



## **Minutes of a Meeting of the South Stoke Parish Council**

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7:30pm, South Stoke Village Hall**

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Victor Meyer (VM)  
John Verrill (JV)  
Deane Mallinson (DM)  
Tina Haslam (TM)  
David Kennedy (DK)  
Andrew Scrivener (AS)

**Members of Public Present: 20 MOP**

**Meeting Started: 19:30**

### **Public Forum: (10)**

*MOP1: speaking on behalf of the neighbour's behalf on the park project. We would like to thank DK for all of the time and effort in discussing this with the neighbours, we unfortunately are not in full agreement with the full plan, mainly to do with the allotments and buildings, we still feel there is a small disproportionate bias to the interests of the wildlife group and is not in the interests of the village as a whole. It is noted that there has been a number of compromises that have been promised in writing, but did not appear in the plan. There apparently have been other consultations and it should be noted that we would like to know who these have been with.*

*MOP2: The wildlife group have no formal involvement officially with the park project.*

*MOP 3: What would the park neighbours like to have in the project? Neighbours - we have requested a smaller space for buildings and allotments and giving more of the space to the wider community – this plan was submitted to the council for consideration on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August.*

*MOP 4: Speaking on behalf of the supporters of the community garden: We believe the current plan creates an asset to the village, it would increase biodiversity, create a tranquil place for children to learn how to grow food. The plan has been devised with specialised experts and other similar groups who have successfully created community spaces. Concerted effort has been made to appease the Neighbour Group and create a compromise that will benefit across the community. There will be many new opportunities for learning, the garden will be different to the rec, which would produce low noise once up and running. There would be clear guidance on how the garden can be used and what can be done. It is hoped the council will accept the £25,000 funding from TOE to provide water, a poly tunnel and compost bays for the area. It is asked that the council approve the proposed planning application and submit to SODC and accept the TOE funding.*



**1. To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given**  
None

**2. Declarations of interest**

DK is a neighbour to the water meadow  
JV has a connection to the church.

**3. To consider requests for dispensations**

None

**4. To approve the minutes of previous council meetings**

- Parish Council Meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

***Resolved:*** Minutes were approved and signed.

**5. Chairman's Announcements**

There are a number of differing views on The Park Project both within the Council and the Community, which makes this a challenging task, and it is requested that everyone respects the right to have a view and right to respond. It is asked that the focus is on the end goal of creating an asset to the community. It is noted that some members of the community/council may be disappointed in the end result.

**6. County and District Councillor Reports**

Report was circulated. It is noted there is a number of grants available and it is advised that everyone takes note and advises the council if there is something that should be looked to be pursued to that a proportionate approach to applications across the community can be taken.

***Resolved:*** Noted.

**7. Parish Finance and Administration**

7.1. To receive and approve SSPC invoices for payment.

payee	invoice number	description	subtotal	VAT	total payable £
Sinead Archer		Aug salary	496.80		£496.80
Yvonne Peet		Aug salary	125.20		£125.20



HMRC		PAYE Aug	31.20		£31.20
Moore	319791	external audit fee 2022/23	210.00	42.00	£252.00
Goring Press	8004	Aug/Sept edition printing	385.33		£385.33
Starboards Systems Ltd	INV 4474	Scribe annual renewal - finance software	345.60	69.12	£414.72
OALC	W-2779	training - finance for councillors - Victor Meyer 7/9/23	30.00	6.00	£36.00
OALC	W-2778	training - precept and budget setting - Victor Meyer 7/9/23	30.00	6.00	£36.00
Zurich Insurance	5.27E+08	Annual insurance renewal - SSPC, Village Hall and Rec Ground	1097.40	131.69	£1,229.09
David Kennedy	505770-1	payment to Passinc Ltd for existing site plan of Park for planning app	59.99	12.00	£71.99
Dr Peter Wardle	2023/1108	archaeological desk top study - The Historic Environment Consultancy - Park Project	640.00	128.00	£768.00
SSPC		intial depost cheque	500.00		£500.00
Graham Ambler	57788	Grass cutting x 4 August	88.00		£88.00
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4,039.52</b>	<b>£352.81</b>	<b>£4,434.33</b>

**Resolved:** Unanimously approved and signed in the meeting.

7.2. To review the budget, discuss and approve changes to ear-marked reserves

Noted that some of the headings on the Scribe software are different to what was done manually at the beginning of the year. It is suggested that a full review against manual and system is done as there has been some jiggling around to make it match/add up as per the Audit requirements.

**Resolved:** Unanimously decided to defer, RFO to circulate a reconciliation of ear marks to be fully reviewed. Full budget review to be completed in October. RFO to check budgeted amounts on scribe and report this back.

7.3. To provide an update on moving the TSB bank account to Unity Trust Bank and approve actions.

Unity Bank submission has been completed, and in order to finalise the account set up the Bank form needs to be signed and submitted. Bank forms were signed in the meeting by YB, VM and AS.



**Resolved:** *Unanimously agreed and noted.*

- 7.4. To review and agree Insurance renewal

Insurance has had a small increase for the new park equipment and is index linked so it has now increased to £1229.29. It is noted we that the policy should be reviewed as park project progresses.

**Resolved:** *Unanimously agreed and noted.*

- 7.5. To receive the external audit and complete the Notice of Conclusion of Audit Report received and Notice has been placed on the notice board.

**Resolved:** *Unanimously agreed and noted.*

- 7.6. To discuss any other items relating to the administration and finances of the SSPC and approve actions.

A VAT reclaim will happen at the end of September.

## **8. To Review Governance Documents**

- 8.1. To review and approve the Financial Risk and Reserves Policy  
Updates were circulated by VM, to all Cllrs for review in August.

**Resolved:** *Unanimously agreed and noted.*

- 8.2. To receive RFO update on OALC guidance on the financial policies/procedures and approve.

Nothing received to date, RFO has compared SSPC documents with other local councils and is happy that SSPC is compliant with the templates provided.

**Resolved:** *Motion to approve the changes above – unanimously approved.*

- 8.3. To review and approve the Grants Policy



VM has said there was no changes to be made, but not all Councillors had seen the policy.

**Resolved:** *Unanimously to defer and the Clerk to circulate the policy to all Cllrs.*

8.4. To complete review and assign H&S Councillor Responsibilities.

VM and DM to share the responsibility of the H&S role

**Resolved:** *Unanimously agreed and noted.*

## **9. Committees and Community Groups**

To receive any reports and updates since the last PC meeting and approve actions:

9.1. The Park Project

- To receive an update on Park Project matters from Cllr Kennedy

Fencing has been completed, orchard trees has been purchased, the provisional footpath has been mowed twice. A few of the standard trees have failed and MTG will replace these.

DK met with the Neighbours and has had productive discussions, but noted it is inevitable that there will be different viewpoints. There has been some rearrangement of the plant beds and footpath, and bins being moved away from neighbours' boundaries.

Highways have been contacted regarding the footpath, and this feedback has been included in the planning application. When it comes to be built there will be consultation with the neighbourhood group.

The archaeology study has been completed and nothing has been flagged up. There may be an SODC requirement for a trial trench to be dug.

The cost of the planning application cost is £295 + £60 for the use of the portal. A decision on TOE funding needs to be made.

Chiltern Conservation Board and MTG will be coming to look at the park tomorrow 12<sup>th</sup> September at 2:15, this is due to the largest funding they have awarded. The invite to attend has been extended to all Cllrs and the



Neighbourhood group.

DM – raised objections on the fencing as it does not appear to meet standard industry specification. There was a general discussion of how the PC become comfortable with the specification, and how invoices are raised and paid. Learnings will be applied to works going forwards.

DM also flagged issues to be looked at with respect to the area allocated to the School, particularly the access gates and barbed wire.

JV noted that he struggles to get on board with using MTG funding for landscaping a garden when MTG funding was for screening. MOP informed the PC that MTG has stated that funding is split into landscaping and screening.

***Resolved:*** Report was noted along with the need to see the Process Flowcharts requested by AS.

- To receive draft Planning Application and approve for submission to SODC

DK: Stated that he worked with the learnings from AS with his dealings with the shop application, and the planning portal guidance and advice received from SODC to create the draft plan that has been proposed, it requires some final tweaks the version 13, DK recommends this evening that the draft plan is approved and moved to submit to SODC for planning.

AS: We do not have a plan in front of us to agree to, has concerns with the current layout. Asked if the footpath can go through the allotments with a gate. Broadly supportive of the plan and was hoping for some images to have been brought up this evening.

DK: highlighted that the footpath is moved to go between the orchard, and movement of two community area buildings. There is no material change to what has been recommended.

DM: thinks the plan is very well put together, the only point is he would like to see a 50/50 split on allotments and community garden.

TH: The park was given to the whole village, and not to those who live nearby



– the community want access to it, and there is a lot of support in the park and gaining access to this space that has been given to the village. It will be a great way to learn and connect with others within the village, and there is something for everybody. Funding has been received as it benefits the community, the project has been scrutinised to minute detail and should be submitted to an dependant body SODC and any objections can be given to SODC as part of the planning process.

JV: There is a risk the allotments could be quite untidy, and does not see the point in the pond when we have the river. Does not agree with the Poly tunnel and it is unsightly, and this plan needs more tweaking before it is submitted and not happy to move to submit this planning application.

VM: we have divergent views, and it would be great to have a unanimous approval to submit this application. It is important that everyone is able to have sight of the plans in a public forum, it is important to do this quickly and that the PC is not being seen to be dragging their heels. A special mention to DK who has put in huge amounts of time and effort to get to this point. An open discussion and display should help everyone feel that due diligence has been taken.

DK: What is the desired outcome of the open dialogue with the community?

VM: There is a forum where for a couple of hours the PC can listen to all members of the community who can raise comments directly to the Cllrs for review.

***Resolved:*** *Unanimously agreed to defer the planning application by 4 weeks, with an action to vote on the planning application at the next PC meeting. Further agreed that an information consultation should be set up within 2 weeks.*

- To note the areas of the Park allocated for the Church burial ground extension and to agree that such areas are reserved for this purpose.

***Resolved:*** *Deferred.*

- To note the allotment indications of interest and to discuss whether the PC supports the inclusion of allotments as part of the Park Project



**Resolved: Deferred.**

- To discuss any other Park Project items and agree actions

**Resolved: Deferred.**

#### 9.2. South Stoke Community Shop

- Update from Councillor Scrivener and discuss and agree any actions  
No Updates.
- To receive the letter from the Shop requesting the written agreement of the PC (as Trustee for South Stoke Village Hall and Recreation Ground) to a rolling month-to-month extension of the Shop Lease, and approve countersigning

**Resolved: Unanimously agreed, document was signed.**

#### 9.3. Amenities Charity

- To note minutes from the recent AC meeting and receive any updates on AC matters

In relation to the AC's previous request for the reinstatement of regular council funds, VM has requested a breakdown of the AC projected operating financial shortfall for further consideration.

This will be provided in time for the October council meeting as the AC 's financial person is away currently.

Finally, the heaters in the village hall have been replaced, so a vote of thanks from the AC to the PC for financing that cost.

**Resolved: Received and noted.**

- To receive a grant request for a £500 contribution for the purchase of an outdoor rowing machine for the Rec and agree actions

The AC received a grant of £1000 from SODC towards the cost and raised another £500 from the BBQ. If successful in this PC request, the £2000 total would cover all costs including installation.

**Resolved: Unanimously agreed and approved to make the payment under S137.**





## 10. Planning

10.1. To consider current planning applications and approve response to planning authority.

- P23/S2860/HH - White Gables Wallingford Road South Stoke  
*Single storey rear extension with timber cut flat roof and double glazed roof lantern. New structural opening to existing dwelling.*

**Resolved:** *It was unanimously agreed to defer the decision to be made via email.*

- P23/S2908/HH - Robins Mead South Stoke Reading RG8 OJH  
*Installation of ground mounted solar panels in the rear garden, in addition to the area allowed by permitted development.*

Application was withdrawn.

**Resolved:** *noted.*

10.2. To note planning decisions made.

- P23/S1596/FUL - Middle Barn Little Stoke  
*The application is for: Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and erection of two new agricultural buildings, Conversion of existing grain storage building to provide small holiday accommodation. Provision of bin and bike storage, amenity space, parking and landscaping ( As amplified by additional Ecological information received 18 May 2023 and contaminated land information received 9 August 2023 and amended by revised site plan, floor plan and design and access statement received 30 August 2023). – GRANTED*
- P23/S2254/S73 and P23/S2235/LB - Devonshire House The Street South Stoke  
*Variation of condition 2 (Approved plans) on planning application P22/S0129/HH (Proposed internal alterations and extension to new-build element of property) - to alter the openings in the gable from three openings to one glazed gable. – GRANTED*

**Resolved:** *noted.*

## 11. Water Meadows

11.1. To note the correspondence received from an MoP and agree actions

VM is happy to draft a response and circulate before sending this to the MoP

**Resolved:** *Unanimously agreed.*



## 11.2. To receive any further updates or communications from Savills

Many of the identified concerns have been raised and addressed. Noted there may be a digging ditch obligation. The lease would be for 20 years, there are no break clauses as there is a cap on the rent review. There is no exit clause on the lease.

No decision has yet been made on taking on the lease of the water meadows, and there is no planned date for the consultation at this point. It was thought joining this to the park project consultation may not be the best place as it may dilute the community response.

AS: it is 44 acres that the village currently does not have full access to at the moment. The lease would come with few obligations with a rental of £1000 per year with a rent review every three years with a 10% increase cap. I do think we should consult at this stage, but it should not stop us from committing to the land. We should consult on what to do with the land at a later date. Would be happy to take the lead on the consultation.

VM: this is a good opportunity, and it would be remiss of the PC to lose public access to this land, this in reality is a cheap offer, there is CIL money set aside that would cover this, there is a number of community groups who are interested in contributing to the use of this land. It is the PC's role to help develop this area as a community area, but do we as the PC have the resources available to do this. Do we have the costs for the legal fees for both the PC and Savills as these would be liable to be paid by the PC. JV: It is anticipated that this would be in the region of £2,000 - £5,000 for legal costs. Noted that there is a possibly application for a footpath from the street to the frontage, but that would be on the definitive map and opens it up to anyone to see.

***Resolved:*** Savills updates were noted.

## 11.3. To discuss the final Heads of Terms and agree actions

TH: why should we pay Savills for something we already have access to, and disagrees with the footpath point – this would allow permanent access to the water meadows indefinitely if this got approved.

There was disagreement over the benefit of the right of way and the benefit this would bring to the village.



TH: Has a private mooring which is separate to the Savills agreement and the PC lease would not affect this. Is there more information on the 5 moorings, and can there be more information be provided and clarification on what the PC is going to do? DM to circulate his findings from his own investigations.

DK: The registry plan of the land has been received, thank you for this. It excludes the piece of land between two properties – JV: this was red lined as land that may be approved for development and is excluded.

DK: Would like a consultation before this is signed.

**Resolved:** *Agreed that the discussion on the water meadow is deferred to the next meeting.*

## **12. Correspondence and Miscellaneous Matters**

- 12.1. Correspondence has been received about dog waste bins being removed. SODC have offered to replace the dog waste bin with a black bin as dog waste can now be included in black bins FOC to a location that is suitable.

AS to circulate where there were numerous other bins have been removed to be raised.

**Resolved:** *It was Unanimously agreed to accept the offer.*

- 12.2. To receive an update on discussions on the community impact of third-party events hosted at the School.

No update

- 12.3. To receive an update on extending the registration for the Perch and Pike as an asset of community value and agree actions.

Clerk submitted the forms in August and has received feedback that more extensive information is required. SODC have explained there the process is now more rigorous compared to when the Perch and Pike was originally listed. Clerk to fully review and resubmit supporting evidence.



**Resolved:** Clerk to move this forward

- 12.4. To receive an update on submitted deep cleanse areas to SODC.

Deep Cleanse has been completed, it was noted that there may be some additional cleaning required.

**Resolved:** noted.

- 12.5. To update on the finances for the speed watch sign.

There is £4,763.65 ear marked reserves from inherited accounts for the Speed sign.

**Resolved:** This was noted and to be moved up to a subsequent agenda and include a speed watch group.

- 12.6. To discuss updates on the defibrillator and support of the phone box/phone box restoration by the Amenities Charity.

AC are still awaiting the status of our application for a Councillor Community Grant to refurbish / install defibrillator in the phone box.

A working group will be set up with DM and a member from AC.

**Resolved:** noted.

### **13. The Newsletter**

- 13.1. To agree list of items from this agenda to be included in the next edition of the parish newsletter.

VM, PW and Clerk will be arranging a date for discussions on advertising.

VM to write a summary for the newsletter.

### **14. Matters for confidential discussion.**

### **15. Matters for future discussion.**

Poppies and wreath to be purchased for the war memorial. JV to lead on this.



**Resolved:** Unanimously Agreed.

**16. To confirm date of the next meeting.**

It was agreed that the next meeting is to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 19:30pm Village Hall.

**Meeting Closed 22:00**