

**Minutes of the Stratton-on-the-Fosse Annual Parish Meeting
held in the Village Hall
on Monday 16 April 2012 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, Mr Jeremy Padfield.

IN ATTENDANCE: County Cllr Gloria Cawood, Clerk, 8 Members of the Public.

1 APOLOGIES: Cllrs Mrs J Davies, Mrs I Duggen, Dist Cllr Steven Priscott, PCSO Housley and Pearson,
Mr N Rowles MSN Rugby Club, Marie Taylor Community Gardens.

2 MINUTES:

Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 18 April 2011 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 meetings are devoted to the day to day running of the parish's affairs. Reporting on highway maintenance, footpaths, planning applications, providing information through the parish website and involvement with local activities. The Chairman highlighted some of the information that parishioners might find interesting.

HIGHWAYS

Signs have been erected in Green Lane warning HGV's that the lane is not suitable for those vehicles. A site meeting held recently to discuss with officials from Mendip district Council Highways Dept the pinch point at Bainsbury View. For some years this has been of concern to the Parish Council, as traffic passes close to the pavement at this point. Councillors are confident that they convinced the officials from Mendip of this danger and look forward to the matter at last being resolved by reducing the width of the pinch point by the far banks, thus creating a new one by the pavement and moving the traffic to the middle of the road.

Having had 2 severe winters in 2009/2010 the Parish Council decided to place 8 grit bins around the village. Although to date they have not been needed, no doubt they will be put to good use in winters to come.

LENGTHSMAN SCHEME:

The Chairman stated that the scheme was part funded by Somerset County Council, who terminated the funding at the end of this financial year, due to severe financial restraints. The Parish Council decided that the service received from Chris Perkins was too valuable to lose and so have engaged him as before for 1 day per fortnight during 10 months of the year. The Parish Council have budgeted for £1,200 per year to cover the extra cost. The Chairman noted that the village was definitely a tidier place since Chris has worked in the parish, but thanks also needed to be given to Councillor Bill Quinn who not only monitors the jobs but regularly assists him.

CC Gloria Cawood arrived at this point 7.40 pm

FOOTPATHS:

The Chairman stated that Councillor Linda Gittings was the footpath's officer who keeps an eagle eye on the parish's footpaths.

For some years the Parish Council has received numerous complaints about the state of the footpath; from Mogg Hill towards Chilcompton. When the school was relocated to Chilcompton, Somerset

County Council pledged to upkeep the path. The Parish council have made many requests over the years to no avail. In fact it was decided that the Parish would have to take on the task itself, but before starting, had asked CC Gloria Cawood to look into the matter. Gloria persuaded Somerset County Council to repair the path, which has now been completed, although a section of the path in the next village still needs attention.

COMMUNITY GARDEN:

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman wished to congratulate the Committee in the wonderful achievement of the Community Garden scheme, which was completed last Autumn and officially opened by Michael Eavis on 31 October 2011. It was thought to be a great asset for the village and can be used by all ages. The Parish Council will be giving its support to help them celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on 3 June 2012.

COLEFORD RE-CYCLING DEPOT

The Chairman stated that there was great concern over the future of the tip. The Parish Council's view was that it was vital that it stays open. An added problem being the charges which vastly increase the incidents of fly-tipping. Somerset County Council estimates that it costs them approximately £60,000 to clear up fly-tipping and the Parish Council fails to understand this logic.

The Chairman finally thanked the Clerk for her unstinting service to the Parish Council. He stated that, on Councillors behalf, the Clerk corresponds with various Council Departments to endeavour to obtain results, takes minutes of meetings and deals with the finance of the Parish Council.

Also he thanked Somerset County Councillor Gloria Cawood and Mendip District Councillor Steven Priscott for their support and guidance throughout the year.

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 2011 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 2011/2012. (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 2012. The Accounts to be inspected by an Internal Auditor (Keith Cockcroft). The Audit Return to be forwarded to Moore Stephens by 01 June 2012.
- 6.5 The Accounts were made available for inspection.

7 SPEAKER – Mr Jeremy Padfield

Jeremy Padfield stated that he was 4th generation farmer. His family farm had been a dairy farm at first then in 2002 it withdraw from dairy and went into partnership with a neighbouring farm – Manor Farm. This now consists of 1200 acres with 800 crop production. (1 acre equalling the size of a football pitch). Jeremy passed around bags of seed and asked the audience to identify them. He gave an informative and interesting talk about the use of the different grains. A "Farm Open Day" is organised annually; with Manor Farm and Church Farm holding this event on alternate years.

8 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CC Gloria Cawood

Gloria Cawood praised the Parish Council's initiative (after she had reported another parish placing its own signs) in organising erection of signs stating "unsuitable for HGV's" at Green Lane. Also Stratton's continued pressure on Somerset County Council and working on the footpath (showing how it should be), along with her own enquiries, had resulted in the Mogg Hill footpath being repaired. At a meeting attended by herself and Stratton Councillors the abandoned Lengthsman scheme (abolished due to lack of funding from SCC and MDC) was questioned. Gloria asked about funding for weed

training for the Lengthsman for parishes that had engaged him (such as Stratton) on an independent basis. To date nothing had been forthcoming about this matter.

Also she praised the wonderful effort of the Committee and the Parish Council in providing the Community Garden.

Another project that the Parish Council had been keen to pursue was a cycle path between the village and the White Post Roundabout, although this had not been successful as yet.

Gloria thought that Stratton-on-the-Fosse was a pro-active Parish Council and looked forward to working with Councillors for another year.

The Chairman thanked CC Gloria Cawood for the help that had been given to the Parish Council during the last year.

9 FOOTPATH REPORT

The state of the footpaths in this parish remain, on the whole, in good order (especially in comparison with other parishes I have visited)

A recent change in farming practice brought about by changes in funding from central government has caused the sheer matter of walking the paths to become harder and less enjoyable during wet weather. The basic change has been that Farmers are now encouraged to use all of their land; right up to the field boundaries; and with the price of grain having increased as it did last year it is not surprising that what use to be a convenient, less muddy track around the outer perimeter of the fields which you were able to walk is now become a planted plough ground. There have also been instances in the parish over the years that I have been the PPLO where little or no heed has been given to the line of footpaths by some people who have just walked just where they please, flattening crops as they have done so. In some parishes landowners have sprayed off a meter width across crops following the exact line of the path in order to encourage people to stick to the same, it would be good if this practice could be encouraged here. I believe it would be beneficial to all if this were done, especially this year, as in August Stratton is to be the central hub for a number of walks lead by the Ramblers during one of their walking festival.

Whilst general clearance and sign replacement work has been carried out by myself, the Ramblers and the village lengthsman, Chris (and by association Bill Quinn) during the year by I am also pleased to report that faults pointed out in my 2010 report in relation to stiles and paths in the Sweetleaze Lane area have now been rectified thereby making access to the paths much easier and safer. However, by far the most successful piece of work to be carried out this year was the renewal of the surface to the Mogg Hill footpath. This was something that was pointed out as a problem 3 years ago to Highways and I am pleased to say that with the help and determination of our County Councillor, Gloria we have finally seen the necessary work carried out to allow parents once more to walk their children to school at Chilcompton whilst pushing younger members in pushchairs etc. without having to negotiate ruts, potholes and large puddles.

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 – Headmaster (Sue Padfield read report in absence).

It was reported that St Vigor and Sat John School had continued to thrive over the last year, despite many changes in staffing due to maternity leave, ill health and two long standing members of staff retiring.

Rosemary Bailey's (Headteacher) retirement certainly was exciting and adventurous. Staff, children, parents, governors and Diocese members were sad to say farewell. Many of the School's successes have been due to the passion, vision and dedication of a great leader and team of staff. Rosemary remains in touch with the school through her work on the Diocesan Board of Education and linking with present staff supporting other schools in the County.

David Allinson now steers the ship and as from the Summer term Lucy Dowdle will be the new Deputy. After two terms as acting deputy Cathy Bushill returns to leading Early Years education across the school and Children's Centre Nursery.

The Children's Centre Nursery successfully bid to achieve Early Years Teaching Centre Status (1 of only 2 in the County). Jas Plasted successfully manages the Children's Centre both in Wells and Chilcompton. The SATs results last year were the best the school has ever achieved.

The current number on roll at the school remains fairly stable at 215. A large Year 6 cohort will leave in the Summer term and the number of new entrants for 2012 look oversubscribed. There is a waiting list of 64 children for the Nursery (20 existing who want to increase sessions and 44 additional) – a credit to staff and acknowledgement of outstanding practice.

Caroline Smailes and Cathy Bushill visited Sangram in Southern India on a study visit; researching a variety of schools and experiencing the hugely diverse culture of rural and urban India. The PTFA supported the venture with £200, as a result the School has resources to enhance the children's learning. Next week the School will be welcoming 2 visitors from one of the schools visited with a view to setting up a link similar to the existing Ghanaian link.

An Auction of Promises organised by the PTFA in March raised £5,500 plus, which will be used for evolving IT equipment throughout the school.

During this Summer term (with the Olympics present) the focus will be on active and healthy lifestyles. New Government policy on Academy status implications are the next challenge to face the staff and governors. Thanks were given to everyone who makes St Vigour and St John an extremely successful and happy school.

10.2 COMMUNITY GARDENS – Clare Bendall - Chair of the Committee

Firstly, Clare stated how pleased the Committee was to see how well the Community Garden is used, and the positive feedback received from Villagers. The Committee was over the moon to see a bus full of special needs children and adults use the park on a regular basis.

The plans for the Community Garden are very nearly close to completion, which is very exciting.

- The Committee is planning to plant around 10 Native Trees and around 10 Fruit Trees.
- Extend and widen pathway to new bin. The bin is now getting emptied by Mendip DC on a weekly basis.
- Permission to replace Football Nets in the field awaiting Downside Trustees to respond with their discussion.

In regard to the Gate at Middlemead the Committee is still open to discussion on this matter; suggesting that the Chairman considers getting in touch to arrange a meeting, so that this matter can be quickly resolved. Clare made a suggestion that the Committee meet in the Village Hall with a group of Councillors to discuss the situation, when a compromise can be agreed.

As a Committee we are hoping to buy another piece of play equipment - more consultations with residents will take place in the Park on the Jubilee celebrations.

Jubilee Picnic in the Park will take place on Monday 3rd June for villagers to gather and enjoy each others company. The Committee has asked for financial help with this from the Parish Council which has agreed to donate £150.00 (already agreed for the hire of a Marquee – no longer required) to help pay for other items for the children. Marie had emailed the Parish Council Chairman with details.

Claire thanked the Parish Council for its continued support with this project.

Councillor David Stock (the Community Gardens representative on the Parish Council) said a few words and thanked the Parish Council for its help and support.

10.3 CAM VALLEY WILDLIFE GROUP – Mrs Barbara Jones.

Cam Valley Wildlife Group continues with a wide range of events including a series of talks at the Centurion Hotel, Workdays on its reserve at Goosard, Wildlife walks in the area and outings further afield. Alongside this it has for some years been running projects; a) to log the wild flowers in the area with a view to producing a local flora. b) Owl conservation with around 70 Barn Owl nest boxes erected in the area. Last year 12 Barn Owl nest sites were monitored which produced at least 34 chicks and 3 sites with single birds. Over 50 Tawny Owl nest boxes have been erected in local woodlands and a small number of Kestrel and Little Owl nest boxes.

In 2012 the group is planning to extend the range of activities including more family events with a focus

on children. New projects also planned are surveying for Otters and other aquatic mammals on the waterways and a Dormouse survey.

Non-members are welcome to attend many of the events, but family membership costs only £5 per annum. Members receive a quarterly newsletter and further details can be obtained from Andre Fournier on 01761 418153 email andrew.fournier@btinternet.com

10.4 VH TRUST– Mr Richard Jones – Chairman

Mr Jones reported that the Village Hall held a surplus for the Year End July 2011 of £15,151 Expenditure was 3.5% up on the previous year.

The money gained from the hire of the Hall had risen by 12.5% and fund raising had gained £15k including grants of £11k. The Bag4Hall scheme raised over £500 and a third of cost grant from Mendip District Council for double glazing the 6 windows in the main hall – which definitely has helped to keep the heating costs down. The Craft Fair brought in £653, the Auction at the Kings Arms brought in £740 (huge thanks go to the Landlord Derek & Landlady Jill) with the total so far from the Giving Machine being £643 More fund raising is needed to finance the tarmacking of the car-park, which was hoped to be completed by this time next year.

Since the last APM a new floor has been laid over the whole of the premises except for the main hall. The Committee or Trustees have also been busy; helped with the bar and the tombola stall at Village Day and ran the refreshments for the Community Garden Open Day. The kitchen is in the process of being decorated and the main hall is scheduled for decoration in the summer holidays. Two new Trustees have joined this year with another person expected to join.

10.5 STRATTON-ON-THE-FOSSE CRICKET CLUB – Mr Clayton Rich, Chairman

The Club just avoided relegation last game of season. A couple of new players will be joining for 2012. Mr Rich thanked Downside School & Abbey for the continued use of the school's pitches, especially first X1 Pitch. Also for the help from Dom Grass, the groundsmen Colin Bendall & Mike Marsh and the community.

The Club was very sorry to lose its Head Quarters (used for pre and post match) established for many years at the Royal British Legion. The Club now meets at the White Post after the game and are well looked after.

The Club is hoping for good weather and results in 2012. The Club would welcome any budding cricketers in the village and if interested in playing should make contact.

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 9.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____