

**Minutes of the Meeting of Stiffkey Parish Council held on
Monday 28th November 2022 at 7.30pm at Stiffkey Village Hall**

Present: Alexandra Hooper (Chairman)
David Clifton
Ian Curtis
Hannah Darby
Philip Harrison
David Smallridge
Martin Williams
Catherine Moore, Parish Clerk

Also present: County Councillor Michael Dalby, District Councillor Victoria Holliday and 4 members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Public Forum

a) Public

Alex Hooper welcomed Victoria Egan from the National Trust to address the meeting regarding the Stoney Road Bridge. Victoria reported that the Trust had spent time researching and surveying to get costs in relating to the bridge. It had been hoped that it could be repaired and extended, however it had to be removed as it was not structurally safe. There had been a number of complex factors including protected wildlife, vegetation and carbon release from the salt marshes. A long term view was required and the situation was complex. The creeks were expanding, and there would be an increase in tidal events in the area of the bridge. The cost estimates so far were £250,000 due to the complexity of the site. More research was required before final decisions could be made. Signs were in place and these were being monitored on a weekly basis. It was recognised that the situation was putting pressure on the other bridges and meetings were taking place with Natural England and Norfolk County Council to review the paths and formal rights of way. The RNLi were also being engaged.

It was confirmed that a decision had not been made as to whether a new bridge would be installed, however this was being carefully considered.

The impact of carbon release from the salt marsh was a long term view, and was a complicated calculation and consideration. It was recognised that rising numbers of people were visiting the area, and the National Trust had a duty of care to the protected environment.

Victoria was asked to make the data available so that people could understand how and why decisions were being made. It was not felt that the process was transparent and that the National Trust were trying to find a reason not to replace the bridge. It was felt that the footfall and damage to the SSSI was significant.

Victoria noted that the National Trust did not have any legal obligations to replace the bridge, and that other projects were also being considered, however the Trust was committed to keeping the Parish Council updated on the matter.

Funding would need to be found for a new bridge if one was to be installed.

If people were cut off by the tide, there was signage pointing out the alternatives. It was not recommended to go through the creek, and this was the persons individual choice.

It was felt by the community that another summer of the footfall to the east towards the bridges would be catastrophic, and a narrow window of opportunity would be

available for building. It was not felt that the National Trust had any sense of urgency about this. In response, Victoria noted that timing was a part of the complexity. A temporary bridge was also not an option, and the urgency would be taken away and fed back.

It was noted that people would cross the marsh and creeks, and felt that the National Trust was putting lives in danger. People did not understand marshes and tides, and the RNLI had been called out to emergencies when people had been cut off by the tide.

It was confirmed that Victoria's attendance at the meeting was not a formal public consultation, and updates would continue.

Victoria noted that there were divided opinions regarding the bridges, with numerous views expressed that it should not be replaced as well as those expressed that it should be replaced. The bridges to the east were owned and maintained by Norfolk County Council, and the bridges at Morston were National Trust.

A member of the public requested that another public meeting be held which could be widely publicised to discuss the matter. It was confirmed that the structural engineer had stated that the bridge was unsafe and needed to be removed.

Victoria noted that ad hoc observations had suggested that there was less footfall from the bridge not being in place, as the campsite had attracted linear movement whereas people were now finding other ways around which meant wider footfall in the area.

It was **agreed** that this would be on the agenda for the next meeting with the village invited, and that detailed questions should be submitted beforehand. **ACTION: Clerk**

It was confirmed that there were no plans to have a formal public consultation as this was not a matter that would fall into this category. The Trust was aware of the broad views of the village and were looking to balance this with other considerations.

Victoria welcomed further considerations and comments over those already submitted.

b) County Councillor

Michael Dalby's report would be resent and circulated. The County Council was consulting on council tax and savings proposals, with a view to increase council tax by 2.99% which included 1% for social care. The Council also wished to know whether a 4.1% increase would be acceptable. Savings proposed included reducing opening hours for the Norfolk Record Office; reducing highways weed spraying; and reducing opening hours for Recycling Centres. This consultation was open until 16th December 2022 and all comments would be welcomed. Alex Hooper would look at the consultation and circulate a response for consideration. **ACTION: AH**

It was noted that the bulk of savings were not being consulted on.

c) District Councillor

Victoria Holliday's report had been circulated. The planning department was consulting on service quality, this would be considered later in the agenda. There was a coastal planning consultation open as well. The budget deficit for NNDC was expected to be around £900,000. Tourism had not picked up. Avian Flu continued to be a problem. There was a lot of work underway regarding Community First Responders. The Council had voted to increase the second home tax on unfurnished and unoccupied properties by 100%, this had been determined a year ahead of requirements. This would be implemented in 2024 if it went ahead.

Additional budget could then be kept local in North Norfolk. It was noted that many second homes were registered for business rates. The Local Plan could address primary residency issues, this was expected to be consulted on from January 2023.

An email would be drafted by Alex Hooper to be circulated giving feedback on the second home position.

ACTION: AH

3. Declaration of Interest for items on the agenda

None.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 26th September 2022

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed**, proposed by David Smallridge, seconded by Phil Harrison, all in favour, and were signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

a) Stoney Road Bridge

Covered earlier in the meeting.

b) Hollow Lane Footpath Surface

The draft letter would be circulated as time pressures had not allowed this.

6. Planning

a) New Applications

None.

b) Applications considered between meetings

None.

7. Finance

a) Finances 2022/23 To Date

The finances to date were **noted**, reporting that there was £6,662.90 in the current account with a £500 cheque in transit to the bank; and £10,070.28 in the deposit account at 31.10.2022. Receipts since the last meeting were:

- £3,502 – Precept.
- £9.92 – Interest
- £6,500 – Community First Responders donations

b) Update on Community First Responders Fund

It was noted that donations of £6,870 had been received and earmarked.

c) Community First Responders Payment

It was noted that the contribution should be for Stiffkey Community First Responders and not for the wider pot. It was confirmed that the Parish Council could make purchases directly and donate the item to the Stiffkey Community First Responders. It was **agreed** that an update would be supplied to those who wished to receive it. It was suggested that a press release could be sent to the EDP to highlight this, Alex Hooper would draft this.

ACTION: AH

It was **agreed** that payments from the earmarked reserve would be made as required, proposed by Alex Hooper, seconded by Phil Harrison, all in favour.

d) Payments

It was **agreed** to pay the following, proposed by Hannah Darby, seconded by Martin Williams, all in favour:-

C Moore	Salary & Expenses Oct & Nov 22	£409.26
HMRC	PAYE Oct & Nov 22	£102.40
SSE	Streetlight Electric September 2022	£53.59
SSE	Streetlight Electric October 2022	£49.62

The Poppy Appeal	Donation	£20.00
C Moore	Website & Domain Renewal	£98.86

8. Correspondence

- a) North Norfolk Planning Department Consultation on Service Quality
The consultation was considered and a response determined.
- b) Stalham Town Infrastructure Levy Letter
The letter from Stalham Town Council was considered. It was **agreed** to send a letter to Duncan Baker on this matter. **ACTION: Clerk**
- c) Second Home Owners Council Tax
Covered earlier in the meeting. It was felt that there was inequality in the properties that did not pay rates, and that the owners of second homes in North Norfolk could afford the 100% increase in council tax. It was felt that there should be planning restrictions such as not allowing an increase in the size of homes which local people could then not afford, pricing them out of the market.
- d) General Correspondence
None.

9. Other Matters

- a) SAM2 Sign Repairs
It was **agreed** to repair the SAM2 device at a cost of £140.70 plus VAT and delivery, proposed by Phil Harrison, seconded by Hannah Darby, all in favour. It was **agreed** that Martin Williams would collect it once it was fixed. **ACTION: Clerk**
- b) Ambulance Response Times / Community First Responders
Covered earlier in the agenda. Alex Hooper continued to try to recruit Community First Responders and was on the committee that discussed ambulance response times. Donations would be welcomed. An update would be put into the Local Lynx. **ACTION: AH**
- c) Dignity at Work Policy
It was **agreed** to adopt the policy, proposed by Alex Hooper, seconded by Hannah Darby, all in favour. **ACTION: Clerk**
- d) Meeting Dates 2023
The meeting dates for 2023 were **agreed**. The January meeting would be rescheduled to Victoria Egan's availability.
- e) Draft Budget 2023/24
The draft budget was considered. It was **agreed** to set the precept at £7,430, Band D £54.35, 1.96% proposed by Hannah Darby, seconded by David Smallridge, all in favour. **ACTION: Clerk**

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be confirmed once Victoria Egan's availability was known. The meeting would begin at 7pm at Stiffkey Village Hall. The meeting closed at 9pm.

CHAIRMAN