

Minutes of the meeting of Stawell Parish Council held on Monday 5th July 2021 in the village hall at 7.00 pm.

Present: - Cllrs. Penny Badcock, Rod Conaway, Hugh Gange-Harris, Brian Lishman (Chairman) and Linda Osborne.

Also present: - Cllr. David Huxtable (SCC) and Stuart Kingham (SDC).

In attendance: - The Clerk (Chris Fry) and ten members of the public.

1455 Apologies: - Cllr. Simon Thomas.

In his absence Simon Thomas (Chairman Stawell village hall) sent an email in which he says the hall committee are looking forward to getting back to normal activities in the hall following the expected easing of Covid – 19 restrictions on 19th July 2021.

1456 Declarations of Interest: - Cllr. Stuart Kingham in respect of planning matters.

1457 Minutes of the previous meeting of 7th June 2021 were taken as read, agreed and signed.

1458 Matters arising from the minutes: -

a. “Sleeping policeman” confusion in Sutton Mallet.

The Chairman reported that there appears to be some confusion between SDC planners and SCC Highways as to who is responsible for the upkeep of the road where the bund had been removed. David Huxtable (SCC) said he would take matters forward.

1459 County/District Councillors’ reports.

County: - David Huxtable reported as follows: -

a. SCC meetings at County Hall.

These have now restarted. The largest meeting room in county hall was only just big enough to accommodate a recent cabinet meeting, with social distancing measures and windows open. He said that the possibility of hybrid or part hybrid meetings at Parish Council level were being considered.

b. Highway surface water in Sutton Mallet.

See item 1458 (a) above.

c. David's monthly report - this has been received.

District: - Stuart Kingham reported as follows: -

a. SDC staff.

The vast majority of SDC staff continue to work from home with a skeleton staff at Bridgwater House.

b. New Chief Executive.

There has been a new Chief Executive appointed during lockdown – Bob Brown.

c. **Northgate development.**

The former "Sedgemoor Splash" site is currently boarded up, with work on a new cinema (to be operated by Scotts Cinemas) being developed, along with a new bowling alley and hospitality venues. The area is now known as "The Yard".

- d. Bridgwater has been allocated £22 million from central government for regeneration purposes as we emerge from lockdown. The estimated cost of the continuing Northgate development is approximately £22 million.

1460 Financial matters.

- a. Three cheques to issue:

No 492 £346.54 payee CN Fry (July/August net salary).

No 293 £113.54 " " (expenses).

No 494 £130.00 " HMRC (paye Apr/May/June).

At 7.21 pm the Chairman suspended the meeting and opened up public participation.

- a. **Ford Lane "hoarding" problems.**

Residents living both sides of a house in Ford Lane reported their neighbour has a lot of stuff hoarded in his gardens and three garages. They are concerned at the potential fire risk as well as the fact that rats are attracted to the property.

Stuart Kingham has agreed to raise the matter with SDC planning enforcers.

- b. **"Coffin" footpath in Ford Lane.**

A parishioner expressed her gratitude for the recent clearing of this by the trained village brush cutter.

- c. **Planning application 46/21/00003 – erection of a building off Sedgemoor Hill Drove in Sutton Mallet.**

Several residents of Sutton Mallet were present at the meeting and they expressed their various objections to the above proposal. This is covered in item 1461 (a) below.

At 7.38 pm the Chairman re convened the meeting.

1461 Planning: -

- a. **Application number: - 46/21/00003.**

Applicant: - Mrs P Hill.

Location: - Os field No 4254, Sedgemoor Hill Drove, Sutton Mallet, Bridgwater.

Proposal: - Erection of an agricultural building.

The Chairman outlined the proposal, which is to erect a building in a field high up behind Godfrey's Farm in Sutton Mallet. Brian said there was a great deal of opposition to this around the parish, expressed both verbally and in writing.

The proposed site is an elevated one part way down Sedgemoor Hill Road. Most of the slope of the drove is below Godfrey's Farm. Complaints include the fact that the building will protrude above the Ridge, the feeling that the eventual use will be non-agricultural,

access to the proposed site would be onto Sedgemoor Hill Drove, an ancient drove which is unsuitable for heavy traffic. Additionally it is felt that water run-off from the site could only exacerbate the on-going problem of serious localised flooding problem down in the village itself.

The applicant's partner operates a small haulage / ground work business, so it was felt any approval should restrict activity to solely agricultural. There appears to be insufficient justification for such a large building on this cultivated land. There is a general suspicion that the proposal could be a means of establishing a business on the site.

The applicant, who was present at the meeting, pointed out that there would be water storage facilities build in with the water being used for the livestock. There was some debate about which ditches would take the water run-off.

Cllr. Rod Conaway said it appeared a sensible idea for the parties here to have a discussion to thrash out some kind of acceptable compromise.

In conclusion the Chairman pointed out that the Parish Council has a duty to reflect the views of the residents of Sutton Mallet to the proposal, although he acknowledged it had some merits.

A vote was called and resulted in: -

Against: 3 Abstentions: 2.

The following comments were submitted to the SDC planners: -

"The Parish Council of Stawell objects to the planning application number 46/21/00003 following a number of complaints from many parishioners living in the village of Sutton Mallet (part of the parish of Stawell).

These we summarise as follows: -

1. The position of the proposed building, near to the sky line of the Ridge will further compromise the setting of the village on entering it from the west, (the newly built farm house at Spring Lane Farm has already had an impact that was not foreseen from plane before it was built), and also from some houses in the village.
2. An increase in run-off down Sedgemoor Hill Drove would exacerbate existing regular localised flooding problems experienced on the outskirts of the village, as this water comes right down into the village in periods of heavy rainfall.
3. There appears to be no apparent need for such a barn in the current circumstances and no agricultural justification is outlines in the application. The area of land currently owned by the applicant is in arable cultivation and operations are carried out by a third party so no machinery storage is required.
4. There is a fear of non-agricultural use, as reported non-agricultural use of equipment for haulage, ground work and demolition and site work un-connected to agriculture and linked to applicants and based currently at Spring Hill Farm.
5. Access is via a non-adopted part of Sedgemoor Hill Drove (the adopted road ends at the entrance to Spring Hill Farm). Ownership of this drove is unclear and maintenance is by tradition by consensus of all landowners/ tenants of land accessed by this, the only route down onto this part of the moor (very many land parcels).

Access to a farm standing would alter the nature of this drove and permission for such would cause many problems that could be difficult to resolve in the future. The plans submitted with the application show the drove as part of the development. The applicants have no ownership of this drove and it should not have been edged in red as part of the application.

We trust that you will take these comments into consideration in deciding on this application”.

b. Parishioners’ comments on: -

Application number: 45/21/00005.

Applicant: Mr P Moate.

Location: Ballwood View Farm, Moor Road, Sutton Mallet Bridgwater.

Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of an agricultural building.

The Chairman outlined the position here, saying that although not an active proposal at the moment (detailed plans are required to be submitted in due course), the Chairman said there were many objections throughout Sutton Mallet to the proposal.

The Clerk was asked to read out a letter from a parishioner who is particularly concerned about the increase in traffic to the small village which would result from this proposal. The property changed ownership on 1st July 2021 and the new owners have been telling local people that there are plans to convert the small farm to commercial livery stables, including stabling for multiple horses, a training ring etc. etc.- which would be let to numerous horse owners. Rumour has it that development is due to start soon and that materials are already on site. Other large scale buildings to facilitate a wedding/event venue for up to 150 people, he understands is also planned.

The letter states that SDC have confirmed that no application for change of use has been submitted (needed for equestrian use), and the parish council is asked if any planning enquiry or change of use proposal has been raised with any parish councillors.

Brian Lishman said he would reply to the letter.

1462. Correspondence.

a. Somerset Waste Partnership.

A letter has been received which says the recent problems in the collection of re cycling and rubbish has been due to a shortage of HGV drivers. They apologise and say they are striving to correct the problems.

b. Stronger Somerset.

The Clerk reported that the District council leaders of the county have written to Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State, urging him to take account of the big majority of Somerset residents who voted heavily for their version of unitary authority in the county in his decision on the matter, which is expected next week.

1463. Matters of report and items for next meeting – None.

1464. Any other business and date of next meeting.

Any other business.

a. HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee Beacons 2022.

The Clerk read a letter from the Somerset Association of Local Councils encouraging communities to make what will probably be the last such chain of beacons as successful as possible. Details of assistance available is given in the letter and a copy has been passed to the village hall Chairman.

b. Somerset Waste Partnership – “Out by 6 am please”.

Parishioners are asked to put their recycling and rubbish out by 6 am in future.

c. TV Licencing for the over 75s.

Parishioners are reminded that anyone in receipt of pension credit qualifies for a free TV licence. Everyone is reminded to make arrangements as by 31st July, the extended transition period will come to an end.

d. Unmade road leading to the Drove in Sutton Mallet.

The Clerk read a letter from a parishioner asking if there has been any progress in the ownership/responsibility of maintaining this road, bearing in mind the new barn proposal, and advising that the local community the severe drainage problems of last year.

See item 1458 (a) above.

e. Field encampment enquiry.

The Chairman reported that a group of a dozen or so people had been making enquiries about occupying the field for, residential purposes, between Stawell and Chedzoy where there was a speed way track a couple of years ago. Although this has come to nothing, he said that Sedgemoor DC has been contacted and procedures will be followed to prevent this being established.

Date of next regular meeting – Monday 6th September 2021 in the village hall.

A special planning meeting will be held on Monday 19th July in the village hall at 7.00 pm.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.31 pm

