

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Severn Stoke & Croome D'Abitot held at 7.00pm at Severn Stoke Parish Hall on 10 May 2018**

**Present:** Cllr Stephen Watkins (Chairman of the Parish Council) District Cllrs Harrison and Michael, Mrs L Gower (Clerk to the Parish Council), County Councillor Paul Middlebrough, Severn Stoke Parish Hall rep Norman Snowball, National Trust - Michael Smith, David Thompson Parish Hall Committee and 9 members of the public.

**1 Welcome by Severn Stoke & Croome D'Abitot Parish Council, Stephen Watkins.**

Cllr Watkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the various speakers for attending this evening.

**2 Apologies for Absence** CSO Martin Butcher West Mercia Police. Pat Preston. John Henderson.

**3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 May 2017 and Matter Arising from those minutes (if any)** The minutes of this meeting had been circulated to attendees at this meeting. Approval of minutes was proposed by Mrs Keating Nash, seconded by Mr Halling, unanimously agreed.

**4 Report of County Councillor** –County Councillor Paul Middlebrough

County Councillor Paul Middlebrough has been in office for a year now. WCC deal with £324 million pounds in a financial year, two thirds of which are spent on vulnerable adults and children. Highways matters costs approximately £60 million. Children's Services has received an awful Ofsted Report and improvement were being made, some services will be outsourced and tenders are being sort. During the show some 150,000 miles were gritted. The Junction 7 Southern Link works should conclude within the next few weeks. The new bridge will be moved into position at the end of May. The Carrington Bridge works is all approved and will commence next year with the scheme being finished in 2021. The Upton Flood Alleviation works are ongoing, the traffic lights will be removed for key events. There will be some overnight closures needed.

The Envirecover Project at Hartlebury, which is an incineration site is now open and dealing with 200,000 tonnes of rubbish being burnt. The railway Parkway scheme will be going ahead with work starting in the near future.

**5 Report of District Councillors D Harrison & J Michael**

Cllr Harrison updated on various things within the parish. Part of the gable end of the School House had fallen down last July at the Conservation Officer instructed it be made stable. The planning permission on this whole site continues to be active, the Coventry Barn application has been approved, we hope some work will commence on this site shortly before further deterioration occurs.

Flooding in Birch Lane, District Cllrs had surveyed the brook, Land Drainage Officer from MHDC left but a new chap has started, enforcement has taken place and action is being undertaken.

Malvern Hills District Council are merging with Wychavon District Council, which will hopefully improve services by shared officers. The grass/open space area at Stonnall Close is still ongoing regarding the cutting of the grass and ownership of the land, Cllr Harrison is still pursuing this with MHDC. The black/recycling bins scheme seems to be working well at present.

**6 Report from Severn Stoke Parish Hall Committee – David Thompson Chairperson**

David Thompson gave the report but is due to finish as Chairperson at the annual AGM on the 15th May as he has moved away. He reported that unfortunately the hall committee is struggling to find people to replace the eight key members who have either moved away recently or resigned. The committee is down to the bare minimum of 5 helpers and officers.

There have been some upgrades in the hall of new hand dryers and income is currently £4,000 per year, a 15% increase on last year. Hire is still good and currently the funds are ok too. If anyone is interested in the Parish Hall please attend the AGM next Thursday. Thank you for your continued support and David added the village will always remain close to his heart.

**7 Report from St Deny's Church by John Henderson circulated at meeting and read by Parish Clerk**

Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parochial Church Council, on behalf of the community, is responsible for use and upkeep of the church and for all church services, including baptisms, weddings and funerals. The PCC raises funds by collections to pay amongst other items for the essential Parish Share of about £11,000 per annum, which goes towards the cost of retaining a Rector in these parishes and in Kempsey and now Norton with whom we are united for administrative purposes. We are fortunate to have a church service every Sunday in Severn Stoke, with average congregation of 16 people,

(many live outside the parish) who are loyal to St Denys. We need younger newcomers to join the congregation, it is recognised that the church, now over 800 years old may not be viable to remain open for regular services within five to ten years.

Every five years, the PCC is required to commission a repair schedule. The current programme commenced last year and will be completed this year with repairs to the East Window stonework and Tower roof. It will cost over £10,000, but charitable grants of £6,500 will offset this. Repairs following an attempted theft of lead from the flat roof in January will be completed when the weather improves.

**Turning to the work of the Friends of St Denys**, the Friends of St Denys assist the PCC as the fund-raising organisation for maintenance and improvement of the church and churchyard. Revised draft Plans for the proposed Loo Pod to be installed in the church with a modest kitchen area are well advanced and awaiting submission to the Diocesan Authorities for consideration.

We hope that the Parish Council will support the efforts of the PCC and Friends and that when the Precept is reviewed, they will continue to authorise as generously as possible their contribution towards the church clock maintenance and the churchyard mowing, which incidentally costs about £2,500 per annum. Donations in the past have been much appreciated. (£1000 this year and £237.60 church clock service)

We are proud to undertake this care to maintain a beautiful aspect of the village for the benefit of the public at large who visit, whilst honouring also those who are laid to rest there and being mindful of those who wish to be interred there in the future.

Please may we take this opportunity to advertise the next big fund raising event by the Friends of St Denys of another open air theatre production, this time of 'Pride and Prejudice' to attract all ages, in the lovely grounds of Severn Bank House on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30 p.m. You will be very welcome.

#### **8 Flood defence progress by Flood Action Group Norman Snowball**

Tim Weeks has moved away from the village. FLAG remain committed to the Flood Defences and slow progress is being made. It is taking a long time for the Environment Agency to get funds together and there are many reports and surveys which are being prepared which the EA are paying for. Meetings regarding land drainage water coming down Severn Stoke Bank are taking place with Severn Trent/Highways etc. Support is needed from the Parish Council and District Council regarding the drains. FLAG will continue to update everyone when they have further information.

#### **9 Croome Court – National Trust Update Michael Smith, Manager, Croome Court.**

Michael Smith gave an outline of the work and goings on at Croome. There had been a strong rise in visitors during 2016/17. This impacts on traffic and facilities. Some big events which have taken place in the past are being stopped or scaled down to reduce the visitor numbers of key days. The weather can also cause problems with parking and NT will address these issues in the coming months. They hope to improve infrastructure and water supply capacity to cope better. They are regularising the temporary permissions for portaloos etc and hope to be successful with some funding to start restoring further buildings. The Weir at the end of Croome river has been repaired. The Tower roofs and west side have had repairs. There has been external funding achieved for restoration of the Long Gallery and repairs to the plaster. Work on the chimneys has also received funding. There are various exhibits coming up and these will change every so often.

There is also ongoing work by a group of volunteers to the dry stone wall around the whole parkland.

There is a liaison group which meets regularly which has representatives from the surrounding villages, District Councillors and Parish Council and NT. Please raise any questions you have with them at any time.

#### **10 Tarmac update –**

Soil stripping commenced in phase A in Sept 2017. Progress was hampered due to delays in getting electricity cables diverted and a crossing over the oil pipeline, but both matters have now been addressed. Mineral extraction is currently progressing in phase A, with approx. 3 months mineral reserves remaining. The precise volume of remaining reserves is constrained by standoffs to the oil pipeline which are currently in discussion with the pipeline operators' agents. Soil stripping in phase B is scheduled to commence in approx. 4-6 weeks' time.

All restoration works north of the Severn Way are now complete, although some remedial works are required around the outfall on the western boundary, which will be completed during the summer of 2018.

The planning permission has a number of conditions which require schemes to be submitted for further approval by the mineral planning. Those schemes have all been prepared and submitted (end Jan) informally to the relevant consultees for comment prior to a formal submission though the planning officers. To date, no responses have been made and are currently being chased.

Although some time off yet, works are progressing internally to develop a more detailed scheme for the conveyor crossing under the A38 to facilitate access to the eastern extension area.

#### **11 Open Forum – Residents Question Time**

Clerk circulates the monthly Policing report recently started by the Policing Team via the "round robin" email address. Please inform the Clerk if you wish to receive this. Update from police read out, new Sargent will be taking over neighbourhood policing soon, we will be informed when post in place. Rural crime remains a concern and to support our local farmers and businesses recent road checks of "trucks and trailers" has taken place. Please phone 101 if you spot anything suspicious.

The Rural Crime Officer is a civilian post and is starting to produce newsletters which Clerks will circulate to residents. Property marking is available if residents are interested. Local patrols continue and we are aware and try to support speed reduction in all areas. Safer Roads Partnership remain the lead authority but your local officers show a presence where we know we can be most effective.

On the police website you can follow a link for crime in "my area" which we would like feedback from residents.

The Clerk gave a brief outline of other items addressed by the Parish Council during the year including the work to try to assist with reducing speeding throughout our parish including the installation of white gates at Kinnersley with a donation from District Cllrs covering the cost and kindly installed free of charge by the National Trust volunteers. We continue to pursue the Safer Roads Partnership regarding key areas along the A38. We are consulted on all planning applications within the parish from Malvern Hills District Council and Worcestershire County Council. We meet quarterly with Tarmac and Croome National Trust as part of liaison groups. We have replaced the old bench in Birch Lane with a Memorial bench for Cllr Male. Our lengthsman works 16 hours per month and his jobs include moving the mobile Vehicle Activated Sign between Severn Stoke, Clifton and Kinnersley on a regular basis. The permanent one in High Green has been away for repair and recently returned. Donations from the Parish Council this year include £1000 to Friends of St Denys towards the upkeep of the Church yard, £50 to Royal British Legion, £1000 to FLAG and covering the cost of the annual service cost of servicing the Clock at an approximate cost of £237. All agendas and minutes of our meetings are available on the "my parish" pages of the Worcestershire County Council website.

**The meeting closed at 19.50pm** Signed.....Chairman of Severn Stoke & Croome D'Abitot  
Parish Council Date .....