Stoke by Clare
Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Stoke by Clare Parish Council held at 7.50pm on Monday 22nd May 2023 at The Barn, Ashen Road, Stoke by Clare

Present

Parish Councillors:

J Blake James	K Nichols
G Dadd	E Smith
J Kiddy	P Vincent
R McKenny	

Also present:

Councillor B Bennett	Suffolk County Council
Councillor N Clarke	West Suffolk Council
Councillor R Rushbrook	West Suffolk Council
Mr T McKenny	Treasurer, Village Hall Committee
Judith Dignum	Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Apologies for absence: Councillor K Richardson (West Suffolk Council)

Opening Remarks: the late Mr Gordon Hatchett

The Council noted with sadness the recent death of Gordon Hatchett, a former Chairman of the Parish Council. Members placed on record their gratitude for Mr Hackett's long and faithful service to the community.

1. Election of Chairman

Following the Clerk's call for nominations, the proposal of Councillor Kiddy, seconded by Councillor Smith, was put to the meeting and duly carried. Accordingly, it was

Resolved:

To elect Councillor Giles Dadd as Chairman of the Parish Council for the Municipal Year 2023/24 (ie until the next Annual Meeting in May 2024).

Councillor Dadd expressed thanks to Members for their nomination.

Councillor G Dadd in the Chair

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

The proposal of Councillor Dadd, seconded by Councillor Kiddy, was put to the meeting and duly carried. Accordingly, it was:

Resolved:

To elect Councillor Justin Blake James as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the Municipal Year 2023/24 (ie until the next Annual Meeting in May 2024).

3. Parish Council Election Results
Uncontested elections having taken place on 4 May 2023, it was noted that those shown below would serve as Parish Councillors for the four-year term until May 2027:

Justin Blake-James	Kevin Nichols
Giles Dadd	Edwin Smith
Jane Kiddy	Paul Vincent
Roger McKenny	

Suspension of Standing Orders (7.55pm)

Upon the motion of the Chairman, duly carried, Standing Orders were suspended to allow public questions and the receipt of reports.

4. Receipt of Reports and Consideration of Issues Raised by Members of the Public
There were no reports in addition to those considered previously at the Annual Parish Meeting and no questions.

Standing Orders re-applied (7.56pm)

5. Declarations of Interest
Councillor Nichols declared an interest in agenda item 11 (Car Boot Fair Proposal).

6. Minutes: 13 and 20 March 2023
Upon the motions of Councillor Nichols and Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillors Smith and McKenny respectively, the minutes of the meetings held on 13 and 20 March 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. Review of Committees and Appointment of Members
The Council received a report by the Clerk which set out for review the structure and terms of reference of the Council's committees and working group and sought the appointment of members for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

Members were satisfied that the current structure and terms of reference continued to meet the Council's needs and that no changes were required. Accordingly, it was:

Resolved:

1. To establish a Finance Committee, a Planning Committee and a Play Area Working Group with membership and terms of reference as set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

2. To appoint members to the Committees and Working Group as follows:

   - **Finance Committee**
     Councillors Dadd (Chairman), McKenny and Nichols (plus Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council ex officio if not otherwise appointed).
   - **Planning Committee**
     Councillors Blake-James, Dadd, Kiddy and Vincent (plus Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Councillor ex officio if not otherwise appointed).
   - **Play Area Working Group**
     Councillors Dadd, McKenny and Smith

8. Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
Having been moved, seconded and duly carried, it was

Resolved:
To appoint Mrs Judith Dignum, Parish Clerk, as the Responsible Financial Officer for Stoke by Clare Parish Council for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

9. Accounts and Audit

i Review of Expenditure incurred under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972
The Council noted that, during the Financial Year 2022/23, expenditure under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 had been approved in the sum of £1,500. This represented a single allocation of grant aid to the Parochial Church Council of Stoke by Clare. The Council had agreed to provide this support on the basis that the church is a significant benefit to the Village, both directly for residents and in terms of attracting visitors who contribute to the local economy.

ii Accounts for the year 2022/23
These would be submitted for approval to the Council's June meeting.

iii Statement of Receipts and Payments
Consideration was deferred until the next meeting.

iv Bank Reconciliations
Bank Reconciliations to year end 22/23 and to 30 April 2023 (date of the latest bank statement) were received and signed by Councillor Dadd as Chairman of the Finance Committee. A net bank balance of £40,062.69 was indicated as of 30 April 2023.

v Accounts for Payment: to receive and agree
Accounts for payment in the sum of £9,584.28 were authorised (as set out in Appendix B to these minutes), and cheques signed accordingly.

Arising from consideration of the payment for insurance renewal, the Clerk was requested to undertake the following regarding The Barn: check the amount of insurance cover relating to the fabric; seek advice as to whether additional cover was needed following the recent improvement works.

10. Village Signs
Further to the recent weather-related damage to the Village sign, it was noted that work was underway in association with a volunteer from the village to assess options for repair and prevention of future recurrence. An insurance claim would also be submitted.

Consideration of issues relating to Village noticeboards was deferred to a future meeting.

11. Car Boot Fair Proposal
Councillor Nichols introduced a proposal by the village clubs for car boot sales to be held on the Village Green during the Summer (with cancellation in wet weather). Pitches would be pre-bookable, with advance payment, and proceeds would go to the clubs themselves. The plan was to hold two sales this year on a trial basis.

The Council expressed its support for the proposal, noting that the pre-booking system would ensure that numbers could be effectively managed. It was suggested that dates and timings be communicated to residents living around the Village Green.

12. Graveyard Responsibilities

In response to a question, it was clarified that the Parish Council was responsible for managing the cemetery in Ashen Lane. The cemetery next to the Church was categorised as a closed churchyard and was managed by West Suffolk Council.

Concern was expressed about the condition of the Ashen Lane cemetery, particularly the length of the grass. Councillor Dadd undertook to raise this with the Council's grounds maintenance contractor. In addition, Councillor Smith advised that he was seeking quotes for replacing the fencing near the Loch Memorial, and Councillor Vincent undertook to carry out repairs to the gate.

Concerning the replacement of village benches (including in the cemetery), Councillor Smith undertook to circulate the quotes he had obtained. He had received several expressions of interest from people interested in sponsorship in memory of a loved one.

13. Correspondence

Defibrillator: Issues had been raised regarding maintenance of the defibrillator, suggesting that responsibility for this, including the provision of training, should transfer to the Council. Members sought clarification regarding a reference to training as part of 'due governance' and any requirement for the provision of refresher courses.

Members considered the possibility of opting for a contracting out arrangement when the existing arrangements regarding defibrillator maintenance expired later this year.

In response to a recommendation by Councillor Rushbrook, it was agreed to add the 'what3words' location to all defibrillator signage.

14. Dates of Future Meetings

Resolved

1. To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council will take place at 7.30pm on Monday 19 June 2023 at The Barn, Ashen Lane, Stoke by Clare, CO10 8JA.

2. To consider bringing forward the date of the October meeting of the Council by one week from Monday 23 to Monday 16 October 2023 (to be confirmed).

15. Urgent Business

The Chairman agreed to consideration of the following item of urgent business on the grounds that the issue had arisen since publication of the agenda.

Village Flagpole

Councillor Smith reported that as the flagpole, which had fallen recently, was not suitable for repair, he would recommend its replacement with a lighter, more modern version. The Council agreed and asked Councillor Smith to obtain quotations accordingly.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed…….

Chairman
19 June 2023

Appendix A

Terms of Reference for Parish Council Committees

Standing committees will be appointed as necessary at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. Formal meetings of the appointed committees will be convened in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

A. Finance Committee

Membership and Quorum

1. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, ex officio, plus other councillors as determined by the Parish Council.
2. The quorum of the committee shall be three members.

Terms of Reference

3. To undertake the following and make recommendations to the Parish Council:

    a. Preparation of the budget and annual precept for the next financial year.
    b. Annual review of the Council's Asset Register.
    c. Annual review of the Council's insurance cover.

B. Planning Committee

Membership and Quorum

1. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, ex officio, plus councillors and non-councillors as determined by the Parish Council.
2. The quorum of the committee shall be three members.

Terms of Reference

3. To review local planning applications submitted to the Council for consultation and provide comments to the Parish Clerk for response to the relevant authority.
4. To lead on other planning issues, or issues which have an impact on planning, as determined by resolution of the Parish Council.
5. To lead on preparing the Council's response to the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and associated issues.

C. Play Area Working Group

Membership and Quorum

1. To be determined by the Parish Council.
2. The quorum for Working Group meetings shall be three members.

Terms of Reference

3. To review play area safety reports, recommending proposed actions to the Council as necessary.
4. To lead on other issues in relation to the play area as determined by resolution of the Parish Council.

Appendix B

Stoke by Clare Parish Council
Accounts for Payment Authorisation, 9 May 2022

FOR AUTHORISATION – received since last meeting

	Cheque No	To Whom	Amount £	Authorised
1.	575	SALC - subscription 23/24	244.63	22/05/23
2.	576	Post Office (for WSC) Gds Maintenance 2022/23	4902.48	"
3.	577	Post Office (for WSC) V Hall waste bin empty	255.32	"
4.	578	Post Office (for WSC) cemetery waste bin empty	127.66	
5.	579	Zurich Municipal – Insurance 2023/24	1545.68	"
6.	580	Clerk April/May salary and expenses	565.95	"
7.	581	Street Cleaner April/May salary	232.56	"
8.	582	PCC of Stoke by Clare – grant (S137)	1500.00	"
9.	583	Bidwells – Licence Fees	210.00	
		TOTAL	**9,584.28**	

Agreed and signed: _____

22 May 2023