

Stinsford Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors held on Tuesday 13 May 2024 at 7.00pm in The Old Library, Kingston Maurward College

Present: Mr George Armstrong (Chair of Parish Council – in the Chair) and five other members of Stinsford Parish Council (Mr Michael Clarke, Mr Kevin Henville, Mr Edd Maynard, Mr Justin Morris and Mrs Sarah Pattison)

Also in attendance: Mr Luke Rake (Principal of Kingston Maurward College and local resident), Dorset Councillor David Taylor and Miss Kirsty Riglar (Clerk to the Parish Council)

1. Welcome

The Chair of the Parish Council, Mr Armstrong, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Mrs Sue Escott.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chair presented his report for the year 2023/24 (attached as the Appendix to these minutes).

Those present thanked the Chair for his detailed report.

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 just under £900; the quarterly interest was currently in the region of £9 which was used to buy additional units.

He reminded those present that he was currently a Trustee, together with the Clerk to the Parish Council and local resident Mrs Pat Cosgrove. Mrs Cosgrove now wished to step down from this role and it was suggested that interest be invited from within the parish for a third Trustee.

In the longer term, it was suggested that the future of the Village Hall Trust be reviewed and community use of space within the parish, such as the new Studio School, be sought instead.

It was **resolved** that:

- (i) the Village Hall Trust continue to exist for the time being;
- (ii) Mr George Armstrong and the Clerk to the Parish Council, Miss Kirsty Riglar, be appointed as Trustees for the year 2024/25 and interest be sought from within the parish for a third Trustee; and
- (iii) the future of the Village Hall Trust be reviewed with a view to securing community use of space within the parish as an alternative.

7. Public Discussion Period

Mr Rake provided those present with an update on the proposed merger of Kingston Maurward College and Weymouth College. The process remained on track, subject to ministerial and Board approval, with financial and legal due diligence currently being undertaken. However there remained a significant amount of work to be completed. He confirmed that it was the Board's intention to seek an Interim Chief Executive for the merged organisation and the recruitment process was ongoing.

In response to a question, Mr Rake explained that the official merger date could be set at any point should the due diligence not be completed in readiness for 31 July 2024. He anticipated that more information would be available for the next meeting of the Parish Council in June.

In response to a question, Mr Rake confirmed that there was a schedule of key milestones for the transition of employees into the new organisation.

In relation to the development of the new Dorset Studio School, he reported that there was some lag in the capital project timeframe. He added that a decision had been made to join the Wessex Multi Academy Trust but this was unlikely to result in any material changes to education provision.

In response to a question, Mr Rake confirmed that the College had a positive relationship with Ilchester Estates from whom it had a fixed farm-based tenancy on land on the far side of the A35. The future of this tenancy would be included in the due diligence work.

In response to a question, Mr Rake reported that the cost of the proposed merger was likely to be in the region of £8-9M.

The Chair reported that following the Parish Council's meeting in April, in addition to written responses from the Leader and Chief Executive of Dorset Council, he had spoken to the Chair of Governors of Kingston Maurward College, Chris Loder MP and the Chair of the Dorset Branch of the National Farmers Union. Following this he had decided not to progress an article in the local media as he was concerned the key issues would be missed. Councillor Taylor added that he had also spoken to Chris Loder MP about this issue. It was suggested that the Chairs of the Governors of both colleges be invited to the next meeting of the Parish Council to discuss its ongoing concerns about aspects of the merger process.

The Chair thanked Mr Rake for his update and for the continuing input of the College in the Parish Council's work.

The meeting ended at 7:51pm.

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

Stinsford Parish Council – Chair’s Annual Report

George Armstrong - May 2024

1. Parish Council

I would like to thank Kirsty Riglar, our Parish Clerk, for all her hard work, help and advice over the past year. I would like to thank our new councillors for joining the council and hope they find interesting opportunities for their talents and energy. I would also like to thank our more established councillors for their stamina and help throughout the year.

2. Dorset Council

The council has had a major political change in the last month. Though there is little scope for increasing the resources of the council, except for asset sales, there is scope for changing priorities and attitudes. We look forward to these changes. I would like to thank David Taylor, our DC Councillor, who has worked hard to help us with all our DC issues.

3. Planning

We have had fewer local planning applications this year. Where we have made objections, there is little sense of them being heard (not a new phenomenon).

The recent granting of Planning permission for extra industrial units on the B3143, despite both Parish Councils objecting on traffic grounds, is a good example of this. Even more so, because the Highways Department has investigated the dangers posed by existing traffic levels on this road.

The Department of Education capital team has shown excellent practice in their prior two planning consultations for the new Studio School. Others could learn from their approach.

The new Local Plan has yet to be made and published. For the North of Dorchester development, the whole issue of housing, its nature, extent and location, is still up in the air. We have acted to provide parishioners with greater information on this issue by organising public meetings with Wessex Water and the Environment Agency (when it can be coaxed out of its defensive shell). We will be pressing the new DC to review its consultation process for the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan: we have used our Neighbourhood Plan in relation to planning applications and other planning issues but we have not had the capacity to pursue ‘projects’. I hope with a complete PC we can review our NP priorities.

4. Traffic

Heavy traffic on rural roads: the horrendous accident on the B3143 has highlighted the issue of rural roads being used for heavy and fast traffic. DC has investigated but has not produced an adequate response to this site and to the wider issue.

A35: a start has been made on setting up a linked parishes initiative to negotiate with Highways England to identify hotspots needing action. In Stinsford this is primarily the ever-increasing tailbacks on the Stinsford roundabout and the lack of an effective diversion and dispersal strategy.

Events traffic: closely linked to the above is the traffic chaos created in the parish when large events are held – the County Show, the Spring Show, the Balloon Festival – that do not have effective traffic management plans.

Studio School: the school creates a large amount of traffic on the Tingleton Road and our efforts to have the traffic lowered or managed better have failed. Most parishioners avoid the

area at school opening and closing times, but the apparent growth of parental traffic and parking is a safety issue.

5. River Path

Heavy rain combined with poor maintenance has damaged the river path in several places. At Stinsford Bridge, the path is completely destroyed and at the Lower Bockhampton end there is considerable damage along the banks. Following pressure from ourselves and David Taylor, a major plan of repair has been drawn up and should be started when the river is lower in the summer (if it is).

6. Bockhampton Playground

We have established a plan of work for maintaining the playground to a safe level. This will cost the council more each year as the equipment deteriorates further with age. We have also launched a consultation on the future of the playground within its protected status.

7. Kingston Maurward/Weymouth College merger

The Parish Council has been supportive of efforts to increase the long-term viability of the College and initially supported the early proposals. However, a poor-quality consultation and an ill-managed selection process have left us with a low level of confidence for the future.

8. Climate change:

The issue of the river path damage perfectly demonstrates the increased rains predicted by Climate science for the UK. In 2024, it was coupled with an El Nino event, itself intensified by Climate change.

9. Communication

I would like to thank those councillors who set up the Facebook group and look forward to its growth and effectiveness in the future.