



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

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF STOKE SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 5th FEBRUARY 2025
THE COUNCIL OFFICE, NORTH STREET WORKSHOPS, STOKE SUB HAMDON, TA14 6QR**

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr. S Nelms, Cllr. Rachael Lewis, Cllr. Rebecca Merrick, Cllr. Mike Foley & Cllr. Moira Hullet

County Councillor Present: Cllr John Bailey (part-time)

Members of public: 10

Also in attendance: Mrs G Lowe (Clerk) & Mr T Heath (RFO)

25/020 ELECTION OF A NEW CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Cllr Merrick proposed Cllr Nelms as Chairman, and this was seconded by Cllr Lewis. It was unanimously agreed that Cllr Nelms should be Chair until the Annual Meeting in May, and she duly signed the acceptance of office form.

Cllr Hullett then proposed Cllr Salter as Vice-Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Foley. Again all members were unanimous in agreeing Cllr Salter as Vice-Chair until the Annual Meeting in May. Cllr Salter will sign his Acceptance of Office form next time he sees the Clerk.

25/021 RECORDING OF MEETING

Cllr Hullett informed the Chair that she would be voice recording the meeting. No objections were raised. Cllr Foley asked the whereabouts of the council's equipment, and Cllr Nelms confirmed that it is in the office, but without a power lead.
The clerk will attempt to source a replacement lead.

25/022 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Salter, Burton, Middleton & Dullaghan and County Cllr Pearlstone.

25/023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr Merrick declared an interest in item 25/035 as Chair of the Memorial Hall.
Cllr Bailey declared an interest in item 25/044 as Chair of HYG and asked if the item could be moved forward. However, this was refused as it was a closed session item.

25/024 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the full council meeting, held on 8th January 2025 as a true & correct record of the meeting. Cllr Nelms signed the minutes.

25/025 STAFFING COMMITTEE AND LCN REPRESENTATION

Following recent resignations, new members were required for the Staffing Committee and representation at the LCN.

- (a) After a brief discussion, members agreed that the Chairman would be LCN Representative together with the clerk.

- (b) Cllr Hulett proposed Cllrs Salter and Dullaghan join the Staffing Committee and members agreed unanimously. This makes a total of 5 along with Cllr Nelms, Cllr Burton (Committee Chair) and Cllr Foley.

Meeting closed at 7.15pm to allow for public questions and observations.

25/026 PUBLIC SESSION

Members of the public (MOP) raised the following issues:

- The issue of the very slippery footpath in front of the properties in Cole Lane. The Council has very recently finally sent an operative to properly clean up the surface moss etc. and it is now much improved, but it has been treacherous causing 2 residents to end up in A&E with injuries from a fall. Cllr Nelms offered to support the residents request for more regular cleaning, and Cllr Bailey asked to be copied in but felt that it could be difficult to organise.
- The parish council's refusal of the grant request for the churchyard was raised by a MOP who reminded members that the churchyard belongs to the village, and is there for the benefit of all. Graves are continually being added & the congregation is small. She asked again for the parish council's support, and Cllr Nelms suggested that they apply again for the next round of grant funding in June.
- A MOP raised the lamppost that is still missing in front of 56 & 58 High St, after being knocked by BT when fixing a cable. The RFO confirmed that as Interim Clerk he had escalated this with County Cllr Pearlstone who confirmed that it was on a 'to do' list for Highways, but wouldn't happen in the current financial year. Hopefully they will do it in April, or soon after.

The clerk will make a note to send a reminder in April.

25/027 SOMERSET COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Bailey reported the following:

- Cllr Pearlstone had sent apologies having taken some leave to sort out flood damage. However, it was confirmed that she will rearrange the walkabout with Highways postponed from 27th January. Hopefully that will help with a lot of the local issues. Cllr Bailey confirmed that the vegetation on slip roads is a tricky issue as there was never a confirmed handover of responsibility between National Highways and the district council, so no one has maintained it. He has asked Highways to share their maps showing the stretches of maintenance with the County Council.

- Cllr Bailey had previously circulated some information about flood recovery which he asked to be shared with all residents. It provides a lot of contact numbers and useful advice and asks for PC feedback on the village's experience. Cllr Nelms confirmed that she had cleared the drain in East Stoke to allow some water to drain away from the path that was a foot deep, but couldn't clear the one on the opposite side which was blocked solid. Cllr Bailey thanked Cllr Nelms.

- Cllr Bailey further reported that the police are keen to be in more contact with the parishes following a reorganisation. The PCSO for Stoke sub Hamdon is Mike Bell.

- He ended his report by confirming that council tax will increase by 7.5% next year, which still leaves a £40m shortfall when balancing the budget. There are going to be 450 redundancies and there are further discussions over the next two weeks about how best to move forward.

The meeting re-opened 7.46pm

*The Chair used Standing Order 2(a) to bring forward agenda item **25/032 - HYFC.***

Jackie Poole wanted to thank the parish council for its support to help find trustees. There has already been one volunteer to act as a Bookings Secretary, and the RFO is helping to sort out the accounts, and ensure payments are made. The facility does give the village a place for the young people to meet with Gymnastics, Star Dance & Brownies still using it. Cllr Bailey personally added his thanks for the parish council's help with the recruitment drive and especially the RFO and other individuals who got together and kept things running. Cllr Hulett confirmed that leaflets were distributed with the newsletter and any remaining leaflets had been left in the Community Shop. More can be printed if necessary.

25/028 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

(a) The RFO confirmed that the two contractors used by the parish council for waste disposal are having difficulty in securing a quote for disposal from their 3rd parties. He advised looking more broadly. Somerset Council have quoted approximately £8 per bin per week, and this is for all bins not situated on council land.

The clerk will look into the matter further.

(b) The Clerk updated on the current councillor vacancies. The deadline for residents to request an election for the most recent vacancy is 18th February. After this, if no election has been called, the council can advertise both vacancies together and co-opt.

25/029 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

(a) Cllr Bailey has heard nothing from the Devolution Dept - he will chase them again.

(b) Cllr Burton & the RFO had met and agreed to obtain quotes for the work that needs doing in both the play-areas following inspection reports. This is for those tasks that were identified in the median risk category.

The clerk and Cllr Burton to follow up.

(c) The RFO confirmed that 40 bags of grit had been ordered & delivered as they were on offer – 40 for the price of 30. Payment is for retrospective approval – see item 25/031 (a).

25/030 PROGRESS REPORTS FROM WORKING/TASK & FINISH GROUPS

i. Progress reports from the following groups were given:

(a) Castle School 150th anniversary WG – nothing to report as Cllr Nelms hasn't yet met with the school.

(b) Stakeholder Mapping T&F

Cllr Hulett reported that a map has been produced and various actions agreed. The WG have another meeting next week, and will report further thereafter.

(c) Speedwatch WG

The Speedwatch representative reported that the recent findings have been reported (highest speed, number of speeders etc) and following a meeting with the police, they now have 9 sites that can be used for speedwatch areas. They are going to be making 20mph signs and putting a lot up around the community in the coming days.

(d) Allotment WG

Cllr Salter had sent a report which the clerk read out. He asked members to approve a further £600 spend on clearing 3 more allotments. After a brief discussion, Cllr Hulett proposed approval for the additional clearance costs, which Cllr Lewis seconded. All members agreed, and confirmed to the RFO that this would be within the current financial year.

Cllr Salter to arrange for the additional clearance work to be carried out.

(e) Dog & Waste bins WG

The clerk read from a report that Cllr Burton had provided in her absence which stated that previously (April '23) the parish council had agreed to purchase a large bin to replace an existing one at the junction of North St and Greatfield Lane, and to relocate the larger bin opposite Cole Lane. After discussion with South Somerset District Council at the time, it was agreed that it could be moved to the opposite side of the road on the verge to the entrance of the workshops and that they would like to have combined litter and dog bins throughout the county.

It was agreed after research that combined bins were too expensive. The resolution was to purchase 2 x 112 litre bins waste disposal bins from Wybone at a cost of £429.99. Subsequently when the housing development had been completed, it was realised that rather than moving the bin to near the workshops, it would be better to move it to the path on the right before Langlands and opposite the glove factory. Therefore, renewed permission is now needed from Somerset Council for the new location.

The clerk will liaise with Cllr Burton to request permission.

ii. Christmas Lights WG

Members agreed to form a Christmas Village Lights WG and Cllr Nelms immediately offered to be involved. However, in the absence of various members, it was agreed to defer the matter to the next meeting. Cllr Foley asked if residents would be included in the WG, and it was agreed that 3 parish councillors and 3 MOP should make up the WG.

25/031 FINANCE

The RFO gave a finance presentation running through the bank reconciliation, receipts and payments and other details to the end of January.

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

• Mr T M Heath	Democratic services	£446.53
• Mrs Gilly Lowe	Democratic services	£678.86
• Cloudy IT	IT Support (January 25)	£ 89.40
• HMRC	PAYE (overdue payments)	£ 3.51
• EVIS	Ranger Services	£650.00
• Cloudy IT	IT Support (February 25)	£89.40

• SALC	Councillor Training	£35.00
• Lloyds Bank	Service charge	£9.35
• HMRC	PAYE (Qtr 3)	£580.62
• Stable Print	Printing of newsletter	£210.00
• EVIS	Grounds Maintenance	£750.00
• Ionos	Web and Mail	£21.00
• 100Green	Gas usage	£19.57
• NWT Supplies Ltd	Rock Salt x 40 bags	£254.46

(b) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the bank reconciliation statement as of 31ST January 2025.

(c) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the quarterly financial statement previously circulated. The RFO suggested that the report be attached to the minutes for transparency purposes going forward, and members agreed.

The RFO further confirmed that the VAT reclaim for the period March '23 to December '24 has been submitted, the Melton Building Society account has been closed, the Cambridge deposit account is now open, the precept request has been submitted and online access to all accounts is now available.

Cllr Nelms thanked the RFO for all his hard work.

(d) The draft Asset Register has been put together with help from a few councillors and previously circulated for comments and feedback. A couple of minor amendments had been added which members confirmed. The RFO explained that the Asset Register would be used for audit and insurance purposes. Cllr Merrick said that some items needn't have hefty replacement values as they are unique items (e.g the Millenium Quilt) and was concerned that this would increase the insurance premium considerably. The RFO confirmed that a number of quotes will be sought when renewing the insurance in May and replacement values can be reduced if necessary. On that basis, members were in agreement to approve the Asset Register.

25/032 HYFC – this item was moved forward on the agenda (see earlier details).

25/033 COUNCIL POLICIES

(a) Members agreed to adopt the **MEMORIAL BENCH** policy previously circulated.

(b) Communications and Social Media Policy
Cllr Foley raised queries about who puts things on the noticeboards (there are 2) and who updates the website. The RFO who had drafted the policy confirmed that the Clerk decides on all content and is responsible for publication, but that councillors can make a request to the clerk. Social media is a good medium, but councillors were reminded that posting on behalf of the council as an individual can cause a problem.

Members agreed to adopt the policy unanimously.

25/034 MEMORIAL BENCH REQUEST

The recent request for a bench was granted.

The clerk will inform the applicant and send them the newly approved application form to complete.

25/035 MEMORIAL HALL GROUNDS

Cllr Merrick reported that there had not been much progress in the possibility of converting to a CIO (Community Interest ?) - the Charity Commission may be able to help and she is awaiting a response to a query. She further confirmed that if the Memorial Hall CIO was dissolved in the future whilst owning the land, it would revert back to the Parish Council once again in Trust, and she will keep members informed of developments

25/036 RANGER TASKS

- (a) The Parish Ranger has completed kerb clearing of West St, Highway & half way down Stonehill towards the church.
- (b) Council **RE -CONFIRMED** a prioritised list of tasks for the Parish Ranger to include the same items as before: East Stoke - to continue clearing the path over the hill.

25/037 PLANNING

- (a) SCC/4116/2025 – Monument Quarry, Ham Hill, Stoke sub Hamdon, Somerset
Proposal: Section 73 Planning Application which seeks the variation of planning condition 2 to include the correct end date and the deletion of planning conditions 7 & 8 of Planning Permission ref: SCC/4058/2023
Members **AGREED** to support the application with no comments.
- (b) 25/00125/TCA – 21, North Street, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6QS
Proposal: Notification of intent to carry out tree surgery works to No.2 trees within a Conservation Area – This is for notification purposes only

25/038 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

The clerk confirmed that she was awaiting a date for the rearranged walkabout with Highways. The issue of parking needs to be urgently addressed following emails received from several residents. Members suggested forming a Parking Working Group. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

25/039 CRIME, DISORDER & COMMUNITY SAFETY

No issues to report.

25/040 CORRESPONDENCE - None

25/041 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Formation of a Parking WG
- Agree members of the Christmas lights WG
- Arrangements for the Parish Annual Assembly - the date for the Assembly was agreed as 21st May.
The clerk will book the Memorial Hall for that date from 6.00-9.30pm.
- Risk management assessment

25/042 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Wednesday 5th March 2025**, starting at 7:00pm in the Parish Office.

25/043 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Council will be requested to pass 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 (grant funding request).

Members agreed an extension to the 2 hour meeting limit & to exclude press & public.

The meeting closed to members of the press and public.

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

25/044 GRANT FUNDING REQUEST

Following the grant application from HYG, the parish council undertook an assessment and agreed on a proposal for the financial year 2025/'26. The clerk was asked to put forward the proposal to HYG.

Meeting closed at 9.24 pm

Approved by.....

Date.....

