

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parish Council
Wednesday 14th June 2023, 7.30pm
At Croome Court SOQ meeting room**

Parish Councillors Present:	Cllr Larry Freeman (Chair) Cllr Susan Faulkner (Deputy Chair) Cllr Lee Russell Cllr Ray Williams	(rep for Croome parish ward), (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward), (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward), (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward).
Also in Attendance:	Mrs L Stevens (Clerk and RFO). District Cllr David Harrison. MF (National Trust). 9 members of the public.	<i>The meeting commenced at 7.30pm</i>
Apologies:	Cllr Royston Garrard (rep for Croome parish ward). Cllr Pat Preston (rep for Severn Stoke parish ward), County Cllr Martin Allen. District Cllr John Michael. J.H (Church Warden). S.S (Lengthsman).	

1.	Introduction, apologies and points of order There are currently 6 vacancies on this parish council, (1 in the Croome parish ward and 5 in the Severn Stoke parish ward).The quorum of this council is that 4 parish cllrs must be present for the meeting to proceed.	
	i. Best wishes to John Michael and his wife.	
	ii. Apologies as above duly accepted.	
	iii. Nominations for Deputy Chair. Cllr Faulkner nominated. Prps: RW. Scnd: LR. Unanimous, carried. Sue welcomed to the role. Acceptance of office signed.	
2.	Declarations of Interest Nil new declarations.	

Public open forum. *Standing Orders suspended. Residents provided with guideline notes on each seat prior to meeting commencement. Nil questions. Standing orders reinstated.*

Croome National Trust. Update on planning applications to change of use of the secondary parking arrangements at Croome (swap round the use of the two over flow car parks). A full-scale plan for re-organising all car parking facilities will be in the works but timescales are unknown. Parish Cllrs had no comments to make.

3.	Co-option for unfilled vacancies x 6. <i>Nil candidates stepped forward.</i>	
4.	Minutes <i>To receive and consider approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.</i> - AGM 10 th May 2023. Duly approved. Prps: SF. Scnd: RW. - Annual meeting of residents 24 th May 2023. Duly approved. Prps: SF. Scnd: LR	
5.	Councillors' Reports <i>To discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.</i>	
	i. CCllr M. Allen. a) Bus funding. Request for donation from parish council to WCC for £100 towards continuation of existing community bus services until mid 2024. Parish cllrs had received notice of this request in advance. Each trip costs approx. £75. Parish Council to receive customer stats please. £100 one off donation. Prps: LF. Scnd: LR. Unanimous carried. This amount is within existing contingency budgets, although Clerk to add Motion to next agenda to confirm donation via a published agenda.	Clerk

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5ii	<p>b) Motion of thanks to Cllr Allen and to WCC for the VAS pole newly installed at Kinnersley. Prps: LF. Scnd: LR. Carried.</p> <p>c) A written report was read out in Martin's absence. To note that the Kinnersley VAS pole will go in first week July, a week later than originally planned. London Arch Outstanding action: Broken drain opposite Stone Cottage Croome Corner w repaired in May. Outstanding works which were planned are: The broken drain cover, The redundant pipe capping, and the replacement drain around Croome Court corner.</p> <p>DCllrs D. Harrison and J. Michael.</p> <p>Smart Water project will be rolled out to include Severn Stoke parish. Parish Council need not get involved. Paid for by District Council.</p>	
6.	<p>Planning and Enforcement</p> <p><i>To consider and resolve to respond to the following applications or enforcement matters. Parish councils are statutory consultees, have no powers to approve or reject planning applications and can submit one of three responses: No Objections, Support or Object, along with comments as required.</i></p> <p>i. M/23/00319/HP The Cottage, Sandford, Severn Stoke, Worcester, WR8 9JE (householder planning) AND M/23/00318/LB The Cottage, Sandford, Severn Stoke, Worcester, WR8 9JE (listed building consent). Cllrs had no comments to make and voted to support this application. Prps: LF. Scnd: SF. Duly carried.</p> <p>ii <i>Standing Item: To consider and resolve to respond, or, as required, arrange an extra-ordinary parish council meeting for <u>planning applications received after date of publication of this agenda.</u></i></p> <p>a) Pre Planning Consultation Cornerstone 12114703. Proposed base station installation upgrade at Cornerstone, Gallops Bridge, WR8 9JS. (Mobile Signal Mast). Cllrs considered whether it was possible to install bat boxes at this location. Clerk to enquire. Cllrs had no other comments to make and instructed the Clerk to acknowledge receipt of the information only.</p> <p>b) Old Hills Footpath – Outstanding regularisation of route. Matter has been in abeyance 21 years due to WCC Footpaths team's prioritisation system for DMMOs. Noted. Cllr is actioning. Clerk noted that the Government is currently considering amending the deadline for recovering/registering such routes.</p> <p>c) M/23/00729/HP. 36 Kinnersley, WR8 9JR. Single storey rear extension. Cllrs noted that this application is not visible from the road. Cllrs had no comments to make and voted to support this application. Prps: LF. Scnd: LR. Duly carried.</p> <p>d) Boundary Review for the County Council. To note Cllr advice and delegate Clerk response. Clerk instructed to request the status quo. Prps: LR. Scnd RW.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
7.	<p>Flood Bund</p> <p><i>Along with the Motions on this agenda, to discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice Standing orders were relaxed to allow resident input. Prps: LR. Scnd: PP.</i></p> <p>Details of the forthcoming public meeting finalised and the event was confirmed as going ahead in light of new EA information and newsletter. Prps: RW. Scnd: LR. The parish council has received a detailed timetable from the Environment Agency (EA) and can use this to work with the EA to resolve any future issues. EA Paul Jones has committed to attending PC meetings in future. EA require a list of questions from the public in advance and the Clerk is to co-ordinate this. DH to print off leaflets and PC to assist with delivery.</p> <p><i>Standing orders were reinstated.</i></p>	<p>Clerk DCllrs</p>

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8. Parish Hall

Along with the Motions on this agenda, to discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice Standing orders were relaxed to allow resident input. Prps: LR. Scnd: SF.

i. Draft **Motion 1** to be considered:

“Over the past two years the parish council has been considering options to help with a request from the village hall management committee in funding/part funding the rebuild of the Severn Stoke village hall - not a parish council owned asset. Relocation and reconstruction of the village hall was considered recently when it became known the longest lease SMT would grant on the current site would be only 25 years. After exploring the costs and likely impact on parish precept, the parish council stated in autumn 2022 that the current cost of living crisis makes a parish council contribution towards funding the rebuild project difficult, with councillors agreeing that they would not countenance adding significantly to the financial burden of parishioners. In June 2023, furthermore, given that all current options for ownership, lease and locations for the hall bring additional, unavoidable, irreversible and character changing burdens to the parish in terms of planning requirements, which would offset any potential benefits of S106, the parish council has decided not to pursue options to contribute towards funding the hall rebuild project at this time. The situation can be re-examined by the parish council at a future date, once the settlement boundaries within the SWDP review are clarified and once the financial climate improves. For now, the focus of the parish council will be on working with the parish hall management committee to continue with demolition and leaving the existing site safe and clear. The parish council will furthermore focus on considering the remaining lease (land only) in Severn Stoke village which is due to expire 2033. A survey of residents was proposed and intended but robust legal restrictions prevent the parish council from writing to and consulting named residents in an objective manner that would satisfactorily meet strict financial and public works loan requirements. Options for a formal parish poll posing a single yes/no question only, would significantly diminish parish council reserves and would likely not bring sufficient clarity. Current delays to flood bund construction have further hindered but ultimately not prevented the project from proceeding. The parish council is willing to receive at any time the thoughts and input of parishioners on this decision, insert clerk contact details. The PC will ensure that the Village Hall Committee is informed of any feedback it receives. This does not affect or require any decision made/to be made by the village hall committee, as a separate body.”

ii. Debate, comments and considerations on the above:

- a) RM - The Hall Management Committee has consistently sought the support of the Parish Council for retaining a community facility. In addition the Management Committee further asked the Parish Council to consider the potential to partially fund a hall rebuild project through a Public Works Loan. The Management Committee have always seen these two aspects as separate, with the underlying support for the retention of a community facility critical to any plans and the support for a public works loan significant, but not fundamental. The Management Committee did not expect a public works loan would fully fund a hall rebuild, with the expectation that further fund raising would be necessary.
- b) Statement from public: better to focus on one thing at a time and get the flood bund built first.

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	<p>c) Question from public: Parishioners require clarity on the future of the village hall charity and future focus, if the project does not proceed.</p> <p>d) PC continues to note health and safety concerns in relation to unauthorised access and that the hall committee has agreed to demolish as soon as possible.</p> <p>e) Parish Cllrs – many variables to consider and at present no clear way of balancing them all in respect of the hall.</p> <p>f) Question from District Cllr in relation to specific ownership of the reading room which was in situ before the hall committee was created. For answer, no information available at the meeting.</p> <p>g) Question from District Cllr in relation to the scenario of nil provision of a community facility and the Management Committee meeting their charitable purposes. For answer, no information available at the meeting.</p> <p>h) Clarity required on whether the hall building is part of the lease and whether St Monica Trust require a building to remain on site once the lease is expired/ended. Cllrs proposed a Motion (<i>Motion 2, not appearing on the agenda, as a motion not requiring written notice</i>) for a scenario where legal advice is required on this point and allocated £750 threshold for commissioning this advice if required. Clerk confirmed that the current budget can cope with this additional expenditure and that as RFO this expenditure should be approved as a necessary legal precaution. Prps: LF. Scnd: SF. Unanimous, carried.</p> <p>i) RW – in the event of support for Motion 1, the PC must be clear in separating its support for the project while declining to pursue a Public Works Loan or any form of funding using public money.</p> <p>j) Motion (<i>Motion 3, not appearing on the agenda, as a motion not requiring written notice</i>): That the PC steps back because of the concerns/constraints (listed in the Motion above), but continues to support in principle the rebuilding/provision of parish hall facilities. Agreed. Prps: RW. Scnd: LR. Unanimous, carried.</p> <p>k) Motion: To accept and adopt Motion 1 above. Prps: RW. Scnd: LR. Unanimous, carried. At the suggestion of the Clerk, the Clerk is to check with the hall committee that they are happy with the exact wording of the Motion and accept changes that reflect a dedication to positive, joint working – approved but no vote. <i>Standing orders were reinstated.</i></p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
9	<p>Audit Finance – To consider and motion to approve procedures and paperwork in connection with the Annual Audit Return.</p> <p>a Minute ref 14/06/2023_9a step 2.1</p> <p>i. Internal Audit - Members to consider and review the effectiveness of internal checking procedures and internal audit work conducted across the entire year*. To include receipt of internal audit review conducted by P. Moore and a review of procedures for internal checking of banking. After review, Motion to accept considered findings & to confirm compliance with all assertions within the Annual Governance Statement. <i>Prps: LF. Scnd: LR. Duly accepted.</i></p> <p>ii. Certificate of Exemption – to consider whether to complete a Certificate of Exemption from submission to the External Auditor due to being under the £25,000 threshold. This does not exclude the parish council from completing Accounting Statements. This will be signed in 10c below. <i>Prps: SF. Scnd: LR. Duly accepted.</i></p>	Clerk

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	<p>Minute ref 14/06/2023_9a step 2.2</p> <p>iii. Clerk to give a briefing on the Accounting Statements and confirm that she, as RFO, has already signed the Accounting Statements prior to presenting them to Members at this meeting.</p> <p>iv. Approve Section 1 of the AGAR - the Annual Governance Statement. <i>Chair & Clerk to minute, sign and date the Annual Governance Statement Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2023. Prps: LF. Scnd: SF. Duly accepted.</i></p> <p><small>* SS&CDA Parish Council as the smaller authority will need to consider the internal audit work performed and internal audit arrangements in place between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2023 before confirming compliance with all assertions of the Annual Governance Statement.</small></p>	
9	<p>Audit Finance – Continued</p> <p>b Minute ref 14/06/2023_9b step 2.3</p> <p>a. To consider and motion to approve procedures and paperwork in connection with the Annual Audit Return – CONTINUED. **</p> <p>i. Members to consider Section 2 - the Accounting Statements.</p> <p>ii. Motion to approve Section 2 - Accounting Statements. <i>Chair to minute, sign and date the Annual Governance Statement Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2023. Prps: LF. Scnd: SF. Duly approved.</i></p> <p>Minute ref 14/06/2023_9b step 2.4</p> <p>b. Approval of Certificate of Exemption. Duly approved.</p> <p>Minute ref 14/06/2023_9c step 2.4</p> <p>c. Signature on Certificate of Exemption by RFO and Chair.</p> <p>d. Approval and signature of the Declaration that the statement of accounts is unaudited. Duly approved.</p> <p>e. Approval and signature of the Notice of Commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights. Electors’ Rights – to note the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights as 16th June to 27th July 2023. Duly approved.</p> <p>f. To note that the completed annual return and notification of date of commencement of period of public rights must be sent to PKJ Littlejohn by 30th June 2023. Duly noted.</p> <p><small>** Guidance for the completion of the Annual Return states that the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements can be considered and approved at the same meeting, as long as it is a meeting of the full authority and that it is clear from the minute references that the Statements were approved in the right order. The authority must approve Section 1 Annual Governance Statement before approving Section 2 Accounting Statements and both must legally be approved before 30th June 2023.</small></p>	Clerk

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10.	<p>General Finance and Admin <i>Along with the Motions on this agenda, to discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice</i></p> <p>a. To consider/approve payment of accounts made in the previous month. App 1. Duly approved. Prps: RW. Scnd: SF</p> <p>b. To consider/approve payment of outstanding accounts. App 2. Duly approved. Prps: LR. Scnd: RW.</p> <p>c. To consider/approve the latest bank reconciliation. <i>Approved and signed.</i></p> <p>d. To note: Information Commissioner Data protection fee will be collected automatically via direct debit on or around 06/07/2023. Duly noted.</p>	Clerk Clerk Clerk Clerk
11.	<p>Lengthsman <i>Along with the Motions on this agenda, to discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice</i></p> <p>a To consider option to purchase Lengthsman training Pershore offer PA1 https://wcg.ac.uk/course/info/1237 and PA6 https://wcg.ac.uk/course/info/1243 in order to tackle weeds along A38 (50-60mph route) and capitalise on County Council work already conducted along that road. To note Clerk advice re avoidance of glyphosate in parish as a flood zone.</p> <p>£350 per course. Check how long the course lasts – ideally it would last five years, Clerk to check. Clerk to ask Kempsey PC if they would share costs. Approve in principle: Prps: RW. Scnd: LR.</p> <p>Note post meeting – WCC declined permit for lengthsman to work along roads with speed limit of 40mph, so PC decision regarding training is null and void. Cllrs and Lengthsman notified by Clerk.</p>	Clerk
12	<p>Speeding</p> <p>A To consider option for purchase of additional VAS to be shared between Kinnersley and Severn Stoke and Clifton, not exceeding £4,000. Preferred company is Westcotec in order to match with existing VAS chargers and pole clips. (Westcotec Brochure / Quotation attached AJQ14020).</p> <p>1 x Portable Speed Indicator Device (SID) with Thank You / Slow Down Legend beneath, battery powered complete with spare Lead Acid battery, 'intelligent' charger, sign weatherproof cover and bracket set for a cost of £3,340.00 each excluding VAT.</p> <p>1 x optional dual colour display for the above sign for additional £250 excluding VAT. Weight: 12kg. Weight with Lead Acid: 23kg. <u>Total cost: £3,590 not including VAT.</u></p> <p>Motion for the above Prps: RW. Scnd: LR. Approved, unanimous.</p> <p>In regard of changing battery, the lengthsman cannot officially be involved and resident volunteers would not be insured for assistance.</p>	Clerk Clerk

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b	<p>WCC proposal plan showing 2 pairs of new 40mph road marking roundels for the A38, south of Stoke Gardens. There's also scope to get the existing pair of 30mph roundels, immediately north of the Stoke Gardens junction, renewed as part of the same order. Funding would only be required for the new work though (2 x pairs = £600). Motion for PC to fund the second pair of roundels (for £300). Prps: RW. Scnd: LR. Approved, unanimous.</p>	
	<p>Correspondence, dates for diary, items for future agenda. <i>Along with the Motions on this agenda, to discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice Cllrs may use this opportunity to report minor matters of info not included elsewhere on the agenda</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thanks to Pip Webster Savills and farmer for arranging for right of way Birch Lane second field (wheat) leading up towards the Worcester Lodge to be cleared. - To note Hot SWEP Activated - Friday 9th June 2023 (Heatwave public guidance and water provision for rough sleepers). - Resident correspondence ref community wind power: https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/what-are-the-benefits-of-community-owned-wind-power/ <p>National Trust and Savills have both noted correspondence and are not able to support at this time, though both organisations support general projects such as this in principle. Issues relate to wildlife, bats, planning permission and land ownership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M5 closures. Two additional nights to complete outstanding resurfacing work. On Wednesday 21 June and Thursday 22 June 2023, M5 southbound will be closed at junction 6 to junction 8, 8pm to 6am. During closures a fully signed diversion will be in place. - Signature on Respect and Civility certificate. Duly approved and signed. <p>Items to be added back to agenda once time permits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kinnersley daffodil bulb planting project. Clerk to write to DCllrs on this issue in respect of funding for £300. - High Green phone box maintenance. Clerk to write to DCllrs in respect of pat testing through divisional funding. - Communication strategy and Vision, including Leaflet/poster for general parish. - Exploration of parish council rebranding to 'Local Community Council'. - Parish council logo/brand/letterhead. - Defibrilators. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
10.	<p>Dates of next meeting: Please always double check meeting dates and times before attendance, as meetings may unavoidably change at short notice. Meetings venue unless otherwise stated: SOQ room, Croome National Trust Visitor Centre. Satnav: Near High Green, Worcestershire, WR8 9DW. What3 words location: ///alleyway.rescuer.perfect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wed 27th September, 7.30pm – (SOQ booked) - Wed 29th November, 7.30pm – (SOQ booked) 	

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Appendix 1. Items already paid 2023 since last PC meeting:

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

15/05/2023	Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman invoice April 2023	£290.90	£0.00
15/05/2023	Mr Simon Bott	Parish Hall Mowing April 2023. £45 per cut. Includes one off payment towards fuel £20	£65.00	£0.00
10/05/2023	Andysloos	Toilet for church fete June 2023. 30/6/23-2/7/23. Booking through Jane Hall. Deposit.	£60.90	£10.15
15/05/2023	BHIB	Annual Parish Council Insurance package (reduced premium due to sign up to long term undertaking 3 yrs)	£497.73	£0.00
01/06/2023	Malvern Hills District Council	Garden Waste Collection Service 23/24 Renewal for Parish Hall x 2 bins. Direct Debit.	£150.00	£0.00
16/05/2023	HMRC Shipley	Quarter income tax payment £2.20 (april). Clerk reimbursed PC, as wage is automatically paid via standing order 23/05/2023	£2.20	£0.00
16/05/2023	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Extra Ink Cartridge expenses for audit printing May 2023	£66.99	£0.00
15/05/2023	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Expenses May 2023	£13.40	£0.00
30/05/2023	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Expenses May part 2 - 2023	£56.49	£3.34
30/05/2023	Cllr Ray Williams	Expenses, repainting bench at Kinnersley	£20.00	£4.00
30/05/2023	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Half share ink expenses with Grimley PC	£128.99	
30/05/2023	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage April 2023. Full pay is £311.84. Report to HMRC 16/05/2023 as £281.84 which is minus £30 home allowance.	£311.84	£0.00

Appendix 2. Items for payment 2023 outstanding:

Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman invoice May 2023	May worksheet	£286.70
Mr Simon Bott	Parish Hall Mowing 16th May 2023	SB0418	£90.00
Andysloos	Toilet for church fete June 2023. 30/6/23-2/7/23. Booking through Jane Hall. Final amount paid 24/05/2023	HAR/847227	£113.10
National Trust	Hire of the S.O.Q Building	n/a	Not yet received
Npower (took over from EON)	Electricity bill for street lighting at Severn Stoke, Stonall Close.	n/a	Not yet received
HMRC Shipley	Quarter income tax payment	HMRC	£2.20
Mrs Jade Hudspith	Internal Audit 2022/2023	Invoice 142	£120.00
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Expenses June 2023 Plus June printing ink	Expenses worksheet june	£17.80
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage May 2023	Month 3	£311.84

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Appendix 3



Severn Stoke Flood Alleviation Scheme – June 2023

This update provides the latest information on the delivery of the Severn Stoke Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Recent work

Over the winter we have been working with J Prosser’s & Sons to import material for the embankment. We have imported two types of material. The majority of the imported material is to form the embankment. There is also material that has been brought to site to form temporary access routes for the main construction phase. All material is tested before it arrives on site to ensure that it is suitable and safe in compliance with our duties as the Environment Agency and the planning conditions.

Archaeological work started in February 2023. The first round of the archaeology progressed well with some finds but nothing major that will impact the scheme. Following a health and safety audit we had to pause the archaeological work on the 3rd of March 2023 while we reviewed the ways of working to ensure a safe environment for both the community and those working on the site.

We have now completed this review, and this will allow the archaeology and other activities to resume later this month.

Upcoming work

The Environment Agency remains committed to completing the scheme. We must ensure that we get the best value within the limited budget we have to spend on the scheme, and we continue to work in partnership with Worcestershire County Council (WCC), Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) and J Prosser and Son Ltd. making challenging decisions to ensure that the scheme remains viable.

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Over the next couple of months, we have the following work planned:

- The archaeological work will restart from early June 2023 and is likely to take 4 to 6 weeks.
- At around the same time in June, Jackson Civil Engineering will start testing the material currently stockpiled to confirm its grading characteristics. This is done so they can develop the appropriate construction methodology to place and compact it within the embankment in accordance with the design specification.
- Fencing of the whole site working area will be completed along with the installation of newt fencing along the site boundary to exclude Great Crested Newts.
- Following the installation of the newt fencing, an exercise to trap and relocate any newts found in the working area will be undertaken. This is to ensure we comply with environmental legislation. Newt trapping will take upwards of 30 days and will commence soon after we have received a licence to trap from Natural England, which we expect to receive in the next 4 to 8 weeks.
- In advance of construction of the flood embankment, construction of associated culverts, toe drainage and drainage diversions will be undertaken. This will commence after newt fencing, and trapping is complete.
- Following the material testing an initial length of embankment will be constructed using the material on site. This is to test the proposed construction methodology to ensure we can meet the design specification. When this is proved this will then allow the rest of the embankment works to progress.

Our ambition is to complete two sections of the flood embankment either side of Ham Lane this year. We will import and stockpile material for the realignment of Ham Lane over the embankment during the winter ready for construction in spring 2024. We are aiming for the new realigned road surface to be complete during summer 2024. We will continue to work closely with WCC Highways on this area of the scheme.

To give assurance around the ‘gap’ that will be in place between the flood embankments over the winter period of 2023/24, we will have in place a contingency plan to seal this area to protect the community from flood waters, until the highways work, and scheme is fully completed.

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.

Signed Chairman

.....Date

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Contact the parish clerk if you would like to receive agendas or minutes by email.

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