



Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH** meeting of Staverton Parish Council held on Monday 13 May 2024 at 6.30 pm at Staverton Village Hall.

CHAIR Nick Woodall READ OUT THE EMERGENCY FIRE DRILL

The meeting started at 6.30 pm.

63. PRESENT: Chair Nick Woodall, Vice Chair Jeff Gibson, Cllr Richard Blueitt, Cllr Claire Braham, Cllr Kevin Lamb, Cllr Amy Meigh, Cllr Ray Symonds (arrived at 6.55 pm) and Parish Clerk June Jones

Attending: Wiltshire Cllr Trevor Carbin, Dr Celia Bennett, Hilperton Conservation working group: Nestlings Pre School, Belinda Bates, Heather Derrick, and Laura Reeves: Emmaus School: James Burgess, and Arjan de Voogd: Residents: Val Chambers, and Andy Borresen

64. APOLOGIES: Cllr Mark Frati

A request was made to bring the next item forward due to other commitments for attendees later on that evening. This was unanimously agreed.

65. Emmaus School Planning application: Belinda Bates from Nestlings Preschool was concerned regarding the group response received to many emails sent to the parish council from parents of Nestlings school children concerning the recent planning application for the extension to Emmaus School. As the emails were very similar and received from parents just a day before the deadline from Wiltshire Council to respond, an email response was swiftly sent out as a group response rather than individually to parents which was a minor breach of the Data Protection Act. This was immediately dealt with by Data Protection Lead Cllr Kevin Lamb who contacted the ICO and was advised that as this was a minor breach it did not need reporting but gave advice on how it should be recorded and treated. All people involved were written to individually with apologies and the breach was fully investigated and reported upon. Chair Nick Woodall apologized on behalf of the Parish Council and said it would not happen again. Ms Bates also asked why the comment on the Wiltshire Council website received from the Parish Council was sent before the January PC meeting. It was explained that all the Councillors had discussed and agreed by email what the response should be, the parish clerk who was unwell at the time and unsure if the January meeting would go ahead, sent the response off earlier than the meeting to make sure it was logged before the deadline. All procedures were followed correctly at the time. Ms Bates also took offense at the tone of the response of one email. Chair Nick Woodall apologized if she felt this way but absolutely no offense had been intended and explained that having received so many emails at the last minute had caused a rushed response which should have been more considered and a lesson had been learned for the future. Nestlings Preschool and Emmaus School representatives then had a frank discussion on outstanding planning issues and it was agreed that they meet up to iron out these issues going forward. It was agreed that the consultation for the application had not been handled well by Wiltshire Council and everyone was satisfied that it was going back for further consultation.

66. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Monday 15th May 2023. This was held to be a true record.

67. CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT – Cllr Nick Woodall

It has been a year of change and learning for the Parish Council. We lost our faithful editor Natasha of the newsletter but gained a new one, in Simon, who is taking it to new heights.

Councillors have had some challenging planning applications which have been difficult to understand and contentious but hopefully the council has learnt the lessons to deal with these better going forward.

The council is also trying to find ways to improve the village hall to make it more attractive to hire, this includes possibly installing Wi-Fi.

We have had to contend with major road works for several months which is currently in the final stages with a month of resurfacing. Local cars owners will be thankful.

Some Councillors have come and gone, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillors for all their hard work and time, above all I would like to thank June, our Clerk, without her, this would all be impossible.

68. CLERK'S ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT – June Jones

Staverton has had a very disruptive year with flooding and road closure due to the replacement of water mains. However we hope the end will come soon with the resurfacing of the road in May and give the residents some respite.

In 2023 the Parish Council welcomed Councillor Kim Mouny and Councillor Amy Meigh onto the Parish Council. Councillor Mouny did an excellent job of taking over the bookings for the village hall but we are sad that he has now resigned due to personal commitments. However, we are pleased to report that there has been an increase in small groups hiring the hall since the previous financial year.

VILLAGE HALL: Income was £4,193 and overheads were £4,637 leaving a short fall of £444.

SPORTS GROUND: Income from football hire was £4,401. Parish Council contribution towards grounds maintenance was £3,800. Primary School contribution towards the maintenance was £2,636. Cost of grounds maintenance by IDVERDE for the year was £4,850 plus other costs of £932. The 3-year contract with IDVERDE is up for renewal July 25..

PRECEPT 2024/25: To cover additional electoral costs of £2,000 the Parish Council raised the Precept to £29,082, an annual increase of £2.77 per household. The full tax levy is now £42.39 per household per annum.

AUDIT AND YEAR END ACCOUNTS REPORT 2023/24: The Internal Auditor stated *“he was pleased to conclude that the Clerk and Council have continued to maintain satisfactory and effective internal control arrangements. We again thank the Clerk for the continued high standard of documentation provided and request that this report is presented to Council for consideration”*.

ACCOUNTS 2023/24: The operating income for 2023/24 was **£41,300.32** and the running costs were **£52,518.78** (including £15,000 which was reinvested with Cambridge and Counties Bank). The movement in funds was £11,104. The bank account reserves at the end of 2023/24 were **£26,252.22**. A total of £65,000 has been invested with Cambridge and Counties. The Fixed Rate Bonds and the interest is ringfenced for the maintenance of the sports ground.

RESERVES 2023/24: At year end 31st March 2024 the Precept account stood at £9040, the Maintenance Fund for the Sports Ground was ££9762, the Gratuity Fund was £7,425 and the petty cash was £24. We are pleased to announce that the general reserves are beginning to recover after expensive capital investment in new doors and floor covering at the Village hall in 2022.

INTERNAL AUDIT 2022/23:

The Internal Auditor was satisfied that there were no significant issues identified and has signed off the accounts.

NEWSLETTER: We are pleased to report that the newsletter is going from strength to strength with the new Editor, Simon Withers. The newsletter costs for 2023/24 were £1,463. A big thank you to all the volunteers who deliver the newsletter and everyone else who contribute to the articles and amazing photos in the magazine.

THE EQUINOX SCOUTS FETE held on 10th June 23 was a great success and raised £1,500 for the Scouts. Although they will be holding this year's fete back at their home ground of Hilperton, we hope to welcome them back to Staverton soon.

69. HILPERTON ACTION GROUP – Dr Celia Bennett

She said that there was a need to watch out for future small development opportunities being pushed through. There has been dialogue between the flood group and the drainage team in New Road and Marsh Road to prevent future flooding. The Drainage Team have asked for people to keep notifying them of issues arising. No decision has been reached yet about the Maxcroft application, but it is hoped that this will be refused.

70. WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR ANNUAL REPORT – Cllr Trevor Carbin

The main thing over the past year as far as Staverton is concerned has been the road works on the B3105. The Wessex Water works last year went as well as could be expected. The current works have generated complaints about the noise at night. I've passed these on to Highways and suggested more consideration should be given to residents when night works are being done in residential areas.

Changes to planning rules mean the council no longer needs to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, at least for the next two years, so has regained control of planning. Speculative developments on unsuitable sites should therefore cease. The plan review process continues.

Despite a 5% Council Tax increase – effectively set by central government – budgets remain tight at WC. The council is working with the government to reduce the deficit in the Special Educational Needs budget. The increase in that and in adult social care costs has the potential to cause severe budgetary problems in a year or two's time.

Other items.

Emmaus.

The first set of plans put part of the building on land leased to the pre-school. That's been corrected, but WC planners made a mistake with the revised plans, announcing a consultation but not putting the new plans on the website. Consultation has now closed, and the application has been called in due to continued concerns from the pre-school and some residents.

The Old Vicarage.

Negotiations between the applicants and the planners continue. There may be further revised plans and another consultation period to come.

Flood Gates.

There were problems over the winter with the gates not being closed at the right time and vehicles getting stuck. WC highways have declined to attend the next Area Board meeting as requested and have blamed local farmers for leaving the gates open. They've also said they're not able to close gates if there's a flood at the weekend unless the duty engineer, who covers the whole county, happens to be available.

71. POLICE MATTERS

The Staverton Convenience Store was recently broken into and the police were notified and attended. Some goods have been stolen.

72. COUNCILLORS' AND RESIDENTS' FORUM

Cereal Partners – Poor maintenance of fence: Resident Val Chambers pointed out that Cereal Partners had not repainted the fence for many years and it needs attention. Chair Nick Woodall said he would contact them regarding this.

73. THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.30 PM.