



**Minutes of the Stratton Audley Parish Council on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016, in the Hunt Room of the Red Lion, Stratton Audley at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Mr J Honsinger (Chairman) Mr A Flack, Ms C Lloyd, Mr S Hopkins and Mr G Nicholson

**Apologies:** Cllr C Fulljames (OCC) Cllr B Wood (CDC)

**In Attendance: (Thames Water)**

Mark Taylor	Field Operations Specialist
Steve Ratkins	Pumping Station Technical Co-ordinator
Artur Jaroma	Asset Manager
Kelly Skuse	Customer Liaison representative

**Members of the public:** Ten

**121. Apologies for absence**

None.

**122. Declarations of interest**

None

**123. Pumping station on Launton Road**

Representatives of Thames Water were asked to attend to update the Parish Council on the situation with regard to the pumping station on Launton Road, which had been failing to cope during recent heavy rains. The meeting hoped that a solution to the annual problem might be presented but this was not to be the case. Whilst minutes of Parish Council meetings are usually kept to a minimum, such is the importance and interest in this subject, in this particular case the minutes attempt to capture the main themes in more detail. Thames Water explained to the meeting that the station design included two pumps (of which one was on standby) with a design flow of 7/8 metres per second which were refurbished in 1999 and again in 2007 to increase output.

Although there are occasional pump failures, these are mitigated by having the backup pumping facility and the recent issues had been the result of the pumping station receiving more flow than it had been designed to pump out. The highway drainage system is separate from the foul water system and at Thames' request OCC had cleared out the road gullies and highway drains around Launton Road. However flow into the pumping station had been increased by some new build in the area (particularly conservatories, new roofs and other extensions) which had been wrongly connected into the foul drainage system.

This resulted in problems in heavy rain when additional water enters the system via these “misconnections” and the problem is compounded by water seeping into the sewers due to exceptionally high ground water table which is exacerbated in periods of heavy rain.

Following the recent event, when Thames Water needed to arrange for tankers to carry away excess water from the pumping station, Thames will carry out a “look and lift” survey to see where additional flows are coming from and whether there is any scope for some of this water to be re directed.

Members of the public attending the meeting pointed out that the problem has been recurring every year for at least the last 10 years and there is a good deal of frustration and anger that Thames Water are not interested in developing a long term solution. Residents were given the opportunity to question the Thames representatives as follows:

Q. Should the system be fitted with a bigger pump?

A. The system is designed to operate within the confines of the pipework leading away from the pumping station. If bigger pumps were fitted the pipe work would have to be replaced between the village and Bicester as it is currently only an 80ml pipe.

Q. It is clear that the pumping station cannot cope in heavy rain

A. If the pumping station is sized for heavy rain there would be a problem in the summer when there is insufficient water to maintain an adequate flow through the pipes. This is because the pumps have no variable speed.

Q. Surely Thames Water could fit a bigger pump with bigger pipes?

A. This is not possible because if the flow drops through the pipes they will not self-clean. At present Thames Water carries out a “look and lift” inspection after heavy rain – but at present there is no sign of major infiltration.

Q. The problem for Stratton Audley is that, once a month, the present pumping station is being overwhelmed, even when rainfall has been moderate rather than heavy. It is clear to residents that the pumping station is at the limit of its capacity. Once the pumping station cannot cope manholes start to lift in Launton Road. The problem has existed for a long time; a problem shows on the Launton Road, and then water does not flow away as it should in The Bradburys, causing problems inside houses when toilets do not flow away.. Has Thames Water checked the flow through the pipes to Bicester which pass under Bicester Airfield?

A. Yes the system has been checked thoroughly with a Network Engineer – whenever a village experiences problems Thames Water check the outfall.

Q. If the problem happens again how does the Parish Council/affected residents sort out the problem?

A. Phone and report any issues. All reported issues will be recorded on Thames information system which feeds into their asset management system. If there are sufficient reports of issues in Stratton Audley Thames will consider whether there is a viable long term solution. If

there is to be any new work to the pumping station in the Village Thames Water will need to build a case to justify any investment required, which essentially means that every incident for every occupier needs to be referred to Thames Water and recorded.

Residents expressed concern at the potential dangers of a pollution incident, should foul water mix with water in nearby streams, and concern that water flooding over the highway could freeze and cause a potentially lethal hazard to highway users. At times there are three tankers queueing up to tanker water from the pumping station and these block up the highway and damage verges on the road.

Representatives from Thames Water clarified that, in their opinion, the problems with the pumping station were due to illegal connections to the foul system coupled with water infiltration from old "pitch pipes" and the current ambient high water level, which required the attention of the Land Drainage Authority (Cherwell District Council, but delegated to Oxfordshire County Council).

Residents attending the meeting agreed that the system design required a rethink, and Thames Water representative urged all affected residents to complete their incident forms detailing all events that have occurred over the last 3/5 years in the expectation that a full picture of the problems at Stratton Audley will assist Thames Water in building a case to look at further design options to resolve the problems. To do this Thames place a notional value on the economic and social effects of flooding incidents, and this value needs to exceed £25000 before they can ask their board to look at funding improvement works. When questioned it seems this figures is arrived at by the number of recorded incidents at Stratton Audley - it seems that records may have been lost or never recorded properly at Thames Water as apparently the Parish is low down the scale and unbelievably have only recorded a value of £3000 which appears to be as a result of the call outs this year only.

A resident made the point that the house to house survey and investigations carried out last year must have cost many tens of thousands of pounds and when questioned about this, none of the Thame team were even aware that this had taken place!

The meeting considered that the whole explanation as to how these values were arrived at was unintelligible and the representatives present were unable to give a reasonable explanation for them. Residents expressed their annoyance that year after year their complaints seem to fall on deaf ears. The Chairman reflected the frustration of residents and made the point that the system was clearly not fit for purpose and that the Thames Water team should communicate this in no uncertain terms up the line in their organisation. When asked how the Parish could get the case for remedial works taken more seriously the only solution on offer was that residents fill out a Sewer Flooding Questionnaire for every incident, including past incidents over the last 3/5 years. Copies were handed out and the Parish Council agreed to co-ordinate their return to Thames Water via a central contact in the Parish.

The Parish Council itself will be looking at all other options available to it – including legal action, political pressure through its District or County Councillors, or its MP and contact with OFWAT and the Managing Director of Thames Water, as it does not feel that a promise to continue to tanker off any surplus water which is causing flooding is an acceptable remedy to the problems experienced year after year by the Village. The Parish Council acknowledged the internal pressures and restrictions that are placed on members of the team, thanked them for attending and would be inviting them to return to attend the Open meeting in May to report back to the Parish on action proposed/taken.

#### **124. Minutes of the meeting of 6th January 2016**

The Council agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were an accurate record of the proceedings.

#### **125. Progress on Parish matters**

SSE Resilience Grant application – The Council has ordered a defibrillator, which will be installed in the Church porch, and has also arranged defibrillator/first aid training on 14<sup>th</sup> March and 9<sup>th</sup> April respectively. The Parish Emergency Plan will be developed once the first aid training has taken place.

The location of the storage shed for the resilience equipment (including a generator and heaters) needs to be considered further. The proposal was for this to be housed in the church since this will be the central point for assembly in the event of any emergency. The Parish Council had proposed paying for the building of a larger shed to replace the existing shed in the church yard which could then be large enough to store the generator, but this idea had been rejected.

##### Christmas lights

The Parish Council will arrange for lights on a tree outside the Church to be discussed with the Church wardens.

##### Path on the Bicester Road

The Chairman reported that OCC had resurfaced the path on the Bicester Road, following work by Councillors to clear the path undertaken earlier in the year. The Clerk was asked to write on behalf of the Parish Council to the cabinet member for Roads to express the Council's thanks.

##### Rural Busses

Cllr Nicholson reported that it appeared that subsidies for rural busses (including the No 8 in Oxfordshire, and the numbers 22 and 23) would be withdrawn in July 2016 and the services will then be terminated. The Council agreed that Thames Travel should be approached to enquire whether they would be prepared to extend their current Bicester Village service to the Parish. It was also suggested that private companies in the Bicester area may be prepared to subsidise a bus service locally

#### **126. Report from District and County Councillors**

None were present.

#### **127. Finance**

The Council noted the monthly report contained in Appendix 1 and authorised the following payments:-

<i>Cheque Number</i>	<i>Payee</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>Amount</i>
500198	Bletchington Silver band	Deposit for Music for festival	£45.00
500199	Tutorcare	Defib/training	£2268.00
500200	The Red Lion	Room hire	£20.00
500201	OALC	subscription	£133.97
500202	HMRC	tax	£75.20
500203	Mrs A Davies	Cl salary	£334.19
500204	John Hicks and Associates	Playground advice	£150.00

The Parish Council noted the progress of expenditure against its budget for 2015/6.

#### **128. Community Led Plan /Neighbourhood Plan** *To receive an update on plan activities*

Cllr Flack reported that he had attended a workshop on Neighbourhood Planning at Bicester, when parties had discussed the main planning issues arising in each parish that was represented at the meeting. It was agreed that he would hand the information he had been given to Jon Hill, who was leading the Stratton Audley neighbourhood Plan initiative. At the meeting reference had been made to concerns that the proposed development of Bicester would swallow all the neighbouring villages and he had also been made aware that the Stratton Audley quarry site at Elm farm had been designated as an outdoor recreation area, provided use is compatible with the site being also designated as one of special scientific interest. All parishes attending the workshop had commented on issues arising out of Thames Water's insufficient management of rural sewage disposal.

The CLP group's main focus at present is now organising the Food and Music festival on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The Festival has obtained offers of sponsorship and promotional support totalling £950 from Finders Keepers, Thomas Merrifield and Bicester Heritage and donations to the raffle have been forthcoming. Bicester Village is sponsoring a professional face painter and Mr John O'Neill has kindly agreed to sponsor the Hog Roast; there will also be a bouncy castle, other children's entertainment, tea and cakes in the Church and a mini beer event. The target is 30 food stalls and so far we have 18 commitments. The Church had been asked to take responsibility for the Tombola but had declined as they did not know of volunteers to assist. The group are now looking for someone else to run the Tombola.

Live music has been organised to run throughout the day, and the Bletchington Silver Band have been booked. The CLP group are now planning for a profit in the region of £3- 4000, subject to the event being extensively advertised, most of which will go toward the Church Porch. The event will also recognise the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, and the Clerk was asked to confirm this to the Lord Lieutenant's office.

#### **129. Parish Council Web site**

Ongoing

### 130. Playground

The Clerk has met with a representative of John Hicks and Associates – the company that inspects the playground in Stratton Audley and discussed the Council's proposals for a new playground with him, including the possible retention of the camel. It would appear that, provided sufficient clearance from the basket swing is maintained, this would be an option. The Clerk now needs to discuss proposals with the Council's preferred supplier, and also agree a start date and a payment schedule. The Clerk reported that the start date for ground works would need to be put back as the contractor was still finishing another site due to the recent severe weather. The current proposal is to start the work after the Easter Holidays in order that the playground is available to parents. It was agreed that the completion date must be before the Food and Music Festival on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

### 131. Planning Applications

To consider all recent Applications received from Cherwell District Council or on the District Council website up to the date of the meeting including:

- Single storey rear extension 4 The Stables Launton Road Stratton Audley Bicester OX27 9AX

Ref no: 16/00237/F

- Discharge of Condition 3 (Stone sample panel) and Condition 4 (Landscaping scheme) of 15/01376/F

Willows Gate Stoke Lyne Road Stratton Audley

Ref. No: 16/00016/DISC

- New open fronted farm machinery storage shed - 25m length - 10m width - 6m max height to eaves

Proposed Machinery Shed West Farm Barns Launton Road Stratton Audley

Ref. No: 16/00054/F

- Magnolia Grandiflora to reduce height by up to 2.5m and reduce sides by up to 1.5m

Stratton Audley Manor Mill Road Stratton Audley

Ref. No: 16/00012/TCA

- Permanent use of land as Rally school including use of land for quad bikes, buggies and jeeps

Pool Farm Mill Lane Stratton Audley Bicester OX27 9AJ

Ref. No: 15/02314/F

All – No objections

### 132. To note Notices of Decisions

- Demolition of existing dutch barn and erection of 4 No dwellings and formation of new access; siting, layout and massing (Resubmission of 15/00640/OUT)

The Green Barn Stoke Lyne Road Stratton Audley Bicester OX27 9AT

Ref. No: 15/02321/OUT – refused - The Parish Council expressed its surprise at this decision

- Single storey rear extension. Two storey side extension. Loft conversion

16 Glen Close Stratton Audley Bicester OX27 9BY

Ref. No: 15/02109/F - approved

**133. Correspondence received** – *to note correspondence received not otherwise on the agenda where decisions are not required.*

The Clerk reported that the police were holding an Open event at TVPA Headquarters on 16<sup>th</sup> March.

**134. Reports from meetings** – *to receive any reports; for information.*

Neighbourhood planning meeting reported earlier.

**135. Items for information or next Agenda –**

The Clerk was asked to request OCC to cut the hedge between Cherry Street and Glen Close, as it now overhangs the footpath, thus forcing pedestrians into the road.

It was agreed that the Council should consider the state of the roads and pavements in the Parish.

The Council will look to holding a “clear up” day before the end of March. Fly tipped items will be reported to CDC.

**136. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7pm in the Hunt Room of the Red Lion.

Please note the new numbering system for items in the minutes. They now run on sequentially from one month to the next across each statutory year and then begin again from no.1 at the start of the new financial year.

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**Stratton Audley Parish Council****Monthly Financial Report**

Parish Council Meeting

29 February 2016

Payments processed since last meeting £3,100.05

06-Jan-16	festive Lights	500190	£40.95
06-Jan-16	CDC	500191	£46.80
06-Jan-16	HMRC	500192	£37.40
06-Jan-16	cancelled	500193	
06-Jan-16	Mrs A Davies	500194	£183.97
06-Jan-16	M Gore	500195	£360.00
06-Jan-16	The Red Lion	500196	£20.00
06-Jan-16	S Edwards	500197	£97.93
04-Feb-16	Bletchington Silver Band	500198	£45.00
04-Feb-16	Tutorcare	500199	£2,268.00

Receipts processed since last meeting £9,571.07

06-Jan-16	SSE Resilience grant	£9,508.00
12-Feb-16	X Mas party	£54.00
05-Oct-15	Bank Interest	£9.07

Bank  
Reconciliation

Statement dated

28 February 2016

Savings Account	£14,873.87
Current account	£880.59

Items not yet cleared:

Receipts None

Payments	cancelled	£0.00
	Bletchington Silver Band	£45.00

Net Total

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**£15,709.46**