

**STOKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2025  
IN STOKENHAM PARISH HALL**

**PRESENT:****COUNCILLORS:****GAIL ADDISON****ADRIAN GOODMAN****CHRIS HART****RICHARD PAIN****CHARLES ROGERS****JULIAN BRAZIL (District and County Councillor)****JONATHAN ANSELL****KIM GREENING****TIM LYNN****LIZ ROBINSON****PIERS SPENCE (Chairman)****Also in attendance:****Clerk – Mrs G. Claydon****APOLOGIES:****COUNCILLORS:****PAULA DOUST****1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors were invited to declare any disclosable interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they had in any items to be considered at this meeting. They were also reminded to consider whether in the light of recent activities any items within their Register of Interests should be updated. It was advised that any unforeseen request for a Dispensation would be considered by the Clerk at this point only if there was no way a councillor would have been aware of such before the meeting. None.

**2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of full council meeting dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were considered before being approved by all present and duly signed as a true and correct record.

**3. OPEN FORUM**

Mark and Caroline Baldwin attended to support their planning application for 8 Grenville Close, where they had recently moved with their two children. Both were working locally, with Caroline looking forward to providing wrap-around care for working parents with children at Stokenham School. They were requesting permission for front and rear extensions along with work to the garden for what they hoped would be their forever family home. The ridge height would remain the same and the design and materials would be in line with other houses in the area. They had liaised with close neighbours who were going to put letters of support on the portal.

Councillors questioned the presence of a caravan in the front garden in light of a local covenant excluding such. The applicants responded that they had only become aware of this recently and intended to move it at an early opportunity. Councillor Pain asked whether they had considered any materials for replacement windows other than UPVC, such as timber or aluminium. It was also pointed out that the Climate Emergency Compliance form mentioned solar PV but no panels were shown on the plans. The applicants responded that they hadn't given as much detail as they could at this stage, and that they were also planning to install an air source heat pump. It was pointed out that everyone reading the application, from Parish Council to planning officers and members of the development committee, would always rather see more detail than less, and it was best to be as specific as possible at this stage, rather than treating the whole thing as a box-ticking exercise. There was some discussion about the images included in the application referred to as

local precedents. It was agreed that what was intended was remodelling to follow neighbouring style with the addition of a porch and a rear dormer within the existing footprint.

A discussion on work to the outside area questioned the removal of a lot of dense vegetation. The applicants responded that the existing garden had been neglected and was very overgrown and needed to be made safe and usable for their children. They were asked whether they had considered using permeable structures rather than tarmac for the driveway: installing a stonework surface on sand would allow the area to drain. The applicants thanked councillors for their input and said they had given them a lot to consider.

Another parishioner who did not identify himself asked when bin collection and recycling would recommence for residents of Kiln Lane as these had been missed for the second week running. He was referred to Cllr Brazil for an answer.

### **DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr Brazil outlined the Devolution White Paper released 16<sup>th</sup> December regarding a strategic authority. The combined council was going ahead but Cornwall then left and the Local Government reform intended that district and county councils be replaced by Unitary. Cllr Brazil did not like this proposal to represent 500,000 people or more. Devon County had agreed and cancelled this year elections as had 16 other areas. District Council had pushed back and said no to the proposal. A management consultant might have created that number but the Districts felt it should be different, probably 3 or 4 unitaries each with 300,000 people. Districts were to meet Monday to consider the best split across Devon for which he gave some examples. All Districts needed to send their preliminary thoughts on numbers and a solution then by March 2025 had to firm up and Autumn 2025 provide details. Devon did not want one single Unitary due to geographical challenge for services. Cornwall had previously gone Unitary and then in-house split duties up into manageable areas akin to previous districts. This proposal was driven by the Treasury to save money. It was estimated that unitary changes would cost £25 - £35million with these changes not paid for by Government when District and County had already been starved of funding. Cllr Ansell provided an example of previous reorganisation funding reallocation that saw many lose out.

Cllr Brazil had managed to get black bins along one section of Kiln Lane collected but was advised no recycling had been picked up and they were now two weeks overdue. A call logged to District advised that they no longer send vehicles out to pick up missed collections but would advise the next crew that they should do so!

Coleridge Lane to Carehouse Cross undergrounding of cables was stated for a customer but there was no indication of where and the diversion did not make sense. Other closures also used descriptions that did not tally on the ground.

Cllr Brazil was asked for his view on huge tractors and trailers using back roads and trashing the side banks. He responded that the law of the land allowed such but acknowledged many vehicles were too wide for roads. It was suggested there should be a restriction on farm vehicle size as the taxpayer paid for repairs.

*Cllr Brazil left the meeting.*

### **4. PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS**

**The following applications were considered and comments forwarded to District planning:**

- 3984/24/HHO Householder application for proposed replacement ground floor extension & loft conversion with dormer to rear 31 Beesands – Response 13<sup>th</sup> February – No

comment. Again noted that an application referred to a property with an address that was in fact 31 Beesands as '31 Chestnut Park to Beesands'. This is misleading.

- 4073/24/HHO Householder application for front & rear extensions, alterations with associated Landscaping & installation of driveway Copperfield, 8 Grenville Close, Stokenham – Response 13<sup>th</sup> February – No objection, but Parish Council offered the following observations: The Climate Emergency would be better addressed if windows and doors were made of materials other than UPVC and composite. Equally, the driveway would make a more meaningful contribution if constructed of permeable paving on sand rather than tarmac due to the terrain and run off in this area. With the increase of light and glazing to the rear of the house, attention was drawn to consideration of thermal gain and a need to cut out high sun, along with reduction of light spill. Whilst acknowledging the need to make the garden usable, the loss of dense vegetation should be offset by the introduction of provision for nesting birds and other wildlife.

#### **PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE**

- Nothing further.

#### **5. CO OPTION**

No applications had been received so this was dispensed with.

*Cllr Brazil arrived at the meeting.*

#### **6. CAR PARKING CHARGES**

South Hams District Council consultation on increasing parking charges with District response date set from 12<sup>th</sup> December to 5<sup>th</sup> January for responses over the Christmas period was tabled. It was AGREED that a local discount should be applied.

Cllr Brazil was questioned on the change from Ringo to Just Park. Ringo did not provide a double tier but Just Park were cheaper. Car parks were a revenue centre to ensure discretionary services such as free toilets, leisure centre and other things that people valued.

#### **7. PARISH TREE PLANTING**

A request from Chillington Community Association for more apple trees to be planted at Helmers playing field was considered with a proposal for up to four trees not exceeding £150. Concern was raised regarding soakaways if trees were planted here. Cllrs Spence and Rogers would review this in a site visit and the matter be brought back in February.

*Cllr Lynn arrived in the meeting.*

#### **8. WEED MAINTENANCE**

Maintenance to clear weed debris and remove unsightly vegetation around parts of the parish, not using chemical treatment, was considered and it was APPROVED for trial works up to a cost of £1500.

#### **9. HEDGE CUTTING**

Overgrown hedges around the parish were noted and AGREED for the clerk to contact owners identified advising of requirements for safety and cutting outside bird nesting times.

#### **10. STOKENHAM OPEN AREA**

Matters raised in the December Open Forum along with costs and ideas to support the village group with grass cutting of the community space area in the centre of the village were reviewed. It was AGREED that Cllrs Greening and Spence would write a specification of annual maintenance for grass cutting areas that parish council felt suitable so that a cost could be considered.

## 11. NEW CAPITAL PROJECTS

It was AGREED to DEFER consideration of the draft policy and any proposal for projects.

## 12. PRECEPT 2025/26

A proposal for the forthcoming financial year was circulated. An overview was provided within the meeting and matters arising therefrom discussed before it was AGREED to approve a request for £53,200 for submission to District Council by 31<sup>st</sup> January.

The Chairman referred to the minutes of July 2024 where it was agreed that Cllr Cowley would research alternative investment possibilities for the Council's cash balances. Since Cllr Cowley's resignation he and the Clerk had reviewed the options and begun the process, and a proposal to move the Council's account from Lloyds to Unity Trust Bank would be brought to February's meeting for ratification.

## 13. REPORTS

- Cllr Ansell – Had considered council tax bands and raised concern that properties, following planning approval, go from small but increased in size whilst council tax remained a lower grade. Cllr Pain was requested to research the mechanism that District Valuers followed and what checks ensured that properties were re rated to the correct level. This was important to ensure local tax income for services provided.
- Cllr Addison – Noted the Chillington play area bridge was slippery. The hand rail was hard to grasp with the grip strip wearing off made this treacherous. Cllr Rogers suggested new grip bars and would look into sourcing and provision of this.
- Cllr Hart – Agreed the handrails on the bridge could not be used because they were green and slimy and asked if they could be pressure washed. The clerk would ask the maintenance contractor if he could carry out this work.

### CLERK'S REPORT

- Works suggested by the safety report for the toddler play equipment had taken place and all the slats were now replaced.
- Advised that 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 is the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day.
- Commencement of a consultation by the Fire Brigade on how they respond to automatic fire alarms due to the increase of an average of 16 false alarms each day. Consultation on proposed changes will close on 9<sup>th</sup> April.
- Consultation link on strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework was circulated to all parish council so that members could take part if wished. There was a proposal to introduce a 6-month suspension power for those found to be in breach of the code.
- Devon Association of Local Councils had sent a Zoom invite for a meeting for smaller councils on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January, 10am – 12pm on Devolution. No request for direct input from the county council or district authorities had been made for and those attending would need to have had sight of the Devolution White Paper.
- Noted that Stokenham Parish Hall committee wished to host the apple press in 2025 within the hall grounds and inside the hall for fun entertainments for the children.

## 14. FINANCE AND CHEQUES

*Balances were provided and the below transactions were approved:*

Current £853.21

Savings £130,861.64

*Received*

Interest – Jan £112.54

***Payments:***

HMRC Jan – Tax & NI £263.09

Wages Jan £1389.69

DCC Jan– Pension £450.74

Paula Doust Travel to Devon County meeting Watermark, Ivybridge in December £16.65

**15. NEXT MEETING**

The next full parish council meeting would be held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025 commencing at 7.30p.m in the Wesley Smith Room, Stokenham Parish Hall.

Meeting finished: 9.40p.m.

Signed ..... Chairman      Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**DRAFT**