

## **MINUTES of the Meeting of Stanton Parish Council held on 10 March 2016 at Stanton Community Village Hall at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** A Shelton (Chairman), I Engall (Vice-Chairman), B Smithson, J Miller, J Mann, R Genn, N Chapman.

**Also Present:** County Councillor Joanna Spicer and Borough Councillor Jim Thorndyke. Pc Arondel – Suffolk Police (By request).

- 1. Apologies for absence accepted:** K McDonald, F J Hart, M Scowcroft.
- 2. To read, consider and approve the minutes of the previous meeting:** 11 February 2016. Proposed by I Engall and seconded by B Smithson.
- 3. Public Forum:** Time limited to 15 minutes with 5 minutes allowed for each question/answer.

Two residents attended the meeting from Michaelhouse Way and Honeymeade Close to voice their concerns about the level of burglaries recently in the village which they considered had not been helped by the street lights being turned off overnight and invited Pc Arondel to respond.

Pc Arondel reported that there had been 4 dwelling burglaries in the last 5 weeks in the Village which is a significant increase from the norm. They have been linked by forensic evidence to a series which is currently being experienced in Stanton, Hopton, Hepworth, Barningham and Great Barton since the beginning of January 2016. Properties targeted tend to be unoccupied and when the residents are away. They appear to be part of the 'lock snapping' series. Residents are urged to take measures to protect themselves including leaving lights on in different rooms and drawing curtains. Crime prevention material is available from the police. In addition, a Hopton resident answered her door to a 'foreign sounding' lady who asked to see her door key as she had 'come to check locks for security'. Two days after that incident a nearby property was burgled and the two may be connected.

Residents are urged to call 101 with any suspicious activity (999 in an emergency).

Cllr Spicer responded that street lights can be turned on temporarily when there is a need such as this and she would be requesting the same to reassure residents. Cllr Thorndyke commiserated with the residents saying that he had been a recent victim of crime himself and felt that street lights may have been a deterrent had they been on.

Cllr Miller agreed that street lights made residents feel safer. Cllr Smithson commented that if lights were off then offenders could not be seen.

One resident attended the meeting to ask Councillors to explain why the Council Tax had increased by 8% this year. Chairman Shelton responded that the increase had been necessary to cover a number of projects planned for this year including complete refurbishment of the play area at a cost of £70,000 and refurbishment of the public toilets. There had been training and additional costs for staff and an increase in the cost of the grass cutting contract. The Council Tax Support Grant from St Edmundsbury Council has been reduced this financial year to £1,194 from £2,388 last year so a reduction of 50%. The Parish Revenue Support Grant from the Government has been reduced over two years resulting in a reduction from £5,762 last financial year to £1,799 this year so a reduction of 69%. Unlike the Borough and County council, we have no other form of income so any additional cost or reduction in grant has to come from a reduced service to the village or an increase in the precept. The resident asked for a copy of the balance sheet – Clerk to deal.

The Chairman thanked the residents for coming to the meeting.

- 4. Report from:**
  - a. B Cllr J Thorndyke** reported that not many residents had yet signed up for the brown bin collections. A leaflet will be circulated on 4 April to explain how the scheme will work. Cllr

Miller asked how the council would identify those who had paid. Cllr Thorndyke to make enquiries and report back. **The Parish Conference** will be at the Stanton Community Village Hall on Monday 11 April at 6pm and all Councillors are encouraged to attend. No sites have been identified for the Gypsy short stay site consultation. This is still ongoing.

- b. **S C Cllr J Spicer** reported that a meeting had been arranged for Wednesday 23 March in respect of Highways issues and in particular the situation at George Hill with the dangerous pathway. The meeting will take place at 8.30am in the Terry Bray Room followed by a site visit if necessary. Clerk to collate a list of areas of concern and contact Police to invite them to attend.

Local GP Surgery issues – there has been another GP surgery meeting and police reported complaints from residents about parking issues. Cllr Miller felt that the Doctors were working hard to resolve any issues and the sudden closure of Hopton had increased the volume of residents using the surgery but it was not a huge issue and we should try and support the surgery as best we could until the new facilities were built in Hopton.

Cllr Chapman reported that the Grundle was coping better but had overflowed at least 5 times on 9/3/16 with the very heavy rain the previous day. A local family affected by potential flooding had been in the area all day clearing the branches that had been washed down. The main problem was a build-up of silt and undergrowth along the watercourse which caused the water to back up behind it. CCllr Spicer said that will be raised with the County Council at the meeting on 23 March.

Chairman Shelton raised the issue of street lights not being repaired. Clerk to collate details and present to the March Highways meeting.

- c. **Suffolk Constabulary** – In addition to the information given in the public report above, Pc Arondel reported changes to Suffolk Constabulary from 4 April. Ixworth Police Station will be closed to the public but will remain open as a base station for officers. Changes to the PCSO structure meant that routine patrols will be reduced but police will still attend Parish Meetings where there is a particular issue to be discussed. CCllr Spicer commented that communication about the changes had been poor with little consultation.

## 5. Clerk's Report: (Items not referred to elsewhere)

### Matters arising from minutes of meeting 11 February

Item 7a – **Annual Parish Meeting** booked for Wednesday 25 May at 7pm

Item 7b – **Public Bench – Meadow Court**. Has been removed by Havebury and the area made good.

Item 8f – **Play Area improvement**. A letter from a member of the public concerned at the poor state of the equipment was read out. Funding applications update – Awards for All not successful. Awaiting to hear from Suffolk Foundation, Havebury and Greggs. Other sources being researched. Contractor agreed to hold prices until April 2016 when prices will rise by 2% which will add £1300.

Councillors agreed that the play area was a priority for the village and £35,000 has been set aside from reserves to renew the equipment which will cost £70,000. However, in the meantime due to the poor state of the equipment and a recent inspection of the equipment by the Borough Council it was proposed by Cllr Engall and seconded by Cllr Mann that the play area be closed temporarily to allow the dangerous equipment to be removed. Clerk to continue to try and source additional funds and report back to the April Meeting.

No queries raised with report.

## 6. Statutory Business/Governance

- a. The resignation of Councillor Unsworth due to moving house was accepted. Councillor Chapman notified the meeting that his resignation was rescinded. Clerk to notify Elections Office and post necessary notices. Vacancy to be advertised on Facebook page.
- b. Council moved to adopt the Equal Opportunities Policy with immediate effect.

7. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Miller declared an interest in item 14b

8. **Matters for discussion:**

- a. **Councillor responsibilities.** The list of responsibilities was circulated and agreed.
- b. **Replacement bench – war memorial.** Chairman Shelton reported that the previous decision to remove the bench at the war memorial should be rescinded and an alternative sought as the bench was well used whilst residents waited for buses. All agreed. Clerk to source possible replacements.
- c. **Policing and Burglary in the village.** Covered by the Police report above.
- d. **Cars parked on verges notice.** Clerk produced a notice that can be used on offending vehicles. Circulated for use as and when necessary.
- e. **Duke Street – Mud on road.** Cllr Engall asked that it be minuted that a local framer continued to leave mud on the road in Duke Street despite a letter from the Council asking him to tidy up the deposits. Clerk has reported matter to County Council and it will be raised at the Highways meeting on 23 March.

9. **Recreation Ground & Car Park:**

- a. **Stanton FC – request for funding for floodlights.** After discussion Councillors agreed that they were unable to make a donation as there was no provision in the budget to do so and the application was refused. Clerk to inform the Club that requests for donations and grants should be made prior to the Annual budget meeting in November.
- b. **Multi Sports Area maintenance proposal update.** Awaiting further quote – defer.
- c. **Request for overnight parking – Recreation Ground car park.** A request for a motorhome to park overnight on two nights to attend a local wedding was agreed. Clerk to advise.
- d. **Grass Cutting contract.** New tender document and specification for grass cutting contract completed with Cllr Mann and invitation sent to 5 local companies for consideration. 3 companies asked for specifications. One failed to respond by the cut-off date. One responded that they were too busy to consider the contract after being sent specifications. A completed tender was received from Vertas Group (Was EFMS Grounds Service and held the contract for the previous two years) The quote of £15,157.06 is an increase of 15% on the previous two years but in the absence of any other quotation it was moved that the tender be accepted. Proposed by Cllr Smithson and seconded by Cllr Genn. Clerk to inform and ask for early response to cut Recreation Ground.

10. **Accounts**

- a. **The accounts were approved** by Cllr Mann and seconded by Cllr Chapman.
- b. **Additional hours** and expenses for training for the Clerk were approved.

PAYMENTS	£NET	£VAT	£GROSS	WHAT FOR	EXP.POWER
Talk Talk (Feb)	33.50	6.70	40.20	Telephone and internet charges	LGA 1972 S111
EON (Feb)	13.30	0.70	14.00	Monthly electricity floodlights	LGA 1972 S111
EON (Feb)	14.25	0.75	15.00	Monthly electricity pumphouse	LGA 1972 S111
Anglian Water	7.00		7.00	Monthly water chge pumphouse	LGA 1972 S111
Wyken Farm	5.00		5.00	Annual Allotments rent	LGA 1972 S111
Tripp Batt & Co Ltd	8.91	1.78	10.69	Broom and handle	LGA 1972 S111
Anglian Water	162.19		162.19	Quarterly water - Village Hall	LGA 1972 S111
SALC	45.00	9.00	54.00	Training - Clerk	LGA 1972 S111
HMRC	216.80		216.80	PAYE	LGA 1972 S112
Ladywell Accountant	123.00		123.00	Accountancy services PAYE	LGA 1972 S112
Joy Hart	288.80		288.80	Clerks Salary	LGA 1972 S112
Lewis Alen	40.80		40.80	Weekend Litter Picker	LGA 1972 S112
Kenneth Brown	420.00		420.00	Street Cleaner	LGA 1972 S112
HMRC	100.70		100.70	VAT payable	LGA 1972 S111

RECEIPTS				
HMRC VAT Repay	4,666.54		4,666.54	
HMRC VAT Repay	2,670.58		2,670.58	

**11. Items for noting**

- a. **Local Councillor publication** - Noted
- b. **Commemorative medal offer** - Noted

**12. Correspondence from Borough and County Councils**

- a. **Play Area Inspection Reports** - Noted

**13. Planning Applications:**

- a. **New Applications received**

DC/16/0244/FUL | Planning Application - Replacement of existing flat roof to pitched roof over garage block | Garage Block Honeymeade Close Stanton Suffolk. (Anthony Mann)  
**Response** – The Council feel that a pitched roof will be in keeping with the area and will enhance the area concerned. No objections.

- b. **Previous applications decided**

**REFUSED** DC/15/2496/HH | Householder Planning Application - A single storey outbuilding providing ancillary residential accommodation (demolition of existing single storey outbuilding) | Hilary Holden, The Old Mill Barningham Road Stanton Suffolk IP31 2AD

- c. **Other planning matters** – It was agreed that a planning Committee meeting will be held on Thursday 24 March. Clerk to produce agenda and circulate.

**14. Correspondence:**

- a. **Late Correspondence.** Councillors discussed two letters which had been received after the Agenda was published on 4 March. It was agreed that to defer the letters to the next meeting in April would be counterproductive and they were therefore introduced at this meeting. A change would be needed to Standing Orders to allow correspondence from residents to be read out in the Public Forum where relevant. Clerk to amend Standing Orders for approval at next meeting.
- b. A letter from **Reverend David Messer** requesting a financial donation towards his fundraising cycle ride was read out. Councillors agreed that no donation could be made as the request needed to be considered at the budget meeting in November. Clerk to inform Rev Messer and offer to promote his fund raising efforts via Facebook page.
- c. **Policing Briefing** – 30 March – Moreton Hall - Noted
- d. **Application for Closure of a Burial Ground – All Saints Church.** The Parochial Church Council has given notice of their application to the Ministry of Justice to discontinue burials at the Churchyards at All Saints and St John’s Churchyards as they are now full. Existing double plots will still be permitted but all new burials will now take place in the Cemetery next to St Johns Churchyard. The burial of ashes will still be allowed at St Johns until further notice. There were no objections to the closure.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Minutes signed as correct..... (A Shelton – Chairman)

Next meeting Thursday 14 April 2016