



The Council Office, North Street Workshops, Stoke sub Hamdon, TA14 6QR

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STOKE SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 4th DECEMBER 2024 AT THE COUNCIL OFFICE, NORTH STREET
WORKSHOPS, STOKE SUB HAMDON, TA14 6QR**

Present

Cllr. P Gould (Chairperson)
Cllr. R Lewis
Cllr. R Merrick
Cllr. M Foley
Cllr. M Dullaghan
Cllr. A Salter
Cllr. D Burton
Cllr. M Hullet
Cllr. G Middleton
County Councillor Bailey (part-time)
County Councillor Pearlstone (part-time)
2 Members of public
Mr T Heath (Clerk)

- 24/275 RECORDING OF MEETING**
A Member of the Public informed the Chair that she would be voice recording the meeting. No objections were raised.
- 24/276 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. S Nelms.
- 24/277 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**
Cllrs Burton and Merrick declared an interest in agenda item 24/294.
- 24/278 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Council **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the full council meeting, held on 6th November 2024.
- 24/279 CO-OPTION OF A PARISH COUNCILLOR**
A resolution to co-opt Moira Hulett as a Parish Councillor was unanimously **APPROVED**. Cllr. Hulett subsequently signed, in the presence of the Proper Officer, an acceptance of office form.

24/280

PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the public thanked the Council for placing onto the agenda an item that will consider offering Castle School an allotment at no cost and outlined the benefits this could bring to the children of the School.

24/281

SOMERSET COUNCIL REPORT

- (a) The County Councillors provided a brief relating to the recent press release from Somerset Council regarding the revised expression in interest of devolution by Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire Councils that commits to a Mayoral Combined Authority for the Heart of Wessex region.
- (b) Cllr Bailey welcomed the Parish Council proposed formation of a working group that will support Castle's School 150th anniversary celebrations.
- (c) Discussion was had relating to responsibilities for filling grit bins this winter. It was **AGREED** that the Interim Clerk should write to Somerset Council to confirm arrangements for this winter.
- (d) It was **AGREED** that arrangements should be made for a village walk around supported by Somerset Council traffic management and safety superintendent to enable the Parish Council to point out many areas of concern with road markings, signage, footpaths, and road conditions. The Parish Council would appreciate guidance from County as to what can or cannot be done in relation to speeding. Cllrs. Perarlstone and Bailey **AGREED** to help with arrangements.
- (e) The Interim Clerk **AGREED** to contact Somerset Council Devolution team to ascertain the current position and future plans that may impact the Parish.

24/282

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- (a) Cllr Burton provided a progress report relating to grit bins throughout the village. 3 bins are waiting to be deployed. 18 bags of grit are in stock. 2 bins with grit have been placed, one on the Windsor Lane junction with East Stoke and one replacing the small bin at the Bonnies Lane/High Street junction. A detailed report will be provided to Members ahead of the January 2025 meeting.
- (b) The Interim Clerk was **ACTIONED** to confirm the position with regards to Somerset Council replenishing grit bins where required this winter.
- (c) An update on the roll out of new dog and waste bins was given by Cllr. Burton. The Interim Clerk was **ACTIONED** to obtain quotes for emptying bins that fall under the responsibility of the Parish Council. It was **NOTED** that there are no arrangements in place for emptying bins at the skate park.

- (d) Cllr. Burton reported that at a recent inspection of the Memorial Hall play area a number of urgent tasks were identified. It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Burton and the Interim Clerk prepare a costed proposal for presentation to Council in the new year. In addition the Interim Clerk was **ACTIONED** to contact the Parish Ranger and request twigs, branches and leaves be cleared from the play area and disposed. No report was provided relating to the Stonehill play area.
- (e) Cllr. Dullaghan provided Council with an update of activities being undertaken by the speed watch team which included deployment of the Speed Indicator Device. It was recognised that currently speed watch activities are limited to two places in the village. The team are working with the police to agree other areas for deployment. Vehicle counters are to be rolled out in four locations.

24/283

FINANCE

- (a) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** a list of payments as detailed below.

Mr T M Heath	Democratic services	£619.40
Lisa Wilson	Democratic services	£43.55
True Tree Care Ltd	Removal of Kite	£144.00
Hamdon First Aid	Defib pads and kit	£94.18
Cloudy IT	IT Support	£43.32
EVIS	Ranger Services	£750.00
Mr P Gould	Decontamination Tape	£10.38
Mr P Gould	Phone Charger	£12.99
Lisa Wilson	Key Cutting	£14.00
Arceus	HYFC Gutter Cleaning	£120.00
Lloyds Bank	Service charge	£7.85
Stable Print	Printing of newsletter	£210.00
EVIS	Grounds Maintenance	£750.00
Ionis	Web and Mail	£21.00
100Green	Gas usage	£17.40
Royal British Legion	Wreath	£100.00

- (b) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the bank reconciliation statement as of 30th November 2024.

24/284

BANK AND BUILDING SOCIETY MANDATES AND DEBIT CARD

- (a) Council **CONFIRMED** signatories on the Lloyds, Melton, and Cambridge accounts as being

Lloyds - Cllrs. Merrick, Fryer, Hulett, Middleton, Lewis and the RFO.

Melton – Cllrs. Merrick, Hulett and the RFO.

Cambridge and Counties - Cllrs. Merrick, Hulett and the RFO.

- (b) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** an additional Lloyds debit card should be requested for use by the Responsible Financial Officer. It was **AGREED** to maintain the debit card, registered to Cllr. Merrick for emergency use only.

24/285

COUNCIL SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Council **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the opening of a Council Saver account with the Cambridge Building Society, with signatories on the account to be the RFO, Cllrs. Merrick and Hulett. On account opening Members **AUTHORISED** an initial transfer of £50,000 of funds from the Lloyds reserve account.

24/286

MELTON BUILDING SOCIETY ACCOUNT

Council **AUTHORISED** closure of the Melton Building Society 90-day notice savings account.

24/287

GRANT APPLICATION

Members undertook a review of the grant application received from St. Marys Church for grounds maintenance of the churchyard. Following extensive discussion, Council **REJECTED** the application, with the Clerk **ACTIONED** to inform the Church of the decision.

24/288

2025/2026 Budget

The RFO gave a presentation to Council which summarised the outcomes and recommendations from the budget and precept work undertaken during the previous 6 weeks by Members and the RFO. It was **NOTED** there remains a great deal of uncertainty around devolution of services from Somerset Council.

Following the presentation, a proposal by Cllr. Burton, seconded by Cllr. Middleton to set the 2025/2026 budget and reserves was unanimously **APPROVED**. A summary of the values approved are detailed here:

Expenditure Budget	£118,927
Income (non-precept)	£6,000
General Reserve	£39,270
Earmarked Reserves	£102,450

Full details of the budget will be available for viewing on the Parish Councils website.

Council confirmed its key delivery areas for 2025/2026 as being:

- Supporting local organisations via grant funding opportunities
- Increased investment in allotments
- Village maintenance and up-keep
- Asset management
- Support to Castle Schools 150th Anniversary celebrations
- Continuation of funding for the village newsletter

The RFO presented a number of recommendations to Council which were duly **ACCEPTED**. These being:

- A Councillor to be formally appointed as lead for 10 of the 12 budget cost centres with delivery plans produced and monitored
- A Council Office Facility Manager to be appointed

- Grant applications to be considered at the June and October meetings
- Stakeholder map, with appointed relationship managers developed
- Quarterly review of budget with adjustments made, approved at full Council
- No budget line to be exceeded without a Council resolution
- Council to prepare and approve an investment strategy paper

24/289 2025/2026 PRECEPT

Following the approval of the budget for next financial year, Council **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the 2025/2026 precept demand of £97,281, therefore no increase on the 2024/2025 precept. It was **NOTED** that the impact on the band D tax base could not be assessed as information from Somerset Council to allow the calculation has not been received.

24/290 STANDING ORDERS

Council overwhelmingly **RESOLVED to ADOPT** a revised standing orders document, previously provided to members as draft issue A.

24/291 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Council overwhelmingly **RESOLVED to ADOPT** revised financial regulations, previously provided to members as draft issue A.

24/292 BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

Council unanimously **RESOLVED to ADOPT** a bullying and harassment policy, previously provided to members as draft issue A.

24/293 ALLOTMENTS

- (a) Following formal requests to the proper officer from Cllrs. Salter, Merrick, Burton and Nelms, Council unanimously **PASSED** a special motion to reverse a resolution made at the Parish Council Meeting of 4 September 2024 - Minute 24/209 (b) refers.
- (b) Council overwhelmingly **RESOLVED to ADOPT** a revised allotment, previously provided to members as draft issue A.
- (c) It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Salter would act on behalf of Council as lead on allotment matters and that every three months Cllr. Salter along with the Clerk would inspect allotment plots.
- (d) The Clerk was **ACTIONED** to seek suppliers and quotes for readying plots for new tenants.
- (e) Council unanimously **AGREED** to offer Castle School an allotment plot free of charge.

- 24/294** **SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL TRUST FACILITY MAINTENANCE PLAN**
 With reference to the Sports and Recreational Trusts agreement with the Parish Council (Clause 7), Council unanimously **APPROVED** the annual Facilities Management Plan for financial year January 1st, 2025, to December 31st, 2025.
- 24/295** **CASTLE SCHOOL**
 Council **AGREED** to form a working group with the objective of exploring, in partnership with Castle School, ideas for celebrating their 150th anniversary. Members **APPOINTED** to the working group were Cllrs. Gould and Middleton.
- 24/296** **STAKEHOLDER MAP**
 In line with the accepted recommendation min. 24/288 refers, Members **APPROVED** the formation of a stakeholder map 'task and finish' group with the objectives of developing the map and recommending associated relationship managers. **APPOINTED** members of the group were Cllrs. Gould, Dullaghan, and Hulett along with the RFO and Clerk.
- 24/297** **RANGER TASKS**
 (a) The Parish Ranger has commenced the task of clearing edges and paths with North street completed and West Street in progress.
- (b) Council **RE -CONFIRMED** a prioritised list of tasks for the Parish Ranger with the addition of clearing twigs, branches, and leaves from the play area at the Memorial Hall.
- 24/298** **PLANNING**
 No Planning matters requiring a Council decision were considered.
- 24/299** **HIGHWAYS MATTERS**
 Highways matters were discussed earlier in the meeting.
- 24/300** **CRIME, DISORDER AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**
 No issues raised or discussed.
- 24/301** **CORRESPONDENCE**
 Council received correspondence relating to the condition of the stone wall at Whirligig Lane. Council **ACTIONED** the Interim Clerk to, working in partnership with County Councillors, establish ownership of the wall and to write to Castle School to advise them of the risks associated with the wall in its current state. Cllr. Dullaghan to tape off the area.
- 24/302** **ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**
 Sports and Rec Trust 5-year strategy paper
 Document Retention Policy
 Asset Register

24/303

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Council unanimously **PASSED** a resolution excluding the press and public from the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (confidential staffing matter)

24/304

APPOINTMENT OF A PERMANENT CLERK

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the appointment of Gilly Lowe as the permanent Clerk with a start date of 1st January 2025.

24/305

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 8th January 2024, starting at 7:00pm.

Approved by.....

Date.....