

**Minutes of the Stratton-on-the-Fosse Annual Parish Meeting
held in the Village Hall
on Monday 15 April 2013 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 Jeremy Padfield.

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

1 APOLOGIES: Cllrs Mr M Daniels Mrs I Duggen, PCSO Housley
Mr N Rowles MSN Rugby Club,

2 MINUTES:

Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 16 April 2012 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 main business at the Parish Council monthly meetings was devoted to the day to day running of parish affairs. It deals with many local issues such as highway and footpath maintenance, lighting, cleaning, providing information for the web-site and involvement with local activities.

Highways

The Chairman reported at the last APM that, as a result of a site meeting with Highways, officials had agreed to alter the pinch points opposite Bainsbury View to make it safer for pedestrians using the pavement. The parish Council have been pressing Highways to carry out this work and have obtained a promise to complete this work by the end of April 2013.

Stratton Lengthsman

The Chairman thanked Chris Perkins who continued to keep the village clean and tidy on his fortnightly visits. The Chairman stated that Somerset County Council had ceased chemical spraying as finance cuts deepened, so the Parish Council paid for Chris to be trained in undertaking this task. The Parish Council supply the chemicals, but Chris uses his own equipment.

The Chairman wished to say a few words of thanks to Councillor Bill Quinn who reluctantly had to stand down as the co-ordinator of the lengthsman scheme. Councillor Bill Quinn was involved right at the start of the scheme as the Parish Council's representative with other parishes. Cllr Quinn planned and executed the jobs with Chris, but very often he was to be seen assisting him. The Chairman thanked Bill most sincerely on behalf of the whole village for his devotion in keeping the village so clean and tidy.

Councillor Malcolm Daniels had very kindly offered to take on the task of co-ordinator for the present. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council were fortunate to receive funding from Somerset County Council for number of years, but because of financial cuts the Parish Council was now covering the cost itself.

Golden Jubilee

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had purchased suitable inscribed Jubilee Mugs for all the village children of 12 years and under, which were presented at the Jubilee Day celebrations.

Kiosk

The Chairman reported that the former kiosk had been painted; shelves fitted, and was now a book swap shop and place to place notices.

Community Garden

This very successful project was nearing completion. The Chairman stated that the initial committee had done a fantastic job in planning and raising the considerable finance to create this wonderful play area. The Parish Council wished to thank the Community Garden Committee for the planning and raising the considerable finance to create the wonderful play area complete with equipment.

A new Committee had recently been formed with the initial Committee together with members of the Parish Council. It will manage the Community Gardens in the future and more would be learnt in the report to follow.

Web Site

The Chairman wished to thank Councillor Malcolm Daniels for his work in building up information of the village on the Parish Council Web-site. There is a wealth of data from the different organisations in the village.

The Chairman stated that County Councillor Gloria Cawood was retiring after many years as Stratton's County Councillor. On behalf of the Parish Council, the Chairman thanked Gloria for the many things that she had done for the village. Examples of which were the Lengthsman Scheme that Gloria fought for funding and various other grants that the Parish Council is indebted that she had secured for Stratton over the years. The Chairman finished by thanking Gloria for attendance at Parish Council meetings and her valuable advice.

The Chairman also wished to thank the Clerk for the valuable work that has been done for the Parish Council over the past year.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT:

6.1 The Clerk had submitted the Accounts for the Yr End 2012 to an Internal Auditor– Mr Keith Cockroft – who had completed the check and was satisfied.

6.2 It was confirmed that the Audit for the Year End 2012 had been inspected and returned by the external Auditors Moore Stephens who were satisfied with the Accounts. The Accounts for Yr End 2012 had been nominated in the 5% of Parish Councils for extra checks – everything had been in order.

6.3 The Clerk gave a detailed Financial Report of Income & Expenditure for the Financial Year 2012/2013. (Details of which were distributed to Councillors and those present at the Meeting).

6.4 The Audit for Yr End 31 March 2013 was now in progress and the Notice of Inspection had been placed on the Notice Board. The Accounts to be inspected by an Internal Auditor (Keith Cockroft). The Audit Return to be forwarded to Grant Thornton by 01 July 2013.

6.5 The Accounts were made available for inspection.

7 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Gloria Cawood

Gloria reported that although she had decided not to stand this time at the Election on 2 May 2013(after 24 years as a County Council), it would still be a sad time as she had loved(almost) every minute of it. Gloria stated that this would, however, be semi retirement as she will continue as the Mendip District Councillor for her area.

She had especially enjoyed working with Stratton's Parish Council, who listened carefully to its community, and thought that together they had achieved many things. The Lengthsman Scheme was one, and she wished to give praise to Cllr Bill Quinn for his co-ordination to what was a very successful scheme. The Community Gardens was another wonderful project which, working together with the Committee, had achieved success.

The Chairman spoke on behalf of the Parish Council to wish Gloria well in her semi-retirement and thanked her for the help that had been given to the Parish Council over the past years.

8 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT – Steven Priscott

Nothing received.

9 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:

9.1 VILLAGE HALL TRUST – R Jones

Cllr Jones stated that the Trust held £9,000 approximately in its Bank Account and were therefore on target to raising the money to complete the surfacing of the Village Hall Car-park; which is the main objective at the moment.

The monies were from grants and fund raising by the Committee. Mendip District Council gave a grant of £1,500 towards the cost of the new double glazed windows. Talktalk donated £600 in recognition of its updating the Broadband facility in the parish. Bags4Hall, raised £550, which parishioners can support by leaving a bag of unwanted clothes or shoes at Fosse House – two collections are made a year from here. The Village Lottery makes approximately £30 per year, but more members are desperately needed. The Giving Machine, which is a system whereby anyone buying on the internet can do so through the Giving Machine which will automatically credit the Village Hall with a percentage of interest. So far this has benefited the Hall by over £900 and Cllr Jones encouraged parishioners to use this method of purchasing through the internet and stated that most companies operated through the Giving Machine; details of which would be placed in the Village Newsletter. Derek and Jill at the Kings Arms helped to raise £151 from a darts evening and also a race night which raised £200. Cllr Jones thanked them for their great support. A gift of unwanted spools of knitting wool raised £220 on e-bay. A table-top sale raised £182 and recently a Curry & Quiz night, with the help of David Stock, raised a staggering £550 and was attended by nearly 80 people. Therefore fund raising and donations have raised over £4,000 in the last year.

Richard Jones reported that since last year, the Hall had been completely replastered where necessary and redecorated. The curtains have been replaced with more practical vertical blinds and all the windows have been replaced with double glazed units. Extra tables and chairs have been purchased and an attractive recognition of all those who contributed to the very successful “buy a Brick Appeal”. A new booking form for the hire of the Hall has been produced with conditions of hiring.

Richard Jones reported that in July 2013, Mogg Hill Nursery School, who has used the Hall for the last 26 years, will be moving the entire school to St Benedict’s School at Midsomer Norton. Richard Jones stated that, although the Hall would be losing its biggest customer, (the approximate loss of income will be £3, 5000), it does now offer the opportunity to let the Hall during the day-time. Therefore mornings or all-day bookings will be available all year round from August 2013.

Richard Jones reported that the Annual Village Day is to be revived and will be held on Sunday 8 September 2013 with the monies raised going to the Village Hall and the re-surfacing of the Hall’s car-park. A special Village Day Committee, with the support of the Village Hall Committee will organise the event.

Richard Jones stated that the Village Hall Committee is at its strongest in recent years and has 10 members – all of which are a pleasure and privilege to work with.

9.2 MSN RUGBY CLUB - Nigel Rowles

Mr Rowles stated that he was unable to attend last year’s meeting because of fixtures. He reported that 2012 was the Club’s 75th year. In the Junior Section (7-18 years) there were 280 plus. Mr Rowles stated that it was a successful and robust club. The only problem being more land was needed and it was hoped that boundary land could be bought; with grants applied for with this objective.

9.3 COMMUNITY GARDENS – Jeremy Padfield

Jeremy Padfield gave an update on the Community Gardens in which he stated that there had been a number of significant changes since the last Report.

The original Stratton Community Garden Committee had disbanded and “morphed” into a Parish Council Committee. This was because the original group had to adhere to strict lottery rules of being a separate community group; the Lottery money had been spent, the grant claims and reports now completed and therefore it was free to set up a new group who were able to take advantage of the VAT arrangements of the Parish Council. The new group comprises; Jeremy Padfield(Chair),Marie Taylor(Secretary) and other members being: Bill Quinn, Malcolm Daniels, Sue Barcutta and David Stock. Monies have been transferred to the Parish Council and are ring-fenced to the Community Gardens.

The Annual Safety Inspection (October 2012) threw up a small number of issues and these have either been addressed or are in progress.

At the Jubilee Celebrations, the children and young people voted for an additional basket swing so following a number of estimates collected late in 2012, work was stated and completed in March 2013. Photos of before, during and after will be available shortly on the village website.

An additional Waste Bin has been erected in the middle of the Community Garden and Dave Stock has kindly offered to empty the contents into the main bin, (emptied by Mendip) when he does his weekly inspection for insurance purposes.

A number of estimates for the Maintenance Contract (Grass cutting March-Oct each year) were considered and Wayne Palmer’s quotation offered the best value for the village.

Jeremy then outlined the next steps to be taken by the Community Gardens Committee:

Signage – the signs which need to be in place for legal purposes are on order.

Silver Birch Copse – to transform the space into a picnic area with a dug path leading to it. Estimates were collected and Syd’s Landscaping (Killings Knapp) provided the best value. VAT reimbursement pending, it is hoped work will be completed in Summer 2013.

Tractor tyre planters – courtesy of the Padfields!

Jeremy stated that following these large purchases, it is anticipated that the balance of approx £2k will be retained as a contingency fund and for small items eg shrubs/seeds.

Jeremy thanked the Parish Council for its continued support.

9.4 CAM VALLEY WILDLIFE GROUP – Mrs Barbara Jones

Barbara reported that the group continued to survive even though committee members were very low.

This year sees the launch of “The Otter Project”; volunteers have been found and the CV area will be closely monitored to follow otter activity. The latest newsletter has an informative article about Ash Die Back, which is well worth reading. The Barn Owl survey work is still very active. There are now 21 nesting pairs in this area. The Somerset Wildlife Trust Community project spearheaded by Chris Sperring has brought 13 new owl boxes into the area.

Helena Crouch continues to lead botany walks every Wednesday throughout the summer, surveying wild flora of the region and passing on her skill to the members. It is hoped for a drier summer this year so that more butterfly and insect surveys may take place.

9.5 ST JOHN & ST VIGOR – Sue Padfield

Sue reported that the school had had another successful and busy year. Last September Mrs Lucy Dawdulle was welcomed as Deputy Head to the Primary Department and Mrs Cathy Bushill was appointed Deputy Head to the Hill Children’s Centre and infants in the school, with David Allison as overall Head of School. Ms Bushill still retains close ties with the running of the Children’s Centre at Wells.

Numerous excursions have taken place to venues that will help the children with their curriculum. Last term a Focus week was held concentrating on using the childrens' imagination and developing exciting writing. The school is very thankful for the P.T.F.A.'s donation in helping in developing I.C.T. in school with a wireless system and laptops for use in all the classrooms. The children arranged a coffee and tea afternoon for parents and carers on Comic Relief Day and they raised over £400.

Jill and Polly; two teachers from the Hill Centre, travelled to India earlier in the year to our partnership school in Tumkur, Southern India. A reciprocal visit is being held this week and to celebrate this an Indian evening with parents and governors has been arranged.

Sue appealed to anyone who is interested in knitting small dolls/animals or has any unwanted wool; as a project instigated by the Diocese of Bath & Wells to teach children values in life through bible stories, is to be started.

9.6 FOSSE HOUSE NURSING HOME

The Chairman welcomed two representatives of the Nursing Home (a nurse and an activities organiser) and invited them to give a report - a summary of which follows :

During its 35-40 years the Home has been under many different ownerships and seen many changes. It is now under a young dynamic Hungarian Manager. It holds an open door policy to the community and wishes to be part of the village. All parishioners were welcome to its annual Fete in June/July. Leaflets giving information about the Home were distributed.

The Chairman thanked them for attending

9.7 LITTLE ANGELS TODDLER GROUP – Sarah Cole(Chair read out)

The Chairman read out a report from the toddler group:

9.8 Stratton on the Fosse CRICKET CLUB – Mr Clayton Rich – Apologies

9.9 PCSO Housley - Apologies

10 MATTERS OF REPORT & ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

10.1 The Chairman introduced Rachel Carter and invited her to say a few words:

Rachel stated that she was a Conservative Candidate in the forthcoming Election on 02 May 2013 and if successful would become Stratton's District Councillor. Rachel had taught for 18 years at Downside and had always been interested in politics; her husband is a District Councillor.

10.2 The Chairman asked that all those who had given a Report submitted a copy to the Clerk for reference.

10.3 The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and invited them to stay for a complementary glass of wine.

10.4 There being no other business the Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN _____ **DATE** _____