

**Minutes of Annual Meeting
of Severn Stoke & Croome d’Abitot Parish Council
and also, the bi-monthly meeting
of Severn Stoke & Croome d’Abitot Parish Council
Wednesday 25th May 2022 at 7.30pm**

Present: S.Watkins, Cllr Preston, Cllr Freeman, Cllr Garrard, Cllr Halling, Cllr Seward, Cllr Sturgess.

In Attendance: Mrs L Stevens (Clerk and RFO).
District Cllr David Harrison, District Cllr John Michael.
Michelle Fullard (National Trust). No members of public.

Apologies: Parish Cllrs Cox, Faulkner, Williams. County Cllr Martin Allen.

**Annual Meeting of Severn Stoke and Croome d’Abitot
Parish Council – 7.30pm**

1a Welcome and notices

The Clerk confirmed receipt of the resignation of Cllr and Chair Stephen Watkins. Motion for S.Watkins to chair the AGM until nominations for new Chair are complete. Prp: PS. Scnd: LF. The Clerk had previously confirmed with CALC that this is permitted. Cllr Sturgess also confirmed his intention to stand down as parish councillor after this meeting. Cllr Sturgess was thanked by all Cllrs for his care and dedication to the parish. S. Watkins noted his congratulations to DCllr John Michael as the new Chair of Malvern Hills District Council – this was seconded by all present.

Election of Parish Council Chair 2022/23

i. Nominations and vote. Cllr Freeman nominated by Cllr Seward. Scnd: PP. Vote unanimous and carried.

ii. Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Paperwork duly signed.

iii. Any immediate relevant declarations of interest, which can be supplemented in due course. It was noted that Cllr Freeman has recently resigned from Friends of St Denys and is a volunteer (non-voting, non-financial) with the National Trust. Croome working parties (pre-covid) in which he participated in a voting capacity, are not currently in operation. Also noted, the recent parish council discussions regarding HGVs using Birch Lane. No Cllr considered these to be significant declarations requiring additional attention.

b Election of Deputy Chair 2022/23

i. Nominations and vote. Cllr Seward nominated by Cllr Freeman. Scnd: PP. Vote unanimous and carried.

ii. Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Paperwork duly signed.

iii. Any immediate relevant declarations of interest. It was noted that Cllr Seward is a resident of Severn Stoke and lives in proximity to Croome Estate land and the Parish Hall. Also noted, the planning application at the Old School House which overlooks his property.

Presentation to Stephen Watkins.

c Parish Cllrs, Clerk and District Councillors presented Stephen with a gift of appreciation. Cllrs noted the extraordinary service given by Stephen to his parish. A summary statement of thanks and farewell to be placed in the parish magazine – here attached as Appendix 1. County Cllr Martin Allen had previously sent his thanks to Stephen.

2 Points of order. Declarations of interest. Apologies and to approve reasons for absence.

No additional declarations. All Cllrs considered and re-approved all pre-existing declaration of interests for up to April 2023. Duly **approved**. Prp: RH. Scnd: RG. Absence noted above.

3a To note two vacancies available for immediate co-option (upon resignation of T. Breslin, March 2021 (Croome Ward) and E. Hadley, March 2022 (Severn Stoke Ward)). Duly noted. Clerk **instructed** to advertise in the next parish magazine as a unique opportunity for ‘give it a try’, on the understanding that the next scheduled (national and local) elections will be in May 2023, at which time all parish council positions (whether filled or not) will be up for public vote.

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b **To note one vacancy (Severn Stoke Ward) (upon resignation and retirement of Stephen Watkins, May 2022) which will be advertised shortly for election.** Duly noted with ref. to Cllr Sturgess' intention to stand down, bringing the number of vacancies to four.

4 **Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council held on Wednesday 5th May 2021.** Duly approved. Prp: GS. Scnd: RH.

5 **To review standard meeting invitation (N.b., standard text that always appears on each agenda, as above) and to approve until further notice.** Duly approved. Prp: RH. Scnd: RG.

6 **To approve until further notice the wording of agenda item 'Public Open Forum', as appearing on the agenda.** Duly approved. Prp: PP. Scnd: RH.

7 **To recommit to all NOLAN principles (principles governing Member conduct).** The Clerk gave a brief summary. Duly considered and approved. Prp: PP. Scnd: GS.

8 **Parish Council Policies (standing orders, financial regs, code of conduct and risk assessments). To re-adopt all parish council policies with a commitment to review all by end Oct 2022.** Cllrs noted the new Code of Conduct published by the LGA. The Clerk was instructed to merge the new code with the existing and present to Cllrs at the meeting in September. Clerk to send round list of documents and Cllrs to select which ones they would be willing to review by end of September.

9 **Committees and Committee Representatives, as reviewed at this meeting.**

- a
- Finance Committee – 3 reps. LF, SF & GS.
 - Finance supervision (unlimited) NC, LF, SF, PP & GS.
 - Planning Advisory Committee – All Cllrs. All Cllrs as per decision May 2021.
 - Staffing Committee – 4 reps NC, LF, SF & GS.
 - Tarmac Liaison Committee – 2 reps. PP & GS.
 - Croome Liaison – 2 reps (+ 1 reserve). LF, RG (& RW).
 - Parish Hall Rep – 2 reps. RH & GS.
 - Community Facilities Working Party (5) LF, SF, RH, GS & RW.
 - CALC Rep – 1 rep. LF.
 - Com. Speed Watch Rep – 1 rep. NC.
 - KLINKS rep – 1 rep. NC.
 - Milestone repair working party LF.
 - VAS caretakers – unlimited. RG, LF & GS

Clerk to advise Tarmac of additional new reps.

b **Creation of working party to look at the issue of paying contractor mileage.**
Allocated to staffing committee.

c **Creation of High Green phone box working party.** Clerk instructed to move to July agenda as Cllrs had not had sufficient time to consider. Concerns as to ownership of land under the phone box. Clerk to write to BT and ask for confirmation of state of electrics.

d **Creation of High Green noticeboard working party.** Cllrs Halling and Garrard to arrange. Clerk to organise new cork board, measure dimensions and apply for divisional grant from DCllrs Harrison and Michael.

e **Creation of Flood Emergency Plan Working Party. Approved.** Prps: GS. Scnd: PP. LF and Clerk to investigate further, contact Jem Teal (MHDC) and CIC. Cllrs had concerns regarding level of dependency placed on parish cllrs and clerk and these must be addressed before approval of the plan.

No other business and annual meeting closed.

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**Monthly Meeting of Severn Stoke and Croome d’Abitot
Parish Council – 8pm**

- 1** **No public open forum.** No public present other than S.Watkins who had no comments to make.
Attendance, Declarations and points of order.
Attendance as previously listed in Annual Meeting on same evening.
- 2** **Minutes** – to consider the approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2022. Duly **approved**. Prp: PP. Scnd: RH
- 3** **Councillors’ Reports**
- a. **Cllr Allen.** Cllr Freeman to ask Rose & Crown if they would be eligible to apply for a portion of the County Council £4k flood fund. It was also noted that funding for the Astons Upton to Tewkesbury bus service runs out end of August. Currently only on average 9 customers for this service a week. Cllr LF
- b. **DCllr Harrison / DCllr Michael. To note and congratulations to DCllr Michael for Chairman of Malvern Hills District Council.** The Clerk asked for the road sweeper to be booked for along the A38. It was noted that the SWDP has been delayed. DCllr Michael to forward to Clerk the minutes of the Town and Parish Conference which discussed transport options and local car sharing schemes. Clerk DCllr
- 4** **Planning**
- a **General enforcement update. Severn Stoke and Kinnersley.** Nothing to note.
- b **D493 Notification of a Public Path Diversion Order - Footpath SS-500(part), formerly Footpath 1, in the parish of Severn Stoke, Worcestershire. To consider and formulate a response.** Cllrs noted a section of the Severn Way missing from the official route and which is subject to ongoing negotiations with land owners. Motion for Parish Council to support this order and request that the creation of the missing section of footpath be brought forward in order to complete the Severn Way (the current detour is excessive). Prp: GS. Scnd RG. Carried. Clerk
- 5** **Speed, parking & traffic concerns** *Discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice*
- a **Croome London Arch corner incl. newly painted yellow lines.** The Clerk was instructed to ask Highways for ‘no parking signs’ similar to those present at the Ketch roundabout. Clerk
- b **Vehicles Activated Speed Signs (VAS)**
- i. **High Green.** 24,224 vehicles traveling east to west with max speed of 50 miles at 9pm one evening.
- ii. **Severn Stoke/Clifton.** The VAS continues to be moved between the two villages regularly in order to keep motorists on their toes. Lengthsman unable to assist with moving as he already has care of the VAS in Kempsey. Highways had previously confirmed that the assessment of speed limits and signage (along the whole of the A38 from M50 to Ketch) will progress once the new roundabout at Upton has been completed. Cllrs **agreed** that no new signage or speed projects were appropriate until that review had been completed. White gates for Severn Stoke village could be considered after that. The Clerk had successfully applied for new zebra bollards on the sharp corner at Severn Bank as the current ones are either broken or missing.

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con S.Watkins had previously noted that lorries delivering material for flood bund construction can only enter the field opp. the telephone exchange by travelling south and turning right into the field (the splay entrance to the field does not allow sufficient turning space when travelling north and turning left). NB additional signage will be required to remind lorry drivers and to warn other vehicles of plant crossing. Cllrs **instructed** the Clerk to re-report this to the EA and to Highways for inclusion in their assessment of A38 speed and obstructions. Clerk
- c **Community speed watch update.** Clerk still awaiting completion of outstanding forms from volunteers and dates for training from operator. Clerk
- d **'Unsuitable for HGVs' signs for Birch Lane and Birch Green Lane.** Highways have approved this request from the parish council. Installation due shortly.
- e **Deer warning signs and distance plates between Kinnersley and Kerswell Green.** Highways have approved this request from the parish council. Installation due shortly.
- f **HGVs using Defford Mill site.** Clerk has obtained list of businesses and existing HGV permissions and will continue to monitor for any new applications for access to the site. Clerk
- 6
a **Highways, footpaths & community infrastructure**
To note completion of siding out of footpath long A38, conducted by WCC.
Cllrs expressed thanks to the County Cllr for pushing so consistently for this work. The parish clerk had received thanks on behalf of residents of Severn Stoke that wished to walk to visit relatives in Clifton and could now do so without having to step on the A38.
- b **To consider and to sign BT contract for adoption of High Green phone box for £1.00.** Add to July agenda. Already covered in Annual Parish Council meeting. Clerk
- 7
Group/Committee updates
- a **Parish Hall /Parish Hall Committee update.**
i. Hall repairs/rebuild update.
Parish Cllrs meet with the Committee on 9th May to hear Committee perspective. CALC have provided a check list of criteria for public loans. At present, without defined plans and quotation, the process of applying for a loan cannot begin.
ii. Ref Parish Council Lease. To consider quotation SME Solicitors.
Parish Cllrs were reluctant to approve expenditure without first seeking advice from Community First (R. Timney). Clerk to speak to hall committee and invite to future meeting if appropriate. Clerk
iii. Contract for mowing update and to accept quotation of £34.00 per cut from Mr S.Bott. (Previous year was £30) Prp: RG. Scnd: RH. Duly approved. Clerk
- b **Severn Stoke Flood Action Group. Including update on Severn Stoke Flood Evacuation Plan virtual meeting 20/05/22.**
Add to July agenda. Already covered in Annual Parish Council meeting. Clerk
- c **Croome Liaison Group**
i. To adopt the minutes of the Croome Liaison Group meeting 31st March. Prps: RG. Scnd: LF. Duly adopted.

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- ii. To consider and vote upon resident request that minutes of the group be published on the PC website.** The Clerk confirmed that CALC had advised that parish council working party minutes should be made public and published on parish council websites. Cllrs considered that they did not have proper authority to approve this resident request, as this group is not a parish council working party and the parish council do not chair or fund the group. The Clerk attends to take minutes as a courtesy only and is not paid for the role. Reference to DCllr Harrison and to the group constitution resulted in a preliminary decision that since permission is required from the whole group to contact or invite the press, similar permission would be required to authorise publication of minutes on a website or provide the minutes to members of the public. Cllrs considered the matter should be referred back to the liaison group, with the constitution clarified and amended as appropriate. Prps: LF. Scnd: RG. Unanimous Carried. Members
- d
- Tarmac Liaison Group.**
Cllrs noted an update regarding the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan. In mid June (13th possibly) the Estate are visiting the quarry and all tenants. It was noted that permission remains outstanding for Tarmac to move the oil pipeline as part of planned excavations within Phase C.
- e
- St Denys' update.**
The Church Warden had approached the parish council with regards to the possibility of a donation towards church roof repairs. The Clerk confirmed that as this building is privately owned, a donation by the parish council is not permitted legally. NB the parish council has no Power to provide public funds in this way. The parish council continues to support the church by paying for occasional room hire for parish council meetings in the absence of a parish hall.
- f
- Police / PCSO.**
It was noted that PCSO F.Allen- Carter has left. The Safer Neighbourhood Team continues to cover Kempsey, Alfrick and surrounding villages based from Malvern Police Station. PC Dee Stanley (Police, Police Community Support Officer, Kempsey & Alfrick SNT) remains in post, as does PC Jon Hand.
- g
- Lengthsman.**
i. Cllrs noted the return of the signed WCC/PC Lengthsman contract.
ii. Request for parish council to consider paying costs for mower repair. New belt and labour £90 (VAT nil) invoice from Mowerfix. 20/04/22. Twin blade toro timemaster mower, damaged at Parish Hall clearing brash and flood debris. Cllrs debated and considered that it was appropriate as a gesture of goodwill to contribute half of the repair costs. NB £45. Prp: PS. Scnd: PP. Unanimous. Clerk
- h
- National Trust. To consider options for assistance in funding a Modular Changing Places Toilet at Croome Court.** (Accessible disabled facilities)
The Clerk had received confirmation from CALC that the appropriate Power to provide public toilets does exist and therefore Cllrs can consider this option. Cllrs asked whether the site would always remain fully accessible at all times as this would be their requirement. It was confirmed that at present the site is open and fully accessible without paying entrance fees but it could not be confirmed whether this would always remain so. Cllrs **agreed** to wait until NT got the relevant planning permissions before considering further, as many details were not known. Prps: PP. Scnd: LF. **Approved**

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- 8 General Finance and Administration**
- a. The Clerk presented a chart summarising annual expenditure and also the bank reconciliation. **To consider/motion to approve payment of accounts made in the previous month** Appendix 2a. Prps: GS. Scnd: PP. Carried.
- b. **To consider/motion to approve payment of outstanding accounts May 2022.** Appendix 2b. Prps: RH. Scnd: GS. Carried.
- c. **To inspect and accept the BHIB parish council annual insurance package.** £474.01. Automatically renews 1st June 2022 as part of three year 'package'. (£428.11 in 2021/22). Upon acceptance of insurance the PC will need to validate the insurance pack for the year by providing the councils Employer Reference Number (ERN). Cllrs noted that the parish hall remains uninsured by the hall committee. The Clerk had already sought advice from BHIB reference this fact and Clerk BHIB had confirmed that they would not be willing to provide insurance cover since the hall is not owned by the parish council and is instead considered to be owned by the hall committee. Leasing the land does not in the advice of BHIB require the parish council to be responsible for the building on that land. Cllrs asked the Clerk to reiterate concerned to BHIB and to **agreed** to accept the insurance subject to this. Prps: GS. Scnd PP.
- 9 Annual Return (AGAR) for the financial year 2021-2022 Part 1**
To consider and motion to approve procedures and paperwork related to internal audit and governance.
- a. Motion to approve **certificate of exemption**. (By which the parish council certifies itself exempt from a limited assurance review). Prp: RG. Scnd: RH
- b. **Internal audit**. To receive and consider the conclusions of the internal audit. Clerk
- c. Based on item b above, to **consider and Motion to approve Section 1 of the AGAR - the Annual Governance Statement**. Members to consider and review effectiveness of internal procedures/audit conducted across entire year. Prp: RG. Scnd: RH. All duly **approved** unanimously.
- 10 Annual Return (AGAR) for the financial year 2021-2022 Part 2**
To consider/motion to approve procedures/paperwork related to the Accounting Statements.
- a. **To consider Section 2 of the AGAR - Accounting Statements**. The Clerk to confirm that as required under legislation, she, as RFO has already signed the Accounting Statements prior to presenting them to Members at this meeting. Prps: PP. Scnd: RG. Unanimous approval.
- b. **Motion to approve Section 2 of the AGAR – Accounting Statements**. Prps: PP. Clerk
- c. Scnd. RG Unanimous approval.
- d. **Approval and signature of the Declaration that the statement of accounts is unaudited (externally)**. Duly **approved**.
- Approval and signature of the Notice of Commencement** of the period for the exercise of public rights. Commences Monday 13 June – Friday 22 July 2022. Duly **approved**.
- 11 Correspondence, dates for diary, items for future agenda - Nil**

Next Parish Council meeting (Parish Council AGM)– Wednesday 20th July 2022, 7.30pm at St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke village.

Signed ChairmanDate

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Appendix 1.

This month Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council has sadly bid farewell to Parish Councillor and Chair Stephen Watkins, who is standing down after more than 30 years of exceptional service. Born and bred in the parish, Stephen has represented residents in a dedicated, passionate and meticulous manner and the Parish Council would like to express its grateful appreciation. Stephen has been instrumental in helping to raise the profile of the parish and in making sure that a local perspective and local voices are properly considered in all things. Stephen will remain active in the parish in advisory roles concerning the flood bund and the parish hall – put simply, we cannot let his knowledge go to waste. Please join Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk in wishing Stephen all the best.

Congratulations to Councillor Larry Freeman who was duly elected as the new Chair of the Parish Council at the annual meeting in May, with Councillor Graham Seward as his deputy.



The parish council will also be bidding a very reluctant farewell to Parish Councillor Paul Sturgess who will be stepping down after moving away from the parish. Paul has been steadfast in his concerns about traffic and speeding and his determination helped secure new speed sign equipment for the parish - shared with his erstwhile community at Clifton. Parish Councillors and the Clerk wish Paul all the best in his new home.

As a result, after also saying farewell to Eileen Hadley earlier this spring and, with a previous existing vacancy, the parish council has 4 vacancies at present, two of which are available for immediate co-option. (Co-option is the process where volunteers are made a member of the parish council through the choice of the present members usually via an interview). Nationwide elections are scheduled in spring 2023, including for Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot parish. **As a result, we are presented with a unique opportunity for new parish councillor/s to come forward to be co-opted onto the parish council and to try out the role for a few months. These volunteers would then have the option to consider whether or not to stand for formal election in May next year. Why not give it a go!**

Situation and timetable at date of publication of this notice:

- 2 vacancies (E.Hadley and additional previous vacancy) available for co-option immediately. Interested parties should approach the parish clerk for a chat and a one-page application form. Eligibility criteria apply (incl. age, address/place of work).
- 2 vacancies (S.Watkins and P.Sturgess) will be advertised on parish noticeboards shortly, asking electors if they would like to fill these positions by holding a public election. If by the deadline of 25 days, fewer than 10 such come forward, these two positions will also be filled via co-option.

Please contact the parish clerk if you would like to discuss the above. **Lisa Stevens, 9 The Limes, Kempsey, WR5 3LG, 07950256363.** A number of leaflets are available if residents would like to know more about the role of parish councillor.

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Appendix 2a Items already paid April/May 2022 since last PC meeting:

(Approved under previous agenda or required payment under contract monthly)

08/04/2022	Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman invoice March 22	£272.00	VAT nil
28/04/2022	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage March 2022	£294.16	VAT nil
30/04/2022	Worcestershire CALC	Annual Sub. Invoice: 8795. Invoice may be subject to change as notified by CALC and a reimbursement may be made to the PC	£430.20	VAT £65.21
30/04/2022	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Expenses April 2022	£29.71	VAT nil
12/05/2022	Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman Invoice April 22	£272.00	VAT nil
12/05/2022	Npower (took over from EON Jan 2022)	Electricity bill for street lighting Stonnall Close. Invoice: IN03167826	£42.84	VAT £2.04

Appendix 2b. Item for payment May/June 2022:

Mr Simon Bott	Parish Hall Mowing April 2022. Invoice: SB0363	£68.00	VAT nil
BHIB (Aviva)	Annual Parish Council Insurance package (reduced premium due to three year contract)	£474.01	VAT nil
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Reimbursement printer ink cartridges. StinkyInk. Shared invoice with Grimley. £42.91 / 2 = £21.45. Invoice: ST004636075	£21.45	VAT £3.57
National Trust	SOQ Room Hire invoice dated 28.03.2022. TO BE PAID VIA CHEQUE as they have no BACS facilities. 26th January 2022 9th February 2022 23rd March 2022 31st March 2022	£120.00	VAT nil
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Expenses May 2022. Stationery.	£7.52	VAT nil
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage April 2022	£294.16	VAT nil
MHDC Garden waste services	Direct Debit to be taken 1st June 2022. Two green waste bins for Parish Hall. Garden Waste Collection Service Renewal 2022/2023 - 0503264	£140.00	VAT nil

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COMMUNITY BUS SERVICE - CB2



New Service

between **Upton-upon-Severn and Tewkesbury**

Every Wednesday

leaving Tunnel Hill at 1000
via The Graftons, Upton High Street, Ryall, Earls Croome,
Severn Stoke, Baughton, Naunton, Uckinghall & Ripple

All journeys must be pre-booked.

For more information, please call Community Action on
01684 892381
(9.00 – 3.30 (Mon-Thurs) and 9.00 – 12.30 Friday)

This is a 'Ring and Book' service operated by Community
Action Malvern which is flexible to meet your local transport
needs

Upton-upon-Severn - Ryall - Earls Croome - Baughton		CB2
Nauton - Uckinghall - Ripple - Tewkesbury		
Operated by Community Action Malvern		No service on other days
Wednesdays only		from 26th January 2022
Tunnel Hill, Upton-upon-Severn	1000*	
The Graftons, Upton-upon-Severn	1005*	
High Street, Upton-upon-Severn	1010*	
Ryall (The Beeches)	1015*	
The Yorkshire Grey, Earls Croome	1020*	
Earls Croom Village Hall	1025*	
Baughton village	1030*	
The Blue Bell, Ryall	1035*	
Naunton	1040*	
A38 Naunton turn	1045*	
Uckinghall	1050*	
Ripple	1055*	
A38 Ripple turn	1100*	
Tewkesbury (outside Boots)	1110 (approx)	
THE RETURN JOURNEY WILL LEAVE TEWKESBURY AT 1300		
* The route is flexible and the exact times depend on route and no. of passengers boarding/alighting.		
Note, therefore, that the bus may arrive in Tewkesbury earlier .		
Please ring to book your journey . Pick-up time will be confirmed on booking		
Bookings must be made by 12-30pm the previous day		
FARES: Adults £8.00 return : Concessionary Bus Pass holders £4.00 return		
The booking line is 01684 892381		
It is open Monday to Thursday between 09-00 and 15-30 and on Fridays, 09-00 to 12-30 : There is an answerphone at all other times		