

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held in Deane Close Common Room at 19.30 on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2010

The meeting started at 19.30

## **Present**

|                               |                |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| J. Spicer, Chairman           | C. Bramall     | K. Rew         |
| M. Symes                      | T. Thomas      |                |
| T. Taylor, West Somerset D.C. | A. Weir, Clerk | 2 Parishioners |

### **1. Election of Chair:**

Mr J. Spicer was unanimously elected as Chairman.

### **2. Apologies**

C. Matravers, V. Sellick, J. Merrick, D. Criddle, A. Trollop-Bellew (Somerset C.C.)

### **3. Declaration of Interest**

MS declared a personal interest in Cricket Club, TT declared a personal interest in the Play Area.

### **4. Minutes of Meeting held on March 10th 2010**

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

### **5. Public comments, questions or suggestions**

There were no comments from the public, further to those made at the Annual Parish Assembly Meeting, which had been held just before this parish council meeting.

### **6. District Council report**

Mr T. Taylor informed us that the new West Somerset Council, the District Council, DC, now had 31 full council members, 15 of these are Conservatives, 14 are members of the Independent Coalition and two are unaligned.. There may well need to be more savings made. West Somerset is a large area district with a small district council but still may have to save 20% from staff cuts. This may lead to an approach to the government from the DC. It is intended that the DC will become more active. There was some discussion concerning future energy sources and the use of the same. Perhaps a heat pump source should be used to help heat some 20 bungalows? Perhaps Magna should become involved? How would this be linked with the Parish Council and the local community? Should under floor heating be used?

### **7. County Council report**

There was no County Council report.

### **8. West Somerset Core Strategy**

The Council had invited parishioners to comment on the options, and emails from parishioners that had been received were read to the meeting, and parishioners present at the meeting gave their views.

Areas of concern expressed by parishioners and Parish Councillors were:

- The need to meet the desire of young people and families to remain in their home village, a proportion of whom have a reasonable wish to buy their home rather than rely on social rented housing.
- The need for growth to secure the future of the shop, post office, pub and school (although it was noted that the school is currently full and turning-away pupils).
- Concern that more housing does not inevitably lead to a proportionately greater use of village services and amenities, but may instead generate more traffic to larger settlements where a wider range of services and amenities are available.

- 15 large detached open-market houses have recently been built (in two developments) plus a number of smaller houses (including two affordable) and conversions, and six new Magna houses are currently being built. This is quite a lot for a small village to absorb, and so there should be a pause before it is decided whether to add more houses.
- Increasing housing in Stogumber without increasing employment within the parish would be likely to increase commuting, which would inevitably be mainly by car given the poor bus service to the village. Other villages identified in Strategy Option 3 are situated on the A39 or A358 where the bus service is relatively good.
- Stogumber is three miles down narrow lanes from the main roads. Increased motor traffic on these lanes would increase the risk of accidents (and the perceived risk of accidents) for motorists and especially for pedestrians and cyclists, thus discouraging the latter modes of transport.
- Increased commuting to work outside the parish would increase West Somerset's 'carbon footprint' compared to locating housing closer to employment.
- Unwillingness of landowners to release land for housing unless there were an element of open-market housing to increase the value of the land.
- The tendency for open-market housing is to build large (four and five bedroom) detached houses, which may have the capacity to accommodate families, but in practice tend to be bought by older people whose children have - or will soon - leave school and the village.

Some of the concerns expressed were not compatible or consistent with other concerns, which reflects the range of opinions held. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Council would respond as follows:

Stogumber Parish Council would support the building of some open-market homes in the village provided that:

1. These were smaller two and three bedroom terraced and semi-detached houses suitable for younger families.
2. The housing development was accompanied by non-residential development that would lead to increased employment within the village (not necessarily on the same site as the housing).

## 9. Standing Orders

SALC has produced Somerset version of the new national model standing orders. Within the model standing orders, there are a large number of points where councils must decide what text or parameters to use. These points were considered in turn, and the Council's conclusions were incorporated into the draft. It was agreed that the draft would be recirculated for Councillors to review before the next meeting. At the next meeting the Council will decide whether to adopt the new standing orders, with or without further amendments.

## 10. S106 Money

The Chairman reported that WSC is taking steps to obtain the money, and despite previous assurances, it is not wholly certain that it will be forthcoming. In the meantime, the Council decided not to make the final decision on how to allocate the money, and the proposals submitted by the Cricket Club and the Village Hall would be considered at a future meeting.

Regarding the play area, Councillors expressed their concern and displeasure that Magna has not remedied the damage caused by their contractors during the construction of six new houses at Slade Close, and that the portion of the play area lent to the contractors has not

been returned to the play area with the agreed improvements. It was agreed that the Chairman and T Taylor would press Magna to hold a meeting to resolve the problems as a matter of urgency. **Action JS and T Taylor**

**11. Finance**

- 11.1 The authorised signatures for cheques was progressing
- 11.2 The year's accounts were proposed, seconded and agreed, and the Chairman was instructed to sign them.
- 11.3 The payments of £30 to the Clerk for a training session for himself and the Chairman, £20. to SALC for a training session for the Chairman and £406.17 for the insurance for the year were all accepted proposed, seconded and agreed.
- 11.4 The budget for this year, 2010-11 was proposed, seconded and agreed.

**12. Allotments**

Nobody had expressed an interest in taking an allotment if the Council were able to find a suitable site, so no further work will be done to find a site.

**13 Purchase of land**

The owner of the land which the Council had expressed an interest in buying is not willing to enter into negotiations. The Council could not identify any other suitable land that it could realistically hope to buy, and therefore no further work will be done in this regard.

**14. STOGO**

It was reported that this community service was now operating satisfactorily.

**15. Planning**

A planning application for the "Construction of a secondary Stable Block/Open Barn" at Hound Hill, Sheepstealing Lane, had been received and it was agreed that the Clerk should try to arrange a site meeting on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May.

**16. Telephone box**

A parishioner present at the meeting was permitted by the Chairman to comment on this item. Following this and after some discussion, no Councillors were wished to review the previous Council decision that it did not wish to purchase the telephone box from BT.

**17, Waste bin outside Village Hall**

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to WSC to state that the Parish Council would move the bin from outside Wick House to the Village Hall / School, and ask WSC to confirm that it would continue to empty the bin. **Action AW**

**18. Salt Bins**

The Chairman has not yet identified the bins to be purchased. **Action JS**

**19 Bus shelter roof by Archer's Grove on Station Road**

The Chairman has ceased reminding Gadds about their promise to install a roof until such time as the S106 money had been obtained, in order not to confuse the two separate matters.

**20. Highway Matters**

- 20.1 The Insurance for the Station Road hand rail installation had been checked and had been satisfactory
- 20.2 Whilst the council was pleased that some of the potholes had been filled, it had been noticed that there was movement in the filling and it was questioned whether the contractor had used the correct materials as it did not appear to include stone chippings. It was suggested that 'pavement slurry' had been used, which is not appropriate for roads. The Clerk to raise this at the next Area Panel Meeting. **Action AW**

20.3 The Council did not think the tree that had been planted at Slade Close Station Road corner was the most suitable tree for the job. It made visibility from Slade Close when driving into Station Road much more difficult.

**21 Electronic service to councillors of meeting notices etc**

The Council has received advice that sending meeting notices etc solely by email left the Council open to legal challenges, and it was therefore agreed that the Clerk would send written notices etc by post or delivery by hand, but would send copies by email in addition.

**Action AW**

**22. Co-option of another councillor.**

Councillors considered the names of persons who might be co-opted if a vacancy arose, and if a suitable person were willing to be co-opted, agreed that the vacancy would be formally advertised to see if any other individuals came forward and an election could be held, and if not, to proceed to a co-option. The Clerk was asked to ascertain from WSC the proper processes and notices required, and ensure that these are followed. **Action AW**

**23, Correspondence**

There were no comments or questions regarding the correspondence available.

**24, Matters by Chairman's permission.**

There were no matters by permission of the Chairman

**25. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

The meeting was closed at 21.55.