

Draft minutes subject to acceptance at the next meeting.

## **STON EASTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT STON EASTON VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022 COMMENCING AT 7.30pm.**

As insufficient Councillors were elected at the May election, a further by election was called to elect additional councillors. As a result, the Annual Parish Council Meeting could not be held in May as required but was held as early as possible after the election process was completed.

Present: Cllrs Tom Killen, Peter King, Ainslie Davies, Ann Huckle and Julian Carver; also in attendance Tom Osborne (retiring Chairman), Rob Winkworth (retiring Vice Chairman) and Alan Butcher (Clerk)

All Councillors signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

22/06/1 - Apologies for absence. None.

22/06/2 - Election of Chairman: The retiring Chairman asked for nominations. Cllr Killen was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations and Cllr Killen was elected unanimously.

Cllr Killen proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Chairman and Vice Chairman for their service which was agreed unanimously.

22/06/3 - Election of Vice Chairman: The Chairman asked for nominations for Vice Chairman. Cllr King was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations and Cllr King was elected unanimously.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

22/06/4 – Co-option of two councillors onto the Parish Council

The vacancies to be advertised in the Parish and website; clerk to prepare suitable notice.

22/06/5 – Confirmation of Proper Officer The Parish Clerk, Alan Butcher, was confirmed.

22/06/6 - Confirmation of Responsible Financial Officer The Parish Clerk, Alan Butcher, was confirmed.

22/06/7 - Appointment of Representatives to outside bodies (if any). No appointments were made.

22/06/8 - Declarations of Interest: No declarations were made.

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22/06/9 - Public Participation:

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for public participation. Five members of the public were present.

- i) The Parish Council was thanked for its contribution to the resurfacing of Ston Easton village hall car park although concern was expressed about the time taken by the Parish Council to confirm the contribution. The Chairman noted that the council had to observe proper process when dealing with public funds.
- ii) Continuing problems were reported with traffic mounting the pavement on the A37 in Ston Easton and damaging highway ironwork. And an accident was reported near the church. It was understood that Somerset highways were monitoring the area.
- iii) The question of the defibrillator in the Ston Easton phone box was raised. Clerk to circulate details and costs for a final decision at the next meeting.
- iv) Concern was expressed about the previous level of precept which was felt to be too low.

22/06/10 - Confirmation of the Minutes of previous meetings:

- i) Minutes of the Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 – were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

22/06/11 - Parish Council Response to Planning Applications

- i) Underhill Farm development. Cllr Huckle gave a brief resume of the Curo presentation back in April and details of the proposed low cost and shared housing given. Cllr Killen noted that as the housing was mostly in Ston Easton parish, Curo could be asked to make contributions to the parish. A query about school provision was raised. Cllr Killen outlined the process whereby the site had been identified following comments from the inspector about the Mendip Local Plan part 2 which required additional housing provision nearer to Midsomer Norton.
- ii) No other planning applications were notified before the publication date for this agenda.
- iii) The clerk advised he had received a request from Hill Reading Architects for a meeting to discuss proposals for the re-development of the Pennys HQ in Ston Easton. It was agreed to invite the presentation before the next Parish Council meeting.
- iv) Cllr Davies raised the matter of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone which, although not in the Parish, could affect parish roads and traffic especially with heavy lorries, etc. Clerk to circulate information on the consultation process currently underway.

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22/06/12 - Financial:

- i) Acceptance of Audited Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The clerk advised that the Internal Auditor had been unable to complete a full audit of the accounts due to lack of information from this and previous years. He had, however, confirmed that the accounts, bank reconciliation and AGAR Accounting Statement were correct. The clerk advised that he would speak to the auditor about his report and that the final agreement of the accounts for 2021/22 should be made at the next meeting.
- ii) Internal Audit report. To be circulated when received from the auditor.
- iii) Completion of AGAR Governance Statement. The draft had been circulated and councillors considered the statement item by item. They were unable to answer “yes” to the statement concerning preparation of the accounting statements in accordance with regulations (section 1 item 1) and “yes” to the statements relating to the exercise of Electors Rights (1-4), the assessment of risks (1-5), the maintenance of internal audit control (1-6) and taking of action on matters raised by auditors (1-7) Councillors acknowledged the difficulties experienced by the council in the previous year and the Governance Statement was signed by the chairman and clerk. The clerk advised that new Financial Regulations, risk assessments and internal audit arrangements would be brought to the next meeting.
- iv) Completion of AGAR Accounting Statement. The accounting statement had been circulated, was agreed and signed by the Chairman and RFO.
- v) Given the difficulties with the 2021/22 accounts and AGAR, it was agreed to advise the Monitoring Officer of these difficulties and the actions taken by the council.
- vi) Changes to Banking arrangements and signatories. The clerk advised that there were now no signatories of the Natwest Accounts on the council and that there was a need to ensure that online banking was operated with multiple authorisations rather than at present. This would require moving the accounts to Natwest Bankline which could cost £20 per month although it was understood that community accounts would be free of charge.. As an alternative, he recommended that the accounts be moved to Unitary Trust Bank which offered ethical banking and a suitable system of payment authorisation. He had circulated details and noted that it would cost £6 per month in charges. After discussion it was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously that the Parish Council banking be moved to Unity Trust Bank. It was further agreed that the signatories to the accounts be Cllrs Killen, King and Davies.

22/06/13 - Parish Council Matters.

- i) Matters arising from previous minutes:
  - a) 21/10/03ii) Village Signs. These would be collected from Cllr King shortly and erected as soon as possible.

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- b) Strapstone Lane alleged illegal occupation. Councillors continued to be concerned about this matter and the lack of action by the relevant authorities. Cllr Killen to contact Mendip to seek action on the matter.
- ii) Parish Traffic and Highways Advisory Group. A meeting to be arranged now that the new council is in place.
- iii) Other Highways matters the following was reported:
  - a) The road had collapsed in Strap Lane.
  - b) The road signage on the A37 through Ston Easton was in a state of disrepair.
  - c) Continued concern was raised about Greenditch Lane where major damage continues to occur. Highways had suggested that the lane was unadopted although this was disputed by all at the meeting.
  - d) Clerk to contact Highways on all matters raised.
- iv) Footpaths Report. Cllr Huckle had nothing to report
- v) Grant application for works to car park adjoining Ston Easton Village Hall This had been completed and an invoice for £2000 plus VAT received.
- vi) Painting Clapton phone box. The spare paint from the Ston Easton box to be passed onto Clapton for their box.

22/06/14 - Matters of Report:

- i) Cllr Davies asked for the council to purchase suitable reference books to aid councillors when dealing with council business. Clerk to circulate information.
- ii) The clerk asked if councillors would like to attend SALC Training Courses. Cllrs Huckle and Davies to attend suitable courses, clerk to advise dates and subject.
- iii) The clerk to update and circulate meetings calendar.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm

22/06/15 - Date and Time of Next Meeting.

21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 at Ston Easton Village Hall with a planning presentation at 7pm followed by the Parish Council meeting.

**Alan Butcher,  
Parish Clerk,  
13th June 2022  
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ston.easton.clerk@gmail.com**