



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 10th DECEMBER 2025
THE COUNCIL OFFICE, NORTH STREET WORKSHOPS, STOKE SUB HAMDON, TA14 6QR**

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr. S. Nelms (Chair), Cllr. P. Berry, Cllr. M. Dullaghan, Cllr. M. Foley, Cllr. M. Hullet, Cllr. R. Lewis, Cllr. R. Merrick and Cllr. G. Middleton

Members of public: 2

Somerset Councillors: Cllr. John Bailey

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

25/240 RECORDING OF MEETING

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

25/241 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Salter and Burton and Somerset Councillor Pearlstone.

25/242 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr Merrick declared an interest as a Committee Member in Item 25/247(b)
Cllr Nelms declared an interest as a Trustee for HYFC in Item 25/253.

25/243 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the Council's ordinary meeting held on 5th November 2025 as a true and correct record of the meeting. Cllr Nelms duly signed the minutes.

25/244 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 confirmed that there was still no news on the planned tree works at East Stoke nor the jetting of drains on Bonnies Lane. The RFO confirmed that Cllr Pearlstone had resolved the issue of the 2023/'24 invoice issued by the Finance Department of Somerset Council.

Cllr Nelms brought up the issue of West End Farm where another vehicle had driven straight across the T-junction and through the gates (2nd December). The gate and one of the steels had been badly damaged. On the last inspection, Highways confirmed that the road sign is not at the correct height to be picked up by headlamps, but surely further measures are required such as flashing lights? Cllr Bailey confirmed that all the normal

signs for approaching a junction are there, and if they are overgrown or not clear then they can be improved, but otherwise there's not much that can be done. There isn't an electricity supply there, but Cllr Nelms asked if solar panels could provide some lighting as it has happened a few times now. Cllr Bailey said that he would ask the question and report back.

Cllr Foley asked if there was any update on the proposed car parking charges consultation, having seen that the Sunday parking charges had been rejected by Somerset Council following the many objections received. Cllr Bailey confirmed that there is a case to allow for the differences between parking in larger towns and rural parking and further information will follow.

The Chairman then used Standing Order 2(a) to bring forward agenda item 25/249 and Standing Order 4(e) to invite any representations from members of the public.

SPEEDWATCH GROUP

Lyn Foley apologised for the lateness of the most recent written reports from the Speedwatch Group, but confirmed verbally that she had attended the quarterly meeting with the police recently. She reported that 501 letters have been issued to people doing 36mph or more from data gathered by the Speedwatch Group's 97 sessions. There are some consistent speeders but it isn't known if they are local residents or people who regularly travel through Stoke-sub-Hamdon - the Group does not receive that information. She confirmed that if the Parish Council do decide to invest in further cameras, the police have acknowledged that the additional information would be useful. Cllr Nelms thanked Lyn and the Speedwatch Group for all their hard work.

**The secondary part of this agenda item will be discussed by members later on in the meeting.*

Lyn Foley also wanted to thank the Parish Council for the Christmas lights which look lovely. She was surprised to hear that those who couldn't afford the suggested donation hadn't been included in the wall-mounted trees. Cllr Nelms and Hulett confirmed that it wasn't Parish Council policy to *charge* for the trees and of the fourteen trees that were installed, only three donations had been received to date. The installation of trees and brackets had **not** been dependent on receiving a donation and it was partly a suggestion and partly a request for permission to use the building as it was the first year that such a display had been organised.

25/245 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Following the resignation of Cllr Russell last month, a casual vacancy has arisen. A resident had submitted an expression of interest, and came to the meeting. After a few further questions, members unanimously agreed to co-opt Gary Edmunds as a new councillor. He duly signed the acceptance of office form and joined the meeting. The clerk will organise further requirements regarding the Register of Member's Interests, training and an email address.

25/246 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Cllr Nelms reported that after a massive effort from the volunteers, the Christmas lights in the village were officially switched on last Wednesday 3rd December, to coincide with the school's advent fayre. It was a really lovely occasion and she was very grateful to everyone involved, but especially Craig from True Tree Care who helped to put up most of the trees and brackets with his cherry picker; to Harry from Castle Farm Christmas Trees for supplying the lovely trees; to Tesco's at Yeovil for their donation of some Christmas lights; to Cliff and Jim for helping the parish council through this process; to Florence from the Hive for coming to the rescue with an electricity supply; to Adrian Johnson for his help and advice; to Mark Lentell for concreting the post of the flagpole tree and to Jake from Ham

Hill Electrical Services for his advice and installation of the outdoor socket box. It was a steep learning curve for all concerned, but having done it once, and invested in various items, it will be bigger and better next year, and hopefully less stressful!

Members agreed that the event on 3rd December had been thoroughly enjoyable and had brought the village together and the lights throughout the village are a welcome festive addition well-worth all the effort.

25/247 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

- (a) Emergency Plan – to update a previous draft and combine with Cllr Dullaghan's proposed draft document for approval. This matter is still outstanding. The clerk clarified what was required, and will circulate a final version of the document for approval at the January meeting. This will then be publicised on the website.
- (b) Defib Risk Assessment and Agreement – The clerk has written to confirm that the Parish Council has agreed to undertake ownership of the de-fib at the school and has received the counter-signed agreement for filing. The copy for the Memorial Hall also includes a Risk Assessment and agreement for the external electrical socket. Cllr Merrick will arrange counter-signing at the next Memorial Hall committee meeting.
- (c) War Memorial Survey – the survey has been carried out (earlier that day) and a report will follow in the new year. Cllr Berry has spoken to a professional stone cleaner in Bath who will provide a guide and a quote if necessary.

25/248 PLANNING

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

(i) 25/02688/FUL – 1, High Street, Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6PP

Proposal: Erection of single storey rear extension to form a storage space.

Members felt that insufficient detail had been submitted with the application particularly regarding proposed materials and use of the storage space. After further discussions, members **AGREED** to object to this application due to insufficient information. Plans can be amended or a new application made with further details.

(ii) 25/02760/HOU – 18, Langlands, Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6QW

Proposal: Erection of single storey rear extension and creation of off-street parking.

Members **AGREED** to support this application, especially as it will take two 2 cars off the road by creating off-street parking.

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

25/249 SPEEDWATCH GROUP

Members re-confirmed a set of objectives for the speedwatch group which had been detailed at an earlier meeting in May when lead responsibilities were agreed.

The RFO suggested that objectives should be measurable and proposed the following: to reduce the average speed of vehicles driving through the village; and to increase overall speed awareness among residents throughout the village.

Members **AGREED** with the objectives and the clerk will write to update the Speedwatch Group.

25/250 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Progress reports from the following groups were given:

(a) Castle School 150th anniversary WG

The clerk is liaising with the school to arrange the official road closure notice for 30th June. Eight weeks' notice is required and the cost has been confirmed at £200.

Members **AGREED** to fund the road closure costs.

The History Group will be working with the children to produce the information boards, and the Village Art Group have offered to loan some larger display boards for a week in March as required.

(b) Speedwatch WG
See previous item

(c) Allotments WG
Nothing to report in Cllr Salter's absence.

(d) Dog & Waste bins WG
Nothing further to report since the last meeting.

25/251 FINANCE

(a) Members **APPROVED** a list of payments circulated ahead of the meeting as part of the Responsible Financial Officers report*.

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

Payments requiring approval at the December meeting

paid by bank transfer

Mr T M Heath	RFO Duties (December 25)	£292.97
Mr T M Heath	Expenses	£22.88
Mrs Gilly Lowe	Democratic Services (December 25)	£722.73
CloudyIT	IT Support	£101.40
S Nelms (Tesco) 1	Christmas Lights	£24.30
S Nelms (Tesco) 1	Christmas Lights	£72.90
Lucie Adams 1	Office Clean	£32.00
HYFC/T	Hall Hire	£90.00
Ham Hill	Electrical Electric Socket	£172.13
CYP	Provision of Youth Services	£2,626.00
	Total	£4,157.31

paid by Debit Card

Screwfix 1	Rawbolts	£58.80
True Traders1	Wall Mounted Stands	£73.96
Christmas Tree1	Wall Mounted Stands	£219.89
Netting		
Screwfix1	Rawbolts	£5.88
	Total	£358.53

paid by Direct Debit/Standing Order

Green Energy1	Gas (November)	£96.99
Green Energy	Gas (December)	£106.89
EDF Energy	Electricity (Sept to Nov)	£160.71
Evis	Grounds Maintenance	£750.00
Lloyds1	Bank Charges	£8.50
Stable Print	Printing of newsletter	£210.00
Tesco	Clerks Phone	£7.98
Ionos IT	Domain	£22.20
HMRC	PAYE & NI (payment Jan 26)	£365.35
	Total	£1,728.62

1 Payments made ahead of the December meeting

November receipts for noting at the December meeting

Ash and Martock Grant	£200.00
Lloyds Bank Interest	£26.52
S&RT Donation	£50.00
Benefice Donation	£75.00
Hinkley & Rugby BS Interest	£1,079.35
Total	£1,430.87

- (a) Members **APPROVED** the bank reconciliation statement as of 30th November 2025. The RFO confirmed that it had been checked by Cllr Lewis earlier that evening.
- (b) Members **NOTED** the content of the Responsible Financial Officer's finance report. The RFO reported that due to the adopted investment strategy, interest in excess of £1000 for 2025 had been earned.
- (c) Members **NOTED** the points raised from the budget planning meeting held on 6th November and again on 2nd December. RFO reported that the Council is in a good position to set the precept request in January and he thanked everyone for their input. He asked a few further questions around likely dates for certain payments which led to a discussion about proposed jetting and clearing of drains in the village. The clerk will investigate and report further at the next meeting.
- (e) Members **AGREED** to carry out fire extinguisher service at £45 + VAT.
- (f) Members **AGREED** to purchase gift vouchers for the deliverers of the newsletter (£10 each), together with the editor and co-ordinator (£20 each).

25/252 ASSET REGISTER

The RFO had previously circulated an updated asset register for review and adoption. A lot of work went into it last year, so only a few minor amendments. Members **APPROVED** and adopted the revised Asset Register and the clerk will publish it on the website.

25/253 HYFC

Following a recent request for more volunteer help to support the day-to-day running of the facility, the Parish Council had received an offer of help from two volunteers. Members **AGREED** to formally accept their offer, and thanked them in advance for volunteering their support. The clerk arrange submission of the annual return to the Charity Commission on behalf of HYFCT but is still awaiting the formal legal advice.

25/254 COUNCIL POLICY REVIEW

The clerk confirmed that the two policies approved and adopted at the last meeting have been uploaded to the website. The amendments to the updated Grievance Policy was deferred to the next meeting in Cllr Burton's absence.

25/255 YOUTH PROVISION

The Working Group is meeting next week and will make some proposals for the next full council meeting in January. Weekly attendance is still on the low side, and there are many other factors to take into consideration currently.

25/256 RANGER TASKS

(a) Cllr Foley reported that due to vehicle breakdowns and staff illness, Evis had fallen behind with some Ranger tasks and consequently none were carried out in November.

Members suggested that in the future, it would be helpful if the Ranger communicated any issues that cause him to fall behind – Cllr Foley will pass on the message.

(b) Council **RE-CONFIRMED** a prioritised list of tasks for the Parish Ranger to include: de-weeding of parking bay and ham stone wall on West Street, de-weeding of the wall along Matts Lane to Langlands, removal of fallen leaves on Cole Lane. Cllr Hulett asked if the bank should be cut back and grips cleared to allow surface water to reach drains that are set-back in some places. Cllr Foley will ask the Ranger about this.

25/257 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Holy Tree Gate – see earlier agenda item 25/244.

25/258 CRIME, DISORDER & COMMUNITY SAFETY

There had been reports of deer being slaughtered and butchered and the carcasses left strewn on public footpaths. The clerk will remind residents that such issues can be reported online or by calling 101.

Also there are various locations in the village where vehicles park and obscure the visibility at junctions. Legally there should be no parking within 5m of a junction. The clerk will investigate with Highways about possible white H-bar markings and appropriate signage to discourage such parking.

25/259 CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing to report.

25/260 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Budget and precept demand – drain clearing – youth provision – H-bars road painting

25/261 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Wednesday 7TH January 2026**, starting at 7:00pm in the Parish Office.

Meeting closed at 8.48pm

Approved by.....

Date.....