

# COMBROKE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held via Zoom on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7.30pm

### COVID-19: Changes to how we hold Public Meetings

In response to the 2020 Coronavirus Global Pandemic, the UK Government Guidance issued in March, required people to limit their physical contact with others, subject to limited exceptions. This did not permit the Parish Council to convene and hold in a public place the planned meeting in March, nor hold an Annual Parish Meeting nor the Council's Annual Meeting in May.

**Appendix A** summarises the key elements of Statutory Instruments under which current arrangements for meetings and managing the end of year financial requirements are permitted. A copy of Appendix A was issued to Councillors prior to this meeting.

### Present

Stephanie Connah (SC)  
Nathan Griffiths (NG)  
Tim Goodhead (TG)  
Jo Price (JP)  
Brenda Rayson (BR)  
Georgina Lowe (Clk), Clerk

DCllr Chris Mills (CM)  
CCllr Chris Williams (CW)

Members of the Public: 0

### Chairman's Announcement

Participants were welcomed to, and thanked for joining, this first remote meeting of the Parish Council.

Since the Agenda was published, it was noted that a pending application had been omitted. This was for Keepers Cottage, 20/00186/FUL, it was proposed this be dealt with at item 9.1.

#### 1. Apologies

There were no apologies

#### 2. Acceptance of Apologies

N/A – All Parish Councillors were in attendance

#### 3. Declarations of Interest

BR – Agenda Item 9.3; JP – Agenda Item 9.4.

#### 4. Public Representation

None.

#### 5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13 January 2020 had been circulated. Proposed TG, seconded JP and

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.**

#### 6. Chairman's Report and Other Reports for Information Only

##### a. Chairman

The new residents at No 19 have made contact to update the PC: they are currently undertaking a light refurbishment of No 19 and plan to move in during July if the Covid situation permits. They are now in the process of purchasing No 18 and will be incorporating part of the outbuildings of 18 into the proposed scheme for 19 for which pre-application discussions with SDC's Conservation Officer are ongoing.

**b. Clerk** No report

**7. District Councillor's Report**

DCllr Mill's Report is attached these minutes

**8. County Councillor's Report**

CCllr Williams' Report is attached to these minutes.

**9. Planning**

The Chairman asked Cllr Goodhead to chair the meeting at item 9.3

**9.1. For Consultation Keepers Cottage, 33 Combrook 20/01245/FUL**

Erection of an oak framed extension replacing existing garage

A briefing note about this application had been sent to Members prior to the meeting. In the previous week BR & TG had met with the Applicant for a very helpful walk around the plot to assist interpretation of the drawings submitted for the proposal. It was agreed BR & TG would draft a Representation and circulate for comments before submission.

BR /  
TG

**Pending Keepers Cottage, 33 Combrook 20/00186/FUL**

Detached oak framed garage with home office/storage above

Further amendments submitted had again been circulated to Members. The deadline for PC comments was the 11<sup>th</sup> June. The submitted amendments now respond to the concerns previously raised in the PC's initial Representation. Accordingly, a further Representation had been submitted expressing no objection to the proposal. The meeting formally approved the submitted Representation.

**9.2. For Consultation 19 Combrook 20/01321/TREE**

Proposed: T1 - lilac - Reduce by 2-3 metres

G1 - apple x3 - Reduce by 2-3metres removing upright shoots and deadwood; reduce branches overhanging driveway

T2 - damson - Fell T3 - buddleia - Pollard

T4 - damson - Reduce to relieve weight and shape

It was agreed the Parish Council would support the Tree Officer's decision

CLK

**9.3. Pending The Little House, School Lane 19/00361/FUL**

Enlargement of parking area; erection of retaining wall.

There has been no further development since the Parish Council's 4th Representation dated the 8th of April in response to the proposed new amendments (18th March) to address the stability/safety issues of the retaining wall.

When the application was considered by the Planning Committee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 Officers were delegated the powers to approve it if an independent engineer, to be appointed by the Authority, confirmed that the design was sound; if it was not sound then Officers were instructed it should be refused. Further consideration of yet another amendment would therefore appear contrary to the clear instructions and delegations of the Committee. Although the independent engineer's report had been requested on numerous occasions it had not been made available to the Parish Council.

The above situation was thought to be wholly unsatisfactory and Cllr Goodhead invited Cllr Mills to ask the Planning Authority to comment.

**9.4. Planning Appeal The Tree Place, Church Hill APP/J3720/W/20/3245828**

Replacement of existing mixed-use building (part residential and part agricultural) to a single dwelling incorporating the existing steel frame on the site

A Representation was submitted to the Appeal supporting SDC's decision to refuse and raising additional concerns about the visibility splay and access for Fire Service appliances.

**9.5. Granted 39 Combrook 19/02282/FUL**

Demolition of work shed, erection of new garage and workroom

**9.6. Granted Lorien, Church Hill 20/00792/TREE**

T6 Norway Spruce Fell

### 9.7. Refused Rowan House, Compton Fields 20/00495/FUL

Change of use from paddock land to residential garden

#### 10 To consider safety concerns regarding the chestnut tree behind the Water Fountain / Well Head at Chestnut House

Concern has been raised that the growth on this tree over recent years may present a safety hazard. After a brief discussion it was agreed to ask an arboriculturist to investigate and provide a report. BR to look into historical minutes and produce a report on the earlier background.

CLK/  
BR

#### 11 To review Council's Delegations to the Clerk

The Chairman commented that the current delegations have served the Council well over the years and particularly of note during the current COVID- 19 situation. In March WALC had advised Parish Councils to put in place such delegations.

In reviewing the WALC advice, it was agreed it might be useful to also delegate powers to spend up to an agreed amount and to authorise urgent action when unforeseen circumstances occur, therefore it was proposed TG, seconded JP and

**RESOLVED: To delegate to the Clerk the powers: to grant dispensation requests; to make decisions and respond to consultations on behalf of the Council in circumstances where the decision / consultation requires an action before the date of the next meeting of the Council; to spend up to £500 and to authorise urgent work when unforeseen circumstances occur (either or both of these powers to be exercised with the full knowledge of the Chair or Vice Chair)**

#### 12. Financial Administration

Copies of the Internal Summary of Accounts and relevant AGAR statements had been circulated prior to the meeting.

- a. **Internal Summary of Accounts 2019-20.** The Summary Accounts were reviewed by the full Council. Cllr Griffiths asked for clarification regarding the difference between the budget for the Village Hall and the actual spend which was significantly more. It was explained this represented: the decision in May 2019 to purchase the Defibrillator Cabinet (£465) which was to be half funded through a grant from the VH Committee; and also the decision in November to replace the gas heater with electric heaters (£221.25) when the gas heater ignition unit failed and it was felt repair would be impractical and costly given its age. There were no further questions, where upon it was proposed TG seconded BR and

**RESOLVED: To approve the internal 2019-20 accounts**

- b. **Certificate of Exemption.** The criteria for the certificate were considered and it was agreed the council met the requirement to exempt itself from the External Audit Review. It was therefore proposed TG, seconded NG and

**RESOLVED: To complete the certificate of exemption for 2019-20**

- c. **To receive Internal Audit Report.** With COVID- 19 restrictions it had not yet been possible for the Internal Auditor to complete. It was noted the Council met the required criterion: audit activity during the year April 2019- March 2020 had been undertaken and no comments or concerns were raised.

- d. **Annual Governance Statement.** Following review of the statements, it was proposed TG, seconded NG and

**RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20**

- e. **The Annual Accounting Statements.** The statements were reviewed and it was proposed TG, seconded JP and

**RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Accounting Statements 2019-20**

f. **To receive payments made under delegated powers and consider payments to be made**

Payments made under delegated powers:

In March 2020 (i.e. Financial Year 2019-20)

Combroke Village Hall Reimbursement of Business Rates 2019/20 £161.21

Clerk's Feb/March Salary £217.62

HMRC £10.60

Income received since last meeting £2,266.50 (precept first installment)

In May 2020

Zurich for the Parish Council and Village Hall Buildings Insurance £501.82

Regarding the above insurance, it was explained that following the end of a 3-year long term agreement with Came and Company, quotations were sought from several companies including the Parish Council's previous Insurers Zurich. The above Premium with Zurich was offered within a 3-year long term agreement.

The Chairman congratulated and thanked the Clerk for her efforts and for making a considerable saving on the premium quoted by Came & Company

Invoices were presented, and payment approved for:

WALC Annual Subscription £105.00

Coventry Diocesan B of E Village Hall Annual Rental £770.00

Clerks April/May Salary £217.82

**Addendum to this Minute:**

*Prior to the preparation and circulation of minutes for approval, an error was identified in the internal summary of accounts. A payment made in March to the Village Hall Committee (Ref Item 12f) should have been recorded as £161.28 instead of £161.21. The internal summary of accounts has been corrected and re-totaled to include the additional 7p under 'payments' and also within 'outstanding cheques' under the bank reconciliation. This issue was identified and discussed with the Internal Auditor who regarded it as a very minor matter noting that the AGAR Accounting Statements are in whole pounds and remain an accurate statement of the Council's Financial Position.*

13 **Lanes and Drainage**

**13.1 County Highways Repair and Improvement**

It was noted the fallen tree was still in the stream; TG & BR to discuss / action.

TG /  
BR

TG reported WCC contractors had visited the footbridge between 39 Combrook and Appletrees and had informed him that works would be scheduled to repair / replace the handrail and rotten wooden supports.

A cone had appeared on a broken drain cover (Spring Lane). This had been reported to the County Highways team.

TG also advised that he had sent photographs of the rutting at the end of School Lane to Patch; these were now 6 inches deep in places and causing cars to ground. CW to follow up with Patch.

**11.2 Proposed Gateway at West Entrance to the Village**

Further advice was awaited regarding the progress of this given the current pandemic.

14. **Climate Change**

The 2nd meeting of Combroke Climate Change Club was held on Sunday 8th March. The Chairman recorded huge thanks to Stephanie & family for a brilliant afternoon; newsletter to follow.

SC

**15. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agendas**

None

**16 Dates of Next Parish Council Meetings:**

It was agreed to postpone the next meeting until September, date to be confirmed

**The meeting closed at 8:44pm**

**Appendix 1: COVID- 19 and Local Authority Regulations**

The Government Guidance in March did not permit the Parish Council to convene and hold either its Annual Parish Meeting nor its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the usual way.

In April the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government issued two Statutory Instruments relevant to governance of Parish Councils

**SI 2020/392**

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) Regulation came into force on 4 April 2020 (N.B. Local Authorities include Parish Councils in England) this gives local authorities greater flexibility in conducting of meetings until May 2021:

- applies to LA meetings required to be held on or before 7 May 2021 -this date can be brought forward if Gov COVID-19 rules are relaxed;
- removed the requirement to hold an Annual Meeting (AGM); *the requirement to hold at least 3 ordinary parish council meetings in a year remains*; and
- provides that where an appointment is required to be made at Annual Meeting, the appointment continues until the next Annual Meeting *i.e. this will apply to the election of chairman, which occurs as the first business of the Annual Meeting, and, therefore the current chairman will remain in office until an annual meeting is held (possibly 2021) unless the council decide to elect a replacement earlier*;
- permits the holding of remote meetings via digital means (video link / telephone) and enables councils to make standing orders to specify how
  - voting will be carried out;
  - Members of the Council and the Public may access documents*Councils should make these decisions based upon their own needs and capacity*;
- confirms that being present at a meeting includes a Member being present through remote attendance and being able to be heard, and where practicable be seen, by every other Member and the public.

**SI 2020/404**

The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulation 2020 amends the deadline by which the Annual Governance Statement; Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) together with any certificate or opinion issued by the local auditor must be published from 30 September 2020 - 30 November. Smaller councils are still required to set a period for the exercise of public rights but the only requirement is that the 30-working day period should start on or before the first working day of September 2020.

PKF Littlejohn as appointed external Auditor for Smaller Authorities have stated that smaller authorities have until 31 July to return their certificate of exemption. But encourage councils to submit them as soon as possible.

## Combroke Parish Council Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 District Councillor's Report

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council's new Discretionary Business Grant Fund launched on Monday 8 June.** Businesses that were not eligible for Government funding through previous COVID-19 related financial support schemes are being invited to apply for business support funding through the discretionary business grant fund.

The scheme will provide support to businesses that fall into a number of priority areas such as bed and breakfasts, small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, regular market traders, charity properties etc. For further details go to <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/dbgrant>

### **Local Council Tax Support Hardship Fund**

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has received funding of £660,000 from the Government, as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak, to help those residents who receive Local Council Tax Support. This funding is targeted at benefit recipients classed as '*working-age*' who qualify for Local Council Tax Support. They will receive a one-off discount of up to £150, which the District Council will apply directly onto their Council Tax Account.

Coronavirus is placing immense pressure on us all. Stratford District Council is determined to do everything we can to support families and businesses financially if they are struggling to make ends meet. If any resident is concerned about finances then please call one of our team and we will do everything we can to help.

### **COVID-19**

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is now beginning to shift its focus from dealing with the medical emergency and initial support phase into thinking about economic recovery; and as Stratford-on-Avon District is the 4<sup>th</sup> hardest hit Council in the country this is vital. The main focus now from SDC is how to finance the next four years. The cabinet is looking at different scenarios on how to recoup the losses

### **Reopening of Stratford Town**

To assist in the reopening of Stratford Town and the recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council have worked together to produce a temporary scheme which will provide additional space for pedestrians to safely circulate, for customers to queue outside shops and for businesses to expand to meet customer needs.

The proposed scheme includes the introduction of a one-way system with traffic restricted to westbound movements on Bridge Street, Wood Street, Greenhill Street and on Alcester Road between Arden Street and Brunel Way, southbound movements on Rother Street, High Street and Chapel Street and eastbound movements on Sheep Street. It is also proposed to introduce a 20mph speed limit in the town centre and to make changes to pedestrian crossings.

### **Stratford-on-Avon District Council's recycling rate hits 64% in April 2020**

There has been a 15% increase in dry recycling and a 33% increase in garden/food waste compared to April 2019. These results maintain our position as the best performing local authority for recycling across Warwickshire and one of the top performers in the UK.

### **Stratford District Council's Chinese friends donate more personal protective equipment to NHS staff at Warwick Hospital**

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has been able to arrange further donations from China of personal protective equipment (PPE) to The South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT), thanks to the Council's on-going cultural relationship with Fuzhou in Jiangxi province.

Fuzhou, with whom the District Council has developed a strong 'sister' city relationship over the past five years, contacted the Chairman of the District Council, Cllr Christopher Kettle, to offer the Council help through the provision of PPE, which we were delighted to accept.

SWFT have now received a total of 35,000 masks, 200 disposable protective suits and 5,000 protective gloves from China through the District Council.

**Cllr Chris Mills**

**Combroke Parish Council 11th June 2020**  
**County Councillor's Report**

First of all, I must congratulate the community work that the Parish Council is carrying out for the residents of Combroke. The current crisis we have in the UK would be far worse if it was not for the work carried out voluntarily by people such as yourselves.

Shire Hall is effectively closed and whilst most of the staff is working from home a large proportion have directed their efforts working as carers at this time. Elected Members on the County Council do receive regular virtual briefings. We are continually bombarded by requests for finance from all sources.

The scale of the economic environmental and community challenges that are now faced by WCC should not be under-estimated. Warwickshire County Council has been appointed the lead authority between Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull as the new NHS Test and Trace Service. This reflects the high esteem in which Warwickshire is held by the NHS. The long-term way ahead is still to be determined but the County Council as Public Health Authority is regularly updating the electorate in line with any advice it receives.

This past week has seen gradual steps being taken to reopen some services and previously restricted areas in Warwickshire.

Some of our recycling centres started to reopen in a limited way with pre-booked slots for residents to visit.

Similarly, the Country Parks are now re-opening with online pre booked parking. Although I am aware of a problem on the Burton Dassett Hills regarding vehicles speeding through villages and anti-social behaviour.

The Highways Team have used the past three months in planning their priorities for when they are able to get the maintenance staff on the roads again. If in the meantime you have reported a defect, please be assured that this is not forgotten and will be attended to at an appropriate time.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

STAY SAFE

**Cllr Chris Williams**

**Member for Kineton and Red Horse Division**

**08.06.2020**