

**Minutes of the Stratton-on-the-Fosse Annual Parish Meeting  
held in the Village Hall  
on Monday 18 April 2011 at 7.30p.m.**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dist Cllr Steven Priscott Dist Cllr Gus Halfhide, PCSO Nicky Housley, PCSO Darren Pearson, Mr T Letcher(Ramblers) ,Clerk, 6 Members of the Public.

**1 APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Mrs J Davies, Mr Jeremy Padfield and Mr N Rowles MSN Rugby Club.

**2 MINUTES:**

Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 19 April 2010 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:**

5.1 The Chairman stated that the majority of the monthly meetings were devoted to the day to day running of the parish's affairs. Reporting on highway maintenance, footpaths, planning applications, providing information through the parish web-site and involvement with local activities.

The Chairman highlighted some of the matters dealt with during the past year:-

**5.2 Highways**

Concern about the increased use of Green Lane by large vehicles – a narrow lane used by students to gain access to Downside playing fields – prompted the Parish Council to request Highways to erect signs denoting unsuitable for large vehicles. As the request was denied, the Parish Council (after taking advice) will be erecting suitable signs to warn that the lane is not suitable for HGV vehicles.

**5.3 Grit Bins**

Following the severe weather this past winter, the Parish Council hope to place grit bins in strategic areas within the village for next winter.

**5.4 Refuse**

The Parish Council welcome the extension of refuse collection including plastics, cardboard, clothing, etc.

**5.5 Traffic Speed**

At certain times of the day and night speeding traffic is still a problem in the village, particularly when there is a low volume of traffic. The traffic calming scheme works well with steady traffic movements. The Parish Council is enquiring into the use of "traffic flashing speed signs".

**5.6 Police**

The Parish Beat Officer based at Shepton Mallet is Darren Pearson who is assisted by PCSO Nicky Housley. The Chairman welcomed them both to attend Parish Council meetings when they can keep the Councillors informed of local problems.

**5.7 Footpaths**

The Chairman thanked Cllr Linda Gittings for her work as Footpath Office during the past year.

**5.8 Lengthsman Scheme**

Chris Perkins continues to keep the village tidy with Cllr Bill Quinn co-ordinating and often assisting when necessary. Chris is employed by 5 parishes on a yearly basis – being stood down for 2 months during the winter. Somerset County Council contributed an annual £5k to this scheme in past years, but with severe financial cutback, the grant is in jeopardy after September 2011. The parishes involved will be meeting to discuss the situation. The Parish Council will be prepared to finance the shortfall in Stratton if the other villages are in agreement. Fortunately Stratton has a healthy reserve and the Parish Council would not wish to lose this very important service.

## **5.9 Coleford Tip**

The Parish Council have been supporting the fight to keep this very valuable service open. It is now open on a trial basis for 4 months on a restricted opening and a £2 per visit cost. One of the concerns being that it increases the fly tipping problem.

## **5.10 Community Gardens**

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council is delighted to be involved in this very important project and commended the terrific amount of work achieved by the Committee involved. Work has now started on the project, which will be of great benefit to the whole community. The Parish Council are committed to support the project practically and financially.

## **5.11 BT Kiosk**

The Parish Council welcomes ideas as to the use of the redundant phone box. Suggestions to date have been a Swap Shop for book/magazines/advertising.

5.12 Finally, the Chairman thanked the Clerk Valerie Attwood for all her work in the past year. Also the Chairman thanked the Somerset County Councillor Gloria Cawood and Mendip District Councillor Steven Priscott for their attendance and advice during the year at the Parish Council meetings.

## **6. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

6.1 The Clerk had submitted the Accounts to an Internal Auditor– Mr Keith Cockcroft – who had completed the check and was satisfied.

6.2 It was confirmed that the Audit for the Year End 2010 had been inspected and returned by the external Auditors Moore Stephens who were satisfied with the Accounts.

6.3 The Clerk gave a detailed Financial Report of Income & Expenditure for the Financial Year 2010/2011. (Details of which were distributed to Councillors and those present at the Meeting).

6.4 The Notice of Inspection had been placed on the Notice Board for Year End 31 March 2011. The Audit Return to be forwarded to Moore Stephens by 01 June 2011.

6.5 The Accounts were made available for inspection.

## **7 SPEAKER –Mendip Ramblers**

Mr Trevor Letcher gave a brief and informative talk on the Mendip Ramblers Association.

## **8 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

District Councillor Steven Priscott stated that although he had only been elected last October (2010) he had enjoyed his time so far and looked forward to the challenges ahead with the expected cuts in the budget.

Gus Halfhide declared that this would be his last Meeting as he was standing down as District Councillor. He stated that, although the work was challenging and hard work, he had enjoyed the last 4 years in the office.

## **9 FOOTPATH REPORT**

9.1 Cllr Gittings stated that over the last year a considerable amount of work has been carried out by Chris Perkins, (the Lengthsman), Cllr Quinn , Somerset County Council, the Mendip Ramblers and herself, with regard to the renewal and replacement of missing signs, stiles and the general clearance/upkeep of the footpaths and bridleways. Listed as follows:

2 stiles replace with kissing gates which made the walking of footpath SM19/30 (Common Road to Pitcot) much easier.

2 new stiles placed along footpath SM19/26 (Watery Lane to White Post via Manor Farm) which makes this now open for walking again.

Finger post signs and way markers showing the starting points and directions of footpaths erected all around the parish, with the only exceptions being at the stat of footpath SM19/16 and SM19/21 (NortonDown/White Post).

- 9.2 Unfortunately, some signs have been lost during the hedge-cutting season (ripped out by the cutters); these have been reported to Somerset County Council.
- 9.3 Cllr Gittings reported that the amount of criminal damage done to the stiles/gates this past year has been less than in previous years.
- 9.4 Somerset Highways also inspected the footpaths around the Locombe Woods /Ponds area where the ground was churned up to such an extent that in wet weather it became impassable. Also a directional sign had been ripped out of the ground. This was found to be due to the Hunt using the area and it is hoped that after fine weather the ground will recover.
- 9.5 The biggest challenge this year with footpaths is the urgent need to have the surface replaced on footpath SM19/15 (Mogg Hill to Chilcompton). This path was originally upgraded from grass to hard surface when the village school at Stratton was closed and the children transferred to the new school at Chilcompton. The purpose of the upgrade was to allow parents to walk their children to and from school and also to be able to push smaller children in buggies. In 2010 Downside pupils tried to carry out some of the work required to clear this path as part of their community project, but were unable to do so due to not having the necessary/correct tools. In view of the work required and the tools needed to carry it out, it is felt that Somerset County Council will need to be involved in the completion of this work.

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

The following Organisations and Schools presented very detailed and in-depth reports to the Meeting. A summary of which follows:-

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

The School had gained 4 National Awards this year. First, the Eco award for being a green school (environmental friendly and sustainable), which encourages children to think about these issues. Also for expanding “Forest School” by converting the bicycle shed into an outdoor classroom with a wood burning stove (donated by the PTFA) to hold environmental lessons.. Second, The International Award for Global Studies. Third, The Healthy School’s Award achieved for encouraging the children to be healthy in mind, body and spirit; several healthy breakfasts were arranged, enhanced by the “Lets get Cooking” Club. Fourth, The School inclusion Award for all pupils including Special Education Needs and Talented pupils for achievement in all aspect of education. Last, The Children’s Centre received an Outstanding qualification from Ofsted.

### **10.2 PCSO – Nicky Housley, Darren Pearson**

The PCSO introduced themselves and a brief report and details of policing given.

### **10.3 COMMUNITY GARDENS – Mare Taylor**

A detailed update on the progress so far was given along with thanks to the Parish Council for supporting the scheme.

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

Barbara Jones thanked the Parish Council for their continual support and reported that the Group continued to flourish; managing 2 Nature Reserves in Paulton and recently purchasing a heavy duty hedge cutter to keep the hedges trim and brambles at bay. A £400 grant from Wessex Water funded a circular saw and materials to build and erect 51 Tawny Owl boxes in local woodlands and with another 8 Barn Owl boxes built the total number are 80. Andre Fournier leads a group to monitor Barn Owls which noted 9 breeding pairs producing 22 chicks, also a single bird at a number of other sites.

Dr Helena Crouch, Somerset Rare Plants Vice Recorder, continues to lead Botany Survey walks in the area every Wednesday. The group also have butterfly experts who lead walks and record sightings. Excursions, such as the RHS Garden at Wisley also take place.

**10.5 VH TRUST– Mr Richard Jones – Chairman**

Richard Jones reported on the achievements to date by a very hard working committee of only 7 trustees:

New central heating system installed and extension of heating system. Insulated ceiling in the main hall. New double glazed windows in kitchen and new kitchen door. New double glazed windows in toilets and enlarged gent’s toilet; plus hand-drier and baby changing fitted. New store-room and new entrance (away from traffic). Concrete paths around rear of building and enlarged car-park for 40 cars with full drainage ready for tarmacking. Emergency lighting added and night-time sodium light on mast in the car park and new fire extinguishers. Pedestrian and field gate for access to football field and the new Community Garden. Security child-safe fencing at front of building. A pair of new front doors and a new Village Hall sign on a wrought iron post.

In order to achieve this, £8,000 has been borrowed to meet the total spend so far of £70,000

The Village Hall Trust’s future plans include:-

Tarmacking the car-park. Double glazing windows in the main hall. New floor surfaces in reception area, kitchen and storeroom. Storage shelves, cupboards, coat rack and hooks.

Richard Jones stated that the Hall was regularly used for the Mogg Hill Pre-School, Little Angels Play Group, Yoga and Karate classes, Slimming World, Creative Memories, Parish Council meetings plus two bands use the hall for practises.

Richard Jones commented that, although a great deal had been achieved, help was still needed with fund-raising to complete objectives.

**10.6 MIDSOMER NORTON R.F.C. – Mr Nigel Rowles (Chairman read reporting absence).**

The Club progresses in its usual way and is truly a “local” rugby club with representative players having been with the Club since their childhood.

It still fields 4 senior teams on Saturdays one of the few clubs to do so. Currently the IstXV are 6<sup>th</sup> place in the Somerset Premiership League. All the Club’s teams play in structured leagues and are currently giving a good account of themselves.

The Club’s junior section goes from strength to strength with some 250 children playing and training on Sunday mornings. Traditionally, each under 15 year group has the honour of touring at this time of year.

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

- 11.1 The Chairman asked that all those who had given a Report submitted a copy to the Clerk for reference.
- 11.2 The Chairman stated that the numbers that had attended were disappointing and thought residents would benefit from attending the Annul Parish Meeting by gaining information on events and plans for the Village.
- 11.3 The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and invited them to stay for a complementary glass of wine.
- 11.4 There being no other business the Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

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