

# South Stoke Parish Council: The Park Project Committee Stage 1 Report & recommendations

## 1. Introduction & contents

In Spring 2022, South Stoke Parish Council (SSPC) consulted the community on various matters one of which concerned the land known as The Park, which was gifted to the Parish in 2016 by Christ Church, on a 999-year lease.

SSPC formed a committee with a remit<sup>1</sup> to evaluate the consultation returns and make recommendations to SSPC on the path forward.

The purpose of this report is to provide the deliverable required to complete Stage 1 of the remit. The report is arranged in the following sections:

Section 1	Introduction & contents
Section 2	Outcomes of the Spring 2022 SSPC Consultation
Section 3	Outcomes of Subsequent Consultations
Section 4	Changes to the consulted design
Section 5	Treatment of Licensees
Section 6	Vision
Section 7	Recommendations

Detailed supporting information is included in the appendices:

Appendix A	Analysis of SSPC Consultation Data
Appendix B	Reports of Subsequent Consultations
Appendix C	Vision for The Park and Summary of Benefits
Appendix D	Implementation of community garden
Appendix E	Ongoing Operation of community garden
Appendix F	Record of meeting with The Governors of St Andrew's School
Appendix G	Record of the meeting with The Parochial Church Council
Appendix H	SSWCG supporting documentation
Appendix I	Records of meetings with Neighbours and Licence Holders

## 2. Outcomes of the Spring 2022 SSPC Consultation

- 2.1. There is strong support for the SSWCG plan
- 2.2. There is strong support for The Park being a green space
- 2.3. The provision of land for an outdoor learning area for the school is well supported
- 2.4. The provision of land for an extension to the existing burial ground is well supported

**All of the above are consistent with the SSWCG plan**

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<sup>1</sup> Draft PARK PROJECT COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE (JULY 2022)

- 2.5. The disposal of land to neighbours is not sufficiently supported
- 2.6. The provision of tennis court and bowling green on The Park is not sufficiently supported

An analysis of comments received is included in Appendix A. The most common comments were:

- a. Vehicle movements on the site should be tightly restricted
- b. There should be no classroom buildings on the land allocated to the school
- c. A footpath from Ferry Road to Cross Keys Road should be established

### **3. Outcomes of Subsequent Consultations**

3.1. **St Andrew's Primary School** has confirmed that it is content with the area of land suggested in the SSPC community garden plan and will negotiate a rental and maintenance agreement with the PC. There is strong synergy between the outdoor learning space and the rest of the community garden site.

3.2. **The Parochial Church Council** has confirmed that it wishes to sublease land from SSPC for an extension to the St Andrew's church graveyard for burials of people from South Stoke. A need will exist in 2 – 3 years and approximately 500m<sup>2</sup> would meet the requirements for the next 25-30 years. Further areas might be required after that period.

3.3. **South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group** has provided detailed supporting information and has offered to support SSPC in its implementation and operation phases.

In particular, the SSWCG has clarified that it:

- Has no direct interest in taking part of The Park under licence or sublease.
- Envisages that SSPC will establish the community garden and, in time, hand responsibility for its management to a community garden association or similar body which will be charged with sustaining the integrity of the initial concepts.
- A plan period of 30 years is considered sensible bearing in mind probable grant conditions and the reasonable time for trees to reach maturity.
- The biodiversity of The Park will be significantly enhanced by the proposed plan.
- Local allotments in Streatley and Woodcote are oversubscribed. SSWCG believes that demand for The Park allotments is also likely to be high.
- Two potential and very credible grant sources have been identified. The amounts available could be sufficient to fund the whole of the identified capital expenditure. No formal application for funding has been made as this is dependent on SSPC's decision to proceed and would be done by SSPC.

3.4. **Neighbours** Most neighbours support the consulted plan. However, there are some common concerns:

- loss of privacy
- increased security risk

- increased noise pollution
- vehicle noise and pollution
- additional vehicle movements through the narrow lane to the village hall
- additional vehicle movements in Cross Keys Road
- car parking close to boundary
- need to keep compost bins away from neighbours boundaries due to increased vermin risk
- unsightly structures
- community growing is supported, but there are some concerns about rented allotments.

These concerns have been addressed, as far as is possible, in the revised plan and in the recommendations included in this report – please refer to 4.1 and the recommendations below.

3.5. **Park Licence Holders** Both licence holders wish to retain their licences for as long as possible, and with as much notice as possible.

#### **4. Changes to the consulted design**

4.1. In order to address the concerns raised since the consultation, The Park Project Committee has amended the consulted design as follows:

- Additional boundary hedges and screening near neighbours' property
- Vehicular access to The Park limited to initial establishment works and essential annual maintenance.
- Wood chip and manure bays moved away from boundary.
- Car park reduced in size and moved away from boundary.
- Additional access gate to school field
- Pond and borehole moved away from graveyard extension to comply with Environment Agency regulations

4.2. The changes address most of the neighbours' concerns whilst preserving the integrity of the consulted plan; the changes are included in the amended drawing "Proposed Community Gardens at South Stoke December 2022 V7" in Appendix C.

4.3. Allocation and management of growing areas. The plan that SSPC consulted on included a cultivated area comprising 11 allotment sized plots, an area of raised beds and a polytunnel. The proposal was that this area would be divided up into smaller plots for community use and for rental to local groups, families and individuals. The assumption was that this would be an adequately sized area to provide growing space for anyone who wanted it.

4.4. The committee has received comments from some neighbours that allotments, even when subdivided, may be seen to exclude some parts of the community.

4.5. The committee believes that it is important that nobody is excluded from having the opportunity to grow food. We know that demand for growing space is high, and with current economic conditions it is likely to get higher. Therefore, the balance between areas to be managed communally and by individuals and groups should be determined by an assessment of the actual demand.

## 5. Treatment of Licensees

### Grazier

- 5.1. It will be necessary to reduce the size of the grazed area to allow implementation to start. Serving notice on the grazier will therefore be required at an early stage.
- 5.2. It might be advantageous to keep the grazier on parts of the site, during the implementation phase, if this can be agreed.

### Chicken plot

- 5.3. The timescale for this license holder is more relaxed. Notice will not need to be served until the PCC has obtained consents for the graveyard extension, and there is scope for a longer period depending on PCC plans and rate of burials.

## 6. Vision

The site design will encourage public access to communal areas, to promote the enjoyment and understanding of the site's biodiversity, whilst maintaining security and integrity of standing crops

To reflect the wishes of the majority of the community as expressed through the Spring consultation, the committee's vision is that The Park will be planned and developed as a green public space and community garden for the benefit of all the community and, specifically to:

- allocate space for an outdoor learning area for the school as a key part of the plan.
- cater for the need for more burial space in South Stoke, an extension to the existing burial ground is included in the plan.
- improve the biodiversity of the environment,
- promote the community's understanding and engagement with wildlife and nature
- provide new opportunities for physical, social and learning activities in the community
- produce wholesome organic food

A community garden will be created, with a minimal environmental impact, using sustainable products with low embodied carbon and with recycled materials wherever possible. The garden will include an orchard, wildflower areas, cultivation plots and a pond with the minimum of supporting infrastructure. It will be built and operated by the community.

## 7. Recommendations

**The Park Project Committee recommends that South Stoke Parish Council:**

1. Confirms its vision for The Park.
2. Gives the go-ahead for the Park Project Committee to commence both the implementation and operation phases. (As defined in Appendices C, D and E) noting that the plan includes an extension to the graveyard and a dedicated outdoor learning area for the school.

3. Gives the go-ahead for The Park Project Committee to apply for grant funding to build the community garden noting that current, time-limited funding sources have been identified that do not impact potential funding sources for other village projects.
4. Gives the go-ahead to The Park Project Committee to conduct a pre-application consultation with South Oxfordshire District Council to determine which elements of the plan implementation require permission under Town and Country Planning legislation and notify Christ Church of SSPC's intentions.
5. Gives the go-ahead for the Parochial Church Council to apply for Planning and Environmental consents for the graveyard extension as marked on the plan and to ask the PCC for monthly progress reports.
6. Serves appropriate notice on the grazier.
7. Makes arrangements for an earmarked reserve account for The Park Project.
8. Establishes procedures for banking and VAT relating to The Park Project
9. Briefs the community about the decision and the delivery plan.
10. Defines the new licences or subleases to be granted and initiates the legal work.
11. Instructs the Park Committee to notify the community of the availability of growing plots and to carefully assess the demand for community growing space and for rented growing space, and then, in consultation with SSPC, make an appropriate decision as to the size of the growing area and the allocation of growing space between communal, group, family and individual users. The committee shall also determine how any communally-used growing space will be managed.
12. Gives the go-ahead for The Park Project Committee to draft an operating strategy for the Community Garden, as set out in Appendix E.

### **The Park Project Committee, December 2022.**

### **Final Draft for Approval by the Committee**

## **Appendix A Analysis of SSPC Consultation Data**

### **Overview**

Returns from the consultation were sent to SSPC as paper and electronically. SSPC issued a total of 178 redacted returns to the committee for evaluation; of these, 17 paper returns were found to be duplicated in the electronic returns or were invalid and have been excluded. The Park Project Committee evaluated 45 paper and 116 electronic returns a total of 161 returns.

The consultation return form proposed 6 possible uses for the whole or part of The Park:

- Green space
- Burial ground extension
- Community garden proposal by the South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group (SSWCG)
- Tennis court or bowling green
- School play area
- Neighbour purchase

Respondents were invited to indicate they 'support' or 'do not support' and rank each of the 6 possible uses in order of preference from 1 to 6 where 1 was most preferred.

In addition, respondents were invited to complete the return with the following five text fields:

- Comments on each possible use
- Statement of support for the SSWCG proposal
- Statement of support for the SSWCG proposal with comments
- Statement of 'do not support' the SSWCG proposal
- Statement of 'no strong view'

It was noted that many of the returns were partially completed and many contained comments not relating to The Park but to other unrelated community matters.

### **Outcomes of the Analysis of Records with Comments Included.**

The first and most apparent outcome is the strong support for the SSWCG proposal with 60% of respondents supporting, 24% against and 16% with no strong view.

There was support for The Park being a green area and for an outdoor learning area for the school and for an extension to the existing burial ground, all of which are consistent with the SSWCG proposal.

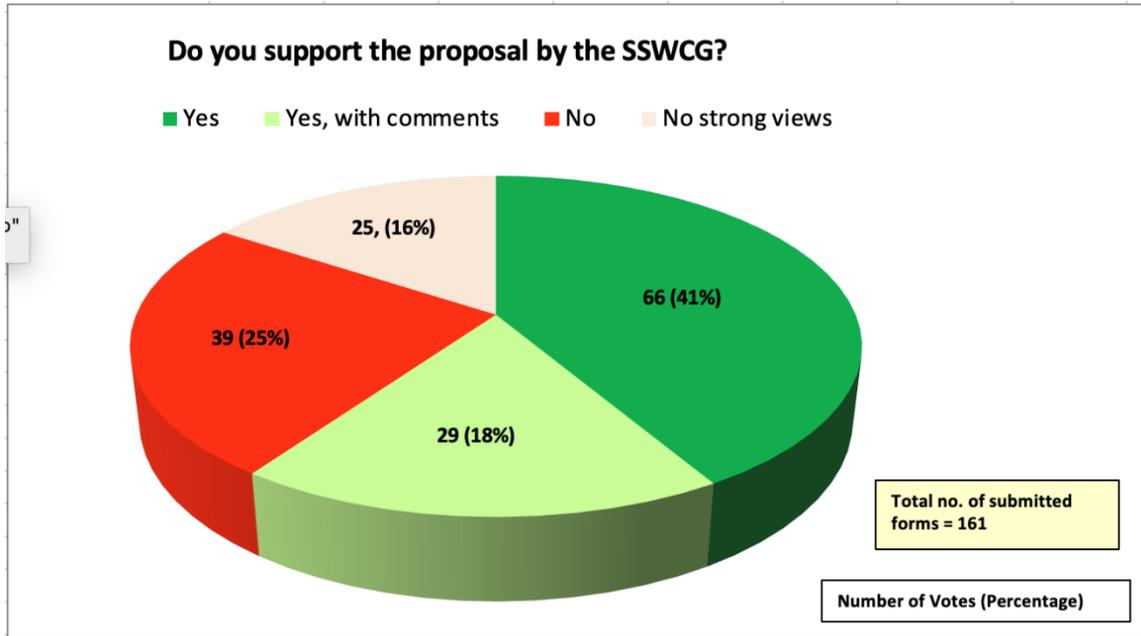
Neither garden extensions nor a tennis/bowling green received sufficient support to be progressed. (The Park Project Committee also noted the intrinsically difficult competitive tendering process that would be required if parcels of The Park were to be sub-leased.)

The Park Project Committee also noted some materially important comments e.g.,

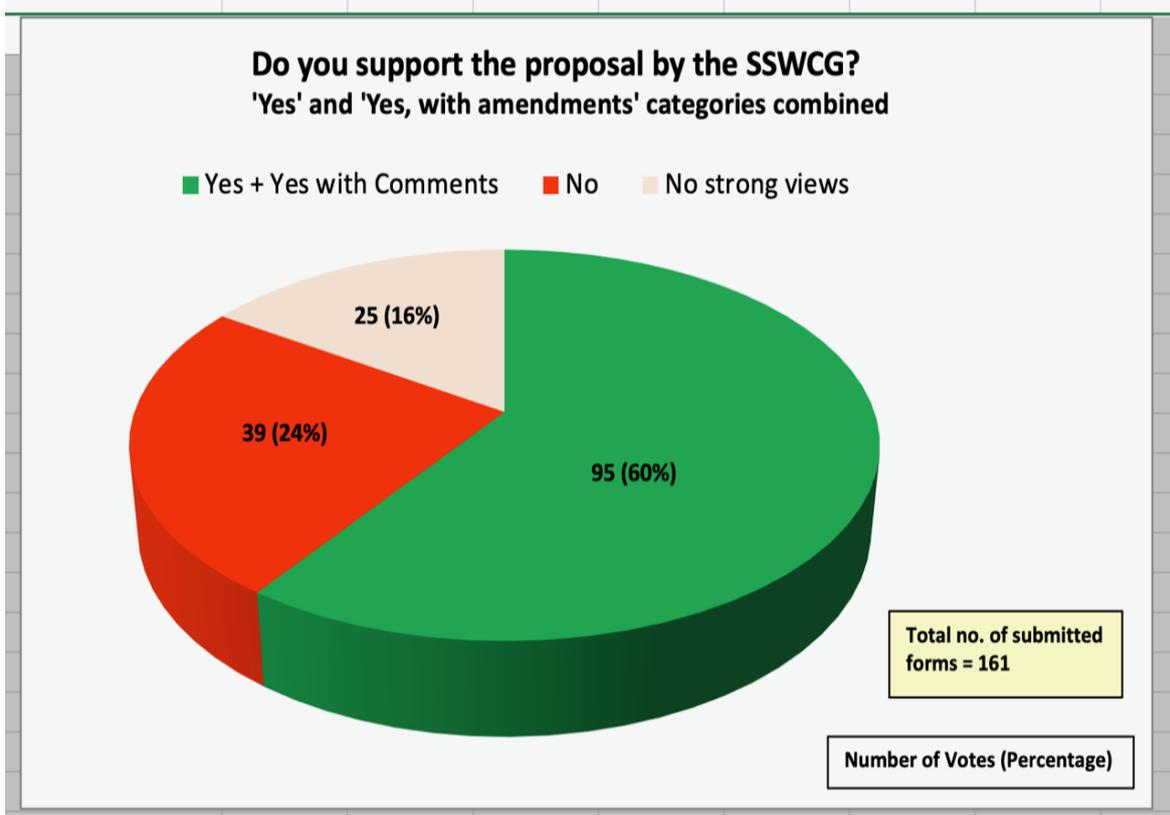
- the SSPC needs to confirm the final agreement with the Mend the Gap group on tree planting in The Park area.
- Pedestrian access for the community from Ferry Road to Cross Keys Road was important
- Vehicle management on the site was important: roads and vehicles on the site must be limited.
- A preference for sports facilities to be on the recreation ground

- The importance of harnessing the enthusiasm and drive of the SSWCG
- To scrutinise the arrangements and funding for maintenance of The Park once the work was commenced.

Initially, the data was analysed to show 'support for the plan with comments' and 'support for the plan without comments' – the first pie chart below reflects this analysis.



The committee then reviewed each comment and adjusted the totals to reflect 'support', 'do not support' or no strong view – the result of this review is provided in the second pie chart below:



## **Appendix B Reports of Subsequent Consultations**

Summaries of the key outcomes of further consultations held since the SSPC's spring consultation. Read in conjunction with the supporting documentation provided in Appendices F, G, H and I.

### **1. St Andrew's Primary School**

The school will use the land for outdoor learning; the benefits to children with access to outdoor learning have been well documented (Appendix F)

The school will use the wider site to enhance the learning experience; this may include the vegetable plots, the wildflower meadows, the trees, the polytunnel and the pond.

The dedicated school space will require boundary hedging or fencing, two personnel access gates and one machine access gate for mowing etc.

A record of the consultation meeting forms Appendix F.

### **2. Parochial Church Council**

The PCC advised that it is empowered by a Faculty of the Diocese of Oxford to acquire and manage a graveyard extension for natural burials, providing the land is not to be consecrated and is available at a peppercorn rent.

There are only 14 vacant burial sites left in the current burial area, which will last about 2-3 years at the current rate of 5 or 6 burials per year. It was noted that the PCC does not wish to reuse areas in the churchyard without headstones, because they contain old burials and it is necessary to trace families and this is difficult.

There is also an area in the churchyard for interment of ashes, with some capacity available.

Whilst the national proportion of deaths ending in cremations is 81% in 2022, and is gradually increasing, at South Stoke the PCC notes a slight increase in the proportion of funerals ending in burial.

The PCC believes that a new area of 500m<sup>2</sup> would allow St Andrews to accept burials for a further 25-30 years.

[Note that the area allocated on the modified plan is currently about 22m x 39m = 858m<sup>2</sup> which is more than 40 years capacity at current density and rate

The PCC asks that SSPC identifies a larger area of The Park for possible future graveyard expansion, after this period.

The use of The Park land as a graveyard extension would be subject to the grant of planning permission for change of use. The PCC is also required to obtain Environment Agency (EA) approval for use of the land as a burial ground; The EA may also require changes to the proposed pond and borehole should ground water contamination be a concern.

Should the graveyard extension not be possible then the graveyard will probably reach capacity in 3 years and if the re-use of old plots is not possible then the graveyard will be closed to further burials. If this happens, the PCC states that the

graveyard will become the responsibility of South Oxfordshire District Council, which may save South Stoke PC up to £850 pa in maintenance costs.

A record of the consultation meeting forms Appendix G

### **3. South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group**

A meeting was held at which SSWCG agreed to provide further documentation to clarify its advice on the following issues:

- Relationship to the land-owner
- The timeframe for its plan
- Biodiversity
- Sustainability
- Capital cost and funding
- Operating cost and funding
- Impact on neighbours
- Impact of the burial ground extension

This input is included in Appendix H

### **4. Neighbours and Park licence-holders**

Nine neighbours and licence holders were invited to meet the committee to express any views or concerns that may not have been considered in the spring consultation returns. The properties contacted were:

Oakham, Cross Keys Road  
The Laurels, Cross Keys Road  
Cleeve House, Cross Keys Road  
Tudor Barn, Cross Keys Road  
Stoke Abbas, The Street  
The Little House, The Street  
Perch House, Ferry Road  
Evermore Cottage, Ferry Road  
Suthernwood View, Woodcote Road

The notes from meetings with neighbours and licence holders and other related documentation is provided in Appendix I

## **Appendix C: Vision for The Park and summary of benefits**

### **Vision**

To reflect the wishes of the majority of the community as expressed through the Spring consultation, the committee's vision is that The Park will be planned and developed as a green public space and community garden for the benefit of the community and, specifically to:

- improve the biodiversity of the environment,
- promote the community's understanding and engagement with wildlife and nature
- provide new opportunities for physical, social and learning activities in the community
- produce wholesome organic food

As a key part of the plan, space will be allocated for an outdoor learning area for the school. To cater for the need for more burial space in South Stoke, an extension to the existing burial ground is included in the plan.

A community garden will be created, with a minimal environmental impact, using sustainable products with low embodied carbon and with recycled materials wherever possible. The garden will include an orchard, wildflower areas, cultivation plots and a pond with the minimum of supporting infrastructure. It will be built and operated by the community.

The site design will encourage public access to communal areas, to promote the enjoyment and understanding of the site's biodiversity, whilst maintaining security and integrity of standing crops.

### **Overall benefits**

#### **Environmental**

The biodiversity of the site will be dramatically improved through careful selection and planting of trees, hedges and wildflowers, and the addition of a pond; together these measures will increase the carbon storage capacity of The Park. Gardeners will be encouraged to use techniques to maximise soil health, including compost-making, which will further improve the carbon storage capacity. The enterprise will be off-grid, generating its own power and using its own groundwater and collected rainwater.

#### **Community, wellbeing & mental health**

This proposal will provide more opportunities for local people to meet, to create and manage the garden, exchange ideas, knowledge and produce in a pleasant natural environment in the heart of our village. The proximity of the school outdoor learning area will provide opportunities for full involvement of the school in the wider site.

#### **Engagement of the community with nature**

The benefits of close engagement with the natural environment are well known. This proposal will provide many opportunities to engage and improve understanding, supported with expert-led guidance.

#### **Learning opportunities**

There is a lot of knowledge and many skills amongst our community covering gardening, environmental matters, timber construction, renewable technology, food production and

orchard management. The development will promote the sharing of this resource, presenting learning opportunities across the community.

## **Food**

The development will result in the production of a large quantity of high-quality food. The health benefits of eating more fresh organic produce are well known, and locally produced food means reduced food miles and reduced packaging. There is potential for distribution of crop surpluses for charitable purposes, and possibly to provide supplies to our community shop.

## **Outdoor Learning Area**

The benefits of outdoor learning to children have been well documented. The outdoor learning area will greatly enhance the learning experience at St Andrew's Primary School. The plan delivers important synergy between the children and the wider community in the community garden.

To understand more about this key aspect of the plan please read the Froebel Pamphlet published in 2022:

[https://www.froebel.org.uk/uploads/documents/FT\\_Re-engaging-With-Nature\\_Pamphlet\\_INTERACTIVE\\_REV-1.pdf](https://www.froebel.org.uk/uploads/documents/FT_Re-engaging-With-Nature_Pamphlet_INTERACTIVE_REV-1.pdf)

## **Graveyard Extension**

Subject to consents, the graveyard will be extended to provide a non-consecrated natural burial space for residents of South Stoke. The graveyard extension and its boundaries will be established, managed and maintained by the PCC.

The graveyard extension will be a natural burial ground, meaning that bodies will not be embalmed or buried in MDF coffins.

The graveyard extension will be available for residents of no religion or any religion and will be accessible to the public.

The area allocated is expected to be sufficient for the next 40 years, after which a further extension might be necessary, depending on future demand.

## **Recommended final design**

The plan below includes amendments made to address the various concerns raised at, and since the Spring 2022 consultation.

### Target Final Design

- Eleven standard allotment sized plots (approx. 25m x 10m) for family/ individual or group use. Flexibly allocated to meet changing demands
- Plots will be split into smaller sections according to demand
- Unoccupied plots will be planted with wildflowers or coppice
- Raised beds and polytunnel for communal use, including access for the less able
- Shed to provide storage, teaching and communal area
- Paved areas for socialising/ learning and undercover seating
- Hazel & willow coppices cropped on rotation for bean rods, pea sticks and basket making
- Produce stall for sales/ given free at entrance
- Noticeboard for events and information
- Orchard of fruit trees with picnic benches
- Bee hotels and logpiles for bugs
- Chippings bay for bulk deliveries, community leaf drop-off, etc
- Solar panels to supply off-grid shed lighting and bore hole pump
- Composting toilet
- Screening plantings to protect neighbour's privacy
- Graveyard extension
- Design and operation to low-carbon organic & permaculture principles



## **Appendix D Implementation of the community garden**

### **1. Approach**

The overall site design represents a target final state. The scheme will be built only as funds allow. The scheme will be delivered in stages, the scope of each stage will be tailored to suit the requirements of the funder; there will need to be some flexibility around this. The approach is low risk and does not involve large financial contingencies.

For example, Stage 1 is anticipated to be an environmental improvement scheme, funded by Mend the Gap. This represents a low-risk project for the Chilterns Conservation Board, because the benefits can be achieved with no dependency on any other funding or works. This Stage represents low risk for the Parish because it delivers significant benefits as a self-funded standalone scheme.

The scope of Stage 1 has been discussed with Mend the Gap and the costs are budgeted though not committed. There is further discussion to be had with Mend the Gap about increasing the scope of Stage 1 to include a water supply.

### **2. Management**

SSPC's The Park Project Committee will manage the implementation. A review of the required work and the match with the people on the committee will be undertaken to ensure that the committee has the right skills and resources to deliver the project. The committee may co-opt additional resources as required.

### **3. Capital funding**

The main sources of funding are anticipated to be from bodies such as:

**Mend the Gap**, a £3.75m project to mitigate the effects of the railway electrification, administered by the Chilterns Conservation Board. SSWCG has good contacts with the CCB and Mend the Gap. Members of SSWCG are closely involved with the scheme. It seems very probable that Phase 1 and possibly Phase 1a, could be funded by Mend the Gap, and possibly the later phases too. Budget provision for most of the scheme has been made.

**Trust for Oxfordshire Environment (TOE)** Supports a variety of environmental and community schemes, including those where biodiversity can be improved and maintained. SSWCG has obtained a very positive indication that up to £15k towards each of three stages could be available.

**SODC Communities fund.** Funds are available for community schemes, SSWCG has recent experience of obtaining grant funding from SODC

**Communities Action Group, Oxfordshire** Some funding is available for community schemes. Several community gardens belong to CAG, and so does SSWCG, which has obtained some funding from them.

**National Lottery Fund:** has supported a long list of community gardens.

If **South Stoke Parish Council** wishes to contribute capital funds, that would be helpful and might speed things up, but it is not a key dependency.

The PCC has agreed to fund all capital and operating costs associated with the graveyard extension. The PCC will directly manage the work required to create and maintain the graveyard extension.

The school governors have agreed to manage the works necessary to establish and maintain the outdoor learning area. The school will fund maintenance and any capital costs (over and above the work for which funds are expected to be obtained by The Park Project Committee for ground works and hedge planting).

#### **4. Financial rules**

In order that financial management of the development of The Park is both effective and transparent it is necessary to observe some financial discipline. The Park Project Committee proposes the following set of rules, which correspond to those observed by SSPC.

1. The Park Project Committee members shall:
  - a. Make a declaration of interests
  - b. Conduct their dealings with the highest ethical standards
2. The Park Project Committee will appoint a Project Manager with responsibility and accountability for delivery including cost control.
3. A control budget of each element of the work and supply will be established during the project establishment period and agreed by The Park Project Committee. Purchase orders of goods and services shall refer to the control budget sum and deviation should be not more than plus 20% for corresponding scope. Greater deviation will require full Park Project Committee approval
4. The control budget shall carry a small cost contingency for unknown events. Managing draw-down of the contingency will be the Project Manager's responsibility.
5. Funds will be obtained in the name of SSPC.
6. SSPC will establish banking arrangements to support the project work including ring-fencing money obtained from Grantors and Donors.
7. Payments to suppliers and contractors will be made by SSPC against invoices approved by the Project Manager.
8. Tendering for work – contractors will be selected by a tendering process to satisfy the funder's and SSPC's requirements.
9. Purchased items – where appropriate three bids will be sought for purchases.
10. VAT shall be handled as SSPC.
11. No commitment to purchase goods or services shall be made without sufficient uncommitted funds at the bank to complete the supply/work.
12. Reporting to Grantors of fund draw down shall meet the Grantors' requirements.
13. Financial reporting shall be monthly to SSPC. The financial report will include
  - a. Cost expended to date, cost committed to date and cost forecast at completion
  - b. Status of draw-down of funds from Grantors
  - c. Contingency status.
14. SSPC is responsible for bookkeeping and accounting.
15. Disputes with and claims by contractors shall be resolved promptly by the Park Project Committee.

#### **5. Mobilisation phase**

The Park Subcommittee will commence implementation through the following actions:

- Appoint key team members
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Agree means and methods
- Review the objectives, SSPC direction and the scope of the work
- Allocate work scope to team members
- Allocate budgets for each work scope element
- Establish a project accounting and VAT reporting procedure
- Establish tendering procedures
- Establish site rules for health, safety and environmental protection

- Establish site access and egress rules to minimise disturbance to neighbours
- Verify the site topography and conceptual design

## 6. Elements of scope in each stage

### a. Stage 1 Environmental enhancements and public access

Pedestrian access gates and paths linking Ferry Road with the Bier Path and Village Hall. Grading of footpath at Ferry Road and construction of hard site access and fencing and field gate at VH carpark. Screening plantings, coppices, trees and orchard. Hedging where this hasn't already been provided by the Mend the Gap mitigation scheme. Wildflower meadow, wildlife pond, log piles, bird and bat boxes, bee hotels, site information signage.

### b. Stage 1a

Borehole, off-grid power system and water distribution to pond

### c. Stage 2 Initial infrastructure for community garden

Rabbit and deer fencing around growing area, water network and troughs in growing area, water tank, road access gate, reinforced track, compost bays, produce stall.

### d. Stage 3 Final infrastructure for community garden

Car park extension, raised beds, shed, polytunnel, composting toilet

## 7. Programme of works

STAGE 1 REPORT - TIMELINE														
09-Nov-22														
PROJECT STAGE	SCOPE OF WORK	MONTHS FROM SSPC DECISION TO PROCEED												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
MOBILISATION	PROJECT ESTABLISHMENT													
			FUNDING »											
STAGE 1	ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS													
STAGE 1A	POWER AND WATER													
STAGE 2	COMMUNITY GARDEN INFRASTRUCTURE													
STAGE 3	COMPLETION OF INITIAL WORKS													
	FIRST GARDENERS ON SITE													
BASIS FOR TIMELINE	1 FUNDING APPLICATIONS COMMENCED IN PARALLEL WIT SSPC DECISION MAKING													
	2 PLANNING PERMISSION FOR CHANGE OF USE NOT NECESSARY													
	3 GREEN PLAY AREA PROGRESSED IN PARALLEL WITH GARDEN WORKS													
	4 BURIAL GROUND EXTENSION HAPPENS LATER ACCORDING TO PCC NEEDS													
	5 TENDERING AND ORDER PREPARATION IN PARALLEL WITH PREVIOUS STAGE OF WORK													

Separate timelines for the outdoor learning area and graveyard extension will be established by the school and the PCC once the scope and design of their works are finalised.

## 8. Management of risk and contingency

The Park development poses risks during the execution of the works and during routine operation. The nature of the risks and the threats they pose need consideration and proactive management strategies.

### Execution Risks

	Risk	Threat	Mitigation
E1	Unexpected ground conditions	Cost and time overrun	Thorough survey of the ground
E2	Severe adverse weather	Time delay	Patience
E3	Higher than forecast wage or material cost inflation	Cost overrun	Cut scope to reduce cost
E4	Contractors' claims	Cost overrun	Good documentary records
E5	Tendered prices above control ceiling	Cost and time overrun	Cut scope and re-tender

### Execution Contingency

The control cost estimate created in Phase 1 will have a cost contingency provision so that the execution team can pay for unforeseen events. Draw-down of contingency will be at the discretion of the project manager.

The control programme for the works created in Phase1 will carry time contingency provisions against critical activities. Use of the time contingency will be at the discretion of the project manager.

### Operating Risks

	Risk	Threat	Mitigation
O1	Volunteer burn-out	Park reverts to scrub	Strong management team including younger people
O2	Maintenance costs outstrip income	Insolvency	Match income stream to outgoings
O3	Poor garden management	Loss of community benefits	Enforcement of rules
O4	One element becomes dominant	Loss of biodiversity	Strong management team

## 9. Capital Cost Estimate

Stage 1: Environmental improvements and access		Estimated Capital Cost inc VAT	Source	
Groundworks: create access; strip topsoil; excavate pond; shift arisings prep areas for wildflowers, trenches for water pipes		£33,000	Est. 4 off 20t loads, 8 man days with machines	Inc. Grading of footpath at Ferry Road and road access at Village Hall
Contractor: supply and install pond liner 26 x16m		£12,000	Internet + day rate est	
Contractor: cut and roll site	1 hect	£2,000	est	
Supply & Install three pedestrian gates, field gate & 100m post & rail fence		£5,000	McVeigh Parker	
Screening plants (supply and install with protection)	350	£2,800	est	
Hedging (supply whips & protection- planting by volunteers)	150m	£750	Murray Maclean	(Along Bier path, West end of southern boundary, reinforcements of Little House boundaries
Hazel whips (supply whips & protection- planting by volunteers)	500	£650	Murray Maclean	for coppice planting
Supply orchard trees, stakes and protection (planting by volunteers)	50	£2,500	FW Matthews	
Supply picnic benches	2	£500	Internet	
Wildflower plugs		£250	Internet	
Supply bat boxes, bird boxes and bee hotels		£600	Internet	@£40, 5 of each
Noticeboard and signage		£500	est	
Contingency		<b>£5,000</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£65,555</b>		
Stage 1a: Off Grid water supply				
100mm borehole to U Greensand est 20-25m, manhole, pump, pressure valve and tank.		£20,000	Budgetary quote	Increase pump cost if 12/24v DC
Equipment housing		£900	est	Secure, for switchgear and batteries
MDPE 25mm pipe	400m	£300	Screwfix	
MDPE pipe fittings		£200	Screwfix	
3kW = 10 off 350W panels on frames		£2000	internet	
Battery regulator or inverter		£1000	internet	Decision needed 240v ac with inverter or all at 12/24v. DC
Battery		£1200	internet	
Switchgear and earth		£250	internet	
Electrical test, connection and certification		£600	Est/man rate	Reduce if low voltage system
Contingency		<b>£2,000</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£28,450</b>		
			<b>Sub total Phases 1 and 1a £87,000</b>	
Stage 2: Initial infrastructure for community garden				
Supply and install lightweight ground reinforced track	450m2	£25,000	internet	3m wide, recoverable track including turning area at southern end.

Water pipe network and troughs in growing area	6	£2,500	Screwfix/McVeigh Parker	72 gal cattle troughs
Water tank 7,000l, on 6" reinforced concrete base supply & install		£3,000	Internet/ Manor Mix	
Manure and chippings bays in concrete blockwork		£4,000	est	Reduced in size
Deer & rabbit fencing around growing area		£2,000	McVeigh Parker	
Produce stall		£500	est	
Contingency		<b>£3,000</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£40,000</b>		
<b>Stage 3: Final infrastructure for community garden</b>				
Shed (materials only, community build)		£20,000	est	
Composting toilet (Supply & install)		£3,000	Internet	Or negotiate use of Village Hall toilets
Raised beds (materials only, community build)		£1,500	est	
Paving around building and raised beds		£1,000	Peppard Building Supplies	
Polytunnel (Materials only, community build)		£4,000	Northern Polytunnels	
Car park		£10,000	est	Reduced size
Contingency		<b>£4,000</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£43,500</b>		
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>£177,500</b>		

## **Appendix E Ongoing operation of community garden**

### **1. Approach and management (excludes the outdoor learning area and graveyard extension, managed by the School and PCC respectively))**

To ensure the safety and sustainability of The Park land, SSPC will appoint a management group to administer the day-to-day operations.

The management group will directly administer land not subleased to third parties.

The management group will report annually to SSPC.

The management group will create rules for use of The Park and will supervise activity on The Park to maintain compliance.

The management group will elect a chairperson, a treasurer and a garden supervisor from the appointees. Elections shall be held every 4 years.

The goals of the management group are to manage The Park:

- In a sustainable way
- To enhance biodiversity and protect the environment
- To balance costs with income
- To encourage the production of healthy food.
- To foster a mutually supportive and friendly environment for all members of the community
- To foster interest in gardening in the community.
- To allocate plots for gardens and allotments according to demand
- To manage plot holders in accordance with the rules
- To maintain trees, hedges, fences, paths and open areas in The Park.
- To maximise the benefit to the South Stoke community

At some future point, consideration should be given to migrating to a Charity management model similar to that used for the Rec and Village Hall.

## 2. Operating cost funding

Operating Expenditure (OPEX) and Income					
The following estimated Opex and Income plan is based on current known costs as at November 2022 and excludes income from grants which would be additional					
				Estimated Annual Expenditure £	
29-Nov-22					
<b>OPEX</b>					
1	Water	Thames Water	Not required if borehole commissioned	200	
2	Insurance		Based on Streatley rate	265	Might be cheaper to add to PC or AC policies.
3	Mowing	Contractor	2 cuts @£200/cut estimated	400	
4	Trees and hedges	Contractor	1 cut @ £150 estimated	150	Not required in first 5 years
5	Fences and gates	Self perform	Materials only estimated	100	Not required in first 3 years
6	Paths and car park	Self perform	Materials only estimated	100	Not required in first 3 years
7	Pond	Self perform	Materials only estimated	50	
8	Vermin control	3 x contractor visits	Est based on Streatley allotments	180	
9	Unforseen			100	
	<b>TOTAL OPEX</b>			<b>1545</b>	
<b>OPERATING INCOME</b>					
1	Allotment plot rental	2500 m2 total	80p/m2/ allow 75% utilisation=1875m2	1500	Probably less % in first 3 years
2	Plant & produce sales			100	
	<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>			<b>1600</b>	

This budget does not depend on a contribution from the Parish Council. However, it might be that the PC would wish to contribute to the maintenance of this communal area, as it does with other communal areas in the village. This would allow some contingency and reserve to be built up.

OPEX will be managed to not exceed income by the prudent adjustment of scope.

## 3. Financial rules

The operation of The Park by the management group appointed by SSPC shall adopt the following rules for financial management:

- a. Financial accounts will be prepared annually
- b. The Park will be managed as a 'not for profit' enterprise and will operate independently of SSPC except for annual oversight and direction.
- c. The management group shall ensure that The Park account shows a positive balance
- d. The Park management group will establish a bank account and banking facilities
- e. Income and expenditure relating to The Park will be managed through the bank account.
- f. Cash transactions will be discouraged

- g. No commitment or expenditure may be made by the management group without the funds existing in the bank.
- h. The management group may obtain income from some or all of:
  - i. Subleases
  - ii. Allotment charges
  - iii. Donations
  - iv. Sales of produce
  - v. Grants
  - vi. Annual subscriptions
- i. Procurement of goods and services will be governed by SSPC standing procedures.
- j. The management group may make expenditure on some or all of the following:
  - i. Contractor services
  - ii. Maintenance activities and consumables
  - iii. Replacement of damaged capital cost items
  - iv. Trees, plants, seeds and such like.
  - v. Tools and equipment
  - vi. Small capital items.

## **Appendix F Record of meeting with The Governors of St Andrew's School**

The Governors have agreed that the following meeting record be included in the committee's Stage 1 report to SSPC:

### **Note of meeting held at South Stoke school 29.11.22**

**Present:** Amanda Rogers                      Headteacher  
Ivo Lasan                                      Chair of Governors  
Clare Wortley                                Governor

David Kennedy    SS PC Park Project committee Chair  
Paul Jenkins                                SS PC Park Project committee Secretary

**Purpose:** The Park Project committee consultation meeting with South Stoke Primary School.

1. **Introduction.** David explained the current position with the analysis of the consultation results, and the good support for green area, Wildlife Group plan and areas for the school and church. David confirmed that all remaining information is needed in the next week or so, in order to inform the Stage 1 report that will go to the PC in mid-December.
2. Clare spoke about the fact that this rural village school is unusual in currently having no green area at all, and outlined some important benefits in the proposal:
  - a. The benefits of having an outdoor learning space are significant and would make the school more attractive to parents, which would help with the sustainability of the school in the longer term, to the general benefit of the village.
  - b. The benefits of an outdoor learning space for the improved mental and physical wellbeing of children and staff are well known and have been widely demonstrated. The new space will provide more flexibility for the school, with possibilities for the area to be used in all aspects of the curriculum, not just physical education.
  - c. The benefits of access to the whole site for further educational opportunities around wildlife, conservation and growing food are also significant. The school would probably wish to have a plot within the growing area and if it is built, a polytunnel. There are further social benefits to the children, staff and wider community arising from the school's involvement with the whole site.
3. The school is content with the area shown on the consulted plan. This isn't based on any science regarding area per pupil, but it would represent a significant improvement on the current outside area and is considered to be practical to maintain and sustainable in the long term.
4. The school would wish its area to be dedicated for its use, with no general public access. This is for reasons of safeguarding and avoiding dogs waste.
5. The boundary of the school area could be hedging or fencing. When children are on site at forest school, ropes are used to delineate boundaries. [Note: keeping dogs out might necessitate stock fencing.]

6. The school would be happy for the Bier Path hedge to be reinstated and would want a pedestrian gate from the Bier Path and another gate into the general public area of The Park. (To be added to site drawing.)
7. Some neighbours had asked for detailed designs for hedging and screening planting along their boundaries and had asked that noise and sight lines be considered in the design. This would probably mean hedges, screening plantings and locating benches etc generally away from boundaries.
8. The Park Project would include fencing, gates, hedging and screening plantings in its costing and grant applications, and make every effort to deliver them. However, no guarantees can be given as to whether these funds will materialise, and it might be that the school would need to fund these aspects on its site.
9. The school would want to erect a storage shed on the site, so that learning resources to be used on the site could be stored there. It was noted that several respondents to the consultation had suggested that there should be no buildings on the school plot.
10. The school would take care of the maintenance of its field, and insurance.
11. The school would provide a rough estimate of its maintenance costs and provide an acknowledgement from the PTA or Board of Governors that funds would be found to cover these costs.
12. The school proposes that the land should initially be licensed to it at a peppercorn rent, in recognition of the importance of the school to the community. In the longer term, it might be sensible to move to a sub-lease in order to guarantee long-term tenure.
13. For planning purposes, the school anticipates needing the land for 30 years. The Board of Governors will confirm this after their meeting later this week.
14. If change of use consent is required then the school will handle any application.
15. If other regulations or constraints apply to the use of the land by the school, the school will take care of it.
16. The main concern of the school is the potential for delay to the timescale: School would like to be on the field early in 2023.

#### **PJ 29.11.22**

SSPC is recommended to follow the link below to understand the benefit to the school pupils and the community from fully embracing the outdoor learning concept and using the resource that The Park affords

[https://www.froebel.org.uk/uploads/documents/FT\\_Re-engaging-With-Nature\\_Pamphlet\\_INTERACTIVE\\_REV-1.pdf](https://www.froebel.org.uk/uploads/documents/FT_Re-engaging-With-Nature_Pamphlet_INTERACTIVE_REV-1.pdf)

For completeness the letter of invitation and draft agenda for the planned meeting with St Andrew's Primary School Governors is provided:

**Harvest Home  
The Street  
South Stoke  
RG8 0JS**

**5 October 2022**

**The Governors  
South Stoke Primary School**

**For the attention of the Mr Ivo Lasan, Chairman**

**Dear Ivo,**

### **Play Area on The Park**

Further to various previous communications between South Stoke Primary School (SSPS) and the South Stoke Parish Council (SSPC) I can confirm that, on 26 September 2022, SSPC authorised its Park Subcommittee to invite the Governors of SSPS to a meeting to discuss the possible provision of a play area for the school on part of The Park land. To this end, I attach a draft agenda which covers the higher level issues that would require a mutual resolution to enable progress to be achieved.

For the avoidance of doubt, I can confirm that the SSPC has authorised its subcommittee to develop a recommendation for the use of The Park land which could then be debated and a decision made by the SSPC. Any such recommendation will need to address the details of The Park development and the legal, environmental and financial consequences of same.

I have attached for your guidance the Park development plan upon which the SSPC consulted the community in the spring of 2022. It is this plan that will form the framework for any discussions with the PCC.

I look forward to your response, comments on the agenda and, if possible, dates when the Governors of SSPS would be able to meet the SSPC subcommittee

**Yours Sincerely,**

**David Kennedy  
Chair – the Park Subcommittee of SSPC**

# **AGENDA FOR MEETING WITH THE GOVERNORS OF SOUTH STOKE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

DRAFT

Date TBC

## **PLAY AREA EXTENSION IN THE PARK**

1. Introductions
2. Representatives' authority
3. Outcomes of the consultation by South Stoke Parish Council on use of The Park
4. The current status of the plan for The Park
5. Overarching objective of the South Stoke Primary School (SSPS) regarding a play area extension in The Park
6. Current position at SSPS and future vision for a play area in The Park.
  - a. The area and location preferred.
  - b. Is the area to be exclusive to the school or shared?
  - c. Legal situation, regulations applicable and legal documents to be created
  - d. The implications of the Town and Country Planning Act
  - e. The planning period i.e. 50 years (?), what-if scenarios.
  - f. The plan for long-term administration of the play area and the costs arising therefrom.
  - g. Access and boundary requirements
  - h. Impact on the landscaping of The Park.
  - i. Environmental impact on The Park
7. Next steps
8. Matters for future discussion
9. Next meeting

## **Appendix G Record of the meeting with The Parochial Church Council**

The PCC has agreed that the following meeting record be included in the committee's Stage 1 report to SSPC

### **FINAL Notes from a Meeting with The Parochial Parish Council.**

Wednesday 30 November 2022 - Lou Verrill, Ben Phillips, David Kennedy & Ivo Lasan

#### **BACKGROUND**

Requirement is to extend the current graveyard as it is close to capacity.

Back in 2006 there were forty graves and forty ashes slots available.

Average number of burials was then five per year, but has risen to six and this year, seven. burials of people from outside South Stoke have taken place in recent months – all these burials were for people who were previous residents of the village or had strong associations with it e.g., past incumbents.

Given that there are thirteen plots remaining, the belief is that available space will run out in two to three years.

If the graveyard is not extended, then it would have to close, and the responsibility would pass to the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)..

The church has been in South Stoke for over eight hundred years and some of the front space graves are more than four hundred years old. There is advice not to dig these up from David Mason (he Diocesan Surveyor) owing to the cost and time required to trace and notify all relatives.

The previous Archdeacon, Judy French, was in favour of having a natural burial space in South Stoke village. The present incumbent and the warden are also in favour of a natural burial space.

The burial ground is for:

- Anybody from the Parish (regardless of faith or not)
- Anyone who has lived in the Parish
- Anyone who has a family connection in the Parish

Also, anyone visiting the parish who dies while here can be buried here.

#### **REQUIREMENT**

The overriding objective is to retain a Burial area for the village. The proposed extension would provide extra space and include a 'Natural Burial Space' as a separate area. This has already been discussed with Bryan Urbick when he was council leader in an open forum at a Parish Council Meeting.

#### **EXPECTATION**

Having enquired of the Diocesan Surveyor, the PCC anticipate that any land allocated to extend the burial area would be on a sub-lease for a period which is equivalent to 999 years less one year plus any time lapsed on the Park lease at that time. The diocese has been advised in the past of a sub-lease being on Peppercorn rental basis.

The church could take on a sub-lease for the land and any existing licence holders would be given fair notice to quit.

The land requested is from the current graveyard boundary to the railway line, about 1,250m<sup>2</sup> in total. This land would be used in tranches as and when the burial space was needed. The first proposed tranche is approximately five hundred square metres. This would not need to be consecrated but Christian burial sites could be blessed by the incumbent.

As a rough calculation, each new plot is 2.75 metres long and 1.2 metres wide which means that the first five hundred square metre tranche (10 metres by 50 metres) could

accommodate up to 141 additional plots which, using five plots each year, would provide an additional 28 years but it could be longer if double plots are utilised.

There is a row of mature trees on the Eastern boundary to the existing graveyard which would not be disturbed. It is planned to access the extension to the graveyard through the existing gateway adjacent to Perch House.

### **PLANNING PERMISSION**

This is not anticipated to be too onerous – Full Planning is required but a graveyard is not a 'Particular Use' class but will require permission for change of use from farmland to graveyard.

SODC has advised that there is precedent for this.

There would need to be consultation with the Environmental Agency regarding environmental considerations: Specifically, soil testing, location of the proposed pond and the bore hole. Please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials> and the salient extracts in Appendix G

There is government guidance on any ground water close to a burial ground – this is covered in section 57 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. There is also a stipulation not to conduct a burial within fifty metres of a water source.

An application to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is also needed for a license **and this is procedural.**

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

The Church has provision and funding for the maintenance of the current graveyard, and this would need to be increased to cover any additional area. The church does have a Tree Fund so could make money available for tree/Hedge planting as borders for the new area. The current plan does allow for some hedge planting.

The plan would be to have machine access to the new area via the existing lychgate.

### **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

The Church already has Health and Safety, Legal policies and Insurance covers in place for its current operation so these would be extended.

Extract from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials>

### **What follows is an extract from the above referenced Gov.UK publication**

This guidance is for local councils or other cemetery operators. It covers developments from 1 April 2022 which require new planning permission under section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The guidance applies to proposals to:

- develop a new cemetery
- expand an existing cemetery

Expanding an existing cemetery means extending the geographical area of a site to an extent that you need new planning permission under section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### **Environmental risks from burials**

Like all developers and operators, those involved with cemeteries have a legal responsibility not to cause pollution.

There is the potential for groundwater pollution caused by:

- large numbers of burials in a short time
- the cumulative effects of many burials over a longer period of time
- novel or unproven burial practices
- site specific environmental factors
- a lack of appropriate operational controls

If pollution happens, the Environment Agency will take action. This will be proportionate and appropriate to the harm being caused.

Large numbers of burials in environmentally sensitive locations cause the greatest concern. In many of these locations cemetery developers and operators need ongoing controls to reduce the risks to the environment. This is especially so in areas where the groundwater:

- is vulnerable to pollution
- is used locally as a source of drinking water
- supports nearby sensitive surface waters or wetland habitats

The Environment Agency encourages cemetery developers and operators not to propose developments in areas where the groundwater is highly vulnerable (wherever possible). They should avoid development proposals that present a high risk to the water environment.

See [The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection](#) (Section L: Cemetery developments).

Higher risk cemeteries include proposed developments with a high burial rate in a vulnerable groundwater area (see statement L3).

Cemeteries located in the following places present an exceptional risk to the environment and human health:

- in a [Source Protection Zone 1 \(SPZ1\)](#)
- within 250m from a well, borehole or spring used to supply water for human consumption

The Environment Agency is unlikely to grant an environmental permit for these developments (see statement L1).

You will need to carry out a [risk assessment](#) to work out the risk from your proposed cemetery development. As a minimum, you must do a risk assessment to support your planning application. If you need to apply for an environmental permit (under the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2016) you must also provide a risk assessment as part of your application.

To avoid groundwater pollution, local councils and other cemetery operators should follow the Environment Agency's:

- minimum good practice groundwater protection requirements for all burial sites

- advice and recommendations from any site specific groundwater risk assessments

### **When you do not need an environmental permit**

Local councils (or other cemetery operators) do not need to apply for an environmental permit for existing cemeteries if:

- they do not need to use active mitigation measures to prevent pollution
- they are not planning to expand a cemetery area after 1 April 2022 which needs new planning permission under section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- they are planning to expand a cemetery area after 1 April 2022 which needs new planning permission, but the risk assessment shows that the expansion is not high risk and the Environment Agency has agreed this
- the Environment Agency has told them, as part of their planning application, that they do not need a permit

You also do not need an environment permit if all burials on existing sites are of human ashes from crematoria.

Active mitigation measures to prevent pollution to the environment could include, for example:

- ongoing groundwater monitoring
- active groundwater drainage controls to allow burials

All existing cemeteries that do not need an environmental permit should still aim to meet the minimum good practice groundwater protection requirements.

### **Minimum good practice groundwater protection requirements**

If you operate an existing cemetery, or are proposing a new cemetery that does not require a permit, you should aim to meet the following minimum good practice groundwater protection requirements.

#### **Requirement 1**

You should not carry out any human burials within:

- a groundwater [SPZ1](#)
- 10m of the nearest land drain
- 30m from the nearest watercourse (which includes ditches and open land drains which may run dry for part of the year) or any other surface water
- 50m of any well, spring or borehole, irrespective of that water's current use
- 250m of any well, spring or borehole where the water is intended for human consumption or used in food production
- areas identified as having karstic groundwater flow characteristics (following any required groundwater risk assessment) – these areas are highly vulnerable to

pollution because groundwater can flow rapidly through the many fissures and fractures present in these rocks.

## **Requirement 2**

You should not carry out any human burials on land which is liable to flooding.

## **Requirement 3**

You should make the base of each grave at least 1 metre above the highest anticipated annual groundwater level.

## **Requirement 4**

You should not dig graves in unaltered or unweathered bedrock. This is solid rock which can be buried or exposed at the earth's surface, and which has not been altered by physical or chemical reactions (or both) such as exposure to the weather.

For completeness please find below the meeting invitation sent to St Andrew's PCC and the draft meeting agenda.

**Harvest Home  
The Street  
South Stoke  
RG8 0JS**

**4 October 2022**

**The St Andrew's Parochial Church Council  
For the attention of the Secretary**

**Dear Sarah**

### **St Andrew's Burial Ground Extension**

Further to various informal discussions with members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) I can confirm that, on 26 September 2022, the South Stoke Parish Council (SSPC) authorised its Park subcommittee to invite the PCC to a meeting to discuss the possible extension to the St Andrew's burial ground.

To this end, I attach a draft agenda which covers the higher level issues that would require a mutual resolution to enable progress to be achieved.

For the avoidance of doubt, I can confirm that the SSPC has authorised its subcommittee to develop a recommendation for the use of the Park land which could then be debated and a decision made by the SSPC. Any such recommendation will need to address the details of the Park development and the legal, environmental and financial consequences of same.

I have attached for your guidance the Park development plan upon which the SSPC consulted the community in the spring of 2022. It is this plan that will form the framework for any discussions with the PCC.

I look forward to your response, comments on the agenda and, if possible, dates when the PCC would be able to meet the SSPC subcommittee

**Yours Sincerely,**

**David Kennedy**  
**Chair – the Park Subcommittee of SSPC**

## **AGENDA FOR MEETING WITH SOUTH STOKE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

DRAFT

Date TBC

### **Burial Ground Extension**

1. Introductions
2. Representatives' authority
3. Outcomes of the consultation
4. The current status of the plan for The Park
5. Overarching objective of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) regarding a burial ground extension in The Park
6. Current position at St Andrew's, past practice and future vision.
7. Discussion of the options available to the community e.g., green burial, ashes
8. Justification for and consequences of each option identified.
  - a. The area required for each option.
  - b. Legal situation, regulations applicable and legal documents to be created
  - c. The implications of the Town and Country Planning Act
  - d. The planning period i.e. 50 years (?), what-if scenarios.
  - e. The plan for long-term administration of the extension and the costs arising therefrom.
  - f. New access requirements
  - g. Environmental impact on The Park
  - h. Impact on the landscaping of The Park.
9. Next steps
10. Matters for future discussion
11. Next meeting

## **Appendix H SSWCG supporting documentation**

### **Response to Park Sub-committee from SSWCG**

(responses from SSWCG in blue)

## 1. Land Matters and Planned Timescale

The need is to clarify SSWCG's perceived position opposite the landowner (SSPC) i.e. will SSWCG implement the capital project, or the SSPC Park Project Committee, or a created-for-the-purpose Community Garden Association (CGA)? If a CGA, when will it be formed? Will the CGA seek a licence to occupy the land? Is it envisaged that the CGA will morph into a different entity in time e.g. into a charity.

SSWCG also needs to indicate a planned timescale for the CGA - an initial 10-year view and a long term 50-year view was mooted to be consistent with orchard planting etc.

We understand that the Park Project Committee (which is part of the PC) has a remit which includes the management for site development. We believe that there would not be a need for a licence or land transfer, as the initial work would be conducted under the auspices of the Park Project Committee, and thereby controlled by the PC, and not by SSWCG (even though SSWCG would assist in this operation). We envisage that when the site is built (at least Stages 1, 1a and 2) a Community Garden Association will be set up to operate the site, made up from plot owners, neighbours (potentially), perhaps a SSPC member and a SSWCG member, and then this association can decide how it wants to carry on going forward. The Community Garden Association could become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or could possibly become part of the existing Amenities Charity, with a similar relationship to the Parish Council that currently exists. SSWCG itself does not plan to try to gain possession of the land or to run the project. Other options include conducting the initial works under a licence, with the Community Gardens applying for a sub-let in the future, although this is viewed by SSWCG as adding significant complexity to the process resulting in possible delays and extra cost.

In terms of the timescale it is hoped that development of the area ie Stage 1 could commence in the first half of next year with the scheme complete and fully operable by end 2024. Longer term, the site is expected to reach maturity in about 10 years in terms of the maturity of planting of hedges, orchards etc but overall the project is envisaged as having at least a 30 year life-span and become an embedded part of the community and an asset of South Stoke. There may also be conditions for the grants that would be sought in terms of both initial expenditure timing and the longevity of the scheme. Finally, it will take several years for biodiversity to develop such that an improvement can be demonstrably seen and assessed.

## 2. Biodiversity

It would strengthen the SSWCG submission to address community concerns about existing biodiversity and how the SSWCG plan will improve this.

SSWCG has conducted informal surveys of the area and the existing biodiversity is considered generally low. The grassland appears to be improved pasture with some clover, self-heal and hawkbit. Areas that are not currently grazed are mostly rank grasses. Roe deer, muntjac, rabbits, moles, foxes and hedgehogs visit the site, and the usual range of common birds that are seen around the village.

SSWCG's proposal would radically improve the biodiversity of the site, which if left as it is will likely decline with continued grazing and the probable loss of ash trees through ash die-back disease.

The planned wildlife pond will allow many hundreds of new species to find habitats. This will include a wide range of aquatic invertebrates, amphibians and plants, which in turn will improve conditions for mammals and birds, a greater range of which is expected to be

attracted. The naturalistic planting of orchards, which will include heritage varieties and wildflower meadows will introduce hundreds more species of plants, mosses, lichens and liverworts, and associated invertebrates, which will also, in turn, attract a wider range of mammals, reptiles and birds. New hedges, trees, coppices and screening plantings will increase the species count and also provide cover for songbirds and a range of invertebrates.

Attempts will be made to keep deer and rabbits out of the growing area, but these species will continue to roam the rest of the site, which will be a more suitable habitat than the existing field.

The growing area is intended to be fully organic. Composting, selection of heritage varieties and seed-saving and seed swaps will be encouraged. The biodiversity of the growing area will also be considerably improved, compared to the existing grazed pasture.

SSWCG will monitor the changes in the biodiversity of the site and intends to publish the outcomes for educational purposes, and to encourage other similar projects.

### **3. Sustainability**

Both SSPC and the community have concerns relating to the long-term sustainability of the community garden. The concerns fall into three categories, and unaddressed, these are a weakness in the SSWCG submission e.g.

- inability to meet running costs – see below ie ‘Money’ regarding opex costs and income
- volunteer burnout

It is envisaged that the community garden is managed by a group of people who are actively involved in the venture. This would typically be called a “Community Garden Association”. These people are likely to have a physical stake in the project, many with their own growing areas, and a financial interest in the project through paying rent and contributing to facilities. Volunteer support could also be called upon from the SSWCG and from the remainder of the village, possibly including school children for some smaller projects.

- lack of uptake of garden plots and/or allotments

We believe that interest in sustainable projects, conservation and the local production of wholesome food is growing in popularity, and if we look at the nearest similar facilities, which are in Woodcote and Streatley, these have been established for many years and are currently over-subscribed, with waiting lists that are getting longer each year. Through a word of mouth exercise we have already compiled a list of people who have expressed an interest in having a plot, even though we have obviously not formally advertised these. We therefore believe there will be sufficient demand to create a vibrant gardening community with a sustainable future.

### **4. Money**

The phased capital cost estimate is well developed and reasonably robust. The funding plan needs to align with the phased capital cost estimate. The case for the SSWG plan would be reinforced by inclusion of correspondence with fund-holders in which specific sums for targeted scope are identified. Such data would greatly reassure SSPC that the SSWCG plan is both fundable and deliverable.

We have presented our initial plan, cost estimate and phasing to several fund providers in the area and have received positive responses from these bodies. We believe we are very well placed to obtain capital funding from Mend the Gap for Phase 1, and parts of Phase 1a and future phases. The Mend the Gap Steering Group has already discussed the project and itemised potential budgetary provision for £150k – see Annex i for email confirmation of this.

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) has also looked at our plans and has identified various items that they believe they could fund. This includes a polytunnel, raised beds and composting toilet – see Annex ii for email confirming this approval in principle

SSWCG has had terrific support from our District Councillor and SODC, for both purchase of equipment and ongoing surveys and working projects, each year since we were set up, and we believe that further funding for the community garden can be obtained through this route.

We are unable to formally apply for any of these funds until SSPC authorises the scheme, and we are concerned that whilst funds appear to be available now, they may not be if we don't apply soon.

The operating cost estimate is weak and flawed by invalid income assumptions. SSPC will want to see that the OPEX is properly estimated and that the funding streams are realistic. For the avoidance of doubt, do not expect that the CGA will receive income from SSPC licences or sub-leases. SSPC will expect a more robust analysis.

We believe the site can substantially be funded from rental from the allotment plots and from plant/food sales and have worked this up as an income/expenditure document. However, we also propose that the PC makes a modest contribution to the maintenance of common areas, as it currently does on the recreation ground, slipway and the churchyard.

We anticipate that this income would be supplemented by grant support (for example SODC "Get Active") and similar schemes designed to promote physical participation in the environment, and for community engagement with nature.

We also expect that the Community Gardens Association would raise funds, donations and modest income from the sale of produce and educational talks.

## **5. Impact on Neighbours**

Neighbours have expressed particular concerns about the following aspects of the SSWG plan; these require SSWG comment:

- the visual changes to The Park if a community garden is permitted
- traffic on the site
- loss of biodiversity

It is recognised by SSWCG that by providing public access to this site it will clearly have some impact, increasing the number of people walking through the site, sitting on the benches and working in the growing area. The routing of the new footpath is arranged to be some distance from existing neighbour's boundaries, and the growing area is central on the site, with shed and polytunnel close to the railway boundary, as far from the neighbours as possible.

The plan includes for all neighbour's boundaries to have new or reinforced hedges, to provide visual screening. In addition, areas of screening planting are provided. The site will include many fruit trees which will also break up views, including those of the railway.

There are good local examples of analogous community garden areas sited close to housing eg at Brightwell cum Sotwell, where judicious location of facilities, use of screening via hedging and trees and a policy of noise and vehicular minimisation has resulted in a beneficial community experience with little friction or disputes.

Specifically with regards to vehicular traffic on the site after construction, the design includes a removable, reinforced plastic access track. We intend to restrict the use of this to the bare minimum, which we anticipate would be only for the occasional (monthly?) deliveries of wood chippings, manure etc, and if we have any disabled people who have no alternative means of participating in the community garden. The access track is an expensive part of the design and we don't see it as the highest priority. It could easily be reduced in scope to provide wheelchair/wheel-barrow access only.

## **6. The Burial Ground Extension**

There is strong community support for an extension to the existing St Andrew's burial ground. The SSWG plan needs to continue to factor this into its planning. Until discussions are completed with the Parochial Church Council on 30 November the details of the burial ground extension are not known. However, there is national and CoE legislation relating to traditional and natural burial grounds. The SSWCG would do well to indicate that it understands the implications of such legislation.

We have taken an iterative approach to the plan development and have adapted it several times to specifically include aspects of the consultation that were well supported and that came about through feedback we were given during follow up discussions; this includes allowance for a reasonably sized extension of the graveyard. If the area we have allowed for on the current plan is given over as a graveyard extension it would sit comfortably with proposed development of the rest of The Park as a community garden, and if it is restricted to people who have been resident in South Stoke it should satisfy demand for many years.

We expect to draw water from a new borehole 20m deep, and this will be sited as far from the burial ground as possible. Given the presence of various other boreholes around the church (some of which are nearer) we don't anticipate any issues, though it would be helpful if the burial area was not used for the burial of embalmed bodies due to pollution concerns. Should the graveyard make the borehole impossible then we will have to use the mains water supply on the site.

We would be concerned if the graveyard extension involved the removal of any of the mature trees or hedging on the boundary between the existing churchyard and The Park, because of the obvious environmental damage that would represent.

Access to the graveyard for pedestrians is included in our plan, and if we attract sufficient funding an access track will be built across some of the site which might then be used for plant access to the graveyard. However, we are not in a position to guarantee this, and if plant access is a firm requirement of the Church then they should make budgetary provision for the cost of this access track.

Furthermore, and in recognition of the legislation, the planned pond has been moved to the southeast corner of the site; it will also be lined with a heavy duty, impermeable layer.

## Annex i – Mend the Gap

Awaiting Response from Elaine King

## Annex ii – Trust for Oxfordshire Environment (TOE)

RE: South Stoke - Community garden

Environmental/SSWCG

R

Rachel Sanderson

Thu, 17  
Nov,  
12:20

to Paul, me

Dear Paul and Ian

It was good to meet you both too – thank you for your time and hospitality. Thank you for sending me further details on both projects discussed. While I wait to hear back from others regarding Lower Meadow, I'm responding now regarding the vision for the new Community Garden.

I confirm that quite a few of the items listed in the different Stages for the project meet the criteria of TOE's Local Environment Fund. This fund provides grants of up to £15,000 for (primarily) capital work at one site supporting projects which improve public access to green spaces, help connect people with nature, or create/protect/enhance natural habitats. In recent years TOE has awarded grants to similar projects so I am confident that the Grant Panel will be happy to support the initiative.

Once TOE has made a formal grant offer, we like a project to be completed within ideally 12 or up to 18 months. We know that the project delivery phase can take longer than anticipated, especially when those involved are volunteers – life gets in the way. For more ambitious projects like this, we would rather see work delivered well and on time and then receive another funding request for the second phase. Depending upon the delivery timetable of the different Stages of the Community Garden project, that might suit you.

### Stage 1

TOE will be delighted to fund the wildlife meadow, hedge and tree planting, pond creation, wildlife boxes etc. TOE occasionally funds signage but only if it is part of a larger initiative and the cost is less than 20% of the total grant request. TOE often funds pedestrian gates and funds some path surface improvements. However, the latter can be very expensive so more often than not we contribute to the total cost of paths. If money is available elsewhere for the paths, that might be better for you.

As mentioned to Ian, we gave a grant to the Peace Oak Orchard in Eynsham towards the cost of a solar pump for a bore hole they had dug. This type of thing just about fits our current funding criteria, but would need to be part of the wider project.

### Stage 2

Ditto comments above about gates and paths. Depending upon the size of the fenced area, the fencing might be expensive but we could probably make a contribution towards the cost and the compost bays.

### Stage 3 – easier for us than Stage 2.

TOE has awarded several grants recently for raised beds in community gardens. We prefer to fund recycled plastic – although more expensive, the raised beds will last and we don't like applicants coming back 10 years later asking for more money to replace rotten wood. Some groups have bought 'off the shelf' planters, others have used recycled plastic boards (typically sold for boardwalks) and made up beds themselves.

TOE has also funded a polytunnel and a composting toilet within the last few years thereby setting a precedent, but I imagine the grant panel will be happier to fund these items as part of a larger grant request ie alongside the raised beds.

Where we can, we like to put applicants in touch with previous grant holders to save re-inventing the wheel, spending hours looking for online quotes etc. I got the impression you know what you're doing and how to do it, but let me know if you would like to visit existing projects.

I hope this helps. Good luck with getting Parish Council approval and do keep in touch.

Kind regards

Rachel

PS – this website page has the details of the Local Environment Fund [www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/main-fund](http://www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk/main-fund) - guidance, application form, quarterly application deadline dates etc. We have agreed this morning that our new “transformational grants” of up to £25,000 will be launched in January (new grants news story for the new year). The difference in the application process for this larger amount of money will be minimal – we will merely ask for an EOI for the Grant Panel to consider before inviting applicants to apply via the standard form.

Rachel Sanderson  
Operations Manager

Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE)  
The Old Counting House, 82e High Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 0BS  
01865 407003 [rachel.sanderson@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:rachel.sanderson@trustforoxfordshire.org.uk)  
[www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk) @TOE\_oxon  
*I work part-time, usually Tuesday to Thursday.*

**Harvest Home, The Street,  
South Stoke  
RG8 0JS**

**18 November 2022**

**For the attention of Mr Ian Haslam South Stoke Wildlife Group**

**Dear Ian,**

### **The Park**

The South Stoke Parish Council (SSPC) has appointed a committee to make recommendations to it relating to The Park land for which South Stoke Wildlife Group (SSWG) plans were part of SSPC's spring consultation with the community. The committee has started work and has reviewed and analysed the returns made by the community; a report of that analysis has been submitted to SSPC. The report concludes that the community supports:

- The Park remaining a green space
- The South Stoke Wildlife Group plan for The Park to become a community space
- The inclusion of a green play area for St Andrew's primary school
- The inclusion of an extension to the St Andrew's church burial ground

The report also concludes that the community does not support:

- Sublease of land for garden extensions
- Creation of either a tennis court or bowling green

The committee would like to meet with SSWG to give SSWG the opportunity to further set out its plans: In particular, the committee would like to hear from SSWG on the following key points:

1. The existing biodiversity in The Park and how delivery of the SSWG plan will protect and improve this.
2. The impact of the SSWG plan on neighbours' properties (both positive and negative) and how this will be managed
3. The capital cost funding plan and SSWG's ability to realise.
4. The operating cost funding plan
5. Plans for the long-term sustainability of the SSWG plan
6. The consequences for the SSWG plan of a burial ground extension as part of The Park development
7. The way The Park, which is a community asset, should be managed for the benefit of the community

If you would like to go ahead with a meeting, please could you suggest some convenient dates and times; I can be contacted via email or post.

**Yours Sincerely,**

**David Kennedy**  
**Chair - The Park Committee**

[david7kennedy@fastmail.fm](mailto:david7kennedy@fastmail.fm)

## **Appendix I Records of meetings with Neighbours and Licence Holders**

Neighbours have agreed that the following meeting records and documents be included in the committee's Stage 1 report to SSPC  
Various document forms follow:

Hello David

Thank you for the letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022, regarding the park consultation.

Sue and I have no strong views as to the future use of the main field.

We would however like to know what the plans are for the strip that joins Ferry Road to the main field.

If possible, we would like to continue renting this for horse grazing, once the committee/parish council have agreed the future of the park.

A couple of points for your consideration:

- The parish took back responsibility for the triangle of land on Woodcote Road, some years ago, promising it would become a space for community use, sadly it is now overgrown and not accessible.
- If the park is to follow the same fate, we would hope a more robust maintenance plan is put in place. When we took on the park, the land was completely overgrown, and it took many hours of work to clear the brush.
- Are we right to assume ownership of the portion of land to be used by the school, will be retained by the parish, as the survival of the school must be very tenuous in the current economic climate.
- The fence along Ferry Road was put up by us and would of course be removed, to return the land to its original condition if and when our agreement is terminated.

Thank you for taking the time to consult us.

David and Sue Allen

## **Notes of the Park Project Committee meeting held on 14.11.22**

### **Present:**

David Kennedy (Chair)

Pat Melia

Ivo Lasan

Paul Jenkins (Secretary)

Cllr Andrew Scrivener

2 members of the public (Dr C Jarvis and Mr A Harden-Sweetnam)

### **Apologies**

Cllr Diana Hathaway

### **Purpose:**

To review progress and agree next actions

#### **1. Public session**

Two members of the public who live next to The Park expressed their concerns about: perceived loss of privacy; concerns about vehicles on The Park; over-development of an already wildlife-friendly area; loss of land currently licensed to them.

They asked that the graveyard extension be phased so that the licensed land was used last.

They would like to see details of proposed screening planting and to be informed of progress.

Mail from Andrew Harden-Sweetnam 14 November 2022

Hi David and committee.

Thanks for affording us the opportunity to present our views.

We are highly concerned overall about the amount of building / development on the park on what is currently a wildlife haven. But specifically.

To recap:

1. We are insistent that our privacy be maintained whatever the outcome.
2. We are averse to vehicle access within the park.
3. We would request that any graveyard extension be phased, with the parcel we rent being the last to be used.
4. We would like the committee and Parish council to recognise that we are conscientious contributors to the village and have held a good tenancy with the land we rent.
5. We would like to be fully informed of progress of plans
6. We would extend an invitation to the committee to view the park from our property / rented land

Thanks again and kind regards

Andrew and Catherine.  
Sent from my iPhone

On 31 Oct 2022, at 18:49, David Kennedy <david7kennedy@fastmail.fm> wrote:

Hello Andrew

The next Park subcommittee meeting is on the 14th November at 7.00 in the village hall. Please do come along. The rules are the same as for the Parish Council meetings - the public has up to 10 minutes to speak to the committee prior to business commencement.

David

## Meeting with Kate and David Richardson

27 November 2022

### Present

Kate and David Richardson  
Paul Jenkins  
David Kennedy

### Response to the Committee letter of Invitation re The Park

Mr and Mrs Richardson came to Harvest Home at the invitation of the committee sent on 18 November. In principle, the Richardsons are pleased with the concept for The Park and supportive of the SSWCG plan and its objectives  
Some concerns were raised by the Richardsons in relation to the plan: these are set out below

1. Visual impact of the community garden from the South and Eastern boundaries of the Little House.  
It was explained that the two existing tree lined boundaries would be reinforced with native species hedging and that beyond the hedging an orchard, planted with heritage varieties, was to be created in natural grassland. The Richardsons would prefer that benches were not sited along the boundary to the Little House. It was further explained that a future Community Garden Association was envisaged but that rules for this association were not yet formalised.
2. The Richardsons expressed disappointment that previous correspondence with SSPC regarding licensing a strip of land to the Eastern boundary of the Little House had been ignored. The perception is that licences have not been issued fairly
3. It was explained that the committee will recommend that existing licences would be terminated but that such termination may be timed to according to the needs of the church for additional burial space.
4. The Richardsons requested that the access gate into the green play area should be at least 2m from the Southern boundary of the Little House
5. The Richardsons expresses the wish that the green play area for the school was not used for buildings or playground equipment.
6. The proactive contact by the committee to the neighbours of The Park is welcomed and it is hoped that continued communication between the SSPC / the committee and the community will be possible. A 'no-surprises' approach by SSPC/the committee would be greatly appreciated. In particular, the committee should give good notice of noisy/ machine work on The Park.
7. The large animal burrows in The Park should be investigated before ground work starts. It is possible that there is a badger sett or fox earth close to the boundary of the Little House. **Action: Committee**

**Meeting between Mary Warnes and Elizabeth Palmer of Oakham, Cross Keys Road and The Park Project Committee represented by David Kennedy, Ivo Lasan**

29 November 2022

The meeting focused on the thoughts and concerns of Mary and Elizabeth raised by the possible changes to The Park land which abuts the Northern boundary of Oakham.

The primary concern is lack of privacy and possible noise when people are working in the community garden area. The Mend The Gap planting plan was explained and the intention to plant a double hedge along the boundary with Oakham (which would be protected by a wire rabbit-proof fence) plus a hazel copse in the SE corner of The Park. Mary and Elizabeth were pleased this planting was progressing and asked if a couple of standard trees could be incorporated into the hedge planting as is planned along the railway line embankment.

**Action: Committee to recommend**

There is a need to publish the Mend The Gap planting plan so that the community is fully aware of the approved scope. **Action SSPC**

There is a concern that the solar panels would be used for external lighting. We advised that this was not envisaged.

There is a concern about the number of structures to be permitted and their size. We advised that one tool shed and one small polytunnel are planned. We do not know the rules about smaller sheds on the allotment/garden plots as these will be for discussion once the Park management team is formed. We advised that the borehole pumping system would be all but invisible.

The efforts of the SSWCG are noted and appreciated but there is concern about the long-term management of The Park once the initial enthusiasm dies back. We explained that the SSWCG is not currently envisaged to be the licensee or manager of The Park. The control of the land rests with SSPC and that SSPC will appoint a team to manage the implementation of whatever it decides to do with The Park. In the future a Community Garden Association may be formed to manage The Park but this is supposition. The source of funding for the work was questioned and we advised that two sources of funds had been identified by SSWCG.

We confirmed that bee hives were no longer part of the plan.

The allotment and garden area is seen as overly formal and some reduced formality would be appreciated. We recommended that Mary and Elizabeth visit the community garden in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell which is a good example of natural planting and management.

**Action: Committee to note and recommend**

We asked for permission to include these notes in the Stage 1 report and this was granted.

## **Note of meeting held at Harvest Home, South Stoke 27.11.22**

### **Present:**

Sandy and Paul Massey-Thompson

David Kennedy

Paul Jenkins

### **Purpose:** Consultation with The Park neighbours

1. David gave an introduction and explained current position with The Park Project committee.
2. Sandy explained that she had a strong interest in the environment and wildlife, and supported those aspects of the proposal, and would help with the implementation. They support the creation of footpath through the site and wildlife pond.
3. Main concern is over vehicular traffic in Cross Keys Road, and the narrow vehicular access to the village hall car park.
4. The Massey-Thompsons would rather that there wasn't an extension to the existing car park.
5. They don't like the idea of any vehicles on the site and would much prefer if the access track across the site to the polytunnel was a wheelchair access rather than a vehicle access.
6. They questioned the demand for allotments and suggested an alternative scheme where people with large gardens made space available for others to cultivate. We explained the position regarding demand at the Streatley allotment site and the indications that demand exists here.
7. They had written to the PC in February, and many of the comments related to the first plan which was consulted by SSWCG prior to the PC consultation. They acknowledged that many of their comments had been addressed in the SSWCG plan consulted by the PC, in particular the screening behind their garden and omission of beehives.
8. Further ideas for the site: willow mazes; picnic tables made from logs, wooden shelter suitable for yoga and meditation. We discussed the potential for the community shed/veranda to be used for this sort of thing.
9. David explained the Mend the Gap proposals which include standards for trees at regular intervals along the railway boundary. Planting is expected to take place in Jan/Feb 23.

**PJ 27.11.22**

## **Notes of Meeting with Tracey and Ivo Lasan The Laurels**

6 December 2022

### **Present**

Tracey Lasan

Ivo Lasan

David Kennedy

1. The Lasans agree to the notes being included in the committee's Stage 1 Report.

### **2. Key messages from the Lasans**

- The Park is for all the residents of the community not just the few
- Where consultation returns were marked 'support with comments', it should be understood that, without the comments being addressed, the support may be forfeit.
- The plan is considered too complex e.g., the polytunnel, allotments
- The concept of community plots is supported but not individual gardens or allotments
- There should be no vehicles on The Park
- Increased traffic on Cross Keys Road and the narrow access lane is undesirable.
- The car park should be deleted.

### **3. Concerns**

- Noise – unless managed this could be intrusive when neighbours are in their gardens
- Privacy – the boundary between neighbours' gardens and The Park needs reinforcement quickly. Planting a hedge of whips may not produce the desired level of privacy for several years.
- Security – if the boundary is not reinforced the back of neighbours' property will be too easily accessible and as such presents a real security risk
- Lighting – there should be no lights on The Park
- Safety – there is a safety concern for walkers and cyclists due to increased vehicular traffic on Cross Keys Road and the access lane.
- Structures – one large shed/store away from neighbours' boundaries would be acceptable. Multiple small sheds and a large poly tunnel are not acceptable.
- Waste – the site needs a waste collection and disposal policy including that for dog poo, plastic, paper and general waste. The Park rules need to address this.
- Compost Bins – should be located well away from houses as they may attract vermin
- Maintenance – how will SSPC ensure that The Park is properly maintained and funded in the medium and long-term?

DK 6 December 2022

## Meeting with Sue and Stuart Campbell Tudor Barn

1 December 2022

Present  
Sue Campbell  
Stuart Campbell  
Ivo Lasan  
David Kennedy

### The Park

Note of the discussion held to discuss the Park development plan as presented by South Stoke Parish Council (SSPC) at the spring consultation.

1. Sue and Stuart, the Campbells) agree to these notes forming part of the Stage 1 Report of recommendation to SSPC.
2. The Campbells object to the car park extension behind their property on the grounds of loss of privacy and noise pollution.
3. The area designated as a car park extension has been the subject of discussions between the Campbells, Savills (for Christchurch College) and SSPC for several years. The Campbells feel the land was promised to them more than once and then the offers were withdrawn. When Park land was sold to neighbours the Campbells were denied; this has resulted in a deep feeling of unfairness and distrust of SSPC. If SSPC override the Campbells wishes and put a car park directly behind their property the Campbells would insist on a screening hedge being planted to maintain their privacy.
4. The allotment layout is considered to be overly formal and not representative of a biodiverse community space. Smaller community plots would be acceptable. The Campbells have been told informally that 'all the allotments have been taken' – we have no knowledge of this and were surprised by the information. **Action DK/IL to find out more**
5. The lane and bier path are considered too narrow for traffic and the Campbells worry about damage to their property now from use by hall-users; increased traffic would just make matters worse.
6. The consultation plan is perceived to be a 'land grab' by the South Stoke Wildlife and Conservation Group (SSWCG). It was explained that the plan is SSPC's plan and that SSPC would manage and control the Park land.
7. The Campbells expressed concerns over capital and operating cost funding and stated their opinion that no work should be commenced until there was sufficient cash at the bank to meet the full cost. The subject of maintenance funding is a concern as the Campbells fear that (based on previous track record) SSPC would not mow grassland or maintain hedges in a timely way. The source of maintenance funding was questioned and how SSPC would arrange matters. It was explained that SSPC would probably have to delegate such matters to a Community Garden Association or similar body.
8. In summary, the Campbells
  - a. Would like SSPC to recognise the unfair treatment they have received and redress this issue
  - b. Would like their privacy protected
  - c. Object strongly to a car park on their boundary
  - d. Consider the lane and bier path unsuited to increased traffic

*Subsequent to this meeting Mrs Campbell forwarded to the committee 11 items of correspondence with SSPC and Savills. This correspondence is provided to SSPC as a separate dossier. The committee recommends that SSPC reads the correspondence before finalising its decisions.*

## **Record of Meeting with Sally Horton**

5 December 2022 at Stoke Abbas

### **Present**

Sally Horton

David Kennedy

Lady Horton is not against the plan to develop the Park in principle and recognises the benefits that it will bring to the community. However, she does have the following concerns:

1. The surface of the lane outside her house is poor and unsuitable for disabled access to the Park
2. The lane is very narrow and unsuited to much traffic. Therefore, the vehicular access to the Park should be limited to essential and disabled user access only. i.e., gardeners should come on foot or by bicycle!

Lady Horton is sceptical about the sustainability of a community garden plot or allotments.

Lady Horton would be strongly in favour of the graveyard extension and of the outdoor learning area for the school; she recognises the important interaction between the outdoor learning area and the community garden

Badgers have been seen at Stoke Abbas in the past but not recently.

For completeness the meeting invitation letter sent to neighbours to the Park and Park licence holders is attached.

**Harvest Home, The Street  
South Stoke  
RG8 0JS**

**18 November 2022**

**Dear,**

**The Park**

The South Stoke Parish Council (SSPC) has appointed a committee to make recommendations to it relating to The Park land which adjoins your property. The committee has started work and has reviewed and analysed the returns made after the SSPC spring consultation; a report of that analysis has been submitted to SSPC. The committee is aware of comments made to SSPC via letters – to date these letters have not formed part of the data analysis. The report concludes that the community supports:

- The Park remaining a green space
- The South Stoke Wildlife Group plan for The Park to become a community space
- The inclusion of a green play area for St Andrew's primary school
- The inclusion of an extension to the St Andrew's church burial ground

The report also concludes that the community does not support:

- Sublease of land for garden extensions

- Creation of either a tennis court or bowling green

As a neighbour to The Park, the committee would appreciate the opportunity to meet you and to invite you to share your thoughts and concerns about the proposed plan: the committee will note and report any concerns when finalising its recommendation to SSPC. If you would like to go ahead with a meeting, please could you suggest some convenient dates and times. Contact details are below.

**Yours Sincerely,**

**David Kennedy**  
**Chair - The Park Project Committee**  
[david7kennedy@fastmail.fm](mailto:david7kennedy@fastmail.fm)  
01491 872230

**ENDS**