

STANTON & STREATLAM PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting held on 28th September 2023 in Stainton Village Hall

Present J Teasdale (JT) B Toulson (BT) J Taylor (JMT) J Rowlandson (JR)
S Chapman (SC) (Clerk)

1. **Public Participation** No members of the public in attendance
2. **Apologies** N B Hutchinson (NBH) A Dobinson (AD)
3. **Declarations of Interest** None
4. **Dispensations** None
5. **Approval of July Minutes*** Proposed by JT, seconded by BT

*(See note at foot of minutes about an issue raised with the July minutes following approval.)

6. Progress or changes since last meeting

6.1 Although the new bus timetables have been in effect for some weeks, there is still no timetable available at the village bus shelter for journeys to Darlington and Bishop Auckland. A repeat request will be made to ask for the updates to be added to the timetable display board.

6.2 Both the village bus shelter and the one on the A688 at Stainton Grove have had their roof re-felted and a wood treatment applied. Shrubbery to the side and rear of this shelter had to be cut back to enable the work to be done and now looks tidier.

6.3 At this time UTASS have no planned training sessions for the safe use of herbicides

6.4 Following the Council's request to DCC that the double gates at Stainton Grove play area be secured unless being used by contracted staff, this has now been implemented and the gates remain shut.

6.7 The community bulb planting event has been arranged for Sunday 1st October and a variety of daffodils and narcissi will be planted on the grassed bank below Hesley Rise. This is a public event and members of the community are very welcome to take part. The grass encroaching onto the footpath along this stretch has been cut back to widen the path. The grasscutter has already been advised of the planting and will trim around the plants when they are growing and flowering.

7. Correspondence received/sent – none received prior to the meeting

8. Financial Report

Balance of Account as at 28th September 2023 £26,729.03

Invoices presented for payment by 28th September.

Village Hall	Room hire, 2 hrs at £15 per hr	£30.00
HMRC	Tax on Clerk's wage (June/July)	£68.40
S Chapman	Bulbs, plants & compost	£106.50
S Chapman	Clerk's wage June/July	£274.20
R Toward	Grass cutting and turf removal	£450.00
W Fright	Repair, re-felting and treatment of bus shelters	£978.00

There is an invoice still to come from C A Stamp when he has completed the footpath clearance on the A688 which will be £1025.00 + VAT. (£1230.00)

Councillor Teasdale reported that Mr Chorlton had been replacing the summer bedding plants with winter pansies but at the time of this meeting had not received his invoice for the plants.

9. Play Area Resurfacing under swings

Following comprehensive discussion within Council members about the quotes received to replace the safety surfacing under the swings in Stainton play area, it was decided that the contract should provisionally go to Bounceback. It was agreed that the Bounceback representative should be contacted to clarify exactly what was offered in the quote and what the timescale for the work would be as unfortunately when he visited the site there was no Council representative available to speak with him and more information is required before confirming acceptance of offer.

DCM was one of the firms recommended by DCC but came in at the highest price and the quote from Sovereign although reasonable was set aside due to previous issues encountered with them. The Council's usual 'go-to' tree surgeon has advised that he is not certified to provide us with a written report regarding the health and safety status of the trees in the Memorial Garden so accredited arborists will be approached for quotes.

10. Memorial Park Wall & Railing Restoration

As previously recorded, the stubs of the original railings will be left in situ throughout the restoration and several experienced metalworkers will be asked to give quotes for the replacement railings.

11. Proposed New Solar Farm

Both from the meeting arranged in the village hall and from feedback from residents, the parish council can appreciate that the proposal raises differing viewpoints. There are a number of residents who support the initiative to reduce the use of fossil fuels and use renewable energy sources and there are other residents who feel the installation would be a huge eyesore and a blot on the landscape. Unfortunately planning regulations have specific reasons that can be applied to planning applications and loss of view is not one that is accepted. Although the Council does understand that a solar farm is not what anyone would like to have virtually on their doorstep it can also appreciate the value that it would provide to a local business that is a major employer in this area. With this in mind the Parish Council has chosen to keep a neutral position on this application and it is therefore expected that the application will go to the planning committee for deliberation and decision.

12. Kinnivie Crossroads

At the date of this meeting a new proposal for implementing safety at the crossroads has been approved by DCC and the plan is to replace the Give Way signs with Stop signs and to install a vehicle activated warning sign. This is obviously a better solution for local drivers than the former proposed closure and will not put Dent Gate Lane under greater pressure as was feared.

13. Arising issues

13.1 A resident had enquired if there had been any herbicide spraying recently but the Council had no knowledge of any such incident.

13.2 It was reported that overhanging hedges and trees on both junctions from the A688 into Stainton were restricting visibility. DCC to be contacted to see if this is something they have plans to tackle.

13.3 The tree on the village green has grown quite tall and there are concerns that it could affect the power lines above it. However it seems that in the past the power company has trimmed the branches back so the resident who reported it will be asked to call the power company to advise of the possible issue.

13.4 It has been noticed that Runa Farm has closed off access to the venue directly from the A67 and now both entry and exit is made onto Town Pasture Lane. This has obviously increased traffic usage at the top part of the lane and Council was unsure if this had been or needed to be approved by DCC. They will be contacted to see what the speed limit is currently on the lane and if it needs to be reviewed.

14. Date and time of next meeting

23rd November at 7.00pm in the village hall.

** Shortly following this meeting, an email was received about the July minutes that had just been approved. These minutes named a resident who had corresponded with the council regarding several concerns he had and information he requested. Unfortunately as he pointed out he had not clearly consented to his name appearing in those minutes. The minutes were immediately removed from the notice boards and advice sought as to how to rectify this mistake.*

As a result these minutes have had any unapproved names redacted and an apology and response was issued. The offence was unintentional and lessons have been learned from the error.