

Stisted Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 6 March 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillor Mark Hughes - Chairman
Councillor Alan Routledge – Vice Chairman
Councillor Richard White
Councillor Howard Hollands
Councillor Bob Powers
Councillor Eleanor McMillan

In attendance: Mrs Ruth Jubb - Clerk
4 members of the public

130 Election of Officials

None required at this stage – wait until general assembly

131 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

County Cllr Paul Thorogood, Cllr Tom Walsh, Councillor Cheryl Hill-Cottingham

132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

133 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

The following items were raised by members of the public:

- The retrospective planning for The Old Post Office Wall has been refused and it was queried what would happen. Advised that BDC are in communication regarding the situation, but no view on outcome. The next application for business use is separate.
- It was queried if there was any update on affordable housing and Cllr Hughes advised that there was no update yet

133.1 County & District Councillors

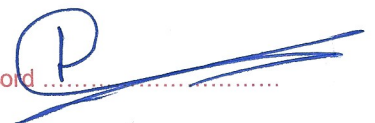
None present as preparing for other meetings regarding potential local gravel pits

133.2 Parish Paths

Cllr Powers noted that various footpath reports have been sent to Highways in the past month and some responses received. The key update concerns footpath 24 opposite the Dolphin near the Car Boot sale ground. There is a stile in poor repair which is the responsibility of the landowner, but it is not clear who the landowner may be. It may be London Quadrant – Cllr Powers to continue to try to find the owner / chase Highways. There are several outstanding actions with Highways.

133.3 Village Hall Report inc. Stisted Archives

- Archives – the Montefiore loaned some pictures to Archives but they are in poor condition. They may be exhibited next year with a view to restoration in 2025, for permanent display in the Montefiore (not shop), later. Fundraising may be required
- Work Ongoing for the Autumn Photo exhibition,
- Village Hall Events (with refreshments)
 - Trades and Business exhibition 7 April for the Public - this will be the start of a series (includes Brenda Toys)
 - 19 April – tea and cake afternoon and an opportunity to collect aural history
 - 20 April social event with drinks and food with space for presentations
- Mr. Hughes as Village Hall trustee updated that there will be a shortfall in Village Hall income this year. One of the main hirers of the Hall is moving to new premises for her business in March, and this income shortfall needs to be covered going forward.



- A temporary income solution could be to have the Village Hall open as a social venue on Friday evenings this year as there is no longer a village pub. It could be 5.00 p.m. until 9.00 or 10.00 p.m. and may include outside catering on some weeks. Some preparation will be needed as a full alcohol licence is required, plus shutters for security so that alcohol does not need to be removed after each event.
- A group will be formed soon to consider options for replacing the Onley as a village resource
- There will probably be two social events this year; a Hog Roast is planned for early July. There is unlikely to be a film night again this year (film nights may be alternate years). The 2nd will be in the autumn. It will be advertised in the parish magazine

133.4 Community Shop

- The shop is doing well and now opens Monday 2 - 4, Wednesday 1.30 – 4 and Saturday 9.30 to 12.00. Easter weekend it will be open more and will have sausage rolls – a leaflet drop will be done to all houses in the next few days. The shop now has a card machine for purchases. Some fresh items, including eggs, are popular.

134 PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th February 2024 were a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr Hughes, 2nd and show of hands.

135 MEETING ACTIONS REPORT

- Cllr Hughes stated the bases and ground spikes for the two benches – would be done, probably on Friday. One bench would be by the pavilion and the other perhaps on Priors Green if acceptable to Annabel Came the owner. Cllr Hughes will contact her for permission and put the bench there or the other side of the pavilion. It is intended to fix the fence on the playing field with new posts at the same time.
- The Emergency Plan still needs follow up with Cllr Hughes and Powers
- Dog poo bins need to be emptied more regularly. The clerk advised that after speaking to the council, it was suggested that if a bin is overflowing and there is an adjacent litter bin, then the bagged poo can be placed in the normal black litter bin. Thicker liners will then be provided by the council in the future. This only helps where the Dog poo bins and litter bins are close together. It is not possible to get extra pick-ups at present as the staff doing this are already at capacity.

Cllr Hughes proposed that the meeting actions were acceptable. It was **RESOLVED** that the meeting actions report was correct and was approved by all by a show of hands.

136 PLANNING MATTERS

136.1 Planning Applications

- 24/00338/TPOCON - The Old Rectory, Water Lane
- 24/00139/TPOCON 57 The Street, Stisted Essex
- 24/00292/TPOCON Gardeners Cottage, The Street

These are all tree works and have been passed to the tree warden for comment, with some comments already received

136.2 Planning Results

- Several as per agenda are still pending
Cllr Routledge stated that activity had been noted at Kings Coven with possible utility connections. There are stables on the site so it may be for that. He is chasing BDC for information

137 FINANCE

The clerk noted the council need to update their banking signatories at the Co-op Bank to allow the clerk to set up payments for a councilor to authorize online to release payment. Moving forward it may be necessary to move to e.g. Unity Bank to allow 2 authorisers if the



current bank cannot do this. This is part of Financial Regulations 6.4 and 6.9. Regulation 6.9 for BACs payments still requires a dual approval, and confirmation every 2 years that it is still acceptable. **ACTION** Clerk to arrange for 2 more councilors to have online access and then to set up dual authorization online as soon as possible. Also to establish if a new account may be needed in the future. The Financial Regulations are under review since mid-2023 and this may impact whether we need to change banks regarding number of signatories for BACs payments.

Every 2 years the council needs to review and approve the use of BACS payments rather than cheques and use of variable direct debits to allow them to continue. There are several BACS payments each month (including grass cutting invoices and payroll as examples). There are currently 5 variable DDs:

- 1) Microsoft – currently £9.48 per month
- 2) A&J Lighting – currently £38.80 per month
- 3) HP Ink currently £9.99 per month
- 4) Opus (electricity) – different every month – currently around £200 to £300 per month
- 5) Zen Website Hosting – currently £8.39 per month

Financial Regulation 6.7 covers variable DDs and 6.9 covers the use of BACs. 6.15 does allow the RFO as service administrator to make payments without a 2nd person to authorize subject to a financial limit and dual signature on the paper requests for payment – limit still to be agreed

It was **RESOLVED** to continue with the variable direct debits, to continue to use BACs payments, and to set up additional bank access. It was proposed by Cllr RW, 2nd by Cllr HH and approved by all.

The clerk noted that the council needs to book a date with the internal auditor in April for review and audit of the 2023 to 2024 accounts. **ACTION** Clerk to arrange a date with Richard Hughes.

Clerk noted that the Internal Control Policy is due for approval again (last one was approved in July 2022 for year end 2023) **ACTION** Clerk to update policy as required and circulate prior to passing for approval by council in April.

137.1 Bank Reconciliation

- The bank reconciliation was reviewed and approved by all

137.2 Payments

- The schedule of payments made in February and BACs due in March was reviewed and approved. As per Financial Regulation 5.2, these must be an appendix to or within the minutes so are shown below

invoice date	method	reason	payee	gross
05/02/2024	BACS	expenses	Cans Expenses	£ 64.69
05/02/2024	BACS	Training	EALC training	£ 456.00
05/02/2024	BACS	S106 Grant	SPC Grant to Shop	£ 200.00
15/02/2024	DD	street lights	AJ Lighting	£ 38.80
19/02/2024	DD	electricity street lights	Opus	£ 245.80
19/02/2024	DD	website	Zen (monthly)	£ 8.39
28/02/2024	BACS	Training	EALC training	£ 678.00
28/02/2024	BACS	salary	clerk salary February	£ 388.80
Card inv date	method	reason	payee	nett
05/02/2024	bank card	IT	Microsoft	£ 9.48
16/02/2024	bank card	IT	HPI Instant Ink	£ 9.99

List of BACS Payments for approval prior to payment:

Est Date to pay	Payee	Reason	Total
11/03/2024	EALC	Training HH RP	£ 204.00
29/03/2024	Clerk		£ 388.80
11/03/2024	SLCC	Membership for Parish Council	£ 112.00
11/03/2024	BDC	Dust Cart	£ 261.25

- These figures were in the support papers circulated. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the bank reconciliation and payments as per papers. Proposed by Cllr Hughes and agreed by all and signed by the chair, including invoices, giving approval to pay
- **ACTION** Clerk to arrange for A&J to fix the street light by the school and then check any charges – if we are charged then we should reconsider the maintenance contract.

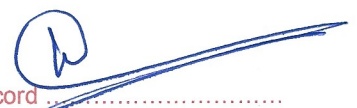
137.3 Notification that External Audit likely to Happen Based on Annual Expenses

- The external audit exemption is based upon the higher of income or expenses being under £25,000 in the financial year.
- The page of budget / income and expenses was circulated. The Clerk noted that she is chasing OPUS energy for the refund due to the council for using LED lights. A request has been made for payment before 31 March to apply as a refund to expenses for the year. This, with the bursary refund due from EALC may lower the expenses below £25k for the year which is also part of the external audit threshold. Cllr White noted that if we know the figure due back to the council, we can accrue for it as a debtor. OPUS is charging for almost 19KwH per day and it should be nearer to 3.4KwH. All chasing to OPUS is evidenced on Stisted Parish Council email. This also shows the 75% energy saving with LEDs to be worthwhile

138 COMMUNITY, RECREATION & MAINTENANCE

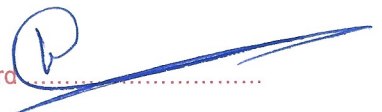
138.1 Neighbourhood Plan

- The draft plan was circulated in the support papers and earlier on email by Cllr Routledge. It requires a few minor amendments e.g. to remove reference to the Onley Arms and include a reference to an “other” community space to replace it.
- The plan is now at the stage of Regulation 14. Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood planning regulations require the draft Neighbourhood plan proposal to be the subject of a pre-submission consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination. The consultation should last at least 6 weeks. Cllr Routledge has only just received the list of external stakeholders from BDC (about 60). Providing there is nothing major raised in the 6 weeks, it will go to BDC to ensure it matches with all the other local plans and then for external referendum – this is arranged by BDC and paid for by BDC, and only requires a minimum of 3 votes in total with the majority being in support.
- Cllr Routledge is requesting approval to go ahead with the consultation to obtain feedback, after correcting the few typing errors in the plan.
- There will be another leaflet drop for all villagers plus a few online copies and perhaps places with hard copies. A comments box has been suggested to receive written comments and these could be in the shop or in the post box in the outer lobby at the Village Hall. If anyone has comments or notices errors, they should be emailed to Cllr Routledge, after 19th March.
- It was **RESOLVED** that the Neighbourhood plan should be updated and moved to the stage of regulation 14. Proposed by Cllr Hughes and 2nd by Cllr McMillan supported by show of hands.



138.2 Update on SAGE 2024 and Gravel Quarries (including feedback from meetings with other parties)

- Update from AR as a member of the public:
 - Alan Routledge, as a villager, has given considerable help with the response for the Potential Gravel Pits. An open meeting was arranged in the Village Hall on 21 February This involved about 123 villagers and presentations from Cllr Thorogood, Cllr Dunn and Alan Routledge
 - He has involved various bodies including Chair of Bradwell Parish Council, Cllr Thorogood, The Golf Club, Stisted School, Stisted Hall, Baytree Farm, and Kings Park & Marks Farm
 - CANS working group have sent a draft of their response to Councillors on email. The draft is still being finalized prior to submission
 - The land owners of the sites have been contacted but no response received. The County Council were also invited, but declined to attend, the meeting.
 - The parish website has been updated by the clerk to include reference documents and guidance on making objections
 - There will be a public drop-in clinic for people requiring assistance on 09 March in the Montefiore
 - BDC are starting their consultation with a meeting on 7 March. AR may attend
 - Objections close 19 March 5.00 pm
 - Positive comments have been received regarding the meeting of 21 February
 - Comments & Objections to ECC are then reviewed and decision taken on preferred site – this is likely to be 2025
- **Update from Cllr Routledge regarding the Parish Council Response and objection**
 - There are various criteria by which the sites were assessed. Cllr Routledge will prepare a draft response for review by the Parish Council based upon these criteria. Cllr Routledge suggested only putting the main points in and leaving some “evidence in reserve” should there be another phase. In addition, there will be comments on the correctness of the overall plan and process
 - The main points that will be used for the response are concerning
 - Traffic & Access
 - Landscape and Visual
 - Dust – Silicosis
 - Use of Land and perhaps Ecology / Environmental with it
 - It is clear that leaflets were not sent to all impacted people as they should have been so process was not followed e.g. Twin Oaks did not receive leaflets. These properties were incorrectly ignored for impacted properties in A89
 - There are discrepancies and concerns over the amount of gravel in the plan
 - Some footpaths will be lost – especially A89 as there is nowhere to reroute
 - Whilst we have some old buildings, there are not as many as Coggeshall had when objecting to their quarry
 - The trees along Kings Lane are not thick enough to hide the quarry if it goes ahead
 - The NFU are discussing the loss of food producing land and this is good quality arable land
 - Cllr Routledge will prepare a draft and circulate. Everyone was in agreement with this but we will need to approve the draft over email as it must be submitted before the next meeting (note the invite to council was sent to the Parish Email and needs to go in with that email)
 - There are no details of how restoration will be done, or what the quarry will be filled with
 - Also noted Rayne have just opened a new quarry near the old one in the past week. On the old A120
 - Chair gave thanks to Cllr Routledge for his efforts



138.3 Working Group - Climate and Nature for Stisted (CANS)

- CANS will not be updating this month as they are working on their draft objection report for the potential gravel sites

138.4 Playing Field and Fencing by Swing

- Cllr Powers has looked at the Multiplay reports and whether it is better to repair or replace. He wants advice from RoSPA when they do their next inspection which is due shortly. Cllr Powers has advised the repairs we are awaiting a decision on repair or replace
- An invitation for the RoSPA inspection is due to the Clerk in April. However, RoSPA are requesting £50 additional fee if Councillors are to attend the inspection (note since meeting – the last report was £111)
- The Clerk will need to reply to the request for the inspection and notify that AR and RP will be attending, and state that we assume there will be no extra charge for this

138.5 Football Foundation

- There has been little action re football but the fence repair was raised. As earlier, Cllr Hughes has offered to repair the fence at the same time as the bench bases are installed. The posts are in the shed and will just be put in next to the existing posts

138.6 George IV Coronation Bench outside Montefiore

- The George IV bench outside the Montefiore is in need of care (sand, oil etc.). It seems solid. The flower pots near it look smart. Cllr Routledge offered to sand and oil the bench in situ. All agreed that he should do this. If a can of oil is bought it can also be used on the new benches. To be done when the weather improves.
Action Cllr Routledge to re-finish the benches

138.7 Onley Bollards

- Cllr Powers has investigated the Onley Bollards and contacted Natalie Banks at BDC. The ref no. as support papers is 24/00077/UBW3. We await a response as it is being investigated

138.8 Speed Control in the Village

- Highways will not do anything about speed at the moment. Cllr Hughes wondered whether a campaign by villagers to drive at 20 mph in the village and 30 mph outside the village envelope would help. This would naturally slow down other traffic. We should consider once the Gravel Objections process is complete and then discuss fully. Refer to a future agenda.

138.9 Litterpick

- The Litterpick is Saturday 16 March @ 9.00 at the village green. Mr. Bass from BDC is delivering equipment on the 15th and collecting full bags on 18th from the village green. There will be equipment for 20 people
- Cllr Hollands queried where the signs should be placed (Tumblers, Water Lane and Kings Lane
- It was queried whether the Litterpickers should go further to Brooks reserve, Moat Farm and Kentishes / Rayne Hatch but no agreement reached until number of volunteers known on the day
- Cllr Hughes will collect full bags to return to Village Green
- Cllr Hollands noted he would put a reminder on Facebook
- Cllr Hughes will be speaking with CANS to sort the recycling again

138.10 Emergency Plan – final updates required

- Cllrs Powers and Hughes will complete the outstanding updates as per action plan

138.11 Update Regarding Disruptive Behaviour at Council Meetings in News

- Cllr Hughes wanted everyone to be aware of the recent comments and the fact that Essex Police have said they will take zero tolerance on bullying and disrupting council meetings. The Government have made more money available for support
- Councillors do not put addresses and phone numbers on website etc. Clerk raised that she has been advised to consider a P O Box for council address. **ACTION** Clerk to investigate P O Box costs

139 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION 2

The following items were raised:

- There was a query over bookings for events for the Village Hall – this was discussed by the Village Hall the previous evening and enquiries had gone to junk so this will be checked in future. Also contact Usha Hollands or Mark Hughes if anyone is considering organizing an event – assistance would be greatly welcomed
- A member of the public raised that, for Events, it may be possible for Bradwell and Stisted to share some social events with exchange invitations
- There was a query whether or not the Dust Cart is cost effective. The contents go to Landfill which isn't good, but the Salvation Army did attend to take furniture and this would be useful for the future. The village do seem to like the Dust Cart. But if people took their own waste to the recycling centre, much of it could be sorted and recycled
- A comment was made that a person had been seen picking daffodils in Church Walk. This should not be happening – could CANs perhaps put a notice "Do not pick flowers"?
- It was queried whether photographs can be included with Gravel Site Objections, particularly in relation to flooding – Cllr Routledge stated that he thought they could be e.g. they can be inserted in a document that is emailed

140 INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

- Replacement of the Onley
- Year End Audit Update and next steps
- Internal Controls Policy & Banking Arrangements
- Future of Parish Magazine
- Request for reports for Annual Parish Assembly

141 CLOSED ITEMS and MOTION TO EXCLUDE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

At 21.00, all members of public were asked to leave the room to discuss closed matters

- Cllr Powers discussed the possibility of some awards within the village and asked the Clerk to investigate some costs for doing this including printing etc.
- Noted that there has been no formal response or action with regard to the antisocial behaviour point raised in a previous council meeting

142 NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 3rd April 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the **Montefiore Institute**.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 21:15 pm.

