

STANTON & STREATLAM PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting held on 23rd January 2025 in Stainton Village Hall

Present J Teasdale (JT) A Dobinson(AD) J M Taylor (JMT)
B Toulson (BT) S Chapman (SC) (Clerk)

1. **Public Participation** None present
2. **Apologies** N B Hutchinson (NBH) J Rowlandson (JR)
3. **Declarations of Interest** None
4. **Dispensations** None
5. **Approval of November Minutes** Proposed by AD seconded by JT
6. **Progress or changes since last meeting**

6.1 The council's website provider was asked about the associated cost to change it to a gov.uk listing and to provide an email address for the council and the clerk. It was advised that it would cost £50.00 per year but that the first year would be free. There would be a £60.00 one off charge to reconfigure the website and £30.00 per email address. A further charge for email storage would be £85.00 per year for a 500mb mailbox or £140.00 per year for a 4gb mailbox.

We are currently paying approximately £200.00 pa for the present website which is running a gmail.com address and both the clerk and the main council email addresses are gmail.com and free. It was resolved to ask the website provider what volume of traffic the site had to see if that warranted the upgrade to gov.uk At this time councillors were of the opinion that until or unless it becomes mandatory to operate with a gov.uk address that we should continue as things are.

6.2 The Precept request has been submitted to and accepted by DCC Strategic Finance.

6.3 The nearest Community Speedwatch group appears to be located in Gainford so Stainton and Streatlam would need to set up a new group. Councillors will visit the Community Speedwatch UK website to see what is needed to form a new group, how many volunteers would be needed to do so and how many local residents are willing to take part.

6.4 There has been a suggestion that the council could source an iron bench to site in the Memorial Garden as the soldier silhouettes had to be removed. A very basic, black-painted steel bench commercially made would cost about £500.00 but would be quite lightweight. As both Mr Taube and Mr Hodgson are experienced wrought iron craftsmen they will be asked to provide quotes for a simple bench with either an inscription or possibly a cut out inscription of 'Lest We Forget'

7. Correspondence sent/received

7.1 The Barclay's banking mandate has now been amended and now only has the three signatories of SC NBH and JT.

7.2 The council has been notified by Streetworks@Durham of the proposed installation of a telegraph pole by Go-Fibre for the continued rollout of their high-speed broadband. This is planned to be positioned on the southern grass verge opposite Hesley Rise. Councillors were concerned about this location as there is a substantial drop on the other side with a retaining wall preventing the higher ground from crumbling and falling. There were some recent repairs carried out at

some point of that stretch as the wall did collapse and needed to be rebuilt. Council will notify Go-Fibre and Streetworks of this concern.

7.3 The Council was contacted by Woodland Parish Council regarding the proposal to build up to 70 holiday lodges within Hamsterly Forest and also set up an adventure rope trail facility, Go Ape. This application is due for a decision in early February and Woodland PC are asking for support in their opposition to it. The grounds for their opposition were made available to the council leading to detailed discussion. Among the issues perceived by councillors were the size of the proposed development in a forest that currently has little, if any, access to utilities such as power and water. Lack of mains water would also mean there was no provision for waste water which would inevitably be generated by holiday visitors staying in the holiday cabins. Construction of the two sites would require heavy construction vehicles and access would be via local roads and this is problematic due to some of them being unclassified or classed as a C road. Once operational there would also be a greater than normal traffic flow on roads in the area. It was queried what impact a development of this size would have on local businesses already operating holiday lets and forest activities. Loss of trees and the associated wildlife should also be taken into account. Another concern was what restrictions would be imposed to prevent further expansion of the two sites or indeed at other locations within the forest boundaries. Although the location of the application is not immediately adjacent to this parish, councillors agreed that there were grounds for concern and a letter advising of these should be submitted to Planning at DCC.

8. Financial Report and payments for approval

	Current account balance	£9,675.75
8.1	Payments for approval	
	Village Hall Hall hire	£30.00
	S Chapman 'Thank you' gift cards for Mr Chorlton & Ms Cluer	£50.00
	HMRC Tax on Clerk's wage Dec/Jan	£77.20
	S Chapman Clerk's wage Dec/Jan	£308.30

8.2 Based on payments made in 2024, council can submit a VAT refund claim of £1,273.29. This together with the current balance and the Precept payment in April will be more than sufficient to cover projected expenses for 2025 – 2026.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 JMT advised that postage is expected to increase again in April so more should be bought now. 1st class is presently £1.65 and 2nd is 85p. More second class than first will be bought and whenever possible a second class stamp will be used.

9.2 A resident has commented on an electric car in the village being charged by means of the charging cable being stretched across the footpath so that any runners or walkers on that stretch need to go out into the road to pass the vehicle.

9.3 Unfortunately once again the council is receiving complaints about dog walkers either not picking up after their pets or worse, bagging the waste and throwing it into

someone's hedge rather than disposing of it responsibly. Thank you for bagging it – but please also BIN IT!!

9.4 The speed limit signs at the Dent Gate Lane end of the village were reported to DCC last year as although the number 30 is clearly visible at night when car headlights shine on the signs, during the day it cannot be seen. It will be reported to DCC again.

9.5 Once the possibilities of starting up a parish Speedwatch group have been investigated and acted on the council will look into making speed awareness and management an issue for the coming financial year.

9.6 It was suggested that the Parish Council look into setting up a Facebook page so they can link with Stainton and Streatlam Village Hall and the Stainton Grove page so that information can be shared .

9.7 The compost heap in the Memorial Garden needs to be removed and this may possibly require use of a tractor and trailer. Any useable compost can then either be reused by Mr Chorlton if suitable for the village planters or taken by residents – maybe for a small donation to the village hall association.

9.8 It was agreed that the village play area was looking very tidy due to the work of Mr Chorlton in reducing the weed growth around the play area fencing.

Date and time of next Parish Council meeting

Thursday March 27th at 7.00 pm.

Dates for meetings in 2025		
March 27 th 7.00 pm in the Village Hall Parish Council Meeting	May 8 th 7.00 pm in the Village Hall Annual Parish Meeting	May 8 th Annual Parish Council Meeting
July 24 th 7.00 pm in the Village Hall Parish Council Meeting	September 25 th 7.00 pm in the Village Hall Parish Council Meeting	November 27 th 7.00 pm in the Village Hall Parish Council Meeting