

Stinsford Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors held on Monday 12 April 2021 at 7.00pm via Zoom

Present: Mr George Armstrong (Chairman of Parish Council – in the Chair) and five other members of Stinsford Parish Council (Mr Michael Clarke, Ms Liz Crocker, Ms Sue Escott, Mrs Julie Martin and Mrs Sarah Pattison)

Also in attendance: Miss Kirsty Riglar (Clerk) and one member of the public (Ms Sally Cooke)

1. Welcome

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr Armstrong, welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman presented his report for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21 (attached as the Appendix to these minutes).

4. Report of the Village Hall Trust

Mr George Armstrong provided the report of the Village Hall Trust. He reminded those present that funds could be used for any communal project to enhance recreational activity within the parish, or to help raise additional funds, having done so in the past for a refurbishment of the play area via grant applications

He explained that the funds were held in M&G Charity Bonds which were currently worth £600. The most recent quarterly cheque had been for £3.49.

He also reported that the Charity Commission was reviewing all very small charities and he hoped that the Village Hall Trust would be included in any refresh programme to ensure that it could be renamed and made more relevant, to be able to fundraise more effectively.

It was **resolved** that Mr George Armstrong, Mrs Pat Cosgrove and the Clerk to the Parish Council, Miss Kirsty Riglar, be appointed as Trustees for the year 2021/22.

7. Public Discussion Period

Ms Cooke raised the following issues:

- (i) progress on the inclusion of a bus stop to serve Thorncombe Woods – the Clerk reported that she needed to go back to the relevant officer in Dorset Council with further information; and

- (ii) working with Kingston Maurward College on a tree nursery enabling residents to plant and grow trees.

The meeting ended at 7:15pm.

Chairman..... **Date**.....

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE STINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

This is a short report on a long 'year'. The first lockdown saw the cancellation of the annual parish meeting and thus prevented the annual change of Chair.

Parish Council

Andy Stillman has retired from the Parish Council and moved to France. I would like to thank him for all his hard work and the expertise he brought to the Parish Council, particularly his access to a wide range of networks.

We have recruited a cohort of new councillors: Liz Crocker, Susan Escott, Julie Martin, and Sarah Pattison, who have brought a breadth of expertise and interests to the Parish Council as well as correcting its gender imbalance.

I would like to thank them for the positive contributions they have made in such a short period.

We have experienced the particular joys of Zoom meetings and I think these have been quite successful, though I look forward to being able to have face-to-face meetings later in the year.

I would like to thank existing councillors for their continued hard work and support.

I would particularly like to thank our Parish Clerk for her expert guidance and hard work and especially for translating diffuse councillors' comments into coherent policy documents.

Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council was lucky when it decided to engage in the Neighbourhood Planning process to be met with an enthusiastic response from volunteers in the parish. The last two years have been an intense process of research, consultation and policy making. The whole process has been driven by parishioners pooling their knowledge of the parish and their concerns for its future.

I would like to thank them collectively but would particularly thank Sally Cooke for coordinating and driving the project and for the specialist advice provided by Jo Witherden. The plan itself will be soon moving into the end stages of external scrutiny and eventually a confirmatory referendum.

Local Plan

The Parish Council produced an excellent response to the first stage of the Local Plan consultation and I would like to thank all who made a contribution to this process. This particular show will run and run as a vast amount of reasoned criticism from the Parish Council and wider community rubs against the spurious arguments of strategic need.

National Planning Framework

The Parish Council responded critically to the new NPF and the Parish Council argued strongly against its proposals to downgrade local planning consultations in the name of efficiency.

COVID

So much has been said and written on the pandemic that more seems redundant. The parish has been lucky to have had a low incidence of infection in its area and thus deaths. Our thoughts, however, are with any families and individuals who have been directly affected by the virus. The main health impact has been in the cancellation of hospital appointments.

The small businesses in the business parks have all been affected but have managed to keep trading. The range of hospitality businesses have been particularly restricted by successive lockdowns and constrained openings. The Parish Council wishes them a successful return to full trading in May. We note that our major employer, Kingston Maurward College, has weathered the many storms and hope it has a successful relaunch of its commercial activities

Kingston Maurward

Our relationship with the College and the estate remains positive. We have been briefed regularly by the Principal on new developments and will continue to contribute to any changes in the master plan and to the emerging position of the college in the Local Plan as a strategic asset within the county. We thank the College for its assistance in maintaining the playground.

Climate and Ecological Emergency

The Parish Council has committed itself to declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency. It is in the process of developing both policy and practice before a public launch. I would like to thank all those who have already contributed to that process.

River Path

We have made very little progress in improving the river path. The effects of the last two winters have accelerated the process of bank erosion on the river path. The FROW Officer has an estimate of approximately £13,000 for improving the path but has made no headway in getting such monies allocated to the path.

Playground

The playground has survived the winter in a good state. A maintenance programme is out to tender and I would like to thank Paul and Julie Morris for their voluntary work on the playground this year.

Neighbourhood Plan Projects

There are a number of projects within the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish Council to implement and we will continue to make progress on these in the coming year.

Annual Parish Meeting

Before COVID and related lockdowns, the numbers attending the Annual Parish Meeting had declined. I had hoped to use the Neighbourhood Plan process to draw more people in. It remains an area of concern.

George Armstrong
April 2021