

Stinsford Parish Council

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 13 June 2016 at 7.00pm in The Pengelly Room,
Kingston Maurward College**

Present: Mr George Armstrong (Vice-Chairman – in the Chair), Mr Michael Clarke, Mr Chris Hext, Mr Will Molland and Dr A Stillman

Also in attendance: Cllr Mrs Jill Haynes (Dorset County Councillor), Mr Giles Nicholson (Area Manager – West and North, Dorset Countryside), Miss Kirsty Riglar (Clerk) and 2 members of the public (Mr Hugh Grenville-Jones and Mr Adam Sultan-Petty).

74. Apologies for Absence

74.1 An apology for absence was received from Mr Richard Wheal and Cllr Patrick Cooke (West Dorset District Councillor).

75. Resignation of Parish Councillor

75.1 The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of resignation from Mr Kim Payne. The Parish Council were saddened to hear of this and expressed their gratitude for Mr Payne's contribution whilst a councillor.

Resolved that:

- (i) Mr Payne be thanked for his contribution to the work of the Parish Council.
- (ii) that the Returning Officer at West Dorset District Council be advised of this vacancy and that this be advertised, as appropriate.

76. Declarations of Interest

76.1 There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

77. Public Participation Time

77.1 Mr Sultan-Petty introduced himself and explained that he and his wife were buying a house within the parish which would be renovated and become their permanent home. He welcomed the thoughts of the Parish Council to ensure that any enhancements to this property would be in keeping with the area. The Chairman welcomed Mr Sultan-Petty to the parish and explained that planning permission had previously been sought for changes to another privately-owned property in the same area and both the Parish Council and District Council had looked upon this sympathetically.

77.2 Mr Armstrong raised an issue on behalf of a local resident about the concrete factory next to the entrance of Birkin House and the increase in noise on Sundays and early in the morning. It was also noted that a film of powder was also created by the operations and that this was a form of pollution. It was **resolved** to contact the Enforcement Officer at West Dorset District Council and raise the issues of noise, intensity of use, duration and number of days per week on which the site was operating, as well as raising the environmental health concerns.

Action by: Clerk

77.3 Mr Armstrong also reported that a local resident had reported further damage to Bockhampton Bridge. Whilst it was noted that the weight restriction signs had now been installed, these related to unladen weight. However, it was believed that heavy vehicles were driving over the bridge carelessly and that some form of narrowing of the bridge to deter this was necessary to safeguard it. It was **resolved** that:

- (i) a request for width restriction on Bockhampton bridge be submitted to Dorset Highways; and
- (ii) Dorset Passenger Transport be requested to review the routing of school buses to avoid this bridge with effect from September.

Action by: Clerk

77.4 Mr Grenville-Jones drew attention to the noise experienced in Higher Bockhampton on due to the PA system used for the Race for Life event held at Kingston Maurward. Whilst the noise had been reduced in recent years, this had increased in 2016 and he asked that the Parish Council contact the organisers to request that this be decreased in 2017.

78. Dorset County Council Matters

78.1 Cllr Mrs Haynes reported the following:-

- (i) that the organisers of the Iron Man triathlon had sent a letter to councillors outlining the arrangements for road closures on the day of the event and she would forward this to the Clerk;
- (ii) that the organisers of the Casterbridge Marathon in 2017 were offering to speak to those parishes affected (the Clerk confirmed that they would be attending the next meeting);
- (iii) that the proposals for the establishment of unitary councils to cover Dorset were being progressed and would be the subject of a consultation exercise later in the summer;
- (iv) that as part of this process, a move towards 'locality boards' was being considered; and
- (v) the arrangements for a Combined Authority to enable all of the principal councils in Dorset to work together on economic development and transportation were currently being consulted upon.

78.2 In relation to the consultation on the establishment of unitary councils, Cllr Mrs Haynes explained that the business plan was currently being produced. Once this was complete, a public consultation exercise would take place, including a lot of Ask Dorset events. Cllr Mrs Haynes offered to liaise with the Clerk to arrange a presentation for a future meeting of the Parish Council which could be publicised to local residents. The Parish Council welcomed this suggestion.

79. West Dorset District Council Matters

79.1 In the absence of Cllr Patrick Cooke, the Chairman moved to the next agenda item.

80. Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre

80.1 Mr Giles Nicholson, Area Manager – West and North, Dorset Countryside, informed the Parish Council that a planning application had been submitted for the extension of the car park to provide an additional eight parking spaces to serve Thorncombe Woods and Hardy's Birthplace. Some clearance of trees had commenced at the far end of the car park to enable this extension. Mr Nicholson confirmed that the area into which the car park would extend was not designated ancient woodland and only 6-8 substantial trees were being felled, together with the removal of some soil. The Parish Council sought clarification as to the boundary of both the ancient woodland. Mr Nicholson explained that a map illustrating this was included in the planning application.

80.2 He also explained that Dorset County Council, as the owners of the whole site, were seeking to place an emphasis on the use of the woods by wildlife and people. A people counter had been installed since March 2015 which had logged 67,272 people walking from the car park to the Visitor Centre in the year to March 2016. From March

2016 to date, an 8.3% drop had been logged. It was therefore possible that the number of visitors experienced during the 2015 open season was an artificial spike. It was noted that the counter did not pick up those visitors who entered the woods direct from the car park. The Parish Council requested the data per month for the year March 2015 – March 2016. It was also noted that the passage of vehicles was not logged and that it was therefore not possible to evidence whether any of the plans implemented to reduce car trips to the Visitor Centre and woods were effective. Cllr Mrs Haynes undertook to enquire whether it would be possible to install a vehicle counter.

- 80.3 In relation to the Parish Council's ongoing concerns that the Travel Plan was not yet implemented in full, Cllr Mrs Haynes explained that she had received an explanation from officers that the park and ride scheme originally proposed was for visitors to park at Kingston Maurward and ride their bicycles to the woods and Visitor Centre; not for a bus to transport them between the two sites. A cycle route and walking route from Dorchester to Higher Bockhampton had now been waymarked, the cycle racks provided were well used and more appropriate arrangements for coach parking had been put in place. She acknowledged that the County Council's financial situation had changed a great deal since the original planning application was submitted for the Visitor Centre and the initial Travel Plan written and that it was not possible to fulfil all of the original aspirations for the project.
- 80.4 The Parish Council expressed their concerns that the Travel Plan was a fundamental building block for the whole project and the approval of planning permission and that it was now unlikely that the various aspects of this would be implemented in full. Concern was also expressed that signage had not been installed in the passing places on Cuckoo Lane and that these were still being used as parking places when the car park was full. Cllr Mrs Haynes explained that this issue had been passed to Dorset Highways and she would follow this up.
- 80.5 Concerns were also expressed about the quality and quantity of the interpretation material made available in the Visitor Centre. Cllr Mrs Haynes explained that this was not a matter for the County Council but one for the National Trust; she explained that this had been raised with Members through a policy development panel looking at the County Council's country parks and it was accepted that the interpretation should be better.
- 80.6 The Parish Council thanked Mr Nicholson and Cllr Mrs Haynes for their update on the latest position and agreed to await further information from them in relation to the aspects discussed before deciding what further action to take.

81. Minutes

- 81.1 It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors and Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 9 May 2016 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

82. Finance

- 82.1 The Clerk reported that there were no items of expenditure to consider.

83. Approval of Annual Audit Return

- 83.1 The Clerk introduced the Annual Audit Return for 2015/16 for approval before it was submitted to the External Auditor.

83.2 It was **resolved** that:-

- (i) the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) be approved;
- (ii) the Accounting Statements (Section 2) be approved: and
- (iii) the views of the Internal Auditor be received.

84. A Neighbourhood Plan for Stinsford

84.1 The Parish Council considered whether to commence the development of a neighbourhood plan for the parish. It was noted that a significant amount of effort would be required to undertake the development of a plan and it was not known whether there was wider support and those willing to contribute their time amongst the residents. The development of the extant parish plan had required significant time and effort and a neighbourhood plan would be more onerous. Some concern was also expressed that whilst a neighbourhood plan would sit alongside West Dorset District Council's Local Plan, the District Council's Development Control Committee could disregard this. It was also noted that, given the increasing pressure placed upon the District Council to deliver housing numbers, a neighbourhood plan could provide some protection to the parish, particularly in relation to its cultural heritage.

84.2 It was **resolved** to investigate whether it was possible to develop a 'light touch' neighbourhood plan before a decision was made as to whether to progress a plan for the parish.

Action by: Clerk to seek advice from Dorset Planning Consultant.

85. Superfast Broadband

85.1 Following the public meeting held on 11 June, the Parish Council noted the outcomes of this and awaited the further information that the representatives from BT and the Superfast Dorset Project had undertaken to provide.

86. Consultation - Draft Waste Plan Updates – Additional and Emerging Preferred Waste Site Allocations

86.1 The Parish Council considered the additional and emerging preferred waste site allocations which included **WP10 – land NW of Stinsford Hill** – which was being considered as a possible site for a Waste Management Centre, comprising a household recycling centre and a transfer facility, possibly combined with a vehicle depot. This site was slightly different from that included in the initial consultation in Autumn 2015.

86.2 It was **resolved** to submit the following comments:-

Stinsford Parish Council rigorously opposed the development of a Waste Management Centre on this site for the following reasons:-

Risk of water contamination – there is a Grade 1 chalk stream and a Chalk Major Aquifer of Principal designation under the site.

Insufficient transport infrastructure – the Stinsford Hill roundabout is heavily used and, due to the current lane structure, is a site at which there are many 'near misses' in addition to a number of collisions. It is very difficult for vehicles to cross the roundabout and the traffic flow on the A35 when travelling between roundabout and the B3150 and Slyer's Lane. This would make access to the proposed site not only difficult but potentially dangerous. Additionally, movements by private vehicles out of Dorchester would also place increased pressure on Grey's Bridge, a Grade II Listed Structure, and generate greater congestion along the B3150. This stretch of road is heavily used and slow moving during rush hour periods, and at weekends, particularly in the summer. A new access to a waste site off of the A3150 would further exacerbate

this. Considerable improvement and modification of the existing roundabout and highway would be required to ensure the safety of cars both entering and exiting the proposed site as well as those on the A3150.

Impact on landscape – This site is part of an unspoilt, undeveloped agricultural landscape which forms a key part of the landscape and visual setting for Dorchester. The development of any waste facility on this greenfield site would irreparably damage this setting and context.

Impact on ecology – The impact of development works alone would have a considerable impact upon the ecology of this agricultural habitat. In addition, a Waste Management Centre would attract vermin which would, in turn, impact upon the agricultural use of the adjoining fields and could pose a threat to animal health, particularly the pig units belonging to Kingston Maurward College.

Impact on tourism - The uninterrupted view across the water meadows towards Dorchester also has cultural significance as this was described in detail by Thomas Hardy in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' and attracts visitors to the area as part of the Hardy Trail. The revised site is higher up the hill than that originally proposed and will be visually more intrusive. The Parish Council consider that it is entirely inappropriate to site a Waste Management Centre in such an obtrusive site alongside the main route into and out of Dorchester to the east.

Impact on the residents of the parish – Stinsford is the smallest of the parishes surrounding Dorchester and yet it is being proposed that it host the Waste Management Centre for whole of the Dorchester area and experience the denigration of greenfield sites and negative impact upon the transport infrastructure to benefit the residents of the wider area. The Parish Council believe this to be inequitable.

86.3 It was also **resolved** to highlight the current consultation on this site to the Hardy Society.

87. Items for future Agenda

87.1 No additional items were proposed.

88. Date of next meeting

88.1 It was **noted** that the next full meeting would be held on Monday 4 July 2016.

The meeting concluded at 9:25pm.

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