



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 7th JANUARY 2025 AT 7pm at
THE COUNCIL OFFICE, NORTH STREET WORKSHOPS, STOKE SUB HAMDON, TA14 6QR**

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr. S Nelms (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Rachael Lewis, Cllr. Rebecca Merrick, Cllr. Mike Foley, Cllr. Martin Dullaghan, Cllr. Andy Salter, Cllr. Densie Burton, Cllr. Moira Hulett, Cllr. Graham Middleton

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

Members of public: 4

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

Cllr Nelms acted as Chair due to the recent resignation of Cllr P Gould with immediate effect. A new Chair will be elected at the next meeting and will remain as Chair until the AGM in May. The vacancy will be dealt with by due process by the clerk.

25/001 RECORDING OF MEETING

Cllr Hulett informed the Chair that she would be voice recording the meeting. No objections were raised.

25/002 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from County Cllr Pearlstone.

25/003 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllrs Merrick and Burton as trustees on the Sports & Rec Trust declared an interest in agenda item 25/011.

Cllr Burton declared a personal interest in agenda item 25/014.

25/004 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the full council meeting, held on 4th December 2024 as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Meeting closed at 7.05pm to allow for public questions and observations.

25/005 PUBLIC SESSION

Members of the public raised questions and observations around the Youth Group's grant request, the running costs of the Parish office, the recent refusal of the grant request by St Mary's Church and the suggestion for Christmas lights in the village.

Members thanked them for their observations, and asked a few questions about the youth group's running costs and attendance figures and confirmed their continued support. The RFO offered to speak further to the individuals on certain matters to further clarify the grant funding process. Members felt that festive lights were a good idea (and perhaps a tree as well), and will investigate further.

25/006 SOMERSET COUNCILLORS REPORT

(a) County Councillor Bailey confirmed arrangements for a walkaround the village with Highways on **27th January 2025 at 10am**, meeting at the Parish Office. The clerk to collate a list of concerns which will be sent in advance of the meeting.

(b) There was no information about ownership of the stone wall along Whirligig Lane in Cllr Pearlstone's absence.

(c) An update on the temporary marking of three additional parking spaces in Lower Ham Hill Road car park has been emailed to Cllr Foley. He will forward the information to other councillors.

(d) The two main points from Somerset Council were about devolving authority to Mayors which is dividing opinion, and the push for foster carers. Any publicity that can help spread the word would be appreciated. Members **AGREED** to promote material on the website, on Facebook and in the newsletter.

Public session closed at 7.32pm and the meeting opened at 7.32pm

MINUTES

25/007 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

(a) Cllr Burton confirmed that with a lot of help from Cllr Hulett and parishioners almost all grit bins have now been filled up, and have shovels. Volunteers have been identified to look after the bin in their vicinity and the issue of lids blowing open will be remedied somehow.

The clerk was asked to order 30 bags of grit which can be stored for use later on in the winter.

(b) The RFO confirmed that all necessary documentation to close the Melton Building Society Account has been sent, and the request acknowledged. The account will close on 9th February, and a cheque for the closing balance will be issued.

25/008 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

(a) The Interim Clerk had written to Somerset Council to confirm grit filling responsibilities, but their reply had been vague and the parish council have been active in the meantime. See agenda item 25/007 (a).

(b) The Interim Clerk has twice written to Somerset Council's devolution team to ascertain the current position and future plans that may impact the Parish Council, and still received no response to date.

Cllr Bailey offered to follow this up.

(c) The quote for bin emptying will be available at the end of this week, and will be reported on further at the next meeting.

(d) Cllr Burton and the RFO are in the process of preparing a costed proposal for tasks associated with the Memorial Hall play area, and asked that it include the play area at Stonehill.

Members **AGREED** to this suggestion.

(e) The RFO has obtained a Lloyds debit card.

(f) The RFO has all documentation ready to send to open a Council saver account with Cambridge Building Society who request that a cheque be sent at the same time as an opening deposit.

Members **AGREED**, and two signatories duly signed a cheque for £50,000.

(g) The RFO had obtained and shared a quote for readying allotment plots for new tenants. See agenda item 25/009 (d) to approve payment.

25/009 PROGRESS REPORTS FROM WORKING/TASK & FINISH GROUPS

(a) Castle School 150th anniversary WG

Cllr Nelms reported that she had met with the Headmaster today and he would like an informal meeting with the Parish Council to start making arrangements for the various events planned. He would like to make it a village-wide event, not just for the school.

Cllrs Nelms and Middleton will meet with the school and report to full council thereafter.

(b) Stakeholder Mapping T&F

Cllr Hulett confirmed that she will be producing a graphic to see at a glance who and how the Parish Council interact with as a visual aid to understanding key stakeholder relationships. This will be presented at the next meeting.

(c) Speedwatch WG

A Speedwatch representative present at the meeting confirmed that four more volunteers are currently being trained which will make twelve in total. This is good news as more sites can be covered at the same time. The "20's Plenty" signs will be going up and they have direct liaison with the police which is useful. She asked if they could join the walkabout with Highways on 27th January and this was confirmed.

(d) Allotment WG

Cllr Salter confirmed that allotment contracts have been published on the website and on FB, and he hopes to get the remainder signed either at the next surgery or by the end of January. The clearance work quoted for by Premier Landscaping Ltd will focus on the allotments at Furlands in the first instance. A POC (Point of Contact) would be identified for each site to highlight any issues. Vacant sites will then be inspected and offered to those on the waiting list, which will be on a two month probationary period. All sites will be inspected quarterly.

After some discussion about the necessity to clear all sites before they were allocated, it was agreed that this would be beneficial as untended and/or overgrown plots impeded others, hence the need for regular inspections in the future. Members then **AUTHORISED up to** £1000 expenditure for clearing allotment areas and plots by Premier Landscaping Ltd.

(e) Dog & Waste bins WG

Cllr Burton confirmed that costs for emptying bins would be £6.50 per bin, approximately £330 per year. Prices would be obtained from alternative contractors and an update on the purchase of new dog waste bins would be provided at the next meeting.

25/010 FINANCE

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

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| • Mr T M Heath | Democratic services | £926.18 |
| • Mrs Gilly Lowe | Democratic services | £697.66 |
| • Cloudy IT | IT Support | £43.32 |
| • EVIS | Ranger Services | £700.00 |
| • Lloyds Bank | Service charge | £7.85 |
| • Stable Print | Printing of newsletter | £210.00 |
| • EVIS | Grounds Maintenance | £750.00 |
| • Ionos | Web and Mail | £21.00 |
| • 100Green | Gas usage | £19.19 |
| • Hugo Fox | Website | £287.86 |
| • Community Shop | Gift Vouchers and cards | £135.98 |

The RFO added three further items for approval, received after preparing the payments list:

- Speedwatch stickers - £213.15;
- SLCC membership for new clerk - £101;
- RFO expenses - £27.48

(b) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the bank reconciliation statement as of 31ST December 2024.

(c) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the quarterly financial statement previously circulated.

(d) Members **NOTED** the transfer of £5,000 from the Lloyds Savings account to the Lloyds Current account.

25/011 SPORTS & REC TRUST 5 YEAR STRATEGY

The 5 Year Strategy (2025-2030) had been circulated to all members previously. After some questions about how the Trust supports other village schemes through grant giving (£500k since 2011), and confirmation that CCTV was proving to be a good deterrent despite some continued incidents of damage taking place at the skateboard park & play area, Cllr Merrick further confirmed that the Trust would liaise with the Duchy in accordance with Clause 9 of the S&RT Agreement with regard to the proposed future projects and ensure compliance with the Duchy requirements. Members noted the further comments and **APPROVED** the strategy.

25/012 COST CENTRES

Members considered the proposal circulated as part of the budget process in which individual councillors would be responsible for certain items aligned with the various cost centres. This would include preparing a short delivery plan for the year, and reporting on progress and delivery against budget.

Members **AGREED** with the proposed items of responsibility as suggested. The details agreed are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| • Salary & Allowances | Staffing Committee Chair |
| • Administration | Cllr Rebecca Merrick |
| • Banking & Loans | Cllr Rachael Lewis |
| • Insurance | Cllr Graham Middleton |
| • Council Office | Cllr Moira Hulett |
| • Printing | Not required |
| • Community Grants | Cllr Martin Dullaghan |
| • S137 | Council Chair |
| • Village Maintenance | Cllr Mike Foley |
| • Allotments | Cllr Andy Salter |
| • Village Assets | Cllr Denise Burton |
| • Community Projects | Cllr Suzanne Nelms |

25/013 RANGER TASKS

(a) The Parish Ranger has commenced the task of clearing branches and leaf clearance around the Memorial Hall, although when last checked, not all debris had been removed. He has continued with kerb and path clearance in West St and High St.

The RFO said that he would follow this up.

(b) Council **RE -CONFIRMED** a prioritised list of tasks for the Parish Ranger to include:

- Clearing Langlands down to Greatfield Lane.
- Clearing and cutting back of East Stoke path.
- Members agreed to include herbicide spraying at the right time of the year to regular tasks.

25/014 PLANNING

(a) 24/02815/HOU – 56 High St, Stoke sub Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6PS

Proposal: Alter and extend existing outbuilding to form a home office and a toilet facility.

Members **AGREED** to support the application with no comments.

(a) 24/02966/LBC – 5 East Stoke, Stoke sub Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6RQ

Proposal: Internal alterations and the installation of heritage double glazing.

Members **AGREED** to support the application with no comments.

(b) The RFO reported that an email had been received from the Acorn Property Group who wished to present their proposals for information. They are in the early stages of planning on a field directly behind Stanchester Academy playing field. Members confirmed that half an hour before the next PC meeting on 5th February would be convenient.

The clerk to confirm a meeting at 6.30pm on 5th February in the Parish Office.

25/015 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

- Castle Street - horrendous potholes.
- The School has asked if Castle Street can be made one-way.

The clerk to collate a list of items to discuss with Highways during the walkabout on 27th January.

25/016 CRIME, DISORDER & COMMUNITY SAFETY

Cllr Dullaghan has received complaints about dog waste on Castle St and West St. Members **AGREED** to include an item in the Newsletter and Facebook asking people to "Please pick up after your dog".

Cllr Dullaghan offered to write a piece and submit it accordingly.

25/017 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no further items.

25/018 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Memorial Hall grounds – status update

25/019 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

Meeting closed at 8.28pm

Approved by.....

Date.....