properties in the village. Some residents have had to change postcodes to enable delivery drivers to find them.
- Banks have been damaged by large vehicles using the narrow lanes.
- A member of the public commented that there are some potholes in the village roads, one particularly large pothole in Back Lane
- The Chairman asked if anyone at the meeting had heard anything about the travellers at the Five Bridges layby. Mr Parker gave a brief summary of his communication with County Councillors in the past few years. He explained that the main issue is that the land the travellers occupy is not actually registered and therefore has no owner. Consequently, they cannot be evicted from the land. Enquiries have established that a person or organisation with land neighbouring the site can take ownership of it. Currently the owners of the neighbouring land are Dorset Council on one side and a local farmer on the other side. When the land is registered and ownership decided Wessex Water has agreed to block off the site to prevent the travellers returning. The Chairman asked if the Parish Council could take ownership. Mr Parker thought not, as it does not own land neighbouring the site.
- Cllr Mrs Sealy reported that the employees of a local business drive through the village at inappropriate speeds and asked if anyone had spoken with the business owner. No-one at the meeting had but most had experience similar situations.

9. RIGHTS OF WAY AND TREE MATTERS

This item had been discussed under item 5 of these minutes.

Trees: A member of the public commented that some trees on the verge by the phone box need to be inspected. They were trimmed a few years ago but not since. She added that there are electric wires going through the branches of them. Discussion took place about where the responsibility lies for the trees. Is it Dorset Council or the owner of the garden nearest the verge? Mr Parker agreed to discuss the legal situation with a local resident who has knowledge of this kind of issue.

10. ACCOUNTS

The Temporary Clerk advised the Members that the closing balance as at 31st March was £2,405. She explained that this figure should be viewed with caution at this stage – the precept can be added to the figure but there may be payments outstanding as none have been made for a while. The new permanent Clerk, who takes up her post in June, will be able to confirm the balance.

11. MATTERS OF INTEREST AND INFORMATION

Mr Parker, provided the following report:

The re-furbishment work on the hall took place at a time when Covid 19 restrictions were in force, but the builders could operate under the safety guidelines laid down by government.

Unable to meet in person, the committee kept in touch by email. The use of 'virtual' meetings was discussed but, given that there was no possibility of using the hall for events, and the email communications on progress of the works were working well, it was agreed that there was no need. The only issue was the Village Hall AGM to which members of the public were invited.

In December 2020, again via e-mail, the committee produced and agreed a series of policies and protocols, using the ACRE guidelines and proformas, to ease the re-opening of the hall for hire. This also included the provision of sanitizer and other equipment, notices and the introduction of a 'one-way' system. As a result of our 'readiness' we were able to accommodate a request from Dorset Council for the hall to be used for a 'one to one' remedial teaching session once a week by a teacher living in the village. The Village Hall has received some grant funding to assist with loss of income and re-opening measures.

At the next meeting in June, the committee are to introduce a resolution to alter its membership as the original trust deed required 5 members appointed by village organisations and three of those (Women's Institute, Mother's Union and Parent / Teacher Association) are no longer in existence.

The committee are planning to have a celebratory re-opening on Saturday 07 August followed by its AGM in October.

Tessa MacIntyre who was the hall's closest neighbour sadly died this year. She was an artist and has done a lino print of her cottage which was in possession of Kathy Clarke. Kathy asked if the village hall would like it and the committee readily agreed to have it framed and hung in the hall with a small plaque. A brass plaque is already mounted in the hall acknowledging the generous legacy left by Basil Ribbons which enabled the refurbishment.

A member of the public asked how many people the hall will hold. Mr Parker confirmed it to be 60 standing and fewer sitting depending on social distancing restrictions.

The Chairman asked about the situation with the caravans on Stour Hill. A member of the public reminded the attendees of the meeting that the original planning permission (which is permanent) was granted in the 1980s for 12 caravans. Drainage was not mentioned on the planning application and there is not provision now for drainage. The current situation seems to be that caravans have been placed on the site but are not lived in and the site is locked up. It was agreed that the Parish Council should monitor the situation.

A member of the public asked if Neighbourhood Watch is still active. Mr Parker replied that the village does not have its own but is part of a similar scheme at Gillingham. He added that he is a member of the Dorset Alert group and offered to notify local residents of any local news reports that he receives.

A member of the public asked how many people are in the Speed Watch group now, Mr Parker confirmed that it is now defunct but that the SID system seems to work well.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked the parishioners present for attending and closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

.....Chairman

.....Date