



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 NOVEMBER 2025
THE COUNCIL OFFICE, NORTH STREET WORKSHOPS, STOKE SUB HAMDON, TA14 6QR**

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr. D.Burton, Cllr. M. Hullet, Cllr. R. Merrick, Cllr. M. Dullaghan, Cllr. G. Middleton, Cllr. M Foley and Cllr. P. Berry

Members of public: None

Somerset Councillors: Cllr. John Bailey

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

The clerk opened the meeting In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, and asked for a proposal for Chair. Cllr Dullaghan proposed Cllr Burton and this was seconded by Cllr Merrick, and agreed by all members. Cllr Burton duly acted as Chair for the meeting.

25/218 RECORDING OF MEETING

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

25/219 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Nelms, Salter and Lewis and Somerset Councillor Pearlstone.

25/220 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr Merrick declared an interest as a Committee Member 25/225 (a), (b) and (d)

25/221 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the Council's ordinary meeting held on 8th October 2025 as a true and correct record of the meeting. Cllr Burton duly signed the minutes.

25/222 SOMERSET COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Bailey had sent a report that had been circulated to all members. The report is also published on the website with other supporting papers.
Cllr Bailey added that he is still waiting to hear from the newly appointed arborist about the trees at East Stoke. The cutting back on the sliproads has now been done, although the legalities of ownership are ongoing. The RFO asked about an invoice received from Somerset Council for Ranger Services in January 2023, dated from February 2024. He had not seen it before, and spent a great deal of time in the summer of 2024 speaking to the

Accounts Department clarifying what was owed. He asked Cllrs Bailey and Pearlstone for help as he cannot call the relevant department. Cllr Bailey offered to chase this up.

25/223 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Following the resignation of Cllr Russell last month, a casual vacancy has arisen. The deadline to request an election by 10 or more electors is 11th November and the notice has been published on the website and in the noticeboards. If no election is requested, the council will begin the process of co-option and advertise the vacancy inviting expressions of interest.

25/224 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Cllr Nelms had confirmed to the clerk the timing with the school about the event on 3rd December, and the tree will be officially switched on at 6.30pm accompanied by the band playing and the children singing. Cllr Burton further confirmed a donation had been received from the coffee shop (£40). The Fleur de Lis and others have agreed to having trees and lights and Cllr Berry confirmed that 15 trees have been ordered and will arrive in the last week of November. The flagpole base and the external electrical socket will be installed in mid-November.

25/225 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

- (a) Memorial Hall play area - as the boules court re-surfacing has not taken place yet, Cllr Merrick suggested that it be postponed until the spring. Members agreed with this suggestion, and the clerk will liaise and confirm that the quote provided will be honoured.
- (b) Bollards at the Memorial Hall – after discussion at the last meeting about replacement of the weathered box to house both the defib and the bleed kit, this was deemed unnecessary. Cllr Berry will install the flexi-bollards to protect both items from vehicles parking too close and ensure access in mid-November.
- (c) Emergency Plan – to update a previous draft and combine with Cllr Dullaghan's proposed draft document for approval. This matter is still outstanding.
- (d) Defib Risk Assessment and Agreement – the clerk had drafted and circulated a document for use. Cllr Burton had spoken to the volunteer resident with responsibility for the defibrillators in the village and he suggested a few minor amendments. He also confirmed that he would order new pads and transfers for the cabinet. It would be useful if the clerk could request new access codes which have not been changed for some time.

Members **APPROVED** the draft with the suggested changes and the clerk will issue copies for signing with the Memorial Hall and Castle School.

25/226 PLANNING

(a) Members are asked to provide comments on the following planning application:

(i) 25/02474/HOU – 24, Norton Road, Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6QL

Proposal: First floor extension and associated internal alterations.

Members had no objections to this application.

(ii) 25/02537/TCA – 56, High Street, Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6PS

Notification of intent to carry out tree surgery works to No.2 trees and fell No.1 tree within a Conservation Area. No.1 – American Black Walnut – carry out crown reduction of up to 2.5m; No.2 – English Walnut – crown reduction of up to 2.5m; Holly Tree – fell due to shading and root damage to existing stone retaining wall.

This is for **notification** only.

(b) Members **NOTED** the decision notices previously circulated.

25/227 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Progress reports from the following groups were given:

(a) Castle School 150th anniversary WG

The clerk to arrange the official road closure notice for 30th June between the hours of 10am and 4pm. The History Group will be working with the children to produce the information boards.

(b) Speedwatch WG

Cllrs Dullaghan and Berry met a couple of weeks ago with the Speedwatch Group who are going to write to the clerk with proposals for signage and village gates and suggested locations for 8 new cameras. They also met with the police recently who confirmed that data collected has shown an increase in speeding, so they have asked for a greater police presence in the village.

(c) Allotments WG

In his absence, Cllr Salter reported that the Castle Kids Patch is great and those involved with it had enjoyed a successful get together last Sunday. Two allotments at Furlands had been rotavated by a kind resident who also cleared the brambles. Allotment holders are very happy and the Clerk was asked to write and thank him on behalf of the Parish Council.

(d) Dog & Waste bins WG

Cllrs Burton and Hulett and surveyed the village with Mark Mayes from Somerset Council and produced a report which had been circulated to all members. Members thanked them for their hard work on this. The recommendation was to purchase 4 new co-mingle bins at a cost of £640 each which together with the re-positioning and removal of certain bins will save almost £3,000 in regular collection costs per year. The clerk was asked to write to both the Memorial Hall Committee and the Sports and Recreation Trust to inform them of the proposed changes and also ensure that residents are kept fully informed via the newsletter and the Facebook page. Education about where and how waste is disposed of is key and must happen in tandem with the new proposals.

Members **AGREED** to the purchase of the 4 new bins at a cost of £2,560 + VAT and to make the necessary allowance for associated collection costs when budget planning for 2026/'27. The clerk to run an information programme and write to the organisations mentioned above.

The Chair then used Standing Order 2a to move the following agenda item into a closed session at the end of the meeting.

25/228 HYFC

This item will be moved to a closed session at the end of the meeting due.

25/229 FINANCE

(a) Members **APPROVED** a list of payments circulated ahead of the meeting as part of the Responsible Financial Officers report*. Some additional invoices had been received since producing the report which included: £40 for gutter clearing at HYFC; £50 for Assertion 10 training for the clerk and RFO; 100 Green Gas supply at £96.99 for October. This is significantly higher than usual and Cllr Hulett offered to donate an electric radiator for the small office downstairs once it was PAT tested.

*The report is published on the website as a supporting paper.

By bank transfer

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Evis | Ranger Duties (October 25) | £500.00 |
| Mr T M Heath | RFO Duties (November 25) | £292.97 |
| Mrs Gilly Lowe | Democratic Services (November 25) | £730.13 |
| CloudyIT | IT Support | £101.40 |
| CYP | Youth Group (June, July, August) | £2,108.00 |
| SALC | New Councillor Training | £75.00 |
| PKF Littlejohn | External Audit | £504.00 |
| Duchy of Cornwall | Office Rent (01/10/25-30/09/26) | £2,400.00 |
| Duchy of Cornwall | Benefice License (01/10/25-30/09/26) | £900.00 |
| | Total | £7,611.50 |

By Debit Card

| | | |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| None | | |
| | Total | £0.00 |

By Direct Debit/Standing Order

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Evis | Grounds Maintenance | £750.00 |
| Lloyds ¹ | Bank Charges | £8.50 |
| Stable Print | Printing of newsletter | £210.00 |
| Tesco | Clerks Phone | £7.98 |
| Green Energy ¹ | Gas | £36.86 |
| Ionos | IT Domain | £22.20 |
| PWLB | HYFC Loan | £4,774.85 |
| | Total | £5,810.39 |

¹ Payments made ahead of the November meeting

Receipts list for noting at the October meeting

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Lloyds Bank | Interest | £28.45 |
| S&RT | Donation | £50.00 |
| Benefice | Donation | £75.00 |
| | Total | £153.45 |

(b) Members **APPROVED** the bank reconciliation statement as of 31st October 2025.

(c) Members **NOTED** the content of the Responsible Financial Officer's finance report.

(d) Members **NOTED** the Q2 Accounting Statement, attached to these minutes.

(e) Members **NOTED** the budget planning process for the 2026/'27 budget starting with a process meeting tomorrow evening.

(f) Members **APPROVED** the cost of the following training sessions in December:

- GDPR Training – Cllr Dullaghan, 5th December - £40

25/230 COUNCIL POLICY REVIEW

The clerk had circulated draft copies of the following policies for review, approval and adoption:

i. Equality and Diversity policy – **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED**

ii. Data Protection Policy – **APPROVED** and **ADPOTED**

iii. Grievance Policy – Cllr Burton had some minor amendments to suggest to this draft and these will be brought back to the next meeting.

25/231 FORMAL PERMISSIONS

(a) Santa Claus Helicopter Visit to Castle School

Members, as leaseholders, considered the request from the Sports and Recreation Trust to allow the helicopter to land for Castle Primary School's annual visit from Santa. The clerk to

confirm appropriate risk assessments are in place and if so, members **AGREED** to grant permission.

(b) Openreach Pole

Members considered the request from Openreach to place a new pole on the Memorial Hall grounds opposite an existing electrical pole located in Langlands.

Members **AGREED** to grant permission.

25/232 WAR MEMORIAL SURVEY

The clerk had circulated a quotation from a specialist surveyor to carry out a condition survey on the war memorial at Ham Hill which was long overdue.

Members **ACCEPTED** the quote from Humphries & Jones of £550 + vat and the clerk was asked to confirm arrangements to carry out the survey as soon as possible.

25/233 YOUTH PROVISION

The clerk reported no response to date following the recent grant application. The attendance figures throughout October were an improvement on the previous month, but still lower than in the spring. Cllrs Nelms, Salter and the clerk are meeting with the current youth provider the following day to receive an update and discuss future plans. They will report further to Council at the next meeting.

25/234 RANGER TASKS

(a) Cllr Foley confirmed that the following tasks were carried out: de-weeding of parking bay and ham stone wall on West Street, de-weeding of the wall along Matts Lane to Langlands and the ivy clearance of holy tree.

Cllr Burton said that she was impressed with recent works carried out, but the leaves blown into piles then need removing, otherwise the wind just blows them around again.

(b) Council **RE-CONFIRMED** a prioritised list of tasks for the Parish Ranger to include: De-weeding parking bays and the wall outside the Memorial Hall on West St diagonally opposite the Fleur de Lis; nettles etc on Whirligig Lane. Brambles and ivy hanging over the wall belong to a resident and the clerk was asked to write to the resident and request that they be cut back. Herbicide treatment has not been carried out which seems a waste after the work done to clear the weeds. Cllr Foley will liaise with the Ranger about this and the list of tasks for this month.

25/235 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr Hulett mentioned the narrowing of the pavement on East Stoke Road and asked the clerk to write to Somerset Council and report it. Also, the overhanging trees in The Avenue have not been dealt with yet, so need to be reported again.

25/236 CRIME, DISORDER & COMMUNITY SAFETY

There had been a burglary in West Street in the middle of the afternoon recently.

25/237 CORRESPONDENCE

An email had been received from a resident about encouraging wildlife in the village. Cllr Berry was asked to liaise and encourage this generally.

The clerk also reported that a grant of £200 had been awarded from the Sub-Hamdon Climate Group for environmental purposes. Council to consider the proposed projects at the December meeting.

25/238 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Policy reviews – 26/27 budget – asset register – IT policy – emergency plan – youth provision - HYFC

25/239 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Wednesday 10TH December 2025**, starting at 7:00pm in the Parish Office.

25/240 Members **APPROVED** a resolution to move into a closed session excluding the press and public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of discussions (business case) according to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

25/228 HYFC

The working group had met and provided a report stating the current financial position of the HYFC facility. Cllr Burton thanked them for their work on this.

After discussion, members agreed to request further legal advice from Battens Solicitors who hold all original documentation associated with the purchase of the building in 2018.

Members **APPROVED** a cost of up to £1500 for the specific legal advice and **AGREED** to move £1500 from earmarked reserves into the main budget.

Members also **AGREED** to obtain market appraisals for possible sale on the open market. Proposals and next steps to be discussed at the December or January meeting once the legal advice has been received, and to ensure that it is well-publicised to residents to allow for public discussion.

Meeting closed at 8.59 pm

Approved by.....

Date.....