



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

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr. S Nelms, Chair, Cllr A. Salter, Vice-Chair, Cllr. R. Lewis, Cllr. R. Merrick, Cllr. M. Foley & Cllr. M. Hulett, Cllr D. Burton, Cllr M. Dullaghan, Cllr G. Middleton

County Councillors Present: Cllr John Bailey (part-time), Cllr Emily Pearlstone

Members of public: 7

Also in attendance: Mrs G Lowe (Clerk)

25/045 RECORDING OF MEETING

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

The clerk is still attempting to source a replacement lead for the parish council's recording equipment.

25/046 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from the RFO.

25/047 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllrs Merrick and Burton declared an interest in item 25/057 as members of the Sports and Recreation Trust. Cllr Hulett also declared a personal interest in the same item. Cllr Nelms declared an interest in item 25/059 as a trustee of HYFC.

25/048 CASUAL VACANCIES

The clerk confirmed receipt of an expression of interest, but the candidate wasn't able to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement. Members agreed to re-run the notice of vacancy on Facebook with an extended deadline of Friday 28th March to encourage more applications as there are currently two vacancies.

25/049 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the full council meeting, held on 5th February 2025 as a true and correct record of the meeting. Cllr Nelms duly signed the minutes.

Meeting closed at 7.06pm to allow for public questions and observations.

25/050 PUBLIC SESSION

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

- Representatives of Hamdon Youth Group (HYG) expressed their disappointment at the council's non-negotiable, conditional grant offer and stated that they were not going to accept the current offer. They stressed the importance of having a youth-group provision in the village and asked the council to reconsider. They felt that the ultimatum didn't reflect a collaborative working relationship.

Cllr Salter reiterated that the council is supportive of HYG but also has a duty to perform due diligence of grant requests. The low number of attendees previously did not reflect good value for money, but it was very encouraging to see 30+ children had attended recently.

Cllr Nelms confirmed that the PC will discuss the matter further and inform HYG of any decisions made.

- A MOP asked about plans for the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. Perhaps a street party could be organised? Cllr Nelms said that they were open to suggestions, and confirmed that the plans for the school's 150th Anniversary celebrations also included a possible street party, so perhaps the two could be combined.
- A MOP asked if anything could be done about the dilapidated stiles at both ends of a footpath crossing a field at the bottom of the Old Fosse Way.
The clerk will contact the Duchy of Cornwall who are the landowners.
He then also asked the County Councillor if a "No Through Road" sign could be placed at the junction of the A303 and the Old Fosse Way as people try to use it as a detour when the A303 is closed or held up due to an accident, but aren't aware that it is a dead end. This causes traffic chaos with vehicles turning around, and trying to pass unnecessarily.
The Somerset councillor will raise it with Highways, and copy in the clerk for information.

25/051 SOMERSET COUNCIL REPORT

- Cllr Bailey requested feedback on LCNs as they are currently being reviewed.
- Cllr Pearlstone summarised the following items from her report:
 - the overgrown slip-roads are a legal matter between National Highways and the local council as neither party currently have responsibility to maintain them.
 - there is a recruitment drive for social work
 - the campaign to improve blood pressure awareness has been very successful with over 3000 people tested in various local facilities (libraries etc).
 - work has now begun on Ham Hill, and hopefully disruption will be kept to a minimum. Ultimately it will boost tourism and surrounding residents will benefit.
 - the budget was passed with a confirmed increase in Council Tax of 7.5%
 - parking charges are being introduced in some council run car parks with Sunday and overnight charging, and some on-street charges. However, the programme will be rolled out over time as work is required to enable a chargeable state, so not immediate.
 - Lime Kiln car park will be closed completely whilst the work is taking place at Ham Hill. Other car parks will be closed on a rolling basis whilst they are re-surfaced.

The meeting re-opened 7.51pm

*The Chair used Standing Order 2(a) to bring forward agenda item **25/057 – Sports and Recreation Trust and Parish Council Agreement.***

The clerk had previously circulated an email with some suggested amendments to the agreement signed between the Sports and Recreation Trust and the Parish Council in May 2024. Cllr Foley asked a question about the definition of "All grounds and associated borders" as he wanted to make sure that it was clear and correct. This hadn't been one of the proposed amendments and other members were not sure of the relevance for the approval of the suggested amendments. Cllr Foley proposed deferring the matter to the next meeting to allow him time to clarify the definition with the Sports and Recreation Trust. This was not carried - 4 not in favour, 1 in favour and 1 abstention (3 members had declared an interest).

The clerk suggested approving the amendments as detailed in the document that had been previously circulated, and Cllr Foley could look into the matter further for a future meeting. Members agreed to this suggestion, and the amendments as proposed were **APPROVED** by the majority.

25/052 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

(a) The clerk hasn't had a chance to look into waste disposal costs, but there is a meeting on 20th March between the clerks and Chairs of the 4 neighbouring parish councils to look at matters such as this where grouping together could achieve economies of scale and/or contact sharing.

The clerk will look into the matter further and report further following the meeting.

25/053 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

(a) Cllr Burton and the clerk inspected the Memorial Hall play area and re-examined the priority list. The boules court installers have been asked for a re-surfacing cost. The clerk will source new signs etc. and get quotes to clear surfaces of moss. The RFO has introduced someone who is highly recommended to quote for repair works to playground equipment.

The clerk needs to carry out the same exercise at Stonehill where the play equipment is in urgent need of repair.

(b) Cole Lane residents – The clerk to write to Somerset Council on behalf of the residents in support of their request for regular cleaning and maintenance of the path. Cllr Pearlstone asked to be copied in.

(c) Permission for licence for new dog bin location.

The clerk will apply online through Street Scene. Cllr Hulett reported that a new bin is also needed at Morley Close.

Costs and delivery lead times to follow once the requisite licences have been granted.

25/054 WORKING/TASK & FINISH GROUPS

i. Progress reports from the following groups were given:

(a) Castle School 150th anniversary WG

Cllr Nelms stated that there is some confusion about the school's anniversary. The building is 150 years old this year, and they will also be celebrating next year which marks 150 years since the school began. Cllr Nelms has a meeting towards the end of this month and will report further at the next parish council meeting.

Cllr Dullaghan asked about the vegetation that overhangs the wall on Whirligig Lane & if it belongs to the school? It doesn't, but the clerk will write to the landowner who does have responsibility and request that it is cut back.

(b) Stakeholder WG

Cllr Hulett reported that the WG had met remotely with the Duchy Estate Management to make introductions and ask about plans for the renewal of the office rent and the allotments agreement. They are waiting to hear further on this. The WG is meeting again on 11th March and the aim is to have all stakeholders and the nature of any associated agreements confirmed by then. Councillors will then be assigned lead responsibilities for each stakeholder group.

(c) Speedwatch WG

Cllr Dullaghan confirmed that the Speedwatch group had taken down the 20mph signs that are on Highways land, but left them up where they are on private property for awareness. They have carried out a Facebook campaign to explain the rationale and residents were largely supportive of the efforts to slow speeding traffic. Cllr Nelms said that correct permissions must be sought in the future and it was a shame that it detracted from a well-intentioned project.

(d) Allotment WG

Cllr Salter confirmed that he has been very busy with many new requests, and almost all of the holder agreements now signed. North St allotments are full and there is a waiting list. The allotments that were cleared by Premier Landscaping have all been taken, and the school plot should be ready after another working-party weekend. He asked if the clerk can write to the remaining holders who haven't yet signed their agreement with a new deadline of the financial year end (31st March). After this date, a non-response will be assumed to be a cancellation of any prior agreement. The clerk will liaise with Cllr Salter to arrange this.

(e) Dog and Waste bins WG

See previous item 25/053(c).

The clerk to request necessary permissions.

ii. Christmas Lights WG

It was agreed at the last meeting that the WG should include parish councillors and residents. Cllrs Nelms, Salter, Middleton and Lewis offered to form the working group and will make a request for residents to join them in the newsletter and on Facebook.

25/055 FINANCE

Cllr Merrick gave the finance presentation in the RFO's absence. She ran through the bank reconciliation, receipts and payments and other details to the end of February.

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

• Mr T M Heath	RFO Duties (March 25)	£461.45
• Mrs Gilly Lowe	Democratic services (March 25)	£567.49
• SALC	Councillor Training	£150.00
• Duchy of Cornwall	Rent Recreation Ground	£720.00
• Duchy of Cornwall	Rent Allotments	£180.00
• Premier Landscaping	Work on allotments	£1692.70
• Stable Design	HYFC Leaflet	£120.00

• Stable Print	Printing of newsletter	£210.00
• EVIS	Grounds Maintenance	£750.00
• Ionos	Web and Mail	£21.00
• Tesco	Clerk's mobile	£7.50

- (b) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the bank reconciliation statement as of 28th February 2025.
- (c) Members agreed to pay the £33k closing balance from Melton Building Society into the Cambridge & Counties account to earn interest – the total balance will still be within the FSCS guarantee. Cllr Salter will copy in the RFO on allotment agreements and provide a spreadsheet of who should have paid what to date so that the RFO can assign BACS payments received.
- (d) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the quarterly financial statement previously circulated. Cllr Merrick commended the excellent work by the RFO on the VAT reclaim, now received. In future, a VAT claim will be made every 6 months.
- (e) The quotation to renew the annual support contract with Cloudy IT had been circulated for consideration.
Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the contract renewal.

25/056 HYG FUNDING REQUEST

After a brief discussion, and considering the comments made during the open session, members agreed to offer to make two staged payments to aid cashflow and employee payments.

The clerk will write to HYG with the new offer, but confirm that the other conditions around weekly sessions and attendance remain in place.

25/057 SPORTS and RECREATION TRUST and PARISH COUNCIL AGREEMENT

This item was moved forward on the agenda – see earlier.

25/058 RISK REGISTER

The RFO had previously circulated a Risk Register (Draft B1) to review and adopt. Cllr Foley had raised several minor iterations which had been highlighted in red. He also suggested that the quarterly review of council owned property should extend to the HYFC. Cllr Merrick said that the template used by the Sports and Recreation Trust could be shared with HYFC for reference. The issues of accessibility will need to be communicated in the short-term and there was a suggestion of forming a working group to discuss the parish office once the issue of rent is known about.

Members **AGREED** to adopt the Risk Register (Draft B1) with the amendments highlighted in red.

*** Members then **AGREED** to pass a resolution to agree to an extension to the 2 hour meeting limit.*

25/059 HYFC

Cllr Nelms reported the excellent news that all committee roles have now been filled, a very good outcome. Jackie Poole is happy to be Chair, and feels well supported. Terry Heath will remain involved for another month to ensure a smooth transition.

25/060 RANGER TASKS

- (a) The Parish Ranger had experienced a staffing issue during February, so no ranger tasks had been carried out, nor any invoice issued. Cllr Burton asked that they continue with kerb clearing along Langlands to Greatfield Lane.
- (b) Council **RE -CONFIRMED** a prioritised list of tasks for the Parish Ranger to include the same items as before.

25/061 PLANNING

Cllr Nelms asked about re-forming the Planning Committee. Members agreed that Cllrs Middleton, Hulett and Burton should form the planning committee.

The clerk was asked to submit comments online in respect of the following applications:

- (a) 25/00135/ADV – Fleur de Lis, West St, Stoke-sub-Hamdon (and associated Listed Building Consent 25/00135/LBC)
Proposal: Installation of 16no illuminated and non-illuminated signs to the exterior of the building.
Members **AGREED** to support the application with no comments.
- (b) 25/00247/FUL – Land at Masons Lane, Montacute
Proposal: Residential development to provide no.7 dwellings, vehicular access and associated landscaping.
After a brief discussion, members **AGREED** to submit the following comments when **OBJECTING** to this application; there isn't sufficient parking for the number and size of dwellings proposed and only granting 0.2 of a space for visitor parking won't help; residents from a new development will either have to make a dangerous turn onto the A3088 – a very fast road, or go via Montacute substantially increasing the traffic movements through what is already a small village; there is already flooding in the area with water running off from the fields – dwellings will increase the amount of run-off and strain existing drainage. Any excess water runs into the Wellhams Brook that becomes Trutt Brook under the A303 and floods the Stoke Road into Martock regularly; a development would join the villages of Stoke-sub-Hamdon and Montacute as one larger conurbation, rather than individual villages.
- (c) 25/00332/HOU – 18, Tiptoft, Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6PD
Proposal: Alteration of existing conservatory into single storey extension.
Members **AGREED** to support the application with no comments.
- (d) 20/01831/FUL – Land rear of Princes Close car park, Ham Hill, Stoke-sub-Hamdon
Proposal: The erection of a detached chalet style dwelling and associated access and parking.
Members **AGREED** to **OBJECT** to this application with the following comment: There isn't sufficient parking for the size of dwelling proposed which will also replace some existing residential parking. Parking is already an issue in the village, and this will add to the problem.

- (e) 25/00344/HOU – 24, The Avenue, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6QB
Proposal: Demolition of existing extension and garage and erection of two storey and single storey extension together with associated alterations. (N.B There is an amendment to this application under the same reference number)
Members **AGREED** to support the application with no comments.

25/062 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

The clerk had previously circulated a summary of notes from the recent meeting with Highways. It was agreed that residents would be encouraged to report road defects online, the clerk will check the list of line re-painting scheduled to take place from April onwards and chase Highways about other matters raised.

25/063 CRIME, DISORDER & COMMUNITY SAFETY

There were no issues to report.

25/064 CORRESPONDENCE

The Duchy has confirmed that external decorations will begin this week on Units 1-7.

25/065 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Formation of a Parking WG – this will not currently be pursued.
- Memorial Hall AGM is taking place on 19th March 6pm
- The future of the parish office
- Co-option arrangements
- Parish Annual Assembly - the clerk confirmed that the Memorial Hall has been booked for 21st May. Members asked the Clerk to invite the local MP.
- Cllrs Lewis, Merrick & Salter sent their apologies for the next meeting.

25/042 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Wednesday 2nd April 2025**, starting at 7:00pm in the Parish Office.

Meeting closed at 9.28 pm

Approved by.....

Date.....