

STUBTON PARISH COUNCIL



Members

Martin Davis - Chair
Bob Warren - Clerk
David Butler - Councillor
Rick Crooks - Councillor
Andrew Smith -Councillor

Minutes of the Stubton Parish Council Meeting (virtual Zoom) held on Wednesday 25th November 2020

Present

Cllr Martin Davis - Chair

Cllr David Butler

Cllr Rick Crooks

Cllr Andrew Smith

Bob Warren - Clerk

County Councillor Alexander Maughan

SK District Councillor Penny Milnes

1. Cllr Davis welcomed everyone to the 4th virtual zoom meeting and briefed the participants on the Zoom protocol for the meeting. He stated that the meeting may be recorded by anyone present.
2. No apologies were received - all present
3. There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and to consider any requests for dispensations.
4. Open Forum - no discussions took place.
5. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record and finalised and signed by the Chair.
6. **Parish Council vacancy**
Following the resignation of Ann Wise a vacancy was advertised for a Parish councillor from the 1st to 21st October. There were no requests from residents for an election to be held so the vacancy will be filled by co-option. It was unanimously agreed that the vacancy will be advertised on the PC noticeboard website for a period of 4 weeks from 26th November to invite expressions of interest.

7. Report by Cllr Alexander Maughan for Lincolnshire County Council Covid-19

The number of Covid patients across Lincoln County and Pilgrim hospitals has continued to rise in recent weeks which at one point led to a critical incident being declared. This however was very short-lived and was mainly due to staffing issues and was removed later the same day.

Overall the picture across Lincolnshire shows cases of coronavirus have moved closer to the National average with certain parts such as East Lindsey seeing high numbers in relation to that average.

At the time of the meeting the last published data was from the 19th November but figures supplied to the County Council for the last 6 days show that cases have declined.

Despite this it is anticipated that Lincolnshire will come out of lockdown into tier 3 of restrictions. Cllr Maughan expressed his preference for a District tier system rather than a County wide one which would probably see South Kesteven moved to tier 2 based on current data.

Additional support has been made available with grants up to the value of £3000 for businesses that have had to close during this latest lockdown. Further support will be made available on a discretionary basis for businesses that continue to be affected by the pandemic.

Devolution - Only a small number of councils were invited to submit devolution proposals and Lincolnshire was not included. Lincolnshire does however remain committed to local government reorganisation and devolution in the county. A business case is being prepared in readiness for the next wave of invitations from the Secretary of State.

Grantham Bypass - good progress has been made despite Coronavirus. Phase 2 (linking new roundabout to A1 trunk road) is due for completion in approximately 1 year. Preparations for Phase 3 (linking Somerby Hill roundabout to the new roundabout) are now complete with all funding in place and completion is expected in 3 years.

Meeting with Highways England re road safety - A1 through Lincolnshire is considered one of the worst stretches of road in the county and there is a push to improve safety. Highways England seemed unconcerned by our concerns raised particularly with regard to the Toll Bar Road, Foston and Long Bennington junctions. Cllr Maughan has since met via zoom with local MP

Caroline Johnson who has agreed to take this up with senior highway officials on our behalf. Follow up meetings have taken place and an update is pending.

Council budget - The budget is on track to be balanced this financial year. A significant amount of extra funding has been received from central government which has been used to protect services and £800,000 has been spent on food support for vulnerable families and children across Lincolnshire. Please signpost people to the support as necessary. BW has the details.

Doddington Lane/Clensey Lane

Cllr Maughan sent BW the Condition index survey completed in 2019 which was circulated to the Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. The report shows that the threshold is still not met for more significant highway works. Potholes will be filled if reported and an attempt will be made to keep the highway as safe as possible. There will be another survey in 2021 (surveys every 2 years) which will give a better picture next year of the current condition of the road. The report does go beyond the surface conditions checking what is happening below the surface as well.

Questions were invited

Cllr Crooks asked if the scanned report is a public document.

Cllr Maughan believed not but thought it could be seen through a freedom of information request. He has been given permission to share it with Parish Councils.

Cllr Crooks asked if this has been shared with Dry Doddington.

Cllr Maughan replied no not yet as they haven't got a meeting this month but they are aware of ongoing discussions.

8. Report by Cllr Penny Milnes for South Kesteven District Council

Cllr Milnes pointed out that there are still challenges to be met for businesses and residents as a consequence of the pandemic and stated that SKDC will be following the government guidelines accordingly to support all involved.

Cllr Milnes echoed the view of Cllr Maughan with regard to what tier SKDC would go into as we come out of lockdown. In all probability we would be

lumped into one health area and the tier would be dependent on data from Boston and East Lindsey.

There are concerns for the growing numbers of cases in the over 60's which was thought could possibly be linked to an increase in family visits.

There is still some money available for funding Covid related projects.

SKDC continues to be in a transition period with many senior staff leaving and many more interim staff filling roles.

Housing drama with SKDC referring themselves to the regulator for non-compliance. Someone has now been appointed to tackle the issue of compliance over the next 2 to 3 years. One of the major aspects surrounds fire risks.

In terms of finance the budget has taken a hit mainly due to loss of income from rentals and facilities such as leisure centres which have had to close. However reserves were in place and help has also been provided from central government.

The Planning department continues with its comprehensive restructure and review of the whole planning process from the way applications are dealt with to working more digitally.

Cllr Milnes is also trying to arrange a training paper for Parish Councils on dealing with Planning Applications.

In terms of current planning applications the application regarding the Brandon Shoot has been deferred until January. If Stubton would like representation at the meeting let Cllr Milnes know.

There are a number of proposals and applications for Solar farms within SKDC notably at Westborough and the possibility of another in the Marston area. Not sure of the impact on Stubton.

Highways - Cllr Milnes concurred with Cllr Maughan re the Highways meeting. The whole stretch of the A1 from Stamford to Newark is an issue and the Garden Village planned for South Grantham will bring more access challenges

9. Email enquiry from a local resident:

An email was received from a resident with regards to a number of enquiries.

Compliance of Parish Council Website.

Cllr Davis responded as follows:

The Village website was created in 2010 and in 2015 an additional page was created for the Parish Council. The Village website does not have to be GDPR compliant although the Parish Council adopted the GDPR compliance of 2018 as shown on the website.

- Website Accessibility Compliance?

Regulations were updated in 2018 with a target date of September 2020 for all public websites to be compliant with regards to accessibility. Most public websites are still moving towards this goal as are Stubton PC and we are currently giving consideration to creating a dedicated standalone Parish Council website.

- Extra website security

This is currently not necessary as no online forms are submitted so it is deemed an unnecessary expense.

Obtaining 3 quotes for works required - in particular the speed reduction gates

The cost of the gates in 2018 was funded by a £200 grant from SKDC, a £600 donation from the disbanded 'Anti-Wind Turbine' group's funds with the balance made up by the Parish Council.

The PC was obliged to use a Highways licensed contractor as the gates are Highways furniture. The original contractor sourced could not fulfil the works and so another licensed contractor had to be found. Consequently obtaining 3 quotes was not really an option in this instance.

Local wood suppliers were used and the gates were fitted and painted by volunteers within the village. Cllr Davis offered his thanks to those volunteers. So far there has been excellent feedback on the gates and they seem to be having the desired effect.

Increase of precept to avoid fundraising?

The ethos of Stubton villagers has always been to support projects by raising funds. Indeed fundraisers are often the focus of social gatherings which are enjoyed by all that attend.

The fundraising for the defibrillator was highlighted in the email enquiry but Cllr Davis pointed out that this was a village residents led initiative to which the PC made a donation. There is a village steering group set up to administer the running and maintenance of the defibrillator but this has no connection to the Parish Council.

There has been a discussion about increasing the precept to £1500 at a previous meeting and this will be revisited in the future at the relevant time.

Are the Council members making decisions before meetings?

Cllr Davis advised the meeting that no decisions are made before meetings. Cllr Davis felt that there may be some confusion because of the Cllr initials listed against certain agenda items. He clarified that the initials were there only to indicate which Cllr would take the lead on that particular item. Any decision required on an agenda item would be made during the meeting by a Cllr vote.

10. Proposal for new Parish Council website

Earlier in the year LCC approached us to offer to host a free PC website. Numerous other PC's in our vicinity already use this service. LCC will set it up but the administration will be undertaken by us.

Cllr Davis proposed that we should make use of this opportunity.

The proposal was seconded by Cllrs Smith and Butler with Cllr Crooks in agreement.

Cllr Crooks asked whether email addresses for councillors would be offered as part of this scheme and Cllr Davis stated he believed so.

Cllr Davis then proposed to name the website 'The Stubton Parish Council Website' and this was seconded by Cllr Crooks with all Cllrs in agreement.

Cllr Davis advised the council that the new website should be administered by either the clerk or a councillor unless the council wished to employ someone for the role.

Cllr Crooks proposed that Cllr Davis should administer the website if he wished to do so as he already administered the existing website. He is also in a position to transfer relevant information and pages across to the new platform.

This was seconded by Cllrs Smith and Butler with Cllr Davis in agreement.

Cllr Davis proposed a date of 1st Jan 2021 for the start of the new website. This was seconded by Cllr Crooks with Cllrs Smith and Butler in agreement.

Cllr Davis advised the council that the village website would retain a link to the new PC website that any visitors could follow.

11.1 Neighbourhood Plan

Representatives of the NP steering group had an informative meeting with Jake Horton (Planning Policy Officer) on 15th Oct 2020. It was suggested that the group look at other examples of plans that had prepared policies in relation to SP3 and SP4. A further meeting is planned for the New Year.

An email was received from Steven Holland, (Chair of Thurlby Planning group) suggesting we look at the Government white paper 'Planning for the future'. Proposals within the paper have implications with regard to Neighbourhood plans. As a result of this the group drafted and sent a letter to our local MP, Dr Caroline Johnson, prior to the deadline of the consultation period. A reply has been received.

Cllr Butler suggested residents should look at the Neighbourhood Plan and in particular the implications of SP2, 3 and 4.

11.2 Speed reduction gates update

All the gates have now been fitted and painted and many favourable comments have been received in terms of benefits to the village.

Unfortunately the gates on Doddington Lane were damaged by a vehicle but the driver contacted the clerk to offer his insurance details. On inspecting the damage it was decided a repair could be made and the driver offered to pay for the materials required. Repairs have now been completed and the damaged areas just need to be repainted.

11.3 Update on quiet lanes.

Cllr Crooks wrote to the 14 households on Doddington Lane to ask for their opinion on the quiet lanes initiative. The response was not massive with the majority feeling that pursuing the initiative might be counterproductive and would not lead to change. There were requests for better and more informative signage on the lane itself. Cllr Crooks requested support from Cllr Maughan to facilitate a meeting with Highways to seek signage relative to the nature of the road, vehicle size and speed. Cllr Maughan said he was happy to do this but it would probably not happen until the New Year. Cllr Maughan will arrange a date and then liaise with the clerk.

11.4 Enquiry from resident re Solar Farm Community development fund

Cllr Crooks was asked by a resident how much benefit the Parish Council got from the Community Development Fund set up when the Solar Farm was set up on Doddington Lane Claypole.

Stubton do not receive anything from the fund.

Upon investigation Cllr Crooks discovered that Claypole, Westborough and Dry Doddington PC's receive significant sums of money on an annual basis to continue for the next 10 years. For example Claypole currently receive £15,000. Cllr Milnes agreed to ask Paul Wood (Cllr for Claypole) for further information.

Mr Wilson, ex Chair to Stubton PC informed the council that funding for Stubton was pursued at the time but was refused on the grounds that no part of the farm lies within Stubton Parish boundaries.

Cllr Maughan stated that there is an ongoing debate about community funding from solar farms and how it is shared out and needs to take into account the impact on each local community, including disruption from construction traffic at the time of building.

There has been no agreement yet on the proposal for a new farm near Westborough.

Cllr Crooks felt that the matter would be worth pursuing.

11.5 Enquiry from a resident re dog waste bin

Cllr Crooks stated there are no dog waste bins in Stubton despite there being many dog owners in the village and walkers with dogs passing through regularly.

Cllr Milnes informed the council that she had met with Ian Yates at SKDC who confirmed that SKDC are not able to empty dog bins. If Stubton PC decided to purchase a bin we would need to arrange and pay for a contractor to empty it.

SKDC do however accept dog waste in the street litter bins if it is bagged correctly.

SKDC can offer signage to let dog owners know that dog waste is accepted in the street bin and can also put up dog fouling signs around the village. There does not appear to be a dog fouling problem in the village, however Cllr Crooks felt signage would be appropriate to educate owners who throw away dog waste in bags. Not wishing to urbanise the village through over-signage, it was agreed that Cllr Milnes will pursue a sign for the existing bin.

11.6 Village Christmas illuminations

Last year the Stubton Social Club funded a tree on the green. This is planned for again this year by the Social Club Committee. Further details can be obtained by contacting a member of this committee. A resident asked for help with buying lights for a tree in the churchyard. Cllr Crooks signposted him to the Chair of the Social Club Committee.

**12.Date and time of next meeting 13.1.2021 at 7:30pm. Format TBC
Thanks were given from The Chair to all attendees.**