

**Minutes of the Stratton-on-the-Fosse Annual Parish Meeting  
held in the Village Hall  
on Monday 19 April 2010 at 7.30p.m.**

PRESENT: Councillors Mr John Padfield (Chair), Mr R Jones (Vice-Chairman), Mr W Quinn, Mr A Norris, Mrs L Gittings, Jeremy Padfield, Mrs J Davies, Mr Malcolm Daniels.

IN ATTENDANCE: CC Gloria Cawood, Clerk, Mr Karl Hine, 6 Members of the Public.

**1 APOLOGIES:** Cllrs, Mr D Stock, Dist Cllr Gus Halfhide, PCSO Nicky Housley, Clare Bendall.

**2 MINUTES:**

Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 20 April 2009 were approved as a true record and duly signed.

**3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST:**

There were none.

**4 MATTERS ARISING:**

There were none.

**5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

The Chairman stated that the majority of Parish Council business was spent dealing with Planning Applications, road maintenance, street cleaning, footpaths etc. However he wished to highlight a few of the other items that it had dealt with in the past year.

The Lengthsman scheme is a great success, Chris Perkins spends one day every other week in Stratton, undertaking a variety of tasks making the village much tidier. The Parish Council wished to thank Chris for his hard work in the past year. Somerset County Council appreciates the saving in the work that is completed in the 4 villages and is contributing a further £5K this year towards the scheme. The Parish Council is very pleased with the concept of the scheme which is costing less with a much improved service than when employing persons in the past. The Chairman thanked Cllr Quinn for his huge input; who represents the Parish Council on the scheme's committee, co-ordinates the jobs for Chris and often helps him if necessary.

Recently, several Councillors undertook the annual spring clean, collecting about 30 sacks of rubbish: the Chairman reflected that it was a great shame that we have such an untidy and thoughtless population.

The Bus Shelter is now in the correct position, after overcoming several problems. Firstly, as the pavement is a little narrow, the roof of the shelter had to be modified. The company returned to install it, but positioned it with the glass screen on the inside, giving no protection to the elements. After protracted arguments with the company (who stated that to comply with policy it had to be in that position), we took advice from SCC who stated there was no reason why the Perspex front should not face the road. Finally the company reluctantly agreed and returned to reposition the shelter at their expense.

The Chairman and Cllr Richard Jones had joined the steering committee representing the Parish Council on the Community Garden Project. The Parish Council is committed to helping finance the project. The project is very important for this community and the Parish Council are concerned about the length of time it is taking to sign the legalities.

Cllr Linda Gittings is invaluable in her role as Footpath Officer; keeping a keen eye on any infringement of the parish's footpaths as well as helping to install new styles and kissing gates.

Malcolm Daniels has recently joined the Council and has kindly offered to take on the Parish Council Website, which has been defunct for a number of years. He hopes to have it up and running in the near future.

The Parish Council has purchased the now redundant telephone kiosk for the princely sum of £1. Councillors thought it was important to keep it as part of our heritage. The Parish Council would welcome any suggestion as to what use it could be.

Finally on behalf of the Council the Chairman thanked the clerk Valerie Attwood for her diligence in the business and financial duties that she has performed in the past year. Councillors' appreciation also goes to Stratton's Mendip District Councillor Gus Halfhide and Somerset County Councillor Gloria Cawood for their help and guidance. Also last, but not least, thanks to all the council members for their support in the past year.

## **6 COMMUNITY POLICE – PCSO**

PCSO Nicky Housley was not able to attend the APM Meeting due to work commitments.

## **7 FINANCIAL REPORT:**

- 7.1 The Clerk gave a detailed Financial Report of Income & Expenditure for the Financial Year 2009/2010. (Details of which were distributed to Councillors and those present at the Meeting).
- 7.2 It was confirmed that the Audit for the Year End 2009 had been inspected and returned by the external Auditors Moore Stephens who were satisfied with the Accounts.
- 7.3 The Notice of Inspection had been placed on the Notice Board for Year End 31 March 2010. The Audit Return to be forwarded to Moore Stephens by 01 June 2010.
- 7.4 The Clerk had submitted the Accounts to an Internal Auditor– Mr Keith Cockcroft – who had completed the check and was satisfied.
- 7.5 The Accounts were made available for inspection.

## **8 SPEAKER: Mr Karl Hine – Affordable House**

The Chairman introduced Mr Hine, the Senior Rural Housing Enabler for Somerset, part of the Community Council for Somerset's Community Development Team.

Mr Hine explained that one of his roles was to work with Parish Councils and local communities to assist them in carrying out a Housing Needs survey in order to identify whether there is a need for affordable housing for local people of the parish. If a need is identified he can work as an impartial broker between all parties in order to enable the project to progress. The ultimate aim is to provide affordable housing, where there is an identified need, for local people. The scheme has been running for 8 years and has 40 small schemes across Somerset.

Mr Hine answered questions about the scheme from Councillors and members of the public regarding the criteria for eligibility and the type of housing built.

A survey would have to be conducted, delivered to every household, to establish what housing needed.

The survey would be free to the Parish Council including FOC envelopes.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hine for attending the meeting and stated that the Parish Council would contact him if it wished to progress with the survey.

*Mr Hine left the meeting at this point*

*A MOP left the meeting at this point*

## **9 REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS AND SCHOOLS:**

The following Organisations and Schools presented very detailed and in-depth reports to the Meeting. These will be available to any person wishing to study them more closely.

### **9.1 ST VIGOR & ST JOHN – Rosemary Bailey (Sue Padfield read report in absence).**

The school had had an excellent year, due to the headmistress and committed teachers and support staff. The current number of pupils on the roll is 214, but the forecast intake in September 2010 is only 2010 - meaning a drop in funding.

Solar panels were installed on the roof to offset energy costs and additional outdoor equipment installed. The Children's Centre is now fully functional, providing complementary educational and social facilities for children outside core school hours and also outside the core primary school age range. It will be run under the leadership of the school, but as a separate entity. Ofsted recently awarded the Nursery section of the Centre "outstanding" across all 16 areas inspected.

### **9.2 LITTLE ANGLES - Toddler Group – Emily Malik**

Emily reported there had been changes in running of the group since last year. In 2009 there had been a low attendance, but at the start of 2010 attendance was growing and the group now numbered 16 children. Emily thanked the Parish Council for its past support and stated that those that attended enjoyed the space provided and the social aspect of the group.

### **9.3 COMMUNITY GARDENS – Marie Taylor**

Marie reported that the scheme now held £6K in funds plus £30K secured funding and £50K applied for funding. The committee was budgeting for £60K. The next step will be to obtain quotes for ground clearing and product management. Decisions would have to be made on the type of ground cover – wood chip would have to be inspected weekly, but bouncy tarmac would incur lower maintenance costs. Marie confirmed that the 20K Mendip District Council grant has to be used by March 2010 and therefore it was essential to finalise the legal requirements as quickly as possible.

### **9.4 CAM VALLEY WILDLIFE GROUP – Mrs Barbara Jones.**

Barbara Jones stated that the Cam Valley Wildlife Group had nearly 200 members and many professional environmental contacts. The group has been in existence for 15 years and is well respected throughout the area. There are bird, botany and bat specialist all working within the group. The Chairman, Andre, is leading a little owl survey within our area. All the records go into national databases. Many fun events are held including visiting gardens and bird and butterfly spotting at beautiful locations. Barbara thanked the Parish Council for its continued support and hoped the newsletter distributed 4 times a year was read and enjoyed.

### **9.5 VH TRUST– Mr Richard Jones – Chairman**

Mr Jones reported that the past year had been difficult financially in common with most organisations. The interest on the invested capital had dropped from 6.26% to 1%. The gas charges had increased to £192 per month and the room hire received from bookings was decreasing steadily. However, a small increase had been negotiated in the nursery school fees which were now £18 per day and this will be increased again next year. The hourly rates for other bookings have also been increased. The cost on annual auditing of the accounts has been cut by half and a saving of £500 on insurance has been made by switching from Zurich to Allied Westminister. A successful application to Somerset Grass Roots for a grant has paid for 2 new front doors and security fencing at the front of the Hall.

A meeting with MDC in June to explore the possibilities of funding may well help in the future, but it was decided to look at providing a new storeroom, new entrance and enlarged male toilets only and then tackle other project such as the car park and decorating obtaining smaller grants as and when possible. At the moment quotations for this comparatively small investment are being sought – the first received at a cost of £54,400.

Fund raising has been steady during the year. The Bag4Hall scheme enabled us to collect £240+ for the Hall in the first collection and it is expected that the second collection a few weeks ago will raise even more. The Giving Machine way of obtaining a special discount when shopping on line will help and several people are currently using it. The total amount collected to date has reached £154 for Hall funds. The current issue of the Stratton Village Newsletter carried details of how to join the scheme and hopefully its numbers will grow. The free delivery of this bi-monthly newsletter is carried out by the Village Hall Committee with the help of friends. The Table-Top sale raised £300 for the Hall and was a successful and enjoyable morning.

A new Village Hall sign has been donated to the Trustees by the Rotary Club and a bracket and pole are being made for us. The Village Day insurance cover was provided and paid – this raised over £2k for the Community Garden Scheme. Summing up, Mr Jones stated that the Village Hall Trust was alive and well, achieving a steady flow of money with enough to complete the first phase of the improvement programme.

**9.6 ST VIGOR & ST VIGOR – Rector Chris North**

The Rector stated that the church continue to flourish though a small congregation. A 5yr inspection had highlighted things to be maintained such as the heating and attention to the medieval glass.

**10 MATTERS OF REPORT & ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:**

- 10.1 The Chairman asked that all those who had given a Report submitted a copy to the Clerk for reference.
- 10.2 The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and invited them to stay for a complementary glass of wine.
- 10.3 There being no other business the Meeting closed at 8.26 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_