

Stisted Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 7 February 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillor Mark Hughes - Chairman
Councillor Alan Routledge – Vice Chairman
Councillor Richard White
Councillor Howard Hollands
Councillor Bob Powers
Councillor Cheryl Hill-Cottingham

In attendance: Mrs. Ruth Jubb – Clerk
County Cllr Paul Thorogood
Cllr Tom Walsh
About 50 members of the public

119 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Eleanor McMillan
BDC Cllr Dennis Abram

120 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

121 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Cllr Hughes reminded there are only 15 minutes for this session. There was much discussion – key minutes are detailed below with actions. The first public session centred on the recently announced Draft Replacement Minerals Plan Review for Essex that was released on the previous day, 6th February:

- A villager stated she had already received a letter from ECC who are writing to all residents and businesses within 250 metres of a proposed future minerals site. The letter included a map of the site near Sarcel. There is a further site on Kings Lane.
- There was a previous campaign, called “SAGE”, in the village in the late 1980s to early 1990s against proposed gravel sites at that time.
- A villager requested to know what the Parish Council remit and response would be to the Minerals Review. Cllr Hughes responded saying that the Parish would set up a Working Party that Cllr Routledge is happy to lead. The Village Hall has been booked for 21 February for a public meeting at 7.30 p.m. This will allow communication with villagers. Some pre-meetings will be needed. The recent campaign against the A120 proposed routes was mentioned, with the need for concerted effort on behalf of the village. Cllr Routledge reiterated that this would be a Working Party not a Sub Committee of the Parish council as the villager was concerned that the Parish Council would be subject to rules that would prevent it being involved. The Parish Council does have a remit with regards to planning. Noted that ECC have formally requested a response from the Parish Council as well as individuals by the end of the consultation on 19 March 2024. The intention is for everyone to be able to have involvement in the campaign.
- There was a query whether other stakeholders, including the land owners / agents and the council, would be invited to the meeting. Noted they would be invited.
- A villager raised that there will be interest from other adjacent Parishes.
- A villager queried the point of communication and how all people will be aware of the minerals review and meetings as some would not receive the formal letter from ECC. It was discussed and agreed that there would be a leaflet produced and delivered by hand to all houses in the parish. People volunteered to assist with printing and delivery; to be coordinated by Cllr Routledge. This would be A4, for approximately 260 households in the village.



- The parish budget was checked and it was noted that there is at least £150 that can be readily available for external costs from the miscellaneous budget, for the Gravel Campaign. (Labour would be unpaid volunteers). There had been a previous fund for SAGE but this has been donated to the Montefiore so is unavailable.
- It was stated that wildlife can be an important factor in any case of this nature to review potential planning sites. Newts were found and building work was stopped for 6 months at one site for DP World Super Containers - even after planning was granted – note it can result in e.g. fenced area to protect wildlife, rather than preventing work completely.
- A villager raised that we should aim to have the 3 sites removed as unsuitable so that they do not even receive planning permission.
- If anyone wants to get involved, Cllr Hughes requested that people contact Cllr Routledge by email. Contact details for the council and most Councillors are on the parish website <https://www.stisted-pc.co.uk/>
- Noted that being in a conservation area may be of benefit, and another person stated that, once again, it appears to be an impact for Stisted as it was with A120 and previous potential gravel sites
- A member of Bradwell PC noted that if current gravel sites were extended and new ones given planning, the total would far exceed the forecast requirement. There should be co-ordination with Bradwell PC regarding a response as one of the 3 sites near Stisted is not in Stisted Parish. National Highways have noted that there is no good road from Pattiswick Hall to the A120 and made a policy objection, and that the visibility splay at the end of Kings Lane is not good. Quote from Candidate Site Assessment Document A89 "Neither Kings Road or its Junction with the A120 Trunk Road are considered "suitable" in their current form and it is unclear what mitigation can be provided". Cllr Routledge noted that he already has the Highways data.

121.1 County & District Councillors Councillor Thorogood

- Cllr Thorogood introduced himself and described his background with regards to the lobbying against quarrying in Coggeshall.
- It is an ECC duty to review the Mineral plan every 5 years. There was a call for new sites for quarries in 2022 to meet increased future aggregate demand. The call seems to be oversubscribed with 55 potential sites being put forward, but 52 remaining as 3 dropped out. A large proportion (15?) sites are in Braintree District, with 3 sites potentially impacting Stisted.
- All potential sites had an initial review by an external consultancy company. The sites are reviewed against 16 criteria and given a Red / Amber / Green rating. All 3 sites are Red for Health & Amenity, with Transport and Access being red for 2 sites but Red/Amber for the Kings Lane site.
- Red is hard to mitigate and the landowner will try to reverse the Red rating – here it is important for objections to keep the Red items as red, and to move the green ones to a higher rating.
- Regarding agricultural – the farmers are C Hill and J Pease. The land is used for farming so it is the soil that is important. Losing farming land is not a good objection as soil can be moved and replaced whereas trees & forestry cannot.
- There is a government list of considerations to be applied to minerals applications (see end of doc for list). Noise and dust are considered important for example. The village should object against these criteria in the correct way to achieve maximum benefit. Cllr Thorogood offered his help to show residents how to draw up a list and make the best objections possible.
- Visual Impact can be an important objection– you cannot object about losing your view, but you can object about the setting of the village.
- Heritage is good as an objection as it is hard to mitigate - in Coggeshall the Grange Barns were used in an objection with regard to Heritage and Historic buildings. 2 sites are Amber and one is Red / Amber for this.



- Transport is a major defense as the A120 is at capacity and this would introduce extra lorries. It has been an issue for many years that the road could be dual carriageway, but it is the road as at today that is to be considered (see comments in the individual site assessments which are on the parish website at <https://www.stisted-pc.co.uk/stisted-campaign-against-potential-gravel-extraction-near-village/>)
- If every site has a defense, then the parish must try to do the best defense to make it less likely to be chosen over other sites in the plan.
- There are footpaths, but footpaths can be diverted. Flooding should also be considered as it is a quarry so the water will run off somewhere.
- Traffic Surveys are important – there has been one on Kings Lane recently but this was not commissioned by Highways, but may have been a local developer as they can pay to have them done.
- Cllr Thorogood offered to create a shopping list of suitable objections. This was accepted

Councillor Walsh

- Cllr Walsh, a Parish Councillor in Coggeshall, noted it is inevitable some sites will go ahead, but the sites for Braintree District are disproportionate in scale and concentration for a small area in Essex. This is a planning not a political issue. Parish Councils regularly object to Planning Issues. Cllr Walsh suggested ECC should be requested to send a representative to our local meeting on 21 February
- Cllr Walsh is on the Local Planning Committee at BDC. He said the plan has not yet been considered, but assumes it will be, and there will be comments.
- The Independent and Green Group have written a letter to Braintree and Witham Times on the Minerals subject and it should be in print soon.
- Landscape is also a criterion. There was a site at West Street Coggeshall where the broader context and surrounding area was relevant to the discussion and decision for planning, not just the landscape of the site.
- Councillor Grants – one has been submitted for the Village Hall, and another for the shop will be shortly. There is no guarantee that they will be approved though.
- Cllr Routledge noted that he has a landscape assessment from the Neighbourhood plan work and is looking at counter arguments for this and for Transport.

121.2 Parish Paths

Cllr Powers noted that paths have suffered with the recent storms but that land owners are being reminded to maintain paths. There are fallen trees across paths so the public should take care (some trees are still partially suspended over paths so it is advisable to go round and not under them).

121.3 Village Hall Report inc. Stisted Archives

- Noted that the Karaoke event at the Village Hall has to be delayed as the main organisers have personal issues taking their time.
- Cllr Hollands stated that historic SAGE gravel quarry records are in the archive and the new working group is welcome to access them
- There will be a spring event in the Village Hall & details will be published. There are two other events, the first of which will be "Stisted Trades and Businesses Past & Present" to include Brenda Toys, Alpha Kennels, & Linden Lady Chocolates. There will also be a photographic exhibition in the autumn for the 2024 Gardens – to show gardens and natural environment. It will be a celebration of garden and nature rather than a competition. Again, there will be publicity and people should take photographs of garden and natural environments through the year.

121.4 Community Shop

- There has been a lot of work in preparation for the new look shop with cleaning and re-stocking. A generous donation was received for a fridge. Footfall has gone up and takings are up. The new shelving is helping and the parish grant is gratefully received. New opening will be Monday and Wednesday p.m. with plans for Saturday morning opening. There are plans to have items such as fresh sausage rolls and Bakewell tarts once there is a fridge. Local honey is already stocked with plans for local eggs soon, and Saturday papers subject to pre-ordering
- There is a book in the shop for suggestions of items to stock and other ideas

122 PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd January 2024 were a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Hughes and 2nd by Cllr Routledge and approved by all.

123 MEETING ACTIONS REPORT

Meeting actions were accepted – with the need to hold some items due to the need to discuss the Gravel Extraction Consultation. Cllr Hughes noted that he has sent another email to the council regarding the licensing for the gates. Clerk noted that she is still chasing electricity suppliers to process the reduction in electricity consumption since the LED inventory was submitted to them in November.

124 PLANNING MATTERS

124.1 Planning Applications

- 24/00078/FUL | Change of use - part ground floor - residential to commercial (wellness studio) | Old Post Office, The Street Stisted. The proposed change of use was discussed. Cllr Hughes and Cllr Routledge were happy to accept the application and agreed by all. **ACTION** Clerk to submit comments.

124.2 Planning Results

- As detailed on the agenda, with two granted as follows: - 23/02761/TPOCON Old Post Office, The Street, Stisted – To remove or prune a Yew Tree APPLICATION GRANTED, and 23/02837/FUL Golf Course Single Storey extn. – GRANTED. Cllr Hollands believes the plan was approved for pruning and not removal of the Yew Tree.

125 FINANCE

125.1 Bank Reconciliation

- Accepted and signed.

125.2 Payments

- Schedule and payments accepted and signed (note that the payments to EALC will have a subsequent bursary partial refund by the end of the Financial Year).
- Funds have been transferred between pots as noted in the budget approval process by updating the opening year balances. The Neighbourhood grant top up is unlikely to take the parish council over the income threshold for external audit unless any further grants are received by financial year end, although expenditure may go over £25k depending on the training bursary refund.
- Final check of Finances still to be carried out with Cllr White and Clerk.

126 COMMUNITY, RECREATION & MAINTENANCE

126.1 Working Group - Neighbourhood Plan

- Cllr Routledge advised that the first draft of the plan is now available for consultation. DW and Cllr Routledge have checked it and Cllr Routledge will email to the council. **ACTION** Cllr Routledge to email the draft Neighbourhood plan to the Parish Council. The process will then continue with regulation 14 consultation by sharing with the wider village and stakeholders. This will include BDC who will

advise of other stakeholders to contact. This will include National Highways. This second phase is for 6 weeks. There will be a short delay before starting the consultation so that it does not overlap fully with the Minerals Plan Consultation.

126.2 Working Group – Climate & Nature for Stisted (CANS)

- No report provided due to possible time constraints with the public discussion regarding potential gravel extraction sites in the village. There is now more information for CANS on the Parish website.

126.3 Playing Field

- Cllr Powers - there is no great degradation of the equipment but action will be needed on the multiplay centre. Obtaining quotes from two suppliers is in hand.
- The earlier complaint regarding the swing was discussed. An inspection was carried out by the council, – the swing is on chains fixed to an immovable welded bracket so they are close to the edge of the swing and cannot be changed. The swings were inspected by ROSPA and passed and have the relevant safety standard. Therefore, no more can be done.
- S106 – mentioned as it could impact the playing field. The clerk has submitted the updated categories for the new Open Spaces Plan so that once it is approved the council can start looking for adult play equipment. (Deadline for new entries was 31 January) There will be circa 3k available and will require 2 quotations for any work. **ACTION:** clerk to check when the new Open Spaces Report is available

126.4 Football Foundation

- Cllr Routledge noted that a few small points are being completed and is investigating getting some spiking for the pitch to aerate the ground.

126.5 Grass Cutting Contract

- The cheaper of the two contracts was agreed via email / WhatsApp but required formal vote as this is a tender. The previous contract was £2.8k and the new one – with Dave Burge - was £2.1k. Proposed to appoint Dave Burge by Cllr Hughes and 2nd by Cllr Holland. All agreed. **ACTION** Clerk to advise applicants formally.

126.6 Rural England Prosperity Funding

- Unfortunately, the fund is full and applications closed before we were able to secure quotes for the work as it is a long lead to obtain quotations.

126.7 Street Clean and Dust Cart

- Dust Cart booked Saturday 10th February. Cllrs Routledge, Hollands and Powers and the clerk will attend to check that correct items are left for the dust cart.

126.8 Newsletter & Parish Magazine

- The church will no longer be running the magazine after the end of the year. It has become more of a community magazine than a church magazine. It does make a very small profit. There is interest in both Stisted and Bradwell parishes taking the magazine on from 2025 with Eleanor McMillan willing to stay on as editor. This will be discussed at the Bradwell Parish meeting on Monday 12 February as well.
- There is now potential to combine the Parish newsletter with the magazine
- There will need to be a person to take on the business side of the magazine for advertising etc.
- Await update from Bradwell Parish Council before making plans to move forward as we have several months before handover from the church
- Agreed no Stisted Newsletter in the interim as it will just be the parish magazine going forward



126.9 Annual Parish Assembly

- This will be in May on the same day as Parish Council meeting. **ACTION** Clerk to book Hall and request reports

126.10 Church Bells

- There is a need for more volunteers to ring the church bells as several current volunteers are elderly and the church needs to train new volunteers. It is 7.30 Monday evenings and there is a steep ladder to the bell tower. This has also been advertised in the Parish Magazine.

126.11 Gulls Meadow

- Cllr Hughes has spoken to the owners of Gulls Meadow – they have erected a barn that is outside planning. The owner is currently speaking with BDC to legalise the position.
- Cllr Powers will also discuss with BDC for the current situation for formal confirmation that action is being taken.

126.12 Street Lights

- Once the position regarding the updated inventory for LED street lights is complete, the council will explore the costs and benefits of having the lights dimmed during the night to reduce consumption further.

126.13 Gladwish General Update

- Enforcement have still not responded to Cllr Hughes regarding Gladwish despite emails and photographs. Cllr Powers has agreed to chase in Cllr Hughes absence

126.14 Speed Control in the Village

- On hold and defer to another meeting

126.15 Autumn Exhibition

- Discussed earlier

127 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION 2

The following items were raised:

- The Onley Arms is closing 18 February. There is no action the Parish Council can take. It is too large a project to be able to buy, take on and run by the community. The village need to consider alternative community venues. One member of the public queried if the village hall could be used – the response was that the village hall already has commitments with other users. The Montefiore cannot have an alcohol licence.
- A working Group to be set up in the future to look at alternatives for a community space.
- A member of the public noted the council receives a lot of retrospective planning applications (especially looking back at the planning applications in relation to the Onley Arms). This cannot be controlled.
- The Onley Arms is not on the market and it is unclear what its future will be. It is sad when considered it was given to the village by Saville Onley.
- Noted that there are several other villages that do have community pubs in Essex and some have even built or bought new community buildings. There will be a lot of work and planning for a working group to be set up in 2 or 3 months after both gravel and Neighbourhood plan consultations.
- A villager raised the fact that the channel sweeper had been but could only access one side of the street. The clerk confirmed no notice had been given of the date of the street sweeper. Noted some blocked gully pots were reported but no action taken to date
- Affordable Housing was queried. Cllr Hughes noted that the council is awaiting a response. One of the sites was close to the potential gravel quarry site.
- Dog poo – **ACTION** Cllr Hughes to contact BDC regarding Dog Poo bins

- In addition, 2 bins are very full by the church and in the playing fields on a regular basis. If the public notify the council, these will be emptied quickly. **ACTION** Clerk to check the schedule for bin emptying and establish whether it can be more frequent for these 2 bins

128 INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- On hold till next meeting due to time constraints.
- It was queried why the Parish Meeting in May 2023 was not on the first Wednesday – but the May 2024 meeting will be 1st May 2024
- Cllr Hughes signed the papers for additional training requests

129 NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 6th March 2023 at 7:30p.m. at the Montefiore Institute.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 20:55 pm.

Attachment as discussed in the meeting is shown on next page