

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SOUTH STOKE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**South Stoke Village Hall 19:00 Monday 21 August 2017**

**Members Present:**

Chairman Roy McMillan (RM)  
Vice Chairman Bryan Urbick (BU)  
Members Gareth Dean (GD)  
Andrew Scrivener (AS)  
John Verrill (JV) (From 19:22)

**Officers Present:**

Clerk Colin Ratcliff (CR)

**Public and Press:**

19 members of the public / press

*RM informed the meeting that John Howell MP was expected but delayed and that the usual business would start and then be interrupted on his arrival.*

**17/593 Apologies for absence**

Mick Walsh (MW)

**17/594 Declaration of Interests**

None

**17/595 Public Forum**

Joyce Hosker asked about the **Hall and Shop project**. She had concerns over parking at the current shop, with the original planning permission allowing five spaces plus one disabled. There are often over 10 parked and including the section next to her house which has a door opening straight onto the car park. Often engines are left running which causes problems for her health. She has had some aggressive responses when asking for engines to be turned off. She hoped any new car park would be sited away from her house.

Geoff Ward said the group were mindful of those considerations, they are working with the Housing Development Group to see if parking can be sited at The Glebe, there is no plan to change the current parking arrangements at present but maybe it needs review. He said the Amenities Charity would look at the plans and permissions. Chris Bertrand said as Steward of the Rec he was happy to come and talk to users.

Paul Jenkins discussed **Footpaths (Item 13)** supporting SSPC in any designation applications of rights of way and asked the old swimming pool area be designated as a common. David Kennedy said the boundaries on the Christ Church maps were not correct and asked that SSPC co-ordinate responses.

Linda Gatto suggested that the path/driveway from The Little House and Bier Path down to The Street, should also be included in any consideration of designation.

**17/596 To consider a response to OCC Footpaths following a notice about designated rights of way**

Item brought forward.

RM had previously circulated information regarding the maps and suggested paths for consideration of designation.

**Resolved:** That SSPC gather evidence with a view to submission on designation of three paths and the piece of land around the former 'swimming pool' area.

**17/597 Session with John Howell MP – See appended notes for summary**

Signed:

R. McMillan

Dated: 18 September 2017

**17/598 Community Shop & Village Hall Group – to receive an update on activities and on SODC’s response to the Pre-Planning Application.**

Item brought forward.

Geoff Ward reported the pre-app had been submitted to SODC and the group met the Planning Officer on 26 July. A four-page reply had been received. Her view was the development would have little impact on the environment, there was a demand for the shop and hall and weight would be afforded to a community benefit. There was some concern about parking, there would be some impact on local residents but mitigation including a tree survey would help. Her conclusion was an application would be acceptable. The next stage being to work towards planning application and employment of an architect / professional consultants. A budget revision and call off process was required. He was mindful the group is only three people and is looking to bring more in. BU said there was currently £8k available but more detail was needed to approve a budget.

David Mitchell (DM) (Diocese building surveyor) said he would look at some guidance and speak to RM.

**17/599 To consider a proposal to seek advice from SODC and Historic England about the listed monument, Dovecote at Manor Farm, and if appropriate, point the owners to potential grant sources for repair.**

Item brought forward.

Janet Jones said this was an ancient monument in private hands and asked SSPC to have a dialogue with the owners as to whether maintenance work would be done, she said there was water coming off the roof, no guttering and some brickwork was splitting. RM said he had tried to contact the owners and would continue to do so.

BU said SODC could raise concerns and order work to be done and Historic England may have grants available. Paul Jenkins was concerned about The Barn and angle of slope.

**Resolved:** That RM talk to the owners prior to any other action.

**17/600 Housing Development Project Steering Group (HDPSTG) – to receive an update on activities and to consider the results of the housing survey**

Item brought forward.

RM welcomed David Mitchell, building surveyor and Jeremy Flawn (JF), planning consultant for the Diocese. RM had previously circulated the housing survey and pre-app papers prepared for the Diocese.

BU thanked them for their efforts and mentioned concerns expressed on Facebook and elsewhere about how to steer development towards market affordable housing. DM said the Diocese was not profit driven and the proposed scheme had an unusual mix of housing types but that SODC demands may dictate the detail. If successful in obtaining planning permission the Diocese could put restrictive covenants on the land in terms of what could be built and to protect for the future.

AS asked if the Diocese had thought of asking SODC for a visibility assessment if the plans fall outside their affordability policies. JF said if the local need is different to the District’s then it may be possible. Robust evidence would be needed. GD asked about what affordability means to local people and AS asked if the Diocese had talked to SOHA or a similar body. DM stated everything is hypothetical until the pre-app has been submitted. GD also asked about an acoustic survey, JF said they may get an informal response from Environmental Health.

RM proposed that SSPC support the Diocese in the making of the pre-app to SODC.

**Resolved:** That SSPC support the application.

**17/601 Minutes of the meetings of 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017**

**Resolved:** That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**17/602 Planning Applications:**

**P17/S2877/FUL – Little Stoke Manor, Little Stoke OX10 6AX**

Replacement of old shed with stable block

**Resolved:** That SSPC considers the application should be approved.

**17/603 To receive reports from the representative of Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.**

Appendices B and B1 were noted. RM noted the potential for grants from Cllr. Bulmer and BU proposed applying for funds to cover the Hall and Shop project consultancy work.

**Resolved:** To apply for a grant to support the shop and hall planning and consultancy costs.

**17/604 Amenities Charity – to receive an update on activities.**

RM had attended their last meeting. They have decided they would no longer spend money on grounds maintenance at White Hill Quarry. Historically SSPC had asked the Amenities Charity to maintain and to date it has had two strims a year. They believe to maintain fully it needs four a year with a cost of approx. £1k.

JV suggested leaving it as a wildlife haven. RM suggested that the Charity have formed an opinion that it does not need management. There is no public right of way through the site. Others had no strong views.

**17/605 Finance**

**1 To approve the payments report and note receipts for July 2017**

**Resolved:** That the report be approved.

**2 To note the reconciled bank account and reserves balances as at 31st July 2017**

**Resolved:** Noted

**3 To review expenditure against budget as at 16 August 2017**

**Resolved:** That the following adjustments to the budget be approved following the setup of the new accounting package:

1. Move £100 from Cllrs expenses to Clerk's expenses.
2. Additional budget of £300 for office supplies
3. Additional budget of £150 for utilities

**17/606 To consider the situation regarding grass cutting and whether to obtain quotes.**

BU suggested that to properly control ad-hoc grass cutting requirements we need to obtain quotes which should include a minimum of £10m public liability to match OCC's criteria.

**Resolved:** That GD review requirements and obtain quotes.

**17/607 To consider asking SODC to review whether TPOs might be advisable at land off Woodcote Road.**

RM had circulated information regarding a potential planning application off Woodcote Road, for which a Tree Survey would be included. He has been told by the owner / developer that there are no proposals to remove further trees.

**Resolved:** To ask SODC to review the trees and consider whether any should be subject to a TPO.

**17/608 To review progress on actions**

See list below - new comments being in bold.

**17/609 To receive items of correspondence and agree actions arising.**

CR had received a response from Sharon Crawford to the complaint sent to Acting CEO Mark Stone, SODC.

AS did not believe the response was accurate and some important issues had not been answered regarding ridge heights.

**Resolved:** That AS draft a response to be circulated by email before submission.

**17/610 Matters for future discussion**

Regarding a revised budget for the village Hall & Shop project it was noted that draft papers would be needed in advance of a meeting to consider.

RM noted that consideration of The Park and its future potential usage would take place at the September meeting. To-date the PC had received suggestions for:

- Two garden extensions
- Two hard tennis courts
- An area for school usage for sport and recreation

**17/611 Next Meeting** – confirmed as Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 19:30 in South Stoke Village Hall.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:55

**Abbreviations:**

<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>OCC</b>	Oxfordshire County Council
<b>SODC</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>SOHA</b>	SOHA Housing
<b>SSPC</b>	South Stoke Parish Council
<b>TPO</b>	Tree Protection Order

Minute	Item	Action/Progress	Action By	Complete/ review date	Status
	The Website	Training to be given to CR in updating the website		August 2017	Complete
	Parish Plan Refresh (PPR)	<b>Housing Development Project SSHDP</b> <b>Cllr McMillan</b>  See minute 17/581 <b>See minute 17/600</b>	RM	Unknown	Open
		<b>Network Rail &amp; Electrification Infrastructure</b> <b>Cllr Urbick</b>  The line between Didcot and Reading is now electrified.  19/6/17 BU stated NWR had been chased regarding consultation but no reply yet <b>21/8/17 See Notes re John Howell MP discussion – no change to process.</b>	BU	Unknown	Open
		<b>Better Road Safety</b> <b>Cllr Walsh</b>  Summary – SSPC are seeking to improve road safety through the village in discussion with OCC. Speed monitoring has been carried out.  22 May 2017 A constructive meeting with Keith Stenning and Mark Francis from OCC had taken place and the results of the survey would support changing the speed limits. There was no support for 20mph in the village except for The Street because of the Primary School and the frequent walkers using the Ridgeway National Trail which traverses this road. Various ideas had been discussed and would now be subject to consultation, the preparation of costs and quotations plus any financial support from OCC. It was asked that a report on these matters should be available ahead of the June PC meeting. The Police could be involved and Trust Oxfordshire may help with a grant towards the costs.  19 June 2017 OCC have proposed they will fund a gate at either end of the village on B4009. To replace the current 30mph signs with larger ones, to redo the roundels, tidy all road markings and fit a pole for a flashing speed sign. They would not agree to count-down markers before the limit. MW is trying to obtain costs for a pinch point and stated flashing speed signs would be ~£7k each. It was agreed to accept OCC's offer and review the extras should funding be identified.  <b>Questions were posed regarding design of and potential sponsors for the gates</b>	MW	September 2017	Open
	Parish Tree Management	The number of location of trees on public land to be identified. RM agreed to continue his work mapping			

Minute	Item	Action/Progress	Action By	Complete/ review date	Status
		all trees within public areas of the greater part of the Village.	RM	September 2017	Open
17/598	Shop and Village Hall Project	<b>Shop and Village Hall Project</b> <b>21/8/17 Pre-App response received. Budget required for next stage.</b>	RM	September 2017	Open
17/599	Dovecot Manor Farm	<b>Repairs to Dovecot</b> <b>21/8/17 RM to speak to owners</b>	RM	September 2017	Open
17/606	Grass cutting Quotes	<b>Ad-Hoc grass cutting</b> <b>21/8/17 GD to obtain quotes</b>	GD	December 2017	Open

Notes appended to council meeting on 21 August 2017

### **Visit of John Howell MP**

John Howell (JH) had written to town and parish councils suggesting meetings with councils / residents during the summer recess. SSPC had taken up the offer and were pleased to welcome JH and his Chief of Staff Angie Paterson to the village.

### School

David Kennedy (DK) (on behalf of the school governors) asked two questions:

1. South Stoke has a rural primary school with around 50 pupils. The government's white paper of April 2016 made academisation mandatory (even for our little school) by 2022. Justine Greening's statement to the commons in October 2016 removed the mandatory condition but did not change the direction of the government's ambition. Small rural schools like South Stoke Primary are not attractive business acquisitions for established academies and do not have the management strengths to form a multi-academy trust.

Are small rural schools like ours doomed under the government's current policy?

2. Recent governments have prioritised schooling in their rhetoric but in real terms total government expenditure on education has fallen from around 11.6% of GDP in 2010 when David Cameron came to power to around 8.7% of GDP in 2017. At the same time the government has announced that per pupil funding is planned to drop further in real terms in the next three years which will jeopardise the financial stability of our small school.

Does the government have any better plan?

JH said there was no inkling from government that it wants to close small schools. There have been a number of moves within the constituency from schools thinking about becoming academies, Kidmore End has just become one. Neither is there any aim to make schools into businesses, but trying to provide a mechanism to improve schools by limiting the influence of the County Council. The choice in South Stoke is purely down to the school as to whether academisation would be useful or not, the mandatory aspect has now been removed. He wished to correct the impression that it is to create a 'business'.

DK said he understood the thrust to improve education but if it were to join an academy the school itself ceases to exist, it becomes a business; also that the ODST programme is closed to South Stoke due to numbers.

JH said he was happy to take that up with them; he could look to see what options exist and what grouping has already taken place within the constituency.

Regarding funding JH said there had been a statement in the commons regarding the current problem and to look to the future with a new funding formula, he was in the F40 group supporting those with very poor funding and deprivation. The formula needed to be fairer and the first attempt was not supportable. He had a meeting with senior schools heads and the minister and £4,800 pp was the figure that came from that meeting. It was hoped that it is a fair funding formula adjusted with a guarantee that no school will lose out in real terms. He would send a copy of her speech.

Bryan Urbick (BU) said that PPF was not fair with the small number of students in rural schools and that a different calculation for small schools was needed.

JH said Nicky Morgan recently spoke of the need for rural schools to look at their budget in terms of sustainability and was interested in hearing about ideas. He was also meeting with South Stoke Primary School in the near future.

### Network Rail

BU discussed the electrification programme; Network Rail has apologised and has made promises of consultation and budget allocation. There has been no consultation yet, they have gone very quiet and are changing their language to mitigation and information rather than consultation. Taken together with Mr Grayling's statement that they are not doing so much electrification is worrying. How can we get them back to the table and with bi-mode usage, why not take out the gantries in this area?

JH said he had met Network Rail and Great Western Railway recently and was told that electrification on this line will continue, nothing has changed yet and he still expects the consultation to take place. He agrees the gantries are very noticeable and is happy to take the issue up again.

BU said he would send some information to JH to show Network Rail are dragging their heels.

### Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

Roy McMillan (RM) said that South Stoke Parish Council had loosely considered whether to attempt a NP. As a small parish of approx. 500 residents there was concern, not of financing, but of the resourcing of local people to carry it out. He also raised questions over the value of a NP given recent problems in Henley even with a made plan.

JH said that the Henley Standard was completely wrong. The recent appeal was about SODC's 3 year land supply which is crucial and JH was instrumental in getting the guidance changed temporarily from 5 to 3 years if a NP is in place. SODC still believe they have 3 years supply, the inspector didn't agree by a shortfall of one house and therefore gave permission for the development. He said Henley's loss is

everyone else's gain. If SODC are right then there is a 3 year supply, if the inspector is right then there certainly now is with the extra development.

He discussed what a NP should cover; there are at least two models, Thame at a cost of £120k and Woodcote, funded mainly by grants. He discussed difficulties encountered in Benson and Chinnor who didn't initially progress their plans. The moment they decided not to, they were set upon by developers and now in both places prodigious developments are taking place. Benson is now working very hard to produce a NP very quickly and Chinnor's is soon to go for referendum. A NP does need some effort to be part of SODC's policy suite.

RM said with only 500 residents he was concerned it would take an enormous amount of goodwill. He said under existing plans, small villages such as South Stoke are infill only but that may of course change and be allocated a percentage increase. The parish council have had a housing development group working with the Oxford Diocese regarding a small development in the village. They have a plan, have had consultations and are ready to submit a pre-app to SODC for advice.

JH said previous allocations are out of the window as there is no 5 year supply and therefore everywhere without a NP is open to speculative development, he asked how much do South Stoke want to review and protect the village? There is an appetite for affordable housing, and if that is what you want there is no reason why that shouldn't be included. He made a speech recently on the future of NPs which included they should have the ability to include affordability.

BU said SODC have 4,000 on their housing list so it is a factor for them JH said to see where the need is greatest though – in Didcot and Wallingford, not rural villages. Local communities need to have the power to write their own plans and he is trying hard to keep standing up for individual communities.

Chris Bertrand said that SODC's primary aim is to build more housing and NPs are about where houses should be built but one cannot choose no development.

JH said NPs are not mandatory, but when looked at overall NPs have in fact meant more numbers have been allocated as the plans have looked closely at what a village wants and needs. Given the two consultations and recent housing needs survey part of the work in developing a NP is done.

RM said it is difficult to keep a suitable number as affordable and also available to locals. JH said he would be holding the Minister to account on the subject and gave details of how he has spent time supporting local NPs such as Benson, Goring and Shiplake and is committed to providing help and information.

Gareth Dean (GD) said the suggestion of a larger school in Goring might pull in local children and threaten South Stoke Primary. JH said it was an issue for the village, the whole purpose of a NP is to look at local requirements and sort it out locally. The Goring situation was not as simple as some have suggested. The developer is only

prepared to build a school if development takes place on land the NP does not believe is suitable and the numbers at Goring school does not mean they are turning people away, they are short of pupils.

Janet Jones said Oxfordshire is the most expensive place to live and public sector workers will not be able to live here, are there any plans?

JH said that Oxford City Council is now reluctantly putting together a local plan to address that issue. They have developed huge areas of land solely for business with no thought of where workers will live. The City Council have said other districts can take more but that is shipping the problem out of Oxford. He said that is an appalling way of doing it. Knowing a lot of work goes into developing a plan, he has argued the answer is reducing the scope of District Plans and Government is listening. He is encouraging Oxford City to get on with it.

CB asked about the availability of assisted mortgages, JH said there is such support including the new savings arrangement to assist in getting a mortgage.

Paul Jenkins (PJ) asked questions about MPs pay and the first past the post election system.

Replies not recorded as being relevant to the aim of the meeting.

C. Ratcliff

Clerk to South Stoke Parish Council