



# STOCK PARISH COUNCIL

**Tuesday 8 April 2025**

**In attendance:** Paul Fenwick (Chair) (PF), Mark Rolph (Vice-Chair) (MR), Paulette McAllister (PM), Sophie Porter (SP), Rob Pritchard (RP)

## **1. Welcome by Chairman**

Chair Paul Fenwick opened the meeting at 7.33pm.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

John Pye (JP), Mandy Baker (MB), Mark Eade (ME), Marnie Dillon (Parish Clerk) (MD)

## **3. Minutes of last meeting**

Approved unanimously without comment.

## **4. Declaration of Councillor Interests relating to the Agenda**

No councillors raised any interests.

## **5. Public participation**

PF read out the Parish Council's Public Participation policy.

## **6. Planning Matters**

**Address: Brook Farm Riding Stables, Stock Road**

**Reference: 25/00135/OUT**

An outline application has been made for the construction of eight new dwellings. A member of the public explained the context of the application. Planning application was granted for 12 units in 2017. A road has been half-built, no new dwellings have been built. Two other dwellings have been built. There could be a total of 20 dwellings within the footprint of the former Riding Stables. The member of the public suggested that the planned development would fill Green Belt. PF suggested the area could be Grey Belt, as it was the former horse exercise area. The member of the public expressed concern over the length of time spoil has been piled on the former exercise area – nine or ten years –

and that a second application has been made when the first development has not been completed. The member of the public also suggested the two dwellings which have been built are totally out of keeping with the village, and a different design would be more in keeping with the local environment. PF said the proposed eight dwellings do not appear to be of the same materials, but the member of public suggested they would be of the same materials. The member of the public suggested the development needs to be right and in keeping. MR asked what Outline Planning means. PMc explained that the development of the road means the 2017 permission stands. PMc explained that it is not comprehensive redevelopment and therefore represents Green Belt sprawl. PMc said it is a piecemeal application in a number of ways and the Parish Council should ask for a detailed masterplan for the site which is subject to public consultation. PMc said the Parish Council should say this is an opportunity to get this development right and meaningful. The National Design Guide and Village Design Statement produced since initial application in 2017 have changed the planning PMc said there is an opportunity to create a beautiful place which reflects the heritage of the site and asked how it will be linked to Section 106 to provide a meaningful contribution to the village. PF asked why the application suggests access is being sought, when a road has already been half-built. PMc said the Parish Council should request a full and detailed application. PF said the Parish Council is not against the development per se, but requests full details.

**Address: 40 Mill Road**

**Reference: 25/00371/FUL**

The Parish Council made no comment on an application for a single storey orangery extension to the rear of the house.

**Address: Fig Tree House, 29A High Street**

**Reference: 25/05616/CAT**

The Parish Council will leave this application to reduce the height of a conifer to the arborealcultivist.

## **7. Essex County Councillor Report**

No report was provided by the Essex County Councillor.

## **8. Highways & Maintenance**

### **Parking**

MR read out a report provided by in full.

### **Parking**

#### **Parking restrictions in the village centre proposed by South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP)**

“The Proposal for restricted parking Consultation Period finished on 14 March 2025. There were many responses for and against the Proposals. There were also several alternative suggestions on how to deal with the Parking issues. I understand that SEPP are now considering the responses and will be writing to everybody that responded including Stock Parish Council. I believe that there may be a meeting in the Middle of May in The Council Chamber. All those that chose to respond will be invited to attend. This matter is now very much in the hands of South Essex Parking Partnership and not Stock Parish Council.”

#### **Parking near Stock Primary School**

“As above. I have advised the Head Teacher that the Proprietors of both The Bear and The Harvard do not have a problem with Parents using their Car Parks at School start & finish times.”

PF and MR discussed the potential use of pub car parks and said further discussions would need to be held before any arrangement could be formalised.

### **Speeding & Road Safety**

“As you will recall all of our efforts to have Average Speed Cameras, Speed Reductions in and around the Village and improvements to the Pedestrian Crossing and Bus Stop position were rejected by Essex Highways. We therefore met with and raised our concerns with our MP Sir John Whittingdale. He agreed to take our concerns to Tom Cunningham the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation and have all of our LHP’s revisited. Meetings have been held with Cllr. Lee Scott Cabinet Member (on behalf of Cllr. Tom Cunningham) and our Essex County Councillor Sue Dobson.

“The latest on three of the nine Local Highway Panel requests are as follows:

1. It has been agreed that the Bus Stop at the top of Stock Hill will be moved to a safer position.
2. The Pedestrian crossing that was justified in becoming a Puffin Crossing but could not be installed due to technical issues. Will be looked at again.
3. The Speed Limit from Crondon Park to Stock Village is being looked at urgently as the National Speed Limit (60MPH) becomes 30 MPH with no buffer Zone of 40MPH.

### **Vehicle Activated Signs**

“These devices have been well received by our Parishioners and seem to be having the desired effect with most drivers slowing if they see Red. We were very pleased to note that on two occasions the Speed Watch Team recorded no body speeding at the junction of Common Road and the B1007. We are in the process of arranging the Download of the Data from the High Street Devices which includes the time of Vehicles passing and the Speed recorded. We need to discuss how we can use this Data effectively. It is hoped that this comprehensive Data will assist in us obtaining Average Speed Cameras.”

### **Community Speedwatch**

MR confirmed that two morning 9-10am Speedwatch sessions did not catch any speeders, but that the Speedwatch team sat at the junction of Stock Road/Common Road caught 15 speeders between 2-3pm one afternoon. It is clear that, despite the VAS being in place, Stock Road/Common Road continues to be a problem area. MR explained that the Rectory Close site is where the highest speed (51mph) was recorded. MR also explained that TruCAM trained teams have been in the village detecting speeders and the data collected can lead to fines and penalty points being issued. There will be two one-hour sessions at Rectory Road each month, while Speedwatch teams continue to work at three other sites.

MR suggested a monthly report with the VAS/Speedwatch and TruCAM data is shared with Sir John Whittingdale MP, Cllr Lee Scott, Cllr Sue Dobson and SERP.

### **Highways Reporting**

MR read out another report from JP:

“We still have many items such as Potholes, very poor pavement conditions, blocked drains, kerbs, missing bollards & signs and unreadable road markings outstanding. We have confirmation that the missing give way sign at the Common Road/Mill Road junction will be replaced. We are trying to sort out the blocked drains on Common Road and Birch Lane. The Pavement outside The Village Store will be repaired. We have requested that the Count Down signs 300 Yards, 200Yards & 100 Yards from Crondon Park to Stock Village on the B1007 are repaired or replaced. I have tried to get the whole length of Pavement repaired along the High Street but at the moment this has been rejected.”

MR agreed that the repairs to the pavement in the High Street need to be prioritised and the Parish Council should contact Cllr Sue Dobson to highlight the issue.

### **Street Care**

MR read out another report from JP:

“We have a regular visit from Litter Pickers every other Tuesday. If Fly Tipping is reported it is dealt with very quickly.”

### **Village Gateways**

“These have now been installed to the agreed design and painted gloss White with Black posts. Most of the existing Gates were retained and these have also been painted. We have purpose made signs on Order to fix to the gates saying STOCK VILLAGE Please drive carefully. The Company that manufacturers these signs require payment before they make them (The Invoice for this is on our April list of Payments to be made).

- **Bus Shelter opposite the Hoop** – Clean, re-varnish and tidy up. Order placed
- **Kissing Gate half way down Mill Walk** – Repaired and repainted.
- **Remove fence around old pond on The Common** – We need agreement to this by the Council. The cost to remove and dispose of is £240.

“This is additional to the works to tidy up the Playground side of the Common which is due to happen on 16 April.”

### **General Maintenance**

Councillors suggested there is no need to remove the fence around the filled-in pond on the Common. SP suggested the planned Memorial Trees can be planted behind the fence, along with a bench, to make it an area for quiet reflection.

### **Litter Pick**

MR reported that a village Litter Pick was carried out on Saturday 29 March and there was a good turnout of villagers of all ages who filled 30 bags with rubbish. Downham Road was identified as the worst road for litter. MR commended the team and villagers who worked on Stock Road to the north of the village up to the Shell petrol station.

## **9. Environment**

### **Common Tree Survey, Drainage and Car Park Project**

MR read out JP’s report that work on the project is nearly complete, save for reflectors to be attached to posts in Common Road. PF said Michael Hurst only wants reflectors on every third or fourth post.

JP’s report also started ‘we have had many complimentary comments about the works’ and that kerbing is required along the edge between the road surface and filled in ditch, which would require permission from Essex County Councillor Sue Dobson.

PF said Michael Hurst suggested there are two options – to cobble along the side of the road, or to use a reconstituted kerb in a Conservation Area, then for Essex Highways to fill in the ragged edging of the road.

### **Trees**

MR read out JP’s report on trees:

“We have now cut down most of the Dead Trees on the Common and cleared epicormic growth and suckers. In accordance with the planning Permission these trees must be replaced. The suggestion of Memorial Trees needs to be discussed further. I am in contact with a local Arborist who is prepared to assist us. The logs from these trees were offered to Parishioners who had Log Burners or required them to protect the grass verges outside their houses. They all went.

### **Further Tree work is planned for 16 April 2025:**

COMMON PLAYGROUND – Cut back all overhanging trees and bushes & cut off Ivy from tree.

FROM COMMON PLAYGROUND TO COMMON ROAD – Cut back all overhanging trees and bushes and remove Epicormic growth & Suckers.

COMMON AREAS BETWEEN ORCHARD HOUSE AND STOCK SURGERY – General cut back and tidy up these untidy areas including removing Ivy and dead branches.

#### **Future Tree Works**

“We need to survey the existing trees in the village to establish any dead wooding that needs to be carried out – arranged for during April.”

SP commented that she had historically spoken to tree surgeon David Swift, who has since retired, about the possibility of appointing a single person/company to look after all the trees the Parish Council has responsibility for in the village. PMc suggested a tree audit be carried out to enable the Parish Council to produce a management plan and budget for the provision and care of trees, including the proposed Memorial Trees, which members of the public would choose from a provided list and pay for their planting, then the Parish Council would care for them. Councillors agreed to proceed with speaking to local tree surgeons to gauge their interest and ability to produce and execute a management plan.

The Parish Council will contact villagers who expressed an interest in planting Memorial Trees to explain that the project will progress in the autumn once a full management plan has been carried out and planting season begins.

#### **Flooding**

MR reported that Smallgains Lane remains the outstanding issue, as blockages are still preventing the water flow. MR said an impasse involving Essex Highways is preventing the blockage in the brook being cleared. Essex Water Management are keen to clear the blockages under the bridge and culvert, with the support of volunteers, in the near future.

### **10. Other Business**

#### **Playground on The Common**

PF provided no update.

#### **VE Day – 8 May**

SP reported that the Fish and Chip vans she had contacted had not responded. RP to speak to Stock Cricket Club to ask if they would be interested in hosting a barbecue. PF said bunting would be put up and SP will provide a playlist of period music. The event will begin at 6.30pm and needs to be properly advertised.

#### **Christmas Market**

SP suggested there will be 40 stalls, which PF is proceeding to book. PF to ask the Parish Clerk if she is prepared to coordinate the allocation of stalls. SP to look into sourcing animals (potentially reindeer, sheep, donkeys). SP to source local craftspeople. A working group has been set up to plan the event, meeting on Monday 28 April at 7pm.

#### **2.5% price increase for grass cutting (C R Swift)**

Councillors agreed this increase and to renew the contract for a further three years unanimously.

### **11. Finance**

The following payments to be made in April were approved:

Sage Monthly Fee	£30.00
Essex Pension Fund (MAR Deficit)	£7.44

O2 Monthly Bill	£13.57
HMRC Employer Contributions (FEB Pay)	£35.12
Clerk Wages (March Pay)	£1,049.84
HMRC Employer Contributions (MAR Pay)	£40.46
S Type Security (Feb 25 Patrols)	£504.00
Branches Tree Services (Invoice number: 260325)	£1,700.00
C R Swift (Gravel Path)	£6,795.77
Tyler's Elite Finishing (Back Lane Bench)	£420.00
Harrys Son (Construction of 4 Village Gateways)	£2,300.00
Harrys Son (Painting of New & Existing Village Gateways)	£1,510.00
Harrys Son (Painting of the Kissing Gate in Mill Walk)	£240.00
JAF Graphics (Village Gateway Signs)	£2,291.00
Branches Tree Services (Invoice number: 160425)	£800.00

#### Bank Balances:

Monies (£45,000 x2) have been transferred from Barclays Bank to two accounts at Unity Trust Bank.

Barclays Bank Community Account	£2,246.34
Unity Trust Bank Current Account	£47,120.84
Unity Trust Savings Account	£95,558.57

MR reminded councillors that applications for funding had been made by Stock Primary School PTA and Stock Village Hall trustees at a recent monthly meeting. PF said we will wait a month to discuss these funding applications.

## 12. Chelmsford City Councillor Report

No Chelmsford City Councillor Report was provided.

## 13. Chair's Report

PF explained that a pre-action legal letter has been received from the Environmental Law Association acting on behalf of Ms E. Miller, relating to an alleged breach of an historic law that suggests work should not be done on a registered Village Green, which the Parish Council did in 1971. The Parish Council's solicitors have engaged and replied in detail and states that the Parish Council is not in breach and explained that the car park has been there in place for over 20 years, that the car park had been extended into an area which had been used previously by cars, and resurfaced. The Parish Council's solicitors will defend the action rigorously and pursue costs should the action be pursued. The Environmental Law Association has apologised for the delay in responding and promised a response from their own solicitor. The cost to the Parish Council to date is around £7,000.

The Chair received an email from a villager in Well Lane explaining her upset at development of a neighbouring property, and that PF and MR offered her advice and enforcement action is underway. The Chair received two letters regarding pond drainage at Honey Pot Lakes, and it has been reported to Public Health.

National Grid have contacted the Parish Council regarding a further statutory consultation period on the Norwich to Tilbury pylons from 18 March-17 April. The Parish Council will formally object to the proposals.

## 14. Clerk's Report

The Clerk will commence maternity leave on 9 May.

**15. Village Information Exchange**

SP has hedging which is to be planted in Dakyn Drive.

Chair Paul Fenwick closed the meeting at 9.32pm.

The Parish Council's annual general meeting will take place at Stock Cricket Club pavilion on Tuesday 13 May 2025 at 7.30pm.