

Stretton-on-Fosse Parish Council

A meeting of Stretton-on-Fosse Parish Council was held on 4 May in the village hall on at 7.30 p.m. following the AGM and APA

M16.10. Apologies

Chris Longleather; Chris Saint arrived at 8.15

M16.11. Approval of minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

M16.12. Matters arising

Portobello crossroads No further information has been forthcoming on this matter, following the announcement in the paper that traffic lights, not a staggered junction will be installed. Councillor Finlay felt that additional signage could be installed now, improving awareness. Councillor Hazelwood felt the matter needed to be left to Chris Saint and Jo Barker to sort out.

She also raised the matter of traffic being directed through Stretton following a serious accident on the Fosse on 24 January 2016, a common occurrence, with subsequent damage to verges and the bridge (see AOB).

M16.13. Finance

M16.13 (a) Approval of accounts since 12 January

The accounts since the last meeting were read and approved.

M16.13 (b) Approval of the appointment of Kenneth Dunn as internal auditor

The appointment of Kenneth Dunn as the internal auditor was approved.

M16.13(c) Approval of Section 1 of the audit form

Section 1 of the audit form was approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.

M16.13(d) Approval of Section 2 of the audit form

Section 2 of the audit form was approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.

M16.14. Planning applications

Submitted

16/00357/FUL The Old Post Office, for J. Alexander (resubmission)

This was taken to committee. Councillor Hazelwood reported that the meeting began at 6.30, the first 2 items taking till 9.30 to deal with. The committee then voted on whether to continue and decided to go on, although two members left. This application was the last to be considered, and was given very little attention or discussion. Councillor Hazelwood felt that the refusal was based on rather flimsy interpretation of the legislation and reflected a desire to conclude the meeting, rather than seriously consider the application. The Alexanders are considering their next move. Councillor Hazelwood said she was considering complaining to the planning department over the conduct of the meeting. (Summary OK Izzi or do you want to put in more detail?)

15_03526_VARY Town Farm, for G. Reynolds/15_03527_LDP

Approved

15/3246/FUL Stables Cottage, for M. Lawrence (retrospective)

15/04479/FUL St Peters Cottage, Erection of shed

15_03526_VARY Town Farm, for G. Reynolds

Refused

15/04315/COUO Agricultural Building Located Off The Fosse Way, Stretton-on-Fosse, for Mr J Duckett

M16.15. Correspondence

Rural Weekly Newsletter

Update on passing by-laws

Tescos bags of help grants (for open space projects)

M16.16. AOB

Bridge on the gated road This appears to have been damaged in the previously mentioned incident of 24 January. The bridge appears to be collapsing, due possible excessive weight of traffic or traffic being forced across by the hedge. Councillor Barker suggested applying for a weight restriction on the gated road. Councillor Saint did not think this was appropriate, and suggested contacting Geoff Morris at Highways. He felt if the damage had been caused by the accident traffic, it may be covered by CC insurance.

The Orchard licence Councillor Hazelwood reported that since returning the signed licence before Christmas, there had been no response from Grewayne, either about the licence or the houses. It has now been confirmed that it has been signed, but there has been no copy or other communication. Councillor Saint reported that the hold-up was that he affordable housing did not need to be built until 5 houses had been built at Shottery and currently Grewayne were still negotiating to buy the land in Shottery. There also appeared to be a problem with the footpath still. He suggested trying the Case officer for an update. Jo Barker also offered to contact them.

Drainage Harold's Orchard One of the Phase 2 houses flooded for the second time in the heavy rains in February. Ditches have now been dug to divert the water from the top of the garden and soakaways dug at the house. Phase 3 is meant to deal with the drainage, but this is unlikely to happen at the moment. He suggested contacting John Gordon, SDC policy-making unit.

Play area Councillor Hazelwood reported that much tidying work had been done recently, but that the wooden equipment was deteriorating, but not to a dangerous condition, and would need replaced in the not too distant future. It was suggested that the present equipment be kept for 2 more years and fund-raising to buy new equipment instigated. The general feeling was that there was no other option. Councillor Finlay pointed out that wooden posts rot faster in concrete than soil, but that the concrete bases could perhaps be used to anchor new metal equipment.

M16.17 Council reports

County Councillors Annual Report - 2016

Council Tax

Warwickshire County Council set its precept on 4th February. Government does not appear to take into account of the higher proportion of the elderly in Warwickshire that need support from our Adult Social Care team. The Council Tax freeze grants of recent years have now been withdrawn from the Government settlement and we appear to have little alternative but decide on a modest rise in Council Tax. Take some comfort that any increase above 4% will require confirmation by a public referendum.

The headline news is that the Council Tax will rise by 3.99%. Half of this is to allow for a rise in costs and the other half to provide further support for adult social care.

Fosse Way - Portabello crossroads

After a long period of silence, I now have an update on the improvements to this busy road junction. The County Council officers are now looking at a new scheme with traffic lights installed at the junction. Apparently engineering challenges have emerged when trying to design the previous proposals for a staggered junction.

Bus services into Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council are removing their subsidy to bus services, that will have an impact on the 50 and 50A services.

Be assured, if the bus services to Banbury and Chipping Norton are reduced, those people with bus passes will still have unlimited travel after 9.00 a.m. wherever buses run. If buses run to Banbury or Chipping Norton, you will still be able to use your bus pass to travel through Oxfordshire to get there and get back.

Devolution

There is a lot of activity on this subject since the general election. There is a clear agenda of the Government to devolve some of its responsibilities for infrastructure and transport to local bodies. The Government and the Midlands cities are looking at other funding streams for a 'Midlands Power House' based on the Core Cities of Birmingham and Nottingham. In both models, local authorities have been invited, not to merge, but to group together to undertake local control of decisions that have been the province of central government.

We have a long history of working with Coventry in economic development issues, but Coventry City Council has voted to become part of the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). As the debate hots up, the West Midlands Combined Authority is fast becoming the only show in town for us to embrace the Government devolution programme.

The Government received 34 devolution submissions across England and 22 of these are based on the traditional shire counties. Though traditional Warwickshire is regarded as a good base, the local map has changed a lot since modern day local authorities were first established in 1889, Shipston having been in Worcestershire until 1931!

Though Stratford-on-Avon District has applied to be part of the WMCA, the county council is currently assessing the economic benefits of joining.

Fire and Rescue Service

We have just been told that since Christmas, the responsibility for Fire and Rescue services has moved, from CLG to the Home Office. CLG minister Marcus Jones has assured me that it will make no difference to our local operations. I shall be watching events very closely.

On the positive side, I was very pleased to hear that Warwickshire fire fighters have been helping with the rescue work in areas hit by the recent floods in the north of England.

Electric Blanket tests

As in every autumn, Warwickshire Trading Standards offered a free testing service for the over 50s. The local testing centre is in Stratford-upon-Avon.

MASH

The Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, the MASH is now in business. This is a new initiative designed to bring various agencies together and focus on providing a co-ordinated and consistent approach to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Various agencies are finalising recruitment to their posts that will work in the MASH. A series of transitional workshops will support people moving into the new team.

John Coleman has been appointed MASH service manager and he can be contacted by eMail at johncoleman@warwickshire.gov.uk or by post at Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RH.

Joint working

We are adding to the list of shared services to save you money. We provide an Internal Audit Service to neighbouring Worcestershire County Council where both Councils will make savings by working together.

Quality of Life

The Warwickshire Observatory provides a lot of information that is needed for effective focussed public services. It has again published the Annual Quality of Life Report to guide how the County Council and its partners to develop a flexible approach to service delivery.

By contrast, Government statistics are published by the Office for National Statistics (the ONS). Inevitably, in this day and age, they are published on line at www.ons.gov.uk
There are exceptions and Health Profiles for areas like south Warwickshire will be found elsewhere in Public Health Observatories. Look on www.apho.org.uk

Magna Carta

The county registration service produced special versions of Magna Carta for people taking up British Nationality.

Chris Saint
County Councillor – Shipston-on-Stour Division

M16.18. Date of next meeting

The next meeting was set for 17 August at 7.30 p.m.