

Stinsford Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors held on Monday 9 May 2016 at 7.00pm in The Old Library, Kingston Maurward College

Present: Mr Richard Wheal (Vice-Chairman of Parish Council – in the Chair), four other members of Stinsford Parish Council and two members of the public

In attendance: Miss Kirsty Riglar (Clerk)

1. Welcome

The Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr Wheal, welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Kim Payne and Dr Andy Stillman (Parish Councillors) and Cllr Mrs Jill Haynes (Dorset County Councillor).

3. Presentation on Neighbourhood Planning

Those present at the meeting received a presentation from Ms Jo Witherden, Dorset Planning Consultant, about Neighbourhood Planning. She explained that:

- (i) a Neighbourhood Plan was a document drawn up by the local community which sat alongside the District Council's Local Plan and set out the community's 'vision' for the area in terms of planning;
- (ii) the process required to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, including consultation, examination and referendum;
- (iii) up to 30 areas in Dorset had decided to develop Neighbourhood Plans;
- (iv) a Neighbourhood Plan should cover the needs of the local area and could include any spaces or places that the community wanted to protect;
- (v) there was a need for volunteers and engagement by local residents;
- (vi) the process took an average of two years to develop a Plan and complete the required stages;
- (vii) the average cost to a parish council was £10,000 with the main costs being consultancy support and printing;
- (viii) grant funding of approximately £9,000 was currently available to communities developing a Plan; and
- (ix) Neighbourhood Plans needed to be evidence-based and involve all stakeholders, including landowners and developers.

Ms Witherden also explained that some areas were developing Neighbourhood Plans jointly, rather than individual parishes doing so in isolation, such as Bridport

and some of its adjoining parishes. She suggested that, given the close proximity to Dorchester and the need for further housing to serve the town's needs for which sites outside the town boundary would probably be sought, this may be something that Stinsford might wish to consider.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Ms Witherden for her presentation and the information that she had provided.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should make a decision at its meeting in June as to whether to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Stinsford. As this would be an important development for the parish, it was agreed that local residents should be encouraged to attend and make their views known.

4. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman presented his report for the year 2015/16. (A copy of this is attached to these minutes.)

In addition, the Vice-Chairman expressed thanks, on behalf of the Parish Council, to Kingston Maurward College for the provision of facilities for meetings of the Parish Council and the maintenance of the play area.

5. Report from County Councillor

In the absence of Cllr Mrs Jill Haynes due to family reasons, the Clerk reported the receipt of Cllr Mr Haynes' report for the year 2015/16. (A copy of this is attached to these minutes.)

6. Report from District Councillor

In the absence of a report from Cllr Patrick Cooke, the Vice-Chairman moved to the next item.

7. Report of the Village Hall Trust

Mr George Armstrong reported that the Village Hall funds could be used for any communal project to enhance leisure within the parish. There had been a small increase in the value of the charity bond shares over the past year, with an income of £38.56. The value of the holdings were now approximately £735. Whilst the Parish Council now held reserves for maintenance of the playground, there was a possible requirement for the continuation of the Trust in order to be the body to apply for funding through grants and rewards. Mr Armstrong added that there may be some benefit to making the details of the Trust available on the Parish Council's website, although it would be necessary to ensure that the specificity of the projects on which the funds could be spent was emphasised.

It was **resolved** that Mr George Armstrong, Mrs Lynda Pain, Mrs Pat Cosgrove and Miss Kirsty Riglar be appointed as Trustees.

8. Public Discussion Period

The Vice-Chairman reported that he had received an email from the Personal Assistant to Oliver Letwin MP suggesting dates in late May and early June for the proposed public meeting about the lack of provision of superfast broadband in the parish. As these were before the next meeting of the Parish Council, we invited comments on how the parish councillors and interested residents should approach the preparation for the management of the meeting.

Mr Grenville-Jones suggested that the representative of Dorset County Council's Superfast Dorset team should be invited to explain why there was an absence of provision within the parish and that the question should be asked as to how much it would cost to provide this properly.

Once the date was confirmed, it was agreed that this would need to be publicised as widely as possible within the parish, including to the business parks at Higher Bockhampton. It was also agreed that specific questions should be shared via email to enable agreement to be reached as to who would post these at the meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Chairman..... Date.....

Chairman's Report 2015/16

Firstly, please accept my apologies for missing this meeting.

For me this year as Chair of the Parish Council has been exhilarating, positive and sometimes downright frustrating. I believe we have made some progress on several major issues and yet others seem to hang on indefinitely. For instance ...

- In the run up to May 2015 the Parish Council had been seriously involved with fighting the ill-judged plan to more than double the size of **Lower Bockhampton**. A great deal of time and effort had been expended on this issue and this long running issue cast a pall over the work of the Council. Fortunately, in the early summer the outline planning application was dropped and the Council could look at other matters.
- **Giant windfarms**, beloved of some and hated by others. In February 2015 the Council recommended the rejection of this application and from then on it became more of a WDDC matter than one for the Parish. Three Council members attended the WDDC planning meeting and the Council's viewpoint was well represented by Michael Clarke.
- The management of the new **Hardy's Cottage Visitor Centre** has taken up a good deal of our time and we have tried to focus on how to remedy a very poor situation. Unfortunately, this work still continues but Jill Haynes (DCC) has been very helpful. Poor planning by DCC and a seeming lack of good will from the regional National Trust means that problems persist; parking is inadequate, disabled access is inadequate, road access is inadequate, the development of the centre as an information centre and hub for both Hardy and the forest is inadequate. There has been some movement on these issues but not a great deal ~ the work is ongoing.
- **Traffic management around Stinsford**. We have been concerned about the safety of the roads around Stinsford with poor warning signage and excessive speeds. We have had meetings with DCC's traffic management staff and outlined our many concerns all along from the Visitor Centre via Lower Bockhampton through to Stinsford Roundabout and then onto Greys Bridge and pedestrian crossing dangers. Lots of letters, emails and talk with DCC but no developments so far. We even have a school with no school warning signs!
- **Superfast Broadband but not in Stinsford**. Yet again a DCC issue. The Superfast Broadband team trumpet their successes yet our broadband speeds have not moved. We have had meetings with DCC and with Oliver Letwin, but so far to no avail. It would appear the initial contract did not apply to most of the parish on the grounds that BT would provide the service commercially. When BT decided not to we were then left without the fast service. This is an ongoing problem, especially in the east of the parish where speeds are embarrassingly slow. We are setting up a public meeting with Oliver Letwin in the chair and DCC

and BT/Openreach being there to answer questions and possibly offer solutions but no date as yet.

- And finally on the big issue front, the issue of building a **Waste Transfer Site on Stinsford Hill**. With obvious traffic problems, air, sound and water pollution problems, and aesthetic problems we are surprised that DCC is still pushing this idea. We will oppose it rigorously.

In between times, we have adopted formal standing orders for the council and implemented the associated financial procedures. We have had good liaison with our colleagues from WDDC (Patrick Cooke) and DCC (Jill Haynes). Communication with the College is good and Kirsty Riglar, our Clerk, needs congratulating for her work developing our website and publicizing the work of the Council apart from excellent clerking!

So it has been an interesting and busy year with some progress being made and more yet to come. I thank fellow members for their commitment and work and look forward to the next year with Richard in the Chair.

Andy Stillman
April 2016.

Annual Report to the Parish Council 2015/16

Dorset County Councillor Jill Haynes

The Government cuts to the County Council grant continue to make the operation of the council very difficult. During the last year all the Directorates have gone through a full staff restructure and there is constant pressure to make savings while continuing to provide good services. In the next three year the Councils across Dorset will be expected to make further savings of over £100M. This pressure is driving all the councils to look at different ways of working as the current situation simply is not sustainable. This devolution agenda continues to be a big discussion area at DCC and of course it makes complete sense to look at fewer councils to save money. The discussions will be helped by the Local Government Association advisors who are working with all the councils, for free, to provide a series of possible options that could be more cost effective while still providing local representation. Combining Councils or two new unitary authorities are being considered. Currently Bournemouth and Poole, which are unitary authorities already, do not look as if they want to join as a single authority with the rest of Dorset. It therefore looks likely that there will be a new unitary covering the remainder of shire Dorset. If these changes are to be agreed by the Government then we have to have firm proposals for Dorset by the autumn of 2016 for them to come into effect in 2019.

One of the cuts that has been agreed to balance the budget is the removal of the member's local budgets. This has been a success for many parishes but it is felt that the little money we now are receiving should be concentrated on our statutory obligations. I am no longer able to take requests for funding although those already agreed will go through.

We will be going to a new committee system from May. Currently the three main committees are silos in their way of working, Environment, Adults and Communities and Children's committees. We now look to work across the directorates in a way that gives a greater integration and understanding of the whole of the activities undertaken by DCC. The new committees will also have the scrutiny role and the audit and scrutiny committee will cease. The audit role will move to the governance committee.

The new committees will be Economic Growth, People and Communities and Safeguarding.

You may be aware that we are changing our youth service provision. We are some £3M overspent on the children's budget and this is because we have so many 10 to 14 year olds coming into care. Currently we have about 440 young people in care against a norm of five years ago of about 350. It is essential that we start to tackle this problem at the cause and begin to work with much younger children and their families. The decision was made to get our youth workers to liaise and work with primary schools to identify families and children that need early help. They need to be out in the community and not necessarily waiting for young people to come in to youth clubs to see them. The County will no longer operate the youth centre buildings that it owns and these are being offered to the local communities. We are

very encouraged by the response and it looks as if all but one of the buildings has either schools or the community interested in taking on the building and youth club. It will be of benefit to these communities if it can work as many of the buildings were only open in the evenings and not every day of the week. There could be many more opportunities for them to be used by local people. There will be a restructure of qualified youth workers to align them with the schools in the community which will be completed by the beginning of September.

We are looking to work in a much closer way with the health services in order to not only make savings in management but also to make the experience one of a single service for people needing care and support. This is still a difficult discussion with partners as people are protecting their own part of the service and of course their jobs. However it is essential that this kind of cooperative working is moved forward quickly. Certainly in my role as the Portfolio Holder for Adult health, care and independence I have seen a big change in attitude even in the last three months.

After financial difficulties at the beginning of the year Dorset Waste Partnership seems to be turning the corner and the new management have been taking better control of the finances. The new collection system has now been rolled out across the county and the council is currently recycling just over 60% of all our domestic waste and this is one of the best rates in the country.

Our Highways section is also rated in the top ten in the country. We now have a full management plan for all the roads we look after. (some like the A35 are managed by the Highways Agency). This plan has enabled us to apply successfully for additional funding for pothole repair. The most recent grant has brought in just over £800k for pothole repairs. It is still not enough but every little helps.

The next few years are going to continue to be very difficult for the Council and I am expecting cuts that will have a big effect in rural areas. Rural bus subsidies are bound to be one of these areas and you will have heard recently that there is also discussion about the future of the mobile library van service. We will need to work together as a community to see how these services can continued to be provided but perhaps in a different way.

Jill Haynes
May 2016