

**STANSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**  
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**Minutes For the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held in Village Hall on Monday 20<sup>th</sup>  
 February 2023 at 6.45pm**

**Present: Wendy Johnson Houghton (Chairman), Faye Gridley, Rex Barnes, Sarah Hopkins and Martin Slater. In attendance: Jessica Ashbridge (Parish Clerk, via Teams), District Councillor Sarah Pugh, West Suffolk District Council (WSDC) Families and Communities Officers Jon Eaton, Lizzie Cocker and 11 Parishioners. The meeting was recorded by the Clerk.**

**AGENDA**

- 1 **Chairman's Welcome** – The Chairman welcomed those present and introduced the topic of conversation for the evening. Included in the meeting pack was a report. Cllr Johnson Houghton advised that the meeting was not to focus on what had happened in the past, but how the £1,000 Locality Budget from the redundant Housing Needs Survey (HNS) could be spent. The grant had been provided by WSDC.  
 Cllr Barnes passed a document from a Parishioner to all Cllrs.  
 Cllr Johnson Houghton advised that the options in the report were:
  - **Neighbourhood Plan** – cost £12,000 - £15,000, and would need a HNS.
  - **HNS** – cost £3,100 with Cambridge ACRE, and does not carry the same weight with the Planning Department as a Neighbourhood Plan.
  - **Parish Plan** – There had been Parish Plans carried out in 2006 and 2016. The cost £1,487.50 with Cambridge ACRE could be carried out end of May – July. The Plan would have no statutory force, but would encourage community engagement, and could aid a village project.
- 2 **To accept apologies and reason for absence** – apologies were not received from Cllr Dennis.
- 3 **Cllr resignation** – The resignation of Cllr Ghirardani was received. Due to the proximity of the elections, the seat would not be offered for co-option.
- 4 **Declaration of interest** by councillors in items on the agenda and dispensation requests - none.
- 5 **Presentation by Jon Eaton West Suffolk District Council, supported by Cllr Sarah Pugh** – ‘How can the residents of Stansfield supported by Stansfield Parish Council (SPC), best utilise the £1,000.00 Locality Budget for the benefit of Community Engagement?’ A letter and reports were received. Mr Eaton advised that either the £1,000 would need to be repaid to WSDC, or it could be repurposed to aid community engagement. Cllr Slater advised that the £1,000 was originally to be used to hold a community discussion, and then the COVID pandemic occurred, the question was raised as to why the community discussion could not now take place. It was advised that the community discussion was raised to talk about a controversial planning application, which was later withdrawn, but the reason a HNS was started.

Mr Eaton advised that there was an opportunity to move forwards. WSDC would need, in writing, an outline proposal, by 22<sup>nd</sup> March, due to purdah commencing on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The item/s would need to be costed. The money would need to be committed and spent within a calendar year.

One option that was raised was a hearing loop in the Village Hal (VH). Costings had been provided for the hearing loop and speakers at £6,500. Stansfield PC had committed to donate £600 towards this. It was suggested that some of the supermarkets could be approached for funding, but they would cover the entire amount, and not split the funding. There was however no

timescale for the works to be carried out, which would rule out the Locality Budget going towards the hearing loop. Mr Eaton, and Cllr Pugh would be meeting with the VH committee, to discuss options. The VH was well used by the Bridge Club – 170 members, and the Cricket Club.

- 6 Open Public session** – A Parishioner suggested that people leaving the village has commented that community engagement was poor and felt that it was a ‘closed village’ due to the Parish Council. She had held a residents drop in meeting, the cost of living had been the main topic. She felt that help was available through the Coffee Caravan, but in some cases it was difficult to access. She had discussed with Cambridge ACRE, Essex ACRE, and CAS various options. She felt there needed to be a community vision – the Chairman advised that there was a statement on the website, commissioned by a landowner, although it was not endorsed by the SPC.

The Parishioner suggested that a one stop shop could be set up for residents to seek help. Cllr Hopkins advised that there was the Voluntary Emergency Telephone system (VET) for the defibrillator, and that cards had been dropped into every household. The other suggestion was to set up a Good Neighbour Scheme. The Parishioner had spoken with other schemes. There would be a dedicated phone number used by a number of volunteers, for residents to contact them on for doctor visits/shopping trips/form filling/help in the garden etc. The volunteers would require DBS checks, training, risk assessments, insurance etc. Costings were available. Banners and postcards could be created with the details for residents. The Parishioner advised that it would bring people together and build on community spirit. The Chairman thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Eaton responded that he would endorse a Good Neighbour Scheme, and advised that they were very labour intensive, and would need at least 8 volunteers. The only negative he shared was ensuring that the work did not impact on local trades – gardeners etc. He suggested that shadowing another scheme would be beneficial.

A Parishioner commented that the Coffee Caravan was created to help tackle loneliness, and took place every month on a Thursday morning. Cllr Pugh advised that she had been very impressed with the Coffee Caravan.

Questions were raised regarding the GNS – would it need to be SPC led, or could it be independent? Would further grants be available from WSDC? Mr Eaton advised that one grant would be available, and then funding could be sought through the supermarket token schemes. The GNS would be endorsed by SPC but led by the community.

A Parishioner asked for the Budget to be used to put beer behind the bar for the Community Pub. A Parishioner suggested that the GNS could be very helpful, with a large enough group of volunteers.

The Parishioners were thanked for their comments.

- 7 Locality Budget – Cllr discussion** - Cllr Johnson Houghton suggested that there was no need for a HNS, they were only relevant for 3-5 years, also that a Neighbourhood Plan was not relevant, as Stansfield was too small and a Type B village. She felt a Parish Plan could be useful as it was community led. She was concerned over the timings for the hearing loop in the VH, and suggested another option, that the money could be returned. Cllr Gridley advised that the GNS would need to be a separate group with SPC involvement and that a Cllr would need to work with the Parishioner that had suggested it. She also suggested a Parish Meetings Forum, and asked Cllr Pugh if further funding was available?

It was determined that further discussion and a proposal should be moved to the next meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March. It was requested that the agenda and meeting pack were sent out well in advance.

- 8 **Website and emails** – It was determined to instruct Aubergine to create a new SPC website for £499 + VAT, and to instruct Force36 to register the domain name stansfield.gov.uk for £50 + VAT, and create email accounts at £3 per user per month. **P: Cllr Johnson Houghton, S: Cllr Barnes, All in fav.** The Clerk had requested funding from Cllr Bennett for the new website.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting at 8.08pm.

Signed.....20<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
Cllr Johnson Houghton