

Stubton Parish Council

Draft minutes – Stubton Parish Council - 7.00 Monday 16th Dec 2024

Open Forum

Residents were invited to raise issues during a 15-minute period.

A resident raised the issue of the regular closure of the railway crossing at Claypole. Other residents agreed that this has been an issue several times. It was requested that there should be advanced warning with clear signage of any closure times to avoid unnecessary detours for vehicles crossing the line. Failure to give prior warning of closure could have serious problems, especially in times of emergency.

A resident spoke about the closure of the footpath off the Old Coach Road, across the railway towards Claypole on Hough Lane and said he had emailed the contact on the closure board to ask several questions. Answers were given resulting that this would almost certainly be a permanent closure of this crossing and LCC have plans to negotiate a footpath to join footpath 15 along the railway and then over the brick bridge (footpath No.2). Considerations concerning time for pedestrian etc to cross the line of the sight line for oncoming trains. Dangers have been monitored by Network Rail. Cllr Maughan has been investigating this problem having had requests from Claypole PC and he confirmed that the temporary closure was extended by the Secretary of State. Ongoing talks by Andy Savage (Footpath Officer) with landowners and Network Rail are trying to agree a sensible diversion. Closure is due to safety reasons. The Westborough crossing will stay open. Residents were concerned that restricted byway 7 along the Coach Road was regularly ploughed leaving it impossible to walk along. In conclusion, the Council will discuss footpaths at the next meeting with the help of interested residents.

A resident updated the Council as to the progress of CATTs and the aim to purchase further SID signs to monitor and control speed through the village however, the search for funding is proving difficult. The link with the Parish Council as a sub committee was apparently causing a problem so CATTs intends to form an unincorporated association which would make them more likely to get grant funding. The cost of two SIDs with batteries and charger would be £5647.

A resident mentioned the increase of Dyson lorries from Fenton Road through the village at 5.30am suggested the possible request for funding from this landowner whose vehicles depend on village roads.

UPDATE ON LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL [Cllr Alex Maughan] – see Appendix 1

UPDATE ON SOUTH KESTIVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL [Councillor Penny Milnes] – see Appendix 2

Opening of Formal Parish Council Meeting (Chairperson's Remarks)

Agenda

1.0 Apologies for Absence - Cllr Jackie Britten-Crooks due to illness, Cllr Mia Watkins resignation.

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2.0 Correspondence – Cllr Taylor had received an email from a resident concerning the accessibility of restricted byway No 9. Advice from the Countryside Officer, Andy Savage, confirmed that this was not a Parish Council matter.

3.0 Conflicts - Disclosures of Interest – None

4.0 Minutes of Last Meetings

Motion: To adopt the draft minutes as a true record of the previous meeting of 23rd September 2024 Proposed: Cllr Taylor; Seconded: Cllr Kirk

5.0 Clerk's report on any matters outstanding from the last meeting.

Roads – The meeting with Cllr Maughan went well and the damage repairs have been completed. However, these have yet to prove secure and are starting to show potential potholes in the near future. Cllr Maughan promised to have another look at the section of road from the Alpaca farm to the corner of Doddington Lane which seems to have most problems. He assured the Council that the top-dressing planned for next year should level off any further uneven surfaces.

The Neighbourhood Plan update will be further put on hold until more details about the finalisation of the Local Plan are provided. Cllr Milnes suggested that the New Year might be a good time to start to view some of the sections such as Design. Biodiversity, though still a possible avenue, was not taken any further after investigation did not reveal any space for this. Similarly the Community Orchard funding.

Funding for the village sign is very limited now but the Council will endeavour to pursue this regardless.

6.0 Finance – items paid since last meeting and balance carried forward. Ukraine flags (2) £9.18.

7.0 Precept 2025-6 – January 17th form review deadline – Cllr Taylor suggested that the review is completed with the request to increase the precept by just 5% to make sure that the village availability for expenditure on insurance and such as the Neighbourhood Plan is brought in line with costs. This was unanimously agreed by the Councillors. The precept would then be £1617 from £1450, an increase of 5%.

Motion to request an increase of 5% in the Precept review – January 17th
Proposed: Cllr Taylor ; Seconded: Cllr Kirk

8.0 Update and progress on residents' priorities

8.1 Feedback from the CATTs group

Motion: To lend financial support to the CATTs group

Following the intention of CATTs to form an unincorporated association this support would then be considered following their formal application for Parish Council donation.

9.0 Village planting and decorations and for calendared celebrations

9.1 Village Poppies for Remembrance Day – Cllr Taylor was unsure where the poppies had gone from the gates. These were put up by Councillors to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty but had been removed by two residents and kept. Cllr Taylor suggested that further poppies should be purchased by the Council to put up on the bus shelter and church gates.

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9.2 Lights for Christmas – those up in the village at the moment are the property of residents and the Stubton Hub. The Council should enhance the Christmas lights and purchase these for next year to replace the very pale ones on the bus shelter.

9.3 Seasonal planting – winter bulbs and thinking ahead to spring.

Motion: To purchase decorations for the village to celebrate occasions

Proposed: Cllr Taylor; Seconded: Cllr Mitchell

Date and time of next meeting as agreed previously – 7.00pm 17th March 2025

Meeting moved into closed session to discuss employment issues.

The meeting that followed agreed there should be an EOM on Friday 20th December 2024 at 5.45pm.

Appendix 2 - District Councillor update from Councillor Penny Miles

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Cllr Penny Milnes District Councillor Report

Planning – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

An updated version of the NPPF was published last week which involves significant changes in the planning process and places great importance to the Local Plan.

However, as part of our ongoing Local Plan (LP) Review, SKDC will need to provide around 25% more allocated land for housing per annum than was originally anticipated – up from 700+ to 900+ p.a. (The method of assessing housing targets has changed to use the percentage of existing housing stock and affordability pressures rather than current population.)

Allocations once in the plan, for example, will be deemed to have consent and potentially avoid further public consultation. Additional support will be needed for provision of public infrastructure.

Additional weight will be given to majority Social Rent schemes which will be a separate category within the 'Affordable Housing' definition.

Furthermore, there is a need to identify land for 'modern economy' uses, for example data centres which will be incorporated into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP's) determined by the Secretary of State (SoS).

Green energy proposals and policies to support climate change mitigation are to be supported. Onshore wind and solar are promoted with an uplift from 50MW to 100MW before deemed an NSIP.

All this change takes time for the planning team to incorporate, although the aim is for the new LP to be ready June 2026.

Extra costs can be offset by changes to planning fees; the need for more planners encouraged via, for example, the Local Government Association (LGA) Pathways

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into Planning programme; the extra time required to implement the new changes will need to be agreed with transitional arrangements.

In addition, a Planning Reform Working Paper is expected on modernising planning committees to support the plan-led system, reduce the number of applications which they deal with and introduce more 'mandatory' training for councillors. At SKDC we have an up-to-date delegation in the Constitution and significant training albeit not all is mandatory. When the new LP is approved it should, in theory, have sufficient information in it to perhaps allow further delegation to Officers.

It is important therefore that you take every opportunity to engage with the LP process as further down the line there could be limited chances to comment. Stubton should remain a 'smaller village' and currently no land been put forward in this Ward for housing allocation. However, there is always the chance of 'windfall sites' coming forward which will be subject to the LP policies. One challenge locally in the rural area, beyond the land required for housing, is more solar farm and onshore wind farm applications; large scale data centres; commercial scale anaerobic digesters etc on farmland as we have very little, if any, brownfield sites.

Design Code

SKDC is one of five local authorities to have been awarded £80,000 by the Office for Place and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of a Design Code Pathfinder project. It will be more prescriptive than the current Design Guidance. Words such as 'must, should, can' will be used. It will be clear, useable and bold. The aim is to give clarity to developers as to what is expected. Please engage with further consultation in the New Year.

Stubton Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

Impacts of these changes to the NPPF, LP and Design Code will inform any review of your NP. I understand that NP in progress can be brought forward by June 2025 without complying with the changes. However, that is a tight timescale for yourselves and I suggest you discuss this complicated matter with Jake Horton at SKDC and potentially work now to align with emerging LP policies at the right time.

Budget

The budget has created challenges for SKDC although we appear to be in a relatively good position due to reserves stabilizing us temporarily. However, our funding is reduced, costs including operating costs, pay and National Insurance is up and more reliance is put on council tax income even though we are capped at 3% or £5...anymore would require a referendum. I will report further when the council budget is disclosed. There could however be pressures on parish councils to use the precept to fund more for their residents. The precept is not capped.

New Customer Services Centre

A new customer services centre was opened in the Picture House (underneath the council offices and part of the cinema building) on 14 October.

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Devolution:

Further to the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal and the creation of the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA), a District Joint Committee is about to be set up comprising the seven district authorities – although there are only 4 seats!! However, today's English Devolution White Paper throws up some interesting unknowns as to the way forward for Districts – or will they be abolished?

Happy Christmas to you all and we look forward to the New Year 2025