

SOUTH STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of South Stoke Parish - 7:30 p.m. 15th April 2019 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr. C. Winpenny (Chairman), and the four other members of the Parish Council, the Parish Clerk, B&NES Ward Councillor Neil Butters and 59 members of the Parish and/or Public.

1. Apologies for absence: None Received

2. Chairman's Report. - The Chairman opened the meeting, and welcomed everyone. He drew attention to his report and highlighted the main points. He drew attention to Truespeed and their intention and efforts to provide full fibre broadband to South stoke, Midford and the surrounding area. He also drew attention to the Village News, an e-mail newsletter being run by Mags Stroud, and invited everyone to subscribe if they wished.

3. Cotswold Wardens – The Cotswold wardens were introduced to the meeting and they spoke briefly about the walks and the work they had been doing in the area.

4. South Stoke village Road Safety and speed limits - Cllr. Jenny John described how we had met with a B&NES Traffic Officer and his opinions on these matters. He had confirmed that a 30 m.p.h. limit on South Stoke Lane, becoming a 20 m.p.h. limit at Brantwood and through the village were appropriate. Also highlighted as of potential benefit were bollards on the pavement edge along South Stoke lane, with a Virtual pavement down into the village, and warnings signs highlighting the presence of pedestrians and horses. The Parish Council will seek to take these forward in the coming year, with the likely need for some Parish funds to implement them.

5. Other South Stoke matters - Cllr. Jenny John highlighted the necessity for the removal of the Rowan tree from the village green for safety reasons. It is expected that it will be replaced during the course of the year. Ideas for an appropriate tree were requested.

6. Midford Road/Village – road safety issues – Cllr. Patrick Dawson discussed the issues with the B3110 thorough the Castle Bends and the Village of Midford. The road has been re-surfaced with a high grip surface at the Castle Bends, with improved signage and a change to the speed limit. Given that 6 accidents occurred last year and only 1 this year, the measures appear to be effective. They had also liaised with the police who confirmed that most drivers speed through Midford village was 30 m.p.h. and that the main problem was volume and lorries.

On other Midford matters, residents are wishing to re-locate the phone box to the Midford Station Platform, as part of the station development. The Midford social event will be on the evening of 29th June in Bob Honey's field.

8. Open Discussion

Issues raised from the floor at this point were, Rat running through the lanes, that a virtual pavement would narrow South Stoke lane, the collapsed wall at Midford castle bend makes the pavement very narrow, a matter which Ward Cllr. Neil Butters will discuss with B&NES Highways.

7 Sulis Down. Update on Hignett Family Trust proposals

The Chair introduced the latest Sulis Down proposals and invited Robert Hellard to address the meeting on the matter and who summarised the current situation. Essentially that the Core Strategy in 2014 had allowed for around 300 dwellings, but that HfT have now submitted new proposals to the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (WEJSP) Consultation, and the B&NES Local Plan review, which seek to make the plateau a strategic site with around 800 dwellings and an access road from the Cross Keys junction. These proposals were submitted close to the consultation period deadline, thereby preventing others from commenting upon them. However, should the Planning Inspector conclude they have sufficient merit, then the entire WEJSP must go out for a further period of consultation.

The Parish Council is seeking advice to see if they can be heard at the first stage of the EiP hearings. Should the proposals be included then it is anticipated further legal and professional advice would be needed, which might be around £5-10 thousand pounds, possibly more depending on the number of consultations.

It was then confirmed that B&NES did not allow the proposals to be included in the Local Plan review, and will resist its inclusion in the WEJSP. We can however expect HfT to prosecute their case vigorously, as Green Belt can only be removed through a review of the Local Plan.

Further points raised were that the housing requirement for the West of England could influence the B&NES allocation, but that B&NES are progressing well against their current housing targets.

That the Manor Farm Commercial Estate is limited by its current access road and that these new proposals would allow further expansion of that estate.

The chair then summed up the current position, highlighting support from B&NES. He put the motion to the meeting:-

We support the Parish Council's intention to object strongly to the latest plans by the Hignett Family trust to create a Strategic Housing Development of around 800 dwellings on the South Stoke Plateau (Sulis Down).

And by show of hands this was carried unanimously, there being no Objections or Abstentions.

He highlighted the potential expense of actions going forward and invited those present to consider providing financial support for the process.

Colin Webb identified himself as Chair of SOBA and indicated that significant support could be garnered from the surrounding area.

Ward Councillor Neil Butters gave a vote of thanks to the Parish Council for their work.

The meeting closed at 8:45 p.m.