

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the electors of Stoke Fleming Parish
held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 15th May at 7pm

Present Parish Councillors: Struan Coupar (Chairman), Michael Barlow (Vice Chairman), Hazel Smith, Caroline Martin, Jay Gascoigne, Ruth Adams, David Harris, Marion Holmes and County Councillor Julian Brazil.
Alison Shaw - St Peter's Church, Paul Girardot - Stoke Fleming Primary School, Tina Graham - Dartmouth Academy, Jenny Farmer, Sue Tweed, Rosemary Shiffner, Katie Franks, Bill Martin, Mary Newman, Tim Moxley, David Holmes.
Parish Clerk: Judy Talbot

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1. Apologies

Cllr Nick Wood, District Councillor Helen Reeve, Amanda Gascoigne, Trevor Mason, Joan Mason, Shirley Ruddlesden, Sue Taylor, Barbara and John Goddard, Mary Rimmell and Peter Barker.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2018 were circulated. Cllr Adams proposed, Cllr Barlow seconded, and all agreed that the minutes be accepted.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report - Struan Coupar

Good evening all, and welcome to the 125th Stoke Fleming Annual Parish Meeting. Many thanks to you all for attending.

This has been an interesting, and in some ways a significant year as I will outline in a moment. First, let me express our thanks to our County Councillor Julian Brazil for his continued and very steadfast support for the work of the Council during the past year. I would also like to pay tribute to District Councillor Michael Hicks for his support during what for him was a very difficult year, dealing with health problems that led to his standing down in advance of the recent local elections. Our new District Councillor, Helen Reeve, unfortunately cannot be with us tonight.

May 2 was the date set for local elections, but the need for a contest in Stoke Fleming was avoided as there were just nine candidates for the nine places on the Council. Eight existing councillors were re-elected, with Mrs Marian Holmes filling the one vacant place. The new council took office earlier this evening at its Annual Meeting.

The Editor of the Magazine asked each of us to pen a few words for the May issue, introducing ourselves as your new parish council. So that you are able to put a face to each name, if you cannot already do so, I'm asking each of them to stand as I read their name. I, by the way, am Struan Coupar, and currently Chairman of the Council. (Introduced other councillors in alphabetical order).

Now, to the rest of the year.

HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND

The past year has of course been the year of Gigaclear, supposedly bringing the benefits of high-speed fibre broadband to the village in a three-month programme running from August to October. What was **not** intended was that it would be October 2019, not October 2018.

As village residents know all too well, that programme has been characterised by delays, disruption, confusion and poor communication. The programming of the work from a local government point of view has been the responsibility of Devon County Council highways department, but they seem merely to have approved road closures and have exercised no control over the progress of the project. The project is funded by central government and administered by Connecting Devon and Somerset, a partnership set up by the two county councils.

We are currently seeking a meeting with them in the hope of bringing the project to a definite close. Hopefully, when completed it will have produced definite benefits for the community in the village.

The not-so-good news is that Gigaclear apparently have been awarded the contract to bring high-speed fibre coverage to the rural areas of the parish within the next year or two.

DAAT

The community rose to the occasion when plans were mooted to install lights for a night landing site on the recreation ground for Devon Air Ambulance. The effort to fund the work was coordinated by Barry Morris and contributions came from the Wednesday Ladies, the Southwestern Housing Society, Loam Rangers, the Post Office shop, Stoke Lodge Hotel, Hort & Sports Society, Christmas Tree Festival, Dartmouth Rotary Club, Mrs Perry, Camilla Clark and the Locality Fund. All deserve our thanks. As a result of their generosity the full amount was raised, with a small surplus that will be used for ongoing maintenance. Planning for the installation and liaison with Devon Air Ambulance was carried out by Cllr Michael Barlow and parish clerk Judy Talbot.

DEVELOPMENT AT COTTON

Towards the end of 2018 another event with major implications for Stoke Fleming occurred when the district council approved an extension of the proposed development at Cotton from 240 new homes to 450. Many people tend to think of that development as "West Dart" or "Townstal" and peripheral to our community but in fact all of it lies within the Stoke Fleming parish boundary, and the people who live there will be our fellow parishioners.

Having in effect two sizeable villages within the parish, one with a long history and the other completely new, will change things considerably. The parish council will expect to provide the same services to them as it does elsewhere, and that will be a major challenge. 450 new homes represents about a 75% increase in the number of dwellings in the parish, but as around 100 of the existing dwellings are not occupied full-time it may be closer to a 90% increase in the number of permanent households.

These new parishioners must also expect representation on the Parish Council. We are unlikely to be able to increase the number of parish councillors, and on a pro rata basis over time something like four out of the nine council places may be filled by people living at Cotton. Inevitably, the residents there will have issues of their own which they will want to see addressed, and we will have to take that on board.

Although it is natural to assume that the people living there will tend to gravitate towards Dartmouth, lack of parking spaces makes accessing the facilities in the town difficult and those at the top of the hill are limited. The development ought to be seen as an opportunity for us, if we approach it positively. Potentially new members for the various groups represented here tonight. More for the cricket club and bowling club, perhaps. New blood for the football team and petanque, additional functions at Stoke Lodge, customers for the Green Dragon, Radius 7, Blackpool Sands and the Post Office - as well as pupils for the school and extra pews filled at St Peter's on Sundays.

It will take about eight years for all of these homes to be built, but work will start very soon.

The parish council's principal concern about the Cotton development has been about the visual impact on the AONB, particularly the southern edge which will extend towards Wheatland and Venn, and be visible from the village. In response to our lobbying the density of housing has been reduced, imaginative designs and layouts will be used to give a semi-agricultural appearance, and that will be combined with careful landscaping to further reduce the impact. The parish council will pay close attention to the proposed detail of the design when that is submitted in the months to come.

Our other concern is about the impact of constantly increased traffic along Venn Lane and through the village. To address that we will shortly be seeking a joint meeting with the district and county councils to look at ways of mitigating the effect of that.

OTHER

During the year £7,000 was expended on improvements to the children's play park in the recreation ground.

The parish council approved an award of £5,000 to the Bowling Club, which this year celebrates its centenary, from Section 106 funds.

As ever the council has been active in responding to approaches from parishioners on a variety of subjects.

Some requests come via email or by telephone, but sometimes parishioners attend our meetings - something that is always welcome. When there are more controversial issues involved people come in groups seeking action, advice or assistance. When they do we do our best to help resolve the problem, even when the issue involved is not within our control.

5. Financial Statement - Judy Talbot

The Clerk presented a Summary of the Accounts Annual Statement of Expenditure and Income for 2018/19, copies of which were distributed, confirming a deficit of income over expenditure of £6,053.74. The Parish Council saw two large projects carried out in 2018/19. These included Devon Air Ambulance night landing site and the Children's Playpark resurfacing. We are awaiting £2,657 in VAT from these two projects. The Parish Council also had to repay a Highway Maintenance Fund of £2,229.36 as the works could not be carried out due to the landowner not giving consent. There were also further costs from the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum which we could not recoup from the District Council.

Increases in the maintenance and repairs costs for the playpark and other parish assets were reflected in the new Budgetary figures for 19/20 and formed part of the reason for the increase in the Precept by £1.00 per household.

The Clerk confirmed the closing Bank Accounts balance as £23,614.26. A copy of the summary of the Annual Statement is attached to these minutes.

6. Neighbourhood Plan - Struan Coupar

Our Neighbourhood Plan had been submitted to South Hams Council in February 2018, but the examination into it lasted throughout the year and it was not until the end of February 2019 that a referendum on it was held. The outcome was a vote in favour of 88%, and a turnout that was better than that achieved in referendums held in two other parishes on the same day.

Our plan was the first to be adopted in this part of South Hams; many others are still in preparation.

The neighbourhood plan aims to conserve as much as possible of what we currently enjoy in terms of both the built and natural environments and preserve it for future generations. Additional housing within the village has been kept to a minimum.

Instead a focus has been on improved communications – improvements to the Bird Walk, a new footpath to the school from Rectory Lane, a new car park at Mill Lane, proposals to deal with rural flooding – and a new footpath along the A379 towards Swannton. This opened shortly after the referendum and is the result of several years' work by the Dart Area Landscape Access Group, whose Secretary is Councillor Nick Wood.

Now the work of the NP Steering Group is over, responsibility for delivering the outcomes reverts to the Parish Council, which set the whole process in motion.

I'd like to pay great tribute to all who took part in the Group's work. When the process started in 2014 the Steering Group consisted of nine councillors and six members of the public. Additional members were recruited, bringing the total to 21. Then attrition took its toll. By the end there were only six still involved, three councillors (Hazel Smith, Jay Gascoigne and myself), two former councillors (Mary Newman and Katie Franks) and one of the original 12 members of the public (Nick Teage).

7. County Councillor's Report - Julian Brazil

Cllr Brazil reported that road maintenance issues are being handled more efficiently than ever. However, both adult social care and education are both struggling with the ongoing financial cuts and increased demand. In particular the special needs sector within education is suffering hugely with more children than ever being excluded from school as there is not sufficient resources to work with them.

Cllr Brazil commented that he hoped the successful completion of the new Slapton Line would have longevity as it would be unlikely to receive further funding in the future. Highways are making safe the various passing places in the back lanes with new resurfacing.

Council tax has risen by % and 1% increase in adult social care. He mentioned that there is a small reserve of financial assistance by way of a Locality Budget which could be used to support communities with various grants for organisations.

Cllr Brazil also gave thanks to Michael Hicks and was sorry that his health has not been good in the last year but has enjoyed working with him.

He also congratulated Cllr Coupar and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in being

the first parish in the South Hams to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and said that it was a good reflection on the community as a whole. He hopes that it will carry weight and in so doing may give communities more power.

The full District Council meeting takes places on the 16th May and the full County Council meeting on 23rd May. He is happy to answer questions on behalf of DC Reeve in the meantime.

8. District Councillor's Report

The incoming new council at South Hams, reflects on the previous year and the challenges they now face.

Yesterday, Cllr Judy Pearce, the new Leader of South Hams District Council, presented the Council's Annual report to the new Council. From the report, Cllr Pearce highlighted the many achievements from the last 12 months, including the new recycling, waste and cleansing contract, which will save the council £3 million.

She told the new Council, that they have also established an encouragingly positive relationship with the Homes and Communities Agency, which the new Council can build on over the coming years.

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council said: "Members will appreciate that what is reported in the annual report took place under the last administration, and that it was written before the new Council has had an opportunity to set out the direction that the Council will take. However, there are some things that will remain unchanged and this gives us a good starting position.

"We know that while we have managed to set a balanced budget this year, we do have a forecast budget gap of £470,000 that will have to be filled. We managed to close the budget gap last year, but now we face the challenge again this year.

"We will continue to pursue the recommendations of the Peer Review, where we will continue to strive for a 'right first time' approach to customer service, and we also know that we want to work closer with our Town and Parish Councils; engaging, informing and listening to them on a more regular basis."

Cllr Pearce concluded: "All this rests on running a lean and efficient Council, where finance, governance and good communications, both internal and external, are key. I am keen to foster better and more collaborative relationships between officers and Members at all levels.

"We are all trying to achieve the same goals, and if we all put our shoulder to the same wheel, it will undoubtedly turn more smoothly for the benefit of the whole District and our residents. I hope this will be reflected in next year's annual report."

The Annual report states that last year, the Council:

- Set a balanced budget of £8.83m
- Collected 2.7m tonnes of household waste
- Inspected 2,100 play parks
- Completed 2,433 planning applications
- Carried out 486 food inspections
- Awarded £253,000 in Community Grant Funding

- Supported 92 events
- Carried out 567 planning enforcement investigations
- Helped to deliver 69 affordable homes
- Picked up 53 fly tips
- Awarded £540,600 in Disabled Facilities Grants
- Collected 171 abandoned vehicles
- Prevented 520 households becoming homeless

Stoke Fleming Primary School - Paul Girardot (please see attached report)

Dartmouth Academy - Tina Graham

As is now the norm Dartmouth Academy has involvement with many clubs and societies within Dartmouth and the surrounding areas and also works alongside the four Primary schools within Education South West.

We have extremely strong links with the Dartmouth Rotary Club. These links involve the annual Food Festival, Young Chef and the Young Photographer Competitions. Pupils of the Academy submitted a record number of entries to this year's Rotary Young Photographer competition and we were also very proud to host the competition. The Intermediate category achieved both first place and runner up, pupils received gift vouchers and entry to the next level. From the 108 entries in the Devon and Cornwall round, Archie French achieved an impressive third place. There were also successes in the senior category: Kyeesha Bryson and Jordan Caple runner up and third places, narrowly beaten by an ex Dartmouth Academy pupil!

Rosey Elliott a former Stoke Fleming pupil and Callum Tracey were both highly praised for the quality of their cooking and their professional approach to the Future Chef Competition in January.

Stoke Fleming, Kingswear and Dartmouth schools have been joint planning the curriculum this year. This means that pupils are studying the same topics at the same time, allowing for greater collaboration and creating opportunities to bring the children together. In December 2018 pupils from all three schools joined us at the Academy for 'The Great Dartmouth Bake Off'! Children worked in teams, learning how to combine ingredients to create sweet, savoury or 'alternative' muffins.

Pupils had to design and build a display for their culinary creations. Julian from Saveur's bakers and Leanne from Cafe Alf Resco kindly agreed to sample and judge the winning muffins in each category. The tension built throughout the day before the winners were finally announced and the children could enjoy eating their own and others' muffins.

Nic Perrott has set up a Dartmouth Academy page on the Neighbourly website, which creates opportunities linked to local businesses. In the first instance, we have been successful in securing a donation of £500 as well as five volunteers to come to the Academy in June to work on upgrading furniture in Art and Design and to revamp our allotment for Hospitality and Catering.

We continue to work with Miranda's Fund, a charitable organisation run by the family of Miranda Benzies to support the Arts.

The Academy again hosted a Primary Maths Challenge on the 8th May including a team from Stoke Fleming involving developing Maths skills.

Tamlyn Gooch and Daisy Ferris former Stoke Fleming pupils took part in the first of five Maths Masterclasses at Plymouth University on a Saturday morning in January. More able pupils from across the county explored the Fibonacci sequence and its relationship to nature with Dr. Jenny Sharp.

We are delighted that Izak Hemmings, former Stoke Fleming pupil, has been accepted into the Exeter Maths school.

Jordan Gooch former Stoke Fleming pupil and Eloise Green are participating in a personal development expedition to Nepal late this term. They have spent over a year preparing and fundraising and we wish them well.

In February 2018 we signed a twinning agreement with Britannia Royal Naval College to further strengthen the close ties between the two organisations. Pupils at the Academy are benefitting enormously from this through reward trips, leadership days and work experience.

This agreement formalises the relationship we already have with BRNC and signifies our intention to develop this further. Both establishments have a similar ethos, which is to help young people become the best they can be. Under this agreement Officer Cadets from BRNC and pupils of the Academy will meet and interact in an educational, cultural and sporting environment, with the intention of improving the understanding of the Royal Navy, community relations and international culture. Last year the Academy attended the BRNC Chapel for our annual Remembrance Service. Officer Cadets from the College were also invited to the Academy's sports day, where they gave a demonstration on the discipline method of fitness used by the Royal Navy to develop co-ordination, physical strength and endurance. The relationship we are developing with BRNC is providing aspiration and opportunity for our pupils and staff. We encourage all members of the Academy to 'Be their best selves' and this is entirely in line with the core values of BRNC. The agreement shows an absolute commitment to building a sustainable partnership which will have a positive impact on the young people of Dartmouth and the surrounding area well into the future.

The Academy is involved in various annual events, which include some of the following:

- Lantern making workshops for Candlelit Dartmouth
- Themed Christmas tree Festival in St Peter's Church at Stoke Fleming
- Summer Exhibition at the Flavel Arts Centre which includes Art and Design and Photography.
- Regularly changing exhibitions at the Doctors Surgery and at Sainsbury's.
- Participation in the Food Festival as well as the Young Chef's Competition.
- Performing at the Dartmouth Music Festival.
- Hosting a festive and fun Christmas luncheon for Dartmouth Caring clients.
- Offering a wide range of opportunities, including foreign and national trips, to pupils during Challenge Week in July.
- Some of our primary age pupils enjoying a residential learning a wide range of new skills through outdoor activities.

Stoke Fleming Parish Church - Reverend Alison Shaw

It has been a positive year for the Parish Church. We achieved our aim of paying our church bills without using any fundraising money so intend to transfer money into our church building fund with a view to a new kitchen and a disabled access toilet. It is our hope that the Parish Church can be seen as more of a community resource in the future.

We are pleased to be involved with our primary school, especially through the weekly Open the Book assemblies. 2018 saw the 6th year anniversary of this. Two members of the church are also on the school's governing body through Education South West.

None of what we do would be possible without the wonderful folk who give their time freely and generously to keep the Parish Church and its grounds open, welcoming, and fit for the prime purpose of worshipping God, serving our neighbours and offering a sacred

space for times of peace and quiet.

On behalf of St Peter's I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support.

Copies of our Annual Report are here available. This year, thanks to a generous donor, we have produced an attractive booklet - please do take one if it hasn't already arrived through your front door!

Thank you.

Reverend Alison Shaw.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8pm thanking everyone for attending.

Attached: Stoke Fleming Primary School Full Report (in PDF)
Stoke Fleming Parish Council Statement of Accounts