

MINUTES OF THE STAPLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on **Wednesday December 13th 2023** at 7.30pm in Staple Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllrs Bartlett (Chairman), J. Kirk (Vice-Chairman), Loukes, Martin and Davis-Marks.

IN ATTENDANCE: There were seven members of the public in attendance.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Ewart, Cllr D. Kirk, Cllr S Chandler (KCC) and Hannah-Biggs-Halles (Clerk).

1.1 n.b. Cllr Ewart observed the meeting via Zoom.

1.2 Cllr Bartlett proposed that Cllr J. Kirk should act as Clerk for the meeting.
(Proposed: Cllr Martin. Seconded: Cllr Davis-Marks)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th November were agreed as a true record, proposed Cllr Kirk and seconded by Cllr Davis-Marks.

3.2 To report and discuss any completed actions/matters arising therefrom, not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

3.2.1 The bank account queries have been resolved.

3.2.2 The queried financial transaction (re. payment to SWFV) is still in hand.

3.2.3 The Scribe accounting software subscription has now been cancelled.

3.2.4 It was agreed that details of the Clerk's expenses should be provided to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

4. PUBLIC SESSION

There was a lively discussion about traffic levels, pot holes, speed limits, KCC's pothole reporting app; and about building contractors' responsibilities regarding the condition of adjacent roads.

5. FINANCE

5.1 Financial Statements for November to include income, expenditure and bank reconciliation as at November 30th 2023.

Due to absence, the Clerk was unable to personally brief the council on the current financial situation; but was able to do so via printouts which were provided for the councillors.

5.2 Clerk's expenses, salary and overtime. Discussion regarding these items was moved forward to the discussion of confidential items section of the meeting.

5.3 Bills to be ratified: It was agreed that the bills be sanctioned. Proposed Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Loukes.

5.4 Budget 2024/5

- 5.4.1 Discussion regarding possible capital projects: It was agreed that with the exception of considering the financing of various elements of the Highways Improvement Plan; no capital projects were envisaged.

6. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:** To review correspondence received since the previous meeting, which had not been included in the agenda

- 6.1 Parishioner highlighted by letter, the flooding problems in various areas of the village.
- 6.2 Telephone call from parishioner regarding the poor condition of the roads surrounding Staple's various building developments.
- 6.3 Details of KALC news and training.
- 6.4 Information from Southern Water.

7. **REPORTS**

7.1 District Councillor

Cllr Bartlett read out bullet points from DDC's latest monthly report.

7.2 Country Councillor

Report received after the meeting.

7.3 Village Hall and Recreation Grounds

Cllr J. Kirk (Village Hall Chairman) informed the meeting that the Hall had recently had a very successful electrical safety inspection; and that a safety inspection of the play area was still in hand.

He reported that the level of bookings was still disappointingly low; and that the December edition of the Escallop had included an advert for the Hall, aimed at increasing bookings.

There was some discussion regarding the possible holding of a coffee morning at the Hall, where residents could suggest ways to increase the level of bookings.

The 24th Feb. was proposed as a date.

Cllr Kirk pointed out that such matters were the responsibility of the Village Hall and recreation Ground Management Committee (VHC), rather than the parish council; but agreed to float the idea with the rest of the VHC, for their consideration.

7.4 Highways (SID, Speedwatch, HIP)

Cllr Loukes gave a detailed report on Speedwatch and the SIDS.

The Highways report prompted an in-depth discussion about flooding in Staple. It was agreed that the Clerk would be asked to contact KCC regarding these various flooding problems; including those at :

- Chapel Lane.
- Jubilee Cottages
- Twitham

- Buckland Lane. (The 'Staple end'.)
- Lower Road
n.b. Already reported; but needs 'chasing up'.
- Mill Lane. (Where the new drain has flooded already).
- Durlock Road. (Near Linton).
- Barnsole Road. (Area from Gander Court to The Black Pig.)

The Clerk would also be asked to find out how long Mill Road will remain closed.

7.5 Footpaths

- 7.5.1 One item regarding footpaths was deferred until the 'confidential items' section of the meeting.
- 7.5.2 Cllr Loukes reported that the Crixhall Court footpath was extremely muddy. But that not much could be done about footpaths until the spring.

7.6 Planning - None to discuss.

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 8.1 It was agreed that the council should replace the ice warning road signs.
Proposed Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Davis-Marks.
Cllr Bartlett expressed the council's thanks to Neil McCollum for putting out the ice signs.

9. QUESTIONS, ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS To include items raised and noted at the meeting.

- 9.1 Cllr Loukes asked about the progress of the enforcement orders / enquired as to whether or not the SIDS were insured. / informed the meeting that John Bowler PC was now the beat police officer for the Staple area.
- 9.2 Clerk to advise John Bowler PC of the dates of the PC meetings.
- 9.3 Clerk will look into who usually cuts the grass at Bates Close, and find out why it isn't being done.
- 9.4 Clerk will look into whether planning permission is required for a new gate in Lee Wood.
- 9.5 Cllr Bartlett informed the meeting that Age Concern, Sandwich were providing discounted meals from Mondays to Fridays; and were extending their Meals on Wheels service to Staple residents..
- 9.6 Cllr Davis-Marks discussed the Twitter feed on the council's web site.
- 9.7 Clerk to chase up insurance for SIDs.

10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED.

- 10.1 Cllrs agreed unanimously to the amended letter provided by Cllr Martin.
- 10.2 Following discussion, Cllrs agreed that the Chairman would discuss the clerk's overtime with her following the meeting.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 10th January 2024