

SOUTH STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of South Stoke Parish - 7:00 p.m. 24th April 2017 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr. C. Winpenny (Chairman), and three other members of the Parish Council, the Parish Clerk, B&NES Ward Councillor Neil Butters and 23 members of the Parish, and the two Cotswold AONB wardens

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Robert Williams, Jenny John, Clare Fox, Sue Dustin
- 2. Chairman's Report.** - The Chairman opened the meeting, and welcomed everyone. He drew attention to his report and highlighted the main points. He asked the Cotswold Wardens to identify themselves to the meeting and thanked them for their work in maintaining the footpaths and giving guided walks, very much as 'unseen heroes'. He drew attention to the vacancy for councillor resulting from the resignation of the Vice Chairman Councillor Robert Hellard with effect from 30th April. Also highlighted was the installation of a defibrillator in the phone box on the village green and the re-painting of the box. Ward Councillor Neil Butters was thanked for his major contribution to this project from his Ward Councillors Initiative fund. The meeting was informed of the availability of a training course on the use of the defibrillator, and many of those present indicated an interest in attending such a course. The clerk will arrange and publicise the training event.
- 3. Planning and Sulis Down Master Plan - Update on current developments.** - Vice Chairman Robert Hellard addressed the meeting, discussing the clear and fairhanded view the Parish Council believes it takes on all planning matters. He gave two example cases and the planning grounds upon which the Parish Council considered these applications. He reported that the Sulis Down development application is now expected in July or August, and the Parish Council will respond based on how that will affect the village. Adrian Done addressed the meeting explaining that three families had acquired the field Combe Path Lawn, for the specific reasons of preventing any building development and to take it forward as a wild flower meadow. They are working with the Parish Council to develop and maintain this environment and have put up some signage to encourage responsible use of the area.
- 4. Parking and vehicle security issues.** - Cllr Paula Black addressed the meeting. She pointed out that there had been an increase in parking in the village in the last 9 months as a consequence of vehicle vandalism and theft from the bay at the bottom of Old School Hill, and that people are now reluctant to park there. She called on the village residents to not leave valuables in their cars parked outside overnight, to use a car alarm where fitted, and to be tolerant of parking within the village. The police believe, and it is hoped that the spate of vandalism and theft has passed. A lighting regime had been considered for the area, however, owing to wildlife and cost considerations this was not regarded as desirable or feasible. The meeting suggested that parking in the village was becoming unsustainable, particularly with the re-opening of the Packhorse Public House. It was suggested that a working committee should be convened by the Parish Council to find and implement a solution to the problem. The Vice Chairman called upon the residents of the village to come forward with any ideas they might have, and the Parish Council will take this forward at their next meeting.
- 5. Southstoke Lane and Village Road Safety** – Cllr. Paula Black addressed the meeting and highlighted the issues of speeding along South Stoke Lane and practice of motorist of mounting the pavement and driving along it to pass oncoming vehicles. She called upon residents and staff from the Manor Farm estate to desist from such behaviour, and explained that the Parish Council was seeking to have bollards installed at strategic points to discourage and prevent vehicle from using the pavement in this way. There was much discussion about appropriate speed limits, their signage and enforcement. This concluded with a very large majority of the meeting calling for an advisory 20 m.p.h. speed limit to be applied and signed along South Stoke Lane and elsewhere as appropriate within the village.

6. Midford Road/Village – road safety issues – Cllr. Patrick Dawson drew attention to Midford as a part of the Parish through which runs a very major road. Whilst the viaduct height signage has significantly reduced the number of lorries attempting to use this route, structural damage to the surrounding area still occurs as the result of lorries turning around.

As a result of discussions with B&NES Cabinet member for Highways a log of serious accidents at the Castle bends is being kept. To-date there have been three such incidents requiring both police and ambulance to attend. The speed of vehicles into the village from both directions remains an issue, and Adrian Done also pointed out that this was also true at the bend at the top of the hill on the junction with the Old Midford Road. Ward Cllr. Neil Butters drew attention to the availability of ‘flashing speed check signage’.

On further Midford matters, it was reported that the Telephone Box was being adopted by the Parish Council to prevent its removal. Also that the Midford Village Party will be taking place on 10th June.

7. Conservation Area update – The Chairman drew attention to the booklet for residents which explained the benefits and responsibilities for everyone living in the conservation Area.

8. Packhorse – Update – Trevor John spoke to the meeting informing them that the latest newsletter was now available updating everyone on the current state of progress. He highlighted the main events throughout the year, being the exchange of contracts last June and the Share issue. Planning Approval, obtaining and reviewing tenders for the work, appointing and negotiating with one builder. He said that £810,000 had been raised and that the provisions for the bat had been completed and work on the car park would commence in two weeks’ time, with other building work commencing in June/July. As the Planning Authority has required them to build a new kitchen a further £240,000 needs to be raised, and a total of £400,000 will be needed to complete everything. However, it is expected that sufficient work will be complete to allow the pub to re-open for Christmas. As a result of the development the pub will now be twice as large as the previous business, and so represents an increased asset base for shareholders.

9. Robert Hellard retirement – The Chairman addressed the meeting and discussed Robert Hellard’s 30 year history of service to the Parish Council. He highlighted in particular the very strong relationship with the Bath Preservation Trust and how he had worked with great effect on the Sulis Plateau development and that he had done much to preserve the rural character of the village.

Tom Geake also addressed the meeting about his time working with Robert and how the focus of the Parish Council was always about the village and community. He also thanked Jane Hellard for her contribution as clerk, and he recommended that the Parish Council should put Robert forward for a Public Honour for his service to the community.

Ward Councillor Neil Butters commented that he thought Robert was a Grade A councillor in so many ways, thoroughness, commitment and planning expertise, and that he had learnt so much from Robert and the Parish Council and wished to convey his huge thanks to them.

The chairman then asked John Brook to make the presentation to Robert Hellard.

Robert Hellard then thanked the meeting for his present, and thank Tom and Rosemary Geake for coming to the meeting from such a distance. He also emphasised the importance of bringing new and younger members onto the Council and that his retirement helped to make an opportunity for this to happen.

The Chairman also informed the meeting that in addition to the picture that had been presented the Parish Council would also be making a gift of two trees to Robert and Jane to mark the retirement.

10. Open Discussion of any matters raised by any attendee. There were no further items raised by any attendee, all matters having been fully discussed within the preceding items.

The meeting closed at 9:20 p.m.