

**Stogumber Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Stogumber Village Hall on 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**September 2017.**

**(in the format to be presented to the next meeting for approval)**

**Present:**

C. Bramall (Chair), M. Symes (Vice Chairman), V. Sellick, G. Tuckfield, C. Matravers, A White, G Rexworthy  
C Morrison-Jones, Clerk

C Lawrence (County Councillor), A Trollope-Bellew (District Councillor)

30 x members of the public

Prior to the start of the Parish Council meeting Izzy Silvester, Village Agent for Stogumber and Bicknoller, gave a presentation outlining the role of the Village Agent in a rural community. She explained that sadly the previous agent, Debbie, had to leave her role as circumstances meant she had become a carer for her father.

Izzy previously covered 5 parishes the other side of Bridgwater but is now working much closer to her home, therefore a lot less travel time.

Izzy explained her background as a town councillor in Watchet and has done a lot of work in Somerset in public health and the charity sectors. She now works as a Village Agent for 3 days a week, covering 18 parishes.

Please do contact her if you know of someone who may need her help, even if they are reticent to ask for help themselves. Service is completely confidential.

Izzy left leaflets and cards to hand out.

CB thanked Izzy for taking the time to come and talk to the meeting.

**The Parish Council meeting then started at 7.15p.m.**

**1) To receive any apologies of absence**

T Brick, T Vesey

**2) Declarations of Interest/Dispensations**

CB- Beacon Field, as a neighbour

AW-Beacon Field, as a neighbour

**3) Public comments, questions or suggestions**

None apart from the fracking issue to be covered in agenda item 7. Public comment on item 7 was taken when this agenda item was reached.

**4) District and County Councillor reports**

**SCC Cllr C Lawrence**

Christine started her report by saying that Stogumber an active village & she is proud of what is achieves.

She then reported that she was the bearer of good news-SCC have received a letter from Jeremy Hunt (Secretary of State for Health) praising Somerset on the significant improvement in the rate of patients discharged from hospital.

The good news continues as 87% of SCC care homes have been rated as either good or outstanding.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been published, examining ways of living well into old age. Quality of life in older age is important.

Christine also reported that, on a personal level, she has trained as a heritage fingerpost painter and encouraged people to attend the training course and become a volunteer.

### **WSDC Cllr A Trollope-Bellew**

Anthony introduced himself as leader of West Somerset District Council to those who don't normally attend the Parish Council meeting.

Formation of new Council with Taunton Deane:- No one wants to see WS disappear but finances dictate that the reformation with TD is essential. The final decision will be taken by the Secretary of State, but has been delayed because of the general election and the Grenfell Towers fire. ATB & J Williams (TD leader) recently met with the Secretary of State but received no commitment yet.

Hinkley C is due to start generating 2027 and ATB's role is to ensure that people of WS get best deal out of the build at Hinkley

WS are starting work on 18/19 budget. WS were originally looking to save £800,000 out of £1.8 million income, but now Hinkley rates have been revalued, this saving now only needs to be £130,000 which is much more achievable.

#### **5) Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 13/7/17 plus the extra-ordinary meetings held on 27/7/17 and 3/8/2017**

Councillors agreed that these minutes represented a true record of the meetings and they were signed by the Chairman.

#### **6) Matters arising from the minutes**

None

#### **7) To consider the following motion:**

**“This council notes that areas in the proximity of Stogumber have been licensed for onshore unconventional oil and gas drilling/exploration and concurs with the concerns expressed by many residents. The council is also of the view that any such drilling, exploration, or extraction activities could be detrimental to residents.**

**Stogumber Parish Council therefore states its opposition in principle to onshore unconventional oil and gas drilling/exploration.”**

CB read out the above motion that Councillors had been requested to vote on.

Several members of the public spoke and raised the following points:

- Thanked councillors for the work they do for the parish and for raising awareness of the fracking issue across the parish - by keeping the issue on the agenda the PC has kept the issue live
- When a petition was circulated recently 201 parishioners were asked to sign. 164 signed, 22 declined to sign as they didn't support it, 15 declined as didn't know enough to comment. The PC is here to hear and support parishioners' concerns – please listen.

- Urged the PC to support the motion.
- Do Stogumber want fracking firm to spoil our geology and environment? Large number of vehicles would be generated by fracking activity.
- It is understood that the PC has no power to stop fracking, but has a duty under its freedom of information policy to speak on behalf of residents.
- The primary objection is that chemicals will be pumped deep into ground – don't know what these chemicals are as it is commercially sensitive information

CB stated that it is the intention of the PC is to try and bring this matter to resolution. SPC does not have financial resources to lobby organisations and will not turn into a pressure group. SALC have confirmed that the PC does not have the power to declare the parish a frack free zone, this would require an act of Parliament. It can be an aspiration but is not enforceable. However, the PC appreciates the strong feeling of parishioners, demonstrated by the numbers attending the meeting and signing the petition. He also reminded those present that as yet, SCC has not received any applications for drilling sites.

CM, as the proposer of the motion, explained his reasoning behind the motion:

- He understands that this country has to strive to become energy self-sufficient, currently has an energy shortfall and is not energy secure. However, he proposed the motion because he is not convinced that fracking is 100% safe & the numbers have proved that there a lot of parishioners that are opposed to this. There could be technological advances in the future that may make fracking safe, but at present he is wishing to propose the listed motion.

GT seconded the motion

Councillors voted - 6 for the motion and none against (1 abstention)

*8 members of the public left at this point*

### **8) Neighbourhood Plan. To consider matters surrounding the publicity and promotion of the referendum, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017, within the parish**

Polling cards have now been issued for referendum on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

CB-plan has been worked on for the last three years, with most of work being done by J Spicer. It has been somewhat diluted during the process as has had to fall within National, County & District policies, but the NP has now been accepted as suitable to put forward to parishioners to vote on in a referendum.

The first part of each section of the NP is the aspiration, the second part of each item is the legal policy

Copies of the NP can be viewed online ([www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning---Building/Neighbourhood-Planning/Stogumber-Neighbourhood-Plan](http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/Planning---Building/Neighbourhood-Planning/Stogumber-Neighbourhood-Plan)) and at the following locations:

- |                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • West Somerset Council Offices | • Williton Library        |
| • Stogumber Central Store       | • Stogumber Village Hall  |
| • Stogumber Primary School      | • White Horse Inn         |
| • St Mary's Church              | • Deane Close Common Room |

Additionally, most councillors have copies available to view or borrow.

It was agreed to hold a NP Information event on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September at the Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm to enable parishioners to ask questions and explore how the NP would impact them.

Councillors unanimously resolved to distribute a flyer through each door in the parish advertising the referendum date, the locations that the NP would be available and promoting the Information Event on 28<sup>th</sup> September. Similar posters would also be produced to put on the noticeboards. GT offered the use of the Stogumber Standard's facilities to print the

information literature (PC to be invoiced for costs). There are 302 houses in parish. Councillors agreed to be assigned specific areas of the parish to deliver to (CB to allocate areas).

*20 more members of the public left the meeting at this point*

SCC Cllr C Lawrence praised the parish for the incredible amount of hard work and effort invested in the NP and congratulated them on having reached the point of referendum.

## **9) The Beacon Field**

### **a) Consider request to use Beacon Field for parking in connection with a memorial service for Mrs Sherren to be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September**

This was agreed by councillors. CB and CM agreed to steward the parking. CB informed the PC that a donation of £200 had been received from Mr Sherren towards construction costs of splay.

### **b) Any other matters concerning the Beacon Field**

i. Consider request by Stogumber Festival Committee to use the Beacon Field for parking late afternoon/evening of the 21 October. There is a Concert booked in St Mary's Church. This was also agreed by Councillors

ii. CB raised the issue of grazing noting that there is always lots of dog muck in field and it may not be possible for stock to use it for much longer. The PC should try and keep grazing it for as long as possible but fears that it will be a struggle to find graziers willing to use it. May have to resort to topping in the future if no one can be found to take the grazing let.

## **10) Playground**

This will be covered at the meeting of the Playground Association, to be held directly after the Parish Council meeting.

## **11) Consider External Auditors report in respect of the 2016/17 audit**

The clerk reported that the External Auditors, Grant Thornton, had completed the 2016/17 audit and have confirmed that the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and that no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Two items were noted, under 'other matters not affecting our opinion which we wish to draw to the attention of the authority'

i) that the advertised period for the exercise of public rights exceeded the required 30 working days and the authority should ensure in future the dates for the exercise of public rights are calculated to cover a period of 30 working days only

ii) that the defibrillator had not been accounted for in the PC's asset register

Councillors noted that the defibrillator was leased, not owned, and so felt that it should not appear on the asset register

## **12) Finance**

### **a) Payments to approve**

C Morrison-Jones	Salary	£526.08
HMRC	PAYE contribution	£18.20
C Morrison-Jones	Expenses & reimbursements	£32.00
Magna	Room hire	£90.00
Grant Thornton	External Audit	£120.00

**b) Amounts received**

17.7.17 Gardens Open donation for Beacon Field works £250.00  
(plus the promise of a £750 donation towards Beacon Field works next year)

**c) Approve bank reconciliation**

Current account balance as at 1/8/17 is £11,434.86.

Reserve account balance as at 31/8/17 is £3,373.76

Allowing for unpresented cheques totalling £181.10, the total balance held, as of 31.8.17, is £14,627.01, including earmarked funds of £1,560.25

**d) Request to update Bank Mandate**

The clerk reported that NatWest have requested that papers requesting to add George Tuckfield as an additional signatory are completed again and re-submitted as they have been lost. GT took the relevant forms for completion and delivery to branch

**e) Any other financial matters notified to the clerk in advance of the meeting**

None

**13) Planning**

**Any planning matters reported to the clerk before the meeting**

None

**14) Highways**

**Any issues to report:**

i. Temporary Overnight Road Closure - A358 Taunton Road, Sampford Brett  
From 410m east of the junction with Woolston Lane, eastwards for a distance of 130 metres.  
The Order becomes effective on 18 September 2017 and the works are expected to last for 3 nights (18.00 – 07.30hrs).

ii. Temporary closure of Rexton Lane  
This road will be closed from 18th October 2017 and is expected to last for 4 days (excluding the weekend) to enable prep and resurfacing works to be carried out in this road.

iii. MS - The edge of the road is falling away on Vellow Road from the old estate office (last cottage on left as you leave the village) to Escott Lane turning

iv. GT – There is a pothole outside the pub

v. MS - The drainage grips on Ashbeer Hill not been attended to, despite previously being reported

*SCC Cllr CL left the meeting at this point*

**15) Any other business by permission of the Chairman**

None

**16) Employment Matters**

CM reported that he had now conducted the clerk's appraisal.

CM proposed, AW seconded, that the clerk's salary should be raised to SCP 23, backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. Unanimously approved by councillors.

CB requested that thanks to the clerk for all her work was placed on record.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday 9th November, commencing at 7.30pm, at the Deane Close Common Room