



04-11-2020 Minutes

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## **STOKENCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 4 November 2020 over Zoom at 7.30 pm**

**Attendees:** Cllr Ian Chadwick (Chairman), Cllr Camilla Baker (Vice Chairman), Cllr Dan Davis, Cllr Ben Fearfield, Cllr Chris Parkinson, Cllr Jen Powis, Cllr Andy Preece, Cllr Robin Thomas, Cllr Neil Watson

**Buckinghamshire Councillors:** Cllr Darren Hayday

**Minutes:** Mrs Heather Presland, Clerk, from recorded Zoom meeting

**Members of the Public:** 1

#### **1. Acceptance of Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs Etholen, Adoh and Saddique.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest (agenda items)**

None.

#### **3. To Confirm Minutes of 21 October 2020**

These were agreed.

Proposed: Cllr Watson;

seconded: Cllr Baker. Cllr Preece

abstained. **4. Matters Arising**

#### **(information only)**

Cllr Preece said he wished to make a statement about going out to tender for the grass cutting contract, a decision made at the previous meeting. He wished to put on record his protest regarding this farce. He said individuals were quoting Financial Regulations as a stick with which to beat Polaris without any knowledge of the rules they were talking about. Had they any knowledge, then they would have known the Regulations do not stipulate a given frequency for running a contract. It was simply another thing being made up for those who may have an axe to grind. He said he was dismayed at the negative comments he had read about Polaris. He felt the matter should have been discussed at a Finance Committee where the proper consideration and expertise could have been applied. He said the only tendering process needed



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having done a good job with most people thinking the commons had never looked better. He felt the nit picking about not returning calls was ridiculous and the only point of contact should be the Clerk rather than having eleven tails trying to wag the dog. Earlier in the year Polaris had been the only contractor who had complied with the tender properly with a fixed price for three years, which Council had chosen not to accept. Furthermore, the seconder of the proposal to go out to tender was Cllr Powis whose husband did the cleaning at Longburrow Hall, which was also a contract worth thousands of pounds per annum and yet the Council had not gone out to tender for that contract. He said it was hypocrisy to ask Polaris to tender again when the cleaning contractor never did so. If done properly, tenders involved a huge amount of work and he stated it was absolute nonsense to go through this exercise in the middle of a global pandemic and when another lockdown was about to start. He said that as the so called Chairman of the Finance Committee, he was so incensed by the nonsense, that he was standing down. It seemed to be an irrelevant role now the lunatics had overtaken the asylum. In summary Cllr Preece said Polaris was a good contractor who had done a good job, had not put up his prices and had offered the Parish Council a three year contract little over six months ago. He said the negative "pile on" was an appalling way to treat any contractor and he would like to personally apologise to Polaris and washed his hands of the Council's hypocritical nonsense. He did not believe going out to tender should be happening and wished it to be publicly recorded that he was disassociating himself from it. Cllr Powis wished to add that if the cleaning contract needed to go out to tender, she was happy this happened. Cllr Preece replied he did not wish it to go out to tender as individuals were doing a good job. Cllr Watson stated the Polaris contract was up for renewal at the end of March as it was only a one year contract that had been agreed by Council. Cllr Preece said the decision was arbitrary and said "you lot have made your decision". He wished his disgust at the decision recorded. Cllr



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comment. Cllr Baker said Cllr Preece had to understand that Council was a democracy and everyone had the right to a personal opinion. Cllr Preece stated all he had asked was to have his statement recorded and was not asking the decision to be changed. Cllr Fearfield suggested the Council look at the procurement policy on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website and referred to the financial thresholds the Parish Council might have. Cllr Preece said there were no thresholds and these were only used for authorisation of payments. Even though he had heard the figure of £25000 being bandied about, Polaris had come in about 10% lower than this. He did not wish to debate it again. Cllr Fearfield suggested that Cllr Preece had an axe to grind for some reason which Cllr Preece denied. Cllr Fearfield said he felt Council needed to be very clear as to whether they had a threshold or not. However, the decision had been taken to go out to tender. He said he respected Cllr Preece's views but did not respect being called "you lot" and said Cllr Preece had brought in his own emotions rather than having a sensible discussion. Cllr Preece said he was not emotional and was simply stating facts. Discussion took place about the previous minutes and Cllr Chadwick said they clearly said the decision was to go out to tender.

### 5. Reports/Actions

Cllr Watson said he had been spending a lot of time working on accessibility to the Council's website which was a legal requirement. Work had been going on in the background although no-one would be aware of it.

### 6. Notification Parish Matters (information only)

(1) Cllr Preece – posts. (2) Cllr Baker gave an update on the pathway between Tippings House and Garda House. She was pleased to report it had been cut back and was a real improvement. Some tidying up had been done at Garda House as well and she asked for thanks for this work to be given. (3) Kings Hotel – camper vans – Cllr Davis. (4) Cllr Thomas commented that an

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installation of air conditioning unit to side elevation – Avalon, Water End Road, Beacons Bottom, HP14 3XE – Ms Sue Tobin – No objection.

Proposed: Cllr Watson; seconded: Cllr Preece. (2) **20/07743** – Application for variation of condition 2 (plan) attached to 19/07065/FUL (Demolition of existing agricultural building and silos and the erection of a three storey (plus attic) practice centre building (Use Class D) incorporating Wallace Hill Cottage, the conversion of Wallace Hill Farmhouse for ancillary office use, replacement of the agricultural store (Bee House) with a two storey workshop, the conversion and extension of Moles Cottage to form a two storey cottage, car parking and track alterations, landscaping, ecological enhancements and associated works) – Wallace Hill Farm, Wellground, Stokenchurch, HP14 3YF – Angus Boyd-Heron – Cllr Preece said this application was for minor amendments to be made to a previously approved application. Discussion took place about an additional entrance. Proposed: Cllr Powis; seconded: Cllr Parkinson. Cllr Preece abstained. (3) **20/07801** – Householder application for construction of glazing to surround existing balcony – Penley Lodge, Marlow Road, Stokenchurch, HP14 3UW – Mr Wali Nazir – No objection. Proposed: Cllr Parkinson; seconded: Cllr Thomas.

### 8. Buckinghamshire Councillors

Cllr Hayday said another lockdown would be starting the following day for a month and he talked through the rules relating to this lockdown. Firework night advice was also discussed. 9. **Finance**

#### ■ Bills Payable

These were approved. Proposed: Cllr Preece; seconded: Cllr Thomas.

10. **Correspondence** - (1) Asbestos Inspection of Longburrow Hall – Cllr Chadwick read through an email from Salvum UK who were quoting £325 + VAT to re-inspect the hall for asbestos. Cllr Watson said he believed there was



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had asked if there was an updated asbestos survey. He agreed the Clerk should check with the insurance company.

### 11. Standing Orders 2020

Cllr Chadwick said a copy of these had been circulated with suggested amendments and asked for comments. Cllr Watson said he thought they looked very good. Cllr Parkinson raised a couple of issues which were clarified. Cllr Preece said he had an issue with the term "Chair" and preferred Chairman, with which Cllr Baker agreed. Cllr Watson said he felt Council should be using more modern wording. The other suggested amendments were agreed. Proposed: Cllr Baker; seconded: Cllr Preece. Cllr Watson disagreed with reverting from Chair to Chairman.

### 12. The Commons

Cllr Chadwick said that Cllr Baker had asked about the grass at the bottom of Longburrow. It was clarified that this was from the Football Club when they cut the grass. In addition, last year when the commons were cut for the fete, the grass from the cut had also been left there. Cllr Chadwick said the Parish Warden was going to be asking them to place any grass cuttings where the mound of soil was, which had come from the MUGA. This was agreed. Cllr Preece said he thought Polaris had not received the correct information about Longburrow playing field and Council needed to decide what they wanted to do in relation to its cutting. It was suggested it could be a wild flower meadow. Cllr Hayday said he would send through some details about an organisation that did this. Cllr Chadwick said the contract would be checked to see what had been included and whether it needed some updating.

### 13. Other Parish Matters

(1) Cllr Preece said he had circulated a document about the posts but he did not believe this had been discussed at the previous meeting. A few posts had been missed and he believed the concrete posts near the Fleur had been put in the wrong place. Cllr Baker agreed. Cllr Preece said he felt this needed to be corrected and was also



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about any issues with the posts and he would also highlight these to the contractor. (2) Kings Hotel – camper vans. Cllr Davis said residents were still objecting to camper vans parking in the hotel car park and that four had been present recently. He felt the Council should have a byelaw banning them from parking there. With the skips in the car park as well, there was reduced parking. Cllr Preece said he was aware the Clerk had applied to the DVLA for ownership details and would then be writing to the owner asking them not to park there. Finding out who the owner was had to be done legally and through the correct channels. In relation to the skips, Cllr Preece said the hotel had been undertaking a lot of renovation and this also needed to be taken into consideration. (3) Cllr Chadwick said an email had been received about the BALC AGM and he needed volunteers to attend. Cllr Watson agreed to this and Cllr Chadwick said he would attend as well. (4) Cllr Davis raised equipment the police had put on a post in the village without requesting permission. Cllr Hayday said the police did run operations and he would try to see if he could find anything out. He asked someone to take a photo of it and send it to him. Cllr Watson had spoken to a PCSO about it, but they knew nothing. (5) Cllr Chadwick read through an email from the owner of the burial plot which had blue chippings placed on it. They were now requesting retrospective planning to retain these. However, they had been told to remove them by Council. It was agreed to reply and ask the blue chippings be removed and could be replaced with neutral chippings. (6) Cllr Chadwick asked if the Health & Safety manual was still in circulation. Cllr Watson said it was a heavy read and would take time to get around all the Councillors. Cllr Baker asked how many Councillors were on the H&S Committee and Cllr Chadwick replied there were three which included Cllr Baker who said she would need some training. (7) Cllr Chadwick asked for thoughts about the production of a Local Plan in response to Cllr Adoh's



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recently to Council saying Council needed to be aware there could be developments and needed to engage with the developer at an early stage. It was agreed this should be re-visited in a year's time and Cllr Adoh should be made aware of the situation in Stokenchurch. (8) Cllr Watson said there had

been some work going on with the Clerk about the defibrillators. The Ambulance Service had lost the registration details of several of them, so an audit had been undertaken and they had now all been re-registered. There was also some work ongoing with a distributor who may be able to fix the two other defibrillators, which he thought might still be in warranty.

#### **14. Any Other Business,**

(1) A parishioner who had recently moved to the village wanted to raise Council's awareness about footpaths which would lose their right of way if they were not declared. This was going on throughout the country so he requested Council earmark any footpaths they were aware of. Cllr Hayday said a process had to be followed and he would try to find the link and forward it to Cllr Chadwick. He said if there were any footpaths which were not in use, the details could be filled out on line and a request submitted they be adopted by Councils. However, it was a very slow process. (2) Cllr Chadwick confirmed the next meeting would take place on 18 November 2020.

**Meeting finished at 2040**