

# Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Severn Stoke & Croome d’Abitot Parish Council

A grouped parish council comprising of the two Parish Areas of Severn Stoke and of Croome d’Abitot

## Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024, 7.30pm At Croome Court SOQ meeting room

<b>Parish Councillors Present:</b>	Cllr Susan Faulkner (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward) Cllr Royston Garrard (rep for Croome parish ward) Cllr Richard Hill (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward) Cllr Pat Preston (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward) Cllr Nicola Sumner (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward) Cllr Ray Williams (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward) 5 vacancies available for co-option upon application.	
<b>Also in Attendance:</b>	Mrs L Stevens (Clerk and RFO). District Cllr John Michael. District Cllr David Harrison. County Cllr Martin Allen. 12 members of the public. <i>The meeting commenced at 7.30pm</i>	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Parish Cllr Larry Freeman (rep for Croome parish ward). S.S (Lengthsman). J.H (PCC St Denys’). P.J (Environment Agency). D.E (Environment Agency) 2 residents. L.H (Parish Hall Committee). M.F (National Trust)	

59/24	<b>Introduction, apologies, general admin and points of order</b> There are currently 5 vacancies on this parish council, (1 in the Croome parish ward and 4 in the Severn Stoke parish ward). The quorum of this council is that 4 parish cllrs must be present for the meeting to proceed. Nil candidates stepped forward for co-option, though one Cllr pack was distributed for information Cllr Faulkner introduced herself and gave a brief summary of the function of the parish council. Apologies were duly accepted.	
60/24	<b>Declarations of Interest.</b> Cllr Freeman existing declaration as a volunteer for the National Trust. No dispensation required. Cllr Garrard existing declaration as a resident of High Green. No dispensation required.	
61/24	<b>The meeting will be adjourned for Open Forum (Public Question Time)</b> Please refer to the notes on your seat for information about this section.  i. <i>Residents have requested to speak ref the application made under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary condition 16 attached to planning permission Opening Times 08/01709/FUL. This application has not yet been formally provided to the parish council by MHDC and the parish clerk received advance notification on 16/07/2024</i>  <b>Extract from National Trust application:</b> <i>As set out in the introduction to this Supporting Planning Statement, it is proposed that condition 16 should be varied as follows: The mansion and visitor centre shall not be open to visiting members of the public outside the hours stated below unless the written agreement of the local planning authority is given.</i> A). <i>Mansion: 10:00 to 17:30 , B). Visitor centre and ancillary buildings: 08:00 to 18:00</i> C). <i>Exceptional events on up to 28 single days in any single year.....</i>  Issues raised include <b>opinions</b> by residents that: (in no particular order) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Existing planning conditions:</b> National Trust have not have been sticking to the existing set opening hours (10-5.3). Currently dog walkers are allowed in at 8am. Trust needs to demonstrate that they appreciate and respect the current conditions before applying for an extension of any kind.</li> <li>• <b>Breach:</b> Residents have received confirmation from Michael Croxford (MHDC) that a breach of planning conditions has occurred. <i>(District Councillor advice was subsequently given that a breach of a planning condition does not trigger an automatic enforcement action – it is a means by which the breach is investigated. Instead it is usual for a series of options to be provided by the planning enforcement officer, usually either asking for submission of a retrospective planning application or the taking of detailed, agreed remedial action. Only if no further action is forthcoming from the person breaching the condition, is enforcement proceeded with – often over a timeframe of years not months).</i></li> </ul>	

61/24  
cont

- **Continued.** (Furthermore, DCllrs confirmed that the current enforcement action has bene closed, because the NT has complied with the requirements and submitted this latest planning application. If this application is refused and the breech of conditions has not ceased, then the residents will need to write to MHDC to request that the enforcement action is re-opened).
- **Increase in planned number of events:** Concern that the increase in the number of events is large/extreme/disproportionate AND not appropriate considering that they are already in breach of existing conditions.
- **Size of events:** Concern that the increase in planned number of events will result in 28 large scale (cinema sized events), nb one every two weeks. There needs to be demonstrated a significant compromise: either a promise that only a few 'cinema sized' events will occur each year or a set timetable of events showing scale and visitor numbers, so that residents feel informed and can make other arrangements. Alternatively, simply class bat walking events as small events and keep the number of large events at a strict 10.
- **Environment/biodiversity** – concern about the impacts that events have on wildlife/biodiversity and the protected species on site.
- **Current park management and lack of security:** No sweep rounds occur at closing time to check the park is empty. No attempt to prevent walkers trespassing on the parkland during closing hours nor to enforce them sticking to the rights of way. (DCllrs clarified that the NT cannot stop access to public rights of way)
- **Proposed opening hours:** concerns the planned opening hours are disproportionate and not usual even for national trust properties. It was stated by residents that 9.30 to 5.30 is more usual with two exceptions at Ashridge and Petworth. There are no reasons within the existing NT framework and guidelines for them to apply for these hours within their application.
- **Conflict** between central NT committing funds for a larger car park and Croome NT applying for an extension to opening hours, possibly negating the car park extension, since simply more visitors will end up arriving.
- **Yellow lines in consultation.** Residents are concerns that the temporary yellow lines project must be allowed to trial without any amendment to existing conditions, in order to successfully demonstrate need/effectiveness.
- **Due process:** Concern that MHDC will simply waive through the process. (DCllrs gave reassurance that though they must not prejudice their thinking process at the present time, they will on the face of the strength of public response, probably ask for the matter to be referred to planning committee, though this cannot be guaranteed. At least 20 different addresses writing to MHDC to object to the application would probably trigger a committee decision
- National Trust have not had regard to **Planning para 59** which requires that planning and enforcement systems must be place in order to uphold public confidence in the planning system.
- **Premises:** concern as to definition of premises. Latest application does not include **car park as 'premises'** and so this may be a get out clause for future uses of the car park. Conflict between the public role of the mansion at Croome Court and the private role – this has never been properly ironed out.
- **Traffic:** Residents stated that NT are focusing on raising funds to maintain the estate at the expense of local village life. At one cinema event, 96 cars passed High Green in 40 mins at the end of the screening although not all cars may have been from attending the Court. There needs to be promised and implemented further traffic controls in the surrounding villages. Traffic must not simply be directed to other villages. Changing the opening times may help with parking issues (MAY) BUT it will bring more and more visitors and the problem will become circular. The argument that more visitors are required to fund a large carpark to help with parking issues is a false statement and an incorrect trail of logic.

**Actions DCllrs** to provide residents/clerk with a copy of the original planning document and planning permissions. (Subsequent to this meeting, Simon Jones (development manager) published the original approved site plan under 08/01709/Ful on the MHDC website. He noted that "the scope of this application is limited to the land within the red line on that plan").

**Action residents** – to provide clerk with the list of events that they have, so as to allow parish councillors to compare what is in the application, with what resident believe to be the case. Also for residents to write to the PC about specific impacts.





62/24	<p><b>Minutes</b>  <i>To receive and consider approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024 AGM of Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council. Prps: PP. Scnd: RH. <b>Approved.</b></li> </ul>	
63/24	<p><b>Flood Bund</b> - <i>Discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice</i></p> <p>a. <b>Environment Agency update Severn Stoke Flood Alleviation Scheme – July 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This update provides the latest information on the delivery of the Severn Stoke Flood Alleviation Scheme. Unfortunately, we could not provide an update to you over the last few weeks due to the restrictions placed on us during the election period.</li> <li>- After not being able to find an affordable contracting route over the winter that complies with the Government procurement rules, we are now exploring a contract with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and their contractor. It will take several months before we know if WCC's contractor can offer an affordable price to build the scheme. We expect to be able to report back to you towards the end of this year to confirm or otherwise if the cost is within our budget. It is then that we will be able to provide you with an initial programme for the work.</li> <li>- Meanwhile we will continue to maintain the site, the new fencing, and boundaries will be subject to regular inspections and repairs as necessary. We will also carry out grass cutting and hedge trimming. We are continuing to look for suitable sources of material and when they have been identified and become available this material will be delivered and stockpiled on site.</li> <li>- The Severn Stoke Flood Alleviation Scheme remains a priority for both the Environment Agency and Worcestershire County Council. We will continue to do everything we can to find an affordable delivery route for the scheme.</li> <li>- Future updates - We will continue to keep you updated with the progress of the scheme via future newsletters and updates to the Parish Council and the Flood Action Group.</li> <li>- Contact us - If you have any queries or comments about the proposed scheme, please contact the Environment Agency Project Manager via email at paul.jones2@environment-agency.gov.uk or call 03708 506 506. Thank you for taking the time to read this update.</li> </ul> <p>b. MP Harriett Baldwin's office are aware of concerns relating to St Denys' church and insurance matters and are in correspondence with the FloodRe Insurance Scheme and potentially with the Association of British Insurers in due course. Likely outcomes unclear.</p> <p>c. <b>Press Release from MP Harriett Baldwin:</b>  WEST WORCESTERSHIRE MP Dame Harriett Baldwin has welcomed news that the county council could take over the delivery of the permanent flood defence scheme for Severn Stoke. The MP met with Worcestershire County Council leader Simon Geraghty and chief executive Paul Robinson in January to ask the council to work with the Environment Agency to find a contractor to deliver the scheme. She also formally wrote to the council in April to ask it to take over the delivery of the scheme. This week it has been confirmed that the council is developing a plan to use a council contractor to do the work. The Severn Stoke scheme has stalled because the Environment Agency's contractor was unwilling to do the work for the budget available and it wrote to the community last week warning that the project was on hold and needs more soil. Earlier in the year, Dame Harriett met with the Environment Agency's chief executive to share her concerns about the hiatus and she plans to meet with Flooding Minister Emma Hardy to try to secure support for the council project from the Frequently Flooded Communities fund. "The current pause on the Severn Stoke scheme is extremely frustrating and local people have shared their concerns with me about their lack of confidence in the Environment Agency. "I've been speaking to Worcestershire County Council for six months to ask them to step in. They have their own contractors and could do the work on the bund in parallel with their own work to raise the road which will cross the new bund. "This is a logical next step and while the Environment Agency will still be part of the project, the work should be done by a team on the County Council contractor framework. "I am grateful that the county council has taken this approach and hope that the project will get back on-course as quickly as possible."</p>	

<p>63/24 cont d.</p>	<p><b>Flood bund update continued</b></p> <p><b>Additional information received from the County Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "WCC is currently commissioning a contractor to build up a target price for constructing the whole Severn Stoke scheme. It is doing so at the request of the EA which remains the scheme's lead agency. You might be aware that a similar arrangement has led to the successful near completion of the flood risk management scheme up the road at Toronto Close. Should the EA assess the contractor's target price to be affordable and give an acceptable benefit cost ratio it is likely that WCC will commission that contractor to construct the scheme. Please accept my apologies that a combination of uncertainty about this position and, more recently, the EA's General Election-related comms embargo prevented this update being shared before now." CCllr Martin Allen.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action DCllrs</b> – DCllrs to chase a meeting between HB, EA, WCC and MHDC. <b>Action Plan B Parish Council</b> – Write a press release.</p>	<p>DCllrs PC</p>
<p>64/24 a. b. c.</p>	<p><b>Councillors' &amp; Friends Reports</b> - <i>Items presented for Motion and decision will be including in the next agenda, unless covered by a previous Motion, or previously approved as part of the annual budget, or covered by the Delegation to the Clerk Policy.</i></p> <p>a. <b>CCllr Martin Allen.</b> <i>Written report provided in advance included in Appendices. Taken as read.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents asked CCllr Allen about ongoing speeding concerns. Sufficient number of residents (10) need to write to WCC with details and they can then laise with the Police Crime Comm.</li> <li>- CCllr Allen to assist with difficulties making contact with footpath warden admin.</li> </ul> <p>b. <b>DCllrs John Michael and David Harrison</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2016 when the M5 was closed for resurfacing, Roger Sutton at WCC and Highways England agreed that the M5 would only be closed for max 2 weeks with then a 2 week break - arrangement does not seem to have lasted to the present day.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action</b> – Parish Council to write to Highways England and ask for a meeting with the aim of reinstating this agreement. Prps: RH. Scnd NS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional info has been provided to the parish council regarding distribution of EV charging points and info on phase 3. New regulations came into effect in 2022 regarding EV charging points in domestic and commercial planning applications.</li> </ul> <p>c. <b>Lengthsman</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will assist with the lose slab at High Green noticeboard and repairs to High Green village white gates. Cllrs gave thanks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Clerk 'quick fire' update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional Elan VAS (funded by PoliceCrimeCom) for A38 is on order.</li> <li>- Three quotes sought for replacement of light column Severn Stoke. Once quotes have been obtained, Clerk will present to PC, seek permission for temporary road section closure and write to residents to inform. Mark Colston (Prysmian) is advising on spec: replace with LED lighting, standard grey paint to match existing, no embellishments as per Highways request.</li> <li>- Lloyds bank correspondence - parish councils are covered by the financial compensation scheme.</li> <li>- Audit paperwork completed, published and provided to external auditor.</li> <li>- Comply with resident requests in relation to audit paperwork and supervised inspection.</li> <li>- Correspondence with MP in reference to flood bund and concern over progress.</li> <li>- Police Crime Commissioner survey response on behalf of the PC.</li> <li>- SWDP Review - Village Facilities &amp; Rural Transport Survey completed and returned.</li> <li>- Liaising with residents regarding concerns over M5 night closures.</li> <li>- Attended WCALC training on audit, best practices for Clerks and parish councils.</li> <li>- Responded MHDC regarding latest planning applications as per instructions at last meeting.</li> <li>- Assisting residents with enquires in relation to planning updates at Old Boars Head car park.</li> <li>- Assisting residents/Savills regarding resident concerns over blocked rights of way/overgrown hedges.</li> <li>- Liaised with WCC with regard to simplifying the lengthsman submission worksheets. Liaised with WCALC about this process. WCALC have now taken over this project.</li> <li>- Monthly magazine submission to Kempsey Times.</li> </ul>	<p>Cllr Freeman and Lgthsman</p>

65/24	<p><b>Planning and Enforcement</b> - to consider, comment and resolve to respond to the following applications or enforcement matters.</p> <p>a. <b>Update where available on Orchard House, Kinnersley - planning enforcement.</b> Enforcement notice has been removed as building has been removed. All rubbish is still piled up at the front gate. Hole in ground is 90% filled. DCllrs to re-report rubbish at front (Section 215 enforceable).</p> <p>b. <b>Proposals to close Upton Library. Appendix 4.</b>  <b>Update 16/07/2024: To note that the library committee has asked for a donation of up to £500. This would need to be agenderised and debated at a future meeting.</b>  Cllrs noted that it is difficult to allocate funding without knowing how many parish residents use the facility. Clerk to find out more and add to budget discussions in Oct.</p> <p>c. <b>Standing Item: To consider and as required, arrange an extra ordinary parish council meeting for planning applications received after date of publication of this agenda:</b></p> <p>d. <b>Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary condition 16 attached to planning permission Opening Times 08/01709/FUL.</b> Cllrs <b>agreed</b> that an extra ordinary meeting is required to debate this application. Agreed date of 21<sup>st</sup> Aug. RH, NS and RG confirmed attendance. NT encouraged to hold a public consultation event also.</p> <p>Councillors considered the location of the next meeting as a conflict of interest in reference to planning application 08/01709/FUL. Where no alternative venue is possible/practical/appropriate, the minutes should record this to show due diligence. Cllrs <b>agreed</b> to hold the next meeting at a facility in Kempsey if possible.</p>	<p>DCllrs</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
66/24	<p><b>M5 closure and diversion through Severn Stoke parish - to consider the 3 week night time diversion and the impact on residents.</b></p> <p>Already discussed Action and option for writing to National Highways to request a review of policy for diversions down the A38.</p>	Clerk
67/24	<p><b>Parish Hall - Maintenance and future use of site</b></p> <p>Clerk to add to September agenda. Cllrs to consider future of the site. Residents have been helping with strimming on site and keeping things tidy – Cllrs gave thanks. Could the PC consider asking for donations if residents ask to use the site for parking for events?</p>	Clerk
68/24	<p><b>Knights Hill parking/access to driveways – Discuss Motions not requiring notice.</b></p> <p>a. <b>Noted:</b> Residents have received a leaflet to update them on the present situation and PC pursual of appropriate signage. Clerk is working with Platform to ascertain ownership of verges. Platform has confirmed ownership/ Clerk is working with MHDC to ensure receipt of outstanding grant for road signs.</p>	Clerk
69/24	<p>a. <b>Parish Council website and .gov email address. Cllr Hill</b>  b. <b>Development of use of social media. Cllr Sumner and Cllr Faulkner.</b></p> <p>Clerk to add to September agenda.  Cllrs <b>agreed</b> to the Clerk, Cllrs Hill, Suimner and Faulkner meeting before the September meeting to forward this project. Prs: SF. Scnd: RH.  Cllrs <b>agreed</b> to allocating £100 plus VAT to forward this project in advance of any likely grants. Prs: SF. Scnd RH. Clerk confirmed this is within allowances for project expenditure in Standing Orders.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>SF/NS/RH</p>

70/24 a. b. c.	<b>General Finance and Admin</b> - <i>To discuss and formulate Motions not requiring notice.</i> To consider/motion to approve payment of accounts made in the previous month. App 3. Prps: PP. Scnd: NS. <b>Carried.</b> To consider/ to approve payment of outstanding accounts this month 2024. App 4. Prps: RW. Scnd: PP. <b>Carried.</b> To receive the latest bank reconciliation. Prps: PP. Scnd: RG. <b>Carried.</b>	Clerk
71/24	<b>Correspondence, dates for diary, items for future agenda.</b> Cllrs may use this opportunity to report minor matters of info not elsewhere on the agenda:  <b>Advert - Volunteer opportunities</b> a. Organising litter picks in each village. b. St Denys' Church Committee has various vacancies. c. Leaflet delivery volunteers wanted across the parish.  i. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy for Worcs Consultation ii. Boundary commission final recommendations for Worcs County Council published. iii. Farm tenant of Naunton Farm, Springhill Farms (Pershore) Ltd has been asked by Savills to address the public rights of way that are in need of urgent attention in vicinity of Severn Stoke village.	
72/24	<b>Date of next meeting - Wed 21st August E-O meeting for planning, 7.30pm</b>	

**Contact the parish clerk if you would like to receive agendas or minutes by email.**  
#Clerk & RFO: Mrs Lisa Stevens, 9 The Limes, Kempsey, WR5 3LG.  
Tel: 01905 820956 / 07950256363 [severnstokeandcda@gmail.com](mailto:severnstokeandcda@gmail.com)

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## Appendix 1 - COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARTIN ALLEN REPORT TO SEVERN STOKE PARISH COUNCIL JULY 2024

**RAAC AND LEGIONELLA** - As you may have heard or read in the local media, due to the continued RAAC and now Legionella, County Hall has mostly had to be evacuated. Much of the councils officers continue to work from home or are now working in Wildwood near county hall. What the current administration intend to do to resolve the situation is not yet know.

**CORNER AT THE LONDON ARCH** - The plan is to install grips either side of this area and hopefully it will stop some of the water that runs down as the gate is much lower than the road so this will always happen. We will also resurface and reshape the entrance which should stop the water holding as deep as it is now but WCC won't be able to completely stop the water going down there

unless a Kerb line is installed along the front, or drainage is added, and this would be a rather large job for the benefit gained. As soon as I have a date for the work I will let you know, classed as very low priority.

**COVENTRY CLOSE** - There is an issue with water entering driveways of residents, they are concerned that when the road is resurfaced, the amount of water going from the highways to their land will increase.

*WCC report continued*

I understand that WCC intend to install Grips leading from the road to the ditch north of Coventry Close. The work is now scheduled for the 14 th of October, but this date may change due to operational reasons.  
 APRIL COTTAGE DRAINAGE PROBLEM - I sent your Clerk the latest email that I received on 07.06.24. This is an ongoing problem which is going to be more complicated than first thought to resolve.  
 SPEEDING ON THE A38 DURING M5 OVERNIGHT CLOSURES - I have asked for additional speed warning signs to be put out during the overnight M5 closures. Unfortunately I don't have the power to insist that WCC put out the signs.  
 LIBRARY IN UPTON - In 2014 Upton Villages Together was formed as a charity to manage the library building, if the local parishes do not contribute to the charity, it may not be able to continue. I don't know how many Severn Stoke residents use the library, be it for books, or one of the many groups such as the mother/toddler group. Please consider if you can contribute.

**Appendix 3. Items already paid June 2024 since last PC meeting:**

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

13/06/2024	Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman Invoice May 2024. Submitted to WCC 13/06/2024.	£368.55
13/06/2024	Mr Simon Bott	Parish Hall Mowing May 2024. SB0448	£65.00
05/06/2024	Kempsey Promotions CiC	DDay celebrations Kempsey Common towards cost of stage for Ruby Rouge and Brass Band. Grant	£75.00
	National Trust	Hire of the S.O.Q Building	not yet received
	Npower (took over from EON)	Electricity bill for street lighting at Severn Stoke, Stonall Close. Not yet received June 2024. Nil balance as of 09/07/2024	not yet received
13/06/2024	HMRC Shipley	Quarter income tax payment. Clerk reimbursed parish council manually 13/06/2024	£4.00
09/07/2024	Mr Phil Moore	Internal Audit 2023/2024. Invoice reduced from £120 to £20 on basis of ease of audit. Invoice 142	£20.00
19/06/2024	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Audit printing ink. Stinky Inks. ST533802038	£86.60
16/06/2024	Mrs Lisa Stevens	June home working allowance (£30) (now paid separately from wage) + Expenses May and June 2024	£56.83
	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage May (paid one month in arrears). New payrise effective April 2024 is £303.12 per month via standing order. Report to HMRC as £303.12. Home working allowance now paid as part of expenses manually (ie see payment 26 above)	£303.12
19/06/2024	Andysloos	Fete at church portaloo for residents. Outstanding balance. Invoice Hall40.	£113.10

**Appendix 4. Items for payment July 2024 outstanding:**

Information Commissioner	Annual membership 2024 - 2025 Direct Debit	£35.00	VAT £0.00
Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman invoice June 2024.	£203.50	VAT £0.00
Mr Simon Bott	Parish Hall Mowing June 2024	£45.00	VAT £0.00
ELAN CITY LTD	Vehicle Activated Sign. Invoice SAJ-UK/2024/01835	£2,747.99	VAT £458.00
Mrs Lisa Stevens	HWA (£30) & Expenses July 2024	£67.30	VAT £0.00
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage June (paid one month in arrears). Home working allowance now paid as part of expenses manually.	£302.12	VAT £0.00
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Correction to standing order manually	£1	

Signed ..... Chairman

.....Date