

Stoke St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting of Stoke St Mary held on Thursday, 11th May 2023, at Stoke St Mary Village Hall at 7.30pm

Councillors Present : Cllrs Colin Fisher (Chair), Dan Fallance, Patricia Fallance (Vice Chair), Rob Hossell, Tania Watt.

Apologies: None received

In attendance: Cllrs Ross Henley and Sarah Wakefield (Somerset Council)
14 Members of Public (MOP)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present

2. Key Issues facing the Village

Cllr Hossell made a slide presentation on a range of issues. All these issues will be considered at the next Parish Council meeting on Thurs, 11th May 2023, at 7pm at the Village Hall

i. A358

The Parish Council is committed to addressing the problems of increased local traffic through Haydon, Stoke St Mary and Lower Henlade via two options – campaigning for either

- The opening of Ilminster Road

Or

- The creation of a new link road to Nexus 25 roundabout.

Cllrs Henley and Wakefield confirmed their commitment to either of these solutions.

An MOP suggested that a section of road be permanently closed to reduce rat running through Stoke St Mary village, the section being at the top of Ashe Road, from the junction with Stoke Hill (50.98976N 3.03577W) running to the West Hatch road (50.99148N 3.03207W), a distance of approx. 350m. Another MOP suggested that this might divert more traffic through Lower Henlade and Haydon.

ii. Taylor Wimpey

Cllrs Hossell and Fisher expressed several concerns about the state of planning in Somerset Council:

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- the lack of continuity in planning departments (staffing), specifically the loss of knowledge of a planning team covering our area
- the lack of an up-to-date local plan
- a potential change to the policy of 'no development east of the M5', further threatened by the effect of the new A358
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – reportedly dominated by developers and their agents

Cllrs Henley and Wakefield both confirmed their opposition to development of the former Crown Estate land.

Cllr Wakefield reported that Somerset Council has started the plan development process but it will take five years, and that the phosphates issue is holding up applications and granted developments.

iii. Higher Broughton Farm Barns

It was agreed that the Parish Council should approach Savills to ask what their intentions are for this site.

An MOP pointed out that the site is increasingly derelict, having been vandalised recently. An MOP raised the issue of Greenway Farm, which will face the same issues re planning. An MOP suggested we seek to have the area classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

iv. Traffic Management/20mph speed limit

Cllr Hossell reported that there has been a strong call for the implementation of a 20mph speed limit in Shoreditch due to safety concerns.

Cllr Wakefield informed the meeting that the 20mph speed limit granted in Trull was likely successful in part due to the installation of flashing speed signs.

An MOP suggested that the main issue of traffic through Stoke St Mary village was due to parents travelling to/from Thurlbear School.

Another MOP felt that the issue was more about the volume of cars, rather than speed.

Cllrs Henley and Wakefield confirmed that they would inform the Parish Council as soon as/if Somerset Council change their policy on granting 20mph speed limits, but encouraged all to write to Somerset Council requesting a change in policy.

An MOP raised concerns about the junction of Stoke Road with Ashe Road, having seen a few potential collisions. Cllr Wakefield offered to enquire about having the white lines repainted.

A Community Speed Watch scheme was discussed, and it was agreed that the Parish Council would reconsider this, particularly as a few volunteers came forward.

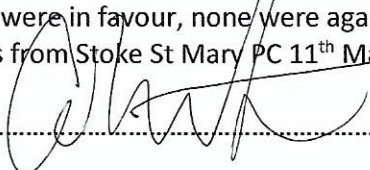
An MOP suggested we use a radar box to measure volumes of traffic, and Cllr Wakefield agreed to investigate sourcing this.

A show of hands was invited to gauge support for a 20mph speed limit. Ten people were in favour, while three were against.

A show of hands was invited to gauge support for flashing speed signs. Fourteen people were in favour, none were against.

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3. Parishioners' Forum

The Parish Council was asked by an MOP to consider the strategy for **the play area**, given the increasing number of young families living in the village.

An MOP pointed out that the **name of Thurlbear Road** had been changed without consultation, to "Ash Road", and that "Ash" should be spelt "Ashe".

Coronation Celebration weekend – an MOP expressed thanks to the organising committee and commented that it was a very enjoyable event.

Litter Bins – an MOP asked that the bin next to the bench/defibrillator be emptied and/or moved, as it is overflowing with dog waste, and made sitting on the bench unappealing.

All these issues will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 18th May 2023.

The date of next year's Annual Parish meeting is to be confirmed.

The Chair thanked all those attending.

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