

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of The Stours Parish Council meeting held at 7.30 pm on Thursday 27th May 2021 in East Stour Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs P Gould (Chairman), Mrs L Bennett, P Bowe, Mrs B Edwards, G Jenkins, R King, J Pitman, Mrs P Patrick, Mrs E Scott, Mrs P Sealy, Lady A Stagg, Mrs J Uden, Mrs J Watkins, and Mrs C Wilkins. Also present the Clerk, Mrs M Cox, and Mr M Elsworth

Reports, Pre-business matters items and Public participation

PUBLIC DISCUSSION – none.

The Chairman welcomed the Councillors to the meeting and reminded them that the Annual Meeting could not be held last year because of the Coronavirus situation. The Government guidance for all local councils at the time was that the existing officers remain in place if possible.

BUSINESS AGENDA

2021/39 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr J Watkins was proposed by Cllr Lady A Stagg, seconded by Cllr Mrs C Wilkins and agreed by all. Elected unopposed. The Chairman duly signed Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

The Chairman thanked the Councillors and said that she felt honoured to be elected as Chairman. She thanked Paul Gould for all that he has done for the Parish Council and read the following report:

Welcome to this meeting, our first since March 2020 in person. I am honoured to be your next Chairman and hope that I can do half as well as Paul who has been a marvellous Chairman for 3 years – a little bit longer than he was expecting but he has steered us through some troubled water lately and we hope we are now back on track. Thank you for all your hard work Paul and especially thank you for being so calm and cheerful throughout.

A lot has happened to us all since the first lockdown but I do hope that you have all weathered these difficult times without too much difficulty and it is very nice to see you all in person. Please forgive me if I don't get your names right, as I have not met many of you, and Zoom kindly gave me all your names - so it had its good points. Please also, could you bear with us as some things may have been missed or done wrong since Michelle's retirement, but we have all done our best and hopefully we can put all that behind us now and move on.

We said goodbye to Michelle in January and welcomed Kate. Unfortunately, in early May, Kate realised that with family problems and a new job as Town Clerk to Sturminster Newton she could not manage to do our Parish Council work and gave in her notice, with no warning and with immediate effect. Our original meetings were cancelled and the four parish Chairmen set to find a replacement.

We have been extremely lucky, with Jane Somper's help in finding Rosanne Jacques as our temporary help, who many of you know and who has been able to help us out with our meetings and sort us out. Sadly, she cannot take us on permanently but we have now found another lovely person, Nicky Philips from Motcombe, who has agreed to take us on from mid-June. She is already Clerk to 5 other parishes but is very organised indeed.

There have been quite a lot of complications in changing Clerks. The main one being the way the accounts have been done. None of the Chairmen liked the MoneyDance software and Kate went to a lot of trouble to create a spreadsheet accountancy system. Sadly, this seems to be difficult to follow as well. Nicky has looked at all this and has her own software for all her parishes and will be putting us on that. We look forward to a more user-friendly system by the time of the next Stours Parish Council Meeting. I would like to thank Bobbie and Paul Bowe for their support during the lockdowns and interviewing prospective Clerks. We had one week in November when we had a Zoom meeting for 5 nights in a row. And I would like to thank Paul Bowe for support recently with the accounts and the resignation of Kate. Finally, a big thank you to Rosanne and I hope that the virus will stabilise now we have the vaccines and life with Covid will be able to move onto happier times.

Cllr Mrs P Patrick arrived at 7.40pm

2021/40 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr P Gould was proposed by Cllr Mrs J Watkins, seconded by Cllr R King and agreed by all. Elected unopposed. 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office Vice-Chairman' was duly signed. Cllr Gould thanked Cllr Watkins for help with recruiting the Clerks.

2021/41 COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION

The Chairman advised that James Nalty had resigned as Councillor and thanked him for his services to the Parish Council.

2021/42 CO-OPTION FOR PARISH COUNCILLOR FOR WEST STOUR

Cllr P Sealy proposed that Mr Mark Elsworth should be co-opted as a Councillor for West Stour Ward. Seconded by Cllr P Gould and agreed by all. The 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' was duly signed.

2021/42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Cllr R McConnell, Cllr R Robson and Cllr F Stanford.

2021/43 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members are reminded that if they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) on their register relating to any item on this agenda, they may not take part in the debate and may not vote. If they have a DPI on any item that is not on their register they must declare that interest, take no part in the debate or vote and register such interest within 28 days.

2021/44 TO CONSIDER GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS

None received.

2021/45 APPOINTMENT TO VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEES.

Stour Provost – Cllr Mrs C Wilkins, Stour Row – Cllr Mrs J Watkins, East Stour – Cllr R McConnell, West Stour – Cllr Mrs P Sealy. Proposed by Cllr M Elsworth seconded by Cllr R King and agreed by all.

2021/46 TO CONFIRM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Chairmen of Parish Meetings. Proposed by Cllr G Jenkins, seconded by Cllr Mrs C Wilkins and agreed by all.

2021/47 TO CONFIRM PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEES FOR EAST STOUR AND STOUR PROVOST.

East Stour – Cllrs R McConnell and J Pitman, Stour Provost – All the Stour Provost Councillors, plus one representative from the football club and one representative from the cricket club. Proposed by Cllr P Bowe, seconded by Cllr Mrs P Sealy and agreed by all.

2021/48 TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO REPRESENT THE PARISH FOR DAPTC, CPRE, DC, TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS, FLOODWARDEN, CRIME AND HOMEWATCH

DAPTC – Cllr Mrs C Wilkins and Cllr P Bowe.

CPRE – Cllr Lady A Stagg.

DC – Cllr Mrs J Watkins.

Transport – Cllr Mrs J Uden.

Crime and Homewatch – defer to next meeting.

Flood Warden – Cllr M Elsworth.

All the above were proposed '*en-bloc*' by Cllr Mrs P Patrick, seconded by Cllr Mrs C Wilkins and agreed by all.

2021/49 TO CONFIRM RIGHTS OF WAY LIAISON OFFICERS AND TREE WARDENS.

Mr Martin Hibbert has agreed to continue the post of Rights of Way Liaison Officer for all four parishes, but had asked the Parish Council to note that this will be his last year in the post. Martin was thanked for volunteering again and for all his hard work as Rights of Way Liaison Officer.

Tree Wardens. Todber – Mr P Matcham, and East Stour - Mrs T Bagnall. West Stour and Stour Provost – deferred to the next meeting,

Proposed by Cllr Mrs P Sealy, seconded by Cllr Mrs C Wilkins and agreed by all.

2021/50 RESOLUTIONS BY STATUTE.

The list of deeds and trusts held by Lloyds Bank PLC were read out by the Chairman. Items held are the same as last year.

Trustees for the National Savings Investment Bank Account – Cllrs P Bowe, Mrs P Sealy and Mrs J Watkins. Any two of the three named to sign. Proposed by Cllr R King, seconded by Cllr Mrs P Patrick and agreed by all.

2021/51 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting of 11th March 2021 (previously circulated). Cllr Bowe advised that the split of the bank balances although correct in total, the breakdown, he believed, may not be accurate. The new Clerk will provide updated figures at the next meeting. Cllr Mrs Sealy commented that her name, spelt correctly on the list of attendees, was spelt incorrectly through the remainder of the minutes. The Chairman noted that the £100 paid to Mrs M Cox was itemised as a gift when in fact it had been a gratuity payment. Cllr J Pitman proposed that the minutes, subject to these amendments, be **agreed** as a correct record. This was seconded by Cllr G Jenkins and duly signed.

2021/52 MATTERS ARISING.

There were none.

2021/53 CASUAL VACANCY FOR STOUR PROVOST WARD

To be filled by co-option.

2021/54 TRAVELLERS AND GYPSIES

The Chairman gave a brief resume of the history of the illegal encampment of Travellers at the Five Bridges, West Stour site. It has been a problem for many years to evict the Travellers. However, it is now known, that the land that the Travellers occupy is not registered and until it is, the illegal encampment can remain. Being unregistered, the land can only be claimed by a neighbouring land owner. The farmer who owns some land next to the site would like to claim it but does not know what the procedure is. Cllr Pitman advised that the farmer could approach a solicitor to make an application to claim the land to the land registry. Cllr King asked if the Council has a permanent site that the travellers could be moved to. Cllr Gould thought this to be unlikely. The 5 Bridges site has, in the past, been considered a possible permanent site by Dorset Council, but Wessex Water had objected because the main sewer runs beneath the site.

2021/55 PLANNING MATTERS

P. Bowe provided a short update to the planning applications for Todber:

- Unit 1, Hambledon Business Centre, Hunts Hill, Todber. The planning application was supported.
- Unit 1 Church Close Business Park, Church Close, Todber. No objections were raised.
- Hop House, Stour Lane, Stour Provost. The Chairman confirmed that this had been discussed as the Stour Provost Assemble Annual Parish Meeting.

2021/56 DORSET COUNCIL MATTERS

County Cllrs Belinda Ridout and Jane Somper's reports had been previously circulated.

2021/57 HIGHWAY MATTERS

- Cllr Mrs Edwards reported that Cllr McConnell has started a Highways and Speeding Group for East Stour. Cllr Pitman explained that the group was formed because of concerns regarding the speed and volume of traffic travelling through the village. The group has engaged the help of Enrico Dimarino, the Dorset Council Highways Officer and Guy Gilding an adviser, both of whom have been very supportive. He commented that a reduction in the speed limit through the village is unlikely.
- Community Speedwatch and SID Deployment. Todber, Cllr King said the SID will be put up in Red Lane next week. He commented that recent data indicated that 50% of drivers violated the speed limit. The maximum speed detected was 70mph on a Sunday afternoon. He suggested that Todber and East Stour work together on the issue of speeding. He added that he will need to replace a Bushnell and Cllr Mrs Sealy offered to lend him the Bushnell owned by West Stour Ward.
- Cllr Pitman advised that the road through East Stour would be closed for re-surfacing and repairs in June and Cllr Mrs Patrick confirmed that the resurfacing works in Stour Provost would take place the following week, weather permitting.

2021/58 PLECK, EAST STOUR

Cllr Mrs Edwards reported that Bob Partridge is now looking after Pleck and looking for volunteers to help.

2021/59 CORRESPONDENCE

Cllr Mrs Sealy reported that she had received correspondence from Guy Gilding regarding his services as the Dorset Lengthsman. She confirmed his charges for the year to East Stour are £144 and West Stour £72. He also cleans the West Stour bus shelter for £40 per year and would be prepared to do the same for Stour Provost if required.

2021/59 FINANCE

ACCOUNTS

The accounts for the year end 31st March 2021 were presented.

PAYMENTS

- Local Delivery Project First Instalment - To pay Gillingham Town Council - £213
- Clerks Salary £912
- Dorset Council Waste Collection £136.50
- Ground Care £108 Stour Provost Playing Field April and May £108
- Karen James – mowing Stour Row Church & Village Hall - £300
- G Hall, upgrade of Clerk's Laptop £150
- P Sealy, reimburse for the payment for noticeboard £200

It was resolved to authorise the above payments. Proposed by Cllr P Bowe, seconded by Cllr Mrs P Patrick.

- To authorise additional payment for road sign (made in January) to Mr Amlot of £11.40. Proposed by Cllr Lady A Stagg. Seconded by Cllr R King.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The following Lloyds Bank PLC direct debit mandates held were reviewed: - Wessex Water (water2business) payment on demand (dated 17.4.19), Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to collect variable amounts (dated 16.4.14) and npower to collect variable amounts (dated 21.8.14) and Scottish Widows (dated 5.6.17). It was **resolved** that they be continued proposed by Cllr Mrs Sealy, seconded by Cllr Lady Stagg.

2019/69 AUDIT FOR THE YEAR END 31ST MARCH 2019

Section 1 – The Annual governance statement 2020/21 was **approved** by the council.

Section 2 – The council **approved** the Accounting statements for the financial year 2020/2021.

Proposed by Cllr Jenkins, seconded by Cllr Gould.

The Clerk said that actions had been taken following Mrs West's Internal Audit report (previously circulated).

2021/60 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

a). Chairman's report

The Chairman thanked Rosanne Jacques for Clerking the May meetings.

b). Playing fields

East Stour – Cllr J Pitman reported that he and Cllr McConnell have taken over from Guy Gilding. There is an issue with roadside parking when Fast Feet Football sessions are taking place but is hopeful that the problem will be resolved quickly.

Stour Provost – The Chairman reported that there have been issues with the playing fields and dogs not being on leads. Playing field signage will be erected in line with Dorset Council's new ruling when the new Clerk takes over.

Stour Row – no issues to report.

c). Crime – no report received.

2021/61 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

To discuss a joint East Stour and Todber speeding group.

To receive an update on the Travellers and Gypsies site at 5 Bridges.

2021/62 DATE OF FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS ALL THURSDAYS AT 7.30pm

To be confirmed when the new Parish Clerk – Nicola Phillips takes up her post.

There being no further business the Chairman of this meeting closed the meeting at 8.35 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

.....Chairman

Date

DRAFT