



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 2<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2025  
THE COUNCIL OFFICE, NORTH STREET WORKSHOPS, STOKE SUB HAMDON, TA14 6QR**

**Parish Councillors Present:** Cllr. S Nelms, Chair, Cllr. M. Foley, Cllr. M. Hullet, Cllr D. Burton, Cllr M. Dullaghan, Cllr G. Middleton

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

Members of public: 3

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

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**25/067 RECORDING OF MEETING**

Cllr Hullet informed the Chair that she would be voice recording the meeting.  
No objections were raised. **The clerk is yet to action sourcing a replacement lead.**

**25/068 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Lewis, Merrick & Salter.

**25/069 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**

Cllr Nelms, HYFC Trustee declared an interest in item 25/079.  
Cllr Hulett, Sports & Rec Trust & History Group for information.  
Cllr Burton, Sports & Rec Trust for information.

**25/070 CASUAL VACANCIES**

Two applications had been received, but then withdrawn for the councillor vacancies.  
The notice requesting expressions of interest will remain valid.

**25/071 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

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

**25/072 PUBLIC SESSION**

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

- At the Speedwatch meeting last week, Somerset Council had provided process and flow chart information which was passed on to the parish council.

## 25/073 SOMERSET COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr Bailey had previously provided a report to include the following updates on local issues:

- Roadside trees at East Stoke – this has been included in the next contract currently out for tender;
- overhanging vegetation and surface green creep on A303 sliproads – clearing this remains difficult as there's no existing agreement on responsibilities between Somerset Council(SC) and National Highways (NH) on the stretch of the A303 between Ilchester and S. Petherton. Having passed 1<sup>st</sup> March, no hedge cutting can take place due to nesting birds. However, given the growing safety issues, this may be considered anyway. Neither party has authorisation to close the road and the matter will be discussed with continued urgency between SC and NH legal depts.
- A356 Crewkerne Road Signage - the large sign on the A356 southbound Crewkerne road, prior to West Street needs cleaning as it has lost reflection due to moss making it satisfactorily legible at night. This is beyond safe for volunteers to undertake and has been added to the teams cleaning schedule.
- Bonnies Lane – Length to be jetted in 2025-26

Cllr Bailey also reported the recent break in at the worksite at Ham Hill Visitor Centre. Several large pieces of equipment including a generator were stolen and if anyone has any information please report it to the police. Otherwise work is proceeding well with footings in place and utilities connected.

A MOP has asked for details of an impact statement that would have been carried out prior to work beginning, on construction traffic driving through the village as he feels that they have been travelling at dangerous speeds and once the new visitor centre is opened there could be increased traffic and coaches etc. through the village. Cllr Pearlstone is investigating this.

Questions were asked about road closures which seem to occur with little notice, updates on bin licences and redundancies at Somerset Council. Cllr Pearlstone confirmed that she is trying to obtain updates on various issues, but the current redundancies and staff reorganisation make it very difficult to know who to contact. Cllr Foley asked about the planned car park charges and if an official notice had been put up informing the public. Cllr Pearlstone confirmed that charges between 8am & 6pm for all previously non-charged car parks will be phased in but there is still a full consultation on overnight and Sunday charging.

The meeting re-opened at 7.25 pm

The Chairman then used Standing Order 2 (a) to move items 25/086 Correspondence forward and 25/078 HYG to a closed session at the end of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the discussion.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk confirmed the following:

- A tree works notice had been received to coppice a hazel tree at The Priory, North Street. This is for **notification** only.
- The Great British Spring Clean encouraging community groups to engage in litter picking was currently running until 6<sup>th</sup> April. The clerk suggested that next year more publicity is given to this via the usual channels.
- A resident had asked permission to clean up the ham stone village sign at North St on entering the village from the A303. The clerk had requested advice from Highways via Cllr Pearlstone regarding Chapter 8 training & safety, and also the

request to position a trough with flowers. The clerk is awaiting a response, but in the meantime will write to the quarry requesting a donated trough as current quotes are £775 + VAT + £75 delivery. The Gardening Club are keen to plant it ready for VE Day celebrations in early May and have offered to maintain it.

#### **25/074 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)**

(a) Bin emptying

Having attended the recent 4 parish meeting, the clerk confirmed that other councils are also struggling to obtain quotes for bin collections. Cllr Nelms had attended a Chair's forum and confirmed that those parish councils who had obtained quotes, found them to be more expensive than Somerset Council's quoted costs.

Members **AGREED** that the clerk needs to request confirmation and formal notification of start dates and associated costs from Somerset Council.

#### **25/075 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)**

(a) The clerk reported that the basketball court at the Memorial Hall play area has been cleared of surface moss, and she had obtained a quote for a replacement chain net to fit the hoop (£28.33 + VAT and delivery). Members **APPROVED** this purchase. The clerk will order the item and investigate line repainting.

Cllr Nelms requested that the surface matting at Stonehill is replaced as it is in a very poor state. Cllr Hulett had circulated some quotes that had been sought last year and confirmed that the Sports and Recreation Trust had offered to make a contribution. Members **AGREED** that the clerk and Cllr Nelms should meet to inspect the play area for equipment repairs and replacement surface options, and obtain some new quotes ready for the next meeting.

(b) Cole Lane residents – The clerk to write on behalf & copy in Cllr Pearlstone – not actioned yet.

(c) Licence for new dog bins update – Cllr Pearlstone is chasing an update (see previous item 25/073).

#### **25/076 WORKING/TASK & FINISH GROUPS**

i. Progress reports from the following groups were given:

(a) Castle School 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary WG – Through the History Group, Cllr Hulett had met with the school and confirmed that exciting plans are being made to involve the community as well as pupils in various celebrations that will commence in September and run throughout the school year. They are also planning to be involved with VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. More information to follow.

(b) Stakeholder WG – see item 25/080

(c) Speedwatch WG

Cllr Dullaghan confirmed that the group continue to do good work throughout the village. Statistics gathered are published in the parish magazine every month and they are talking to the police about next steps and the possible purchase of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) with APNR. They also plan to publish the 9 sites where they can be based via the usual channels for information and as a deterrent. He offered a big thank you from the parish council.

The clerk was asked to write to neighbouring parishes about co-purchase of a SID.

(d) Allotment WG

Cllr Burton reported that at North St and Furlands all agreements are now signed. The East side of Furlands is a mess and the request to approve payment for more clearance work was discussed. However, as it wasn't accompanied by a formal quote with details of the work that would be done, approval was deferred until further information was obtained.

(e) Dog & Waste bins WG

See previous item (25/073)

## 25/077 PARISH OFFICE

Members discussed the renewal of the office tenancy & the request for some office space by the Benefice. The RFO had made some revised budget calculations based on the new rent proposed by the Duchy of Cornwall and new utility contracts.

After some discussion, members asked the clerk to obtain more information from the Benefice about hours, access and shared responsibilities as they felt that they could not make a decision without being better informed. There are several related aspects (e.g clerk's workload, security measures) to the Benefice request for use which some members didn't feel would benefit the community.

The clerk will contact the Benefice and report further. The decision to renew the office tenancy can be deferred to a later meeting as the office tenancy expires in October. Cllr Burton requested that some work is carried out on the door lock and fit as it is very hard to unlock and open. The clerk will investigate further.

## 25/078 FINANCE

The RFO gave a report to include discussion around the end of year position, the insurance provision and the Finance Report (attached).

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

• Mr T M Heath	RFO Duties (April 25)	£454.09	CC1
• Mrs Gilly Lowe	Democratic services (April 25)	£690.71	CC1
• Mr T M Heath	Expenses (stamps)	£6.60	CC2
• Mrs Gilly Lowe	Expenses (stamps and envelopes)	£13.65	CC2
• EDF Energy	Electric (2024/2025)	£1215.76	CC5
• Cloudy IT	IT Services	£90.36	CC2
• Water2Business1	Water Bill	£99.28	
• Chairs Allowance1	Easter Eggs for HYFC event	£28.99	
• HYG Grant	(1st stage payment)	£3402.00	CC7
• EVIS	Ranger Duties (Feb)	£650.00	CC9
• EVIS	Ranger Duties (Mar)	£650.00	CC9

(b) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the bank reconciliation statement as of 31<sup>ST</sup> March 2025 which included the End of Year position.

(c) Members **NOTED** the content of the Finance Report.

(d) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the cost of up to £200 plus VAT to undertake a building valuation of HYFC.

(e) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE and ADOPT** the previously circulated Investment Policy.

- (f) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the recommendations in the Finance Report. Use of the same authorised signatories on any new accounts opened was also **APPROVED**.
- (g) Members **NOTED** the year end accounting statement.
- (h) Members **NOTED** the movement of £5,000 from the Lloyds Instant access account to the Lloyds Business Account.
- (i) Members **AGREED TO DEFER** discussion of the amendments to the 2025/'26 budget to the next meeting given pending decisions around the parish office and grant funding. The RFO also recommended that in future the minutes should reflect which associated power is used for items of expenditure.

#### **25/078 HYG**

Using Standing Order 2(a), the Chairman moved this item to a closed session at the end of the meeting.

#### **25/079 HYFC**

Members considered the request from HYFC to arrange for some work to the door threshold to allow wheelchair access. Cllr Nelms will request a quote from the handyman at HYFC ready for the next meeting.

The request for a disabled parking space requires advice from Highways which the clerk has requested. Cllr Foley suggested asked Somerset Council for a grant towards any associated costs. The clerk will copy in Cllr Pearlstone and make a written request. The painting of the rear window frames was never completed, only primer. The RFO will ask for quotes to complete the work ready for the next meeting.

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

#### **25/080 STAKEHOLDER WG**

Members **APPROVED** the previously circulated details and suggested lead responsibilities with some minor amendments: Cllr Burton to be added as 'Distribution' for Village Newsletter; the clerk, Cllrs Hulett & Nelms for **council** contribution to the newsletter & Cllr Foley to have Lead Responsibility for Contracts (not Contractors) & Suppliers.

#### **25/081 RANGER TASKS**

- (a) Update for March – the ranger had sent confirmation of clearing the basketball court, herbicide spraying and clearing debris. Members felt that more detail is required and asked the Clerk to write and request a more comprehensive list be detailed on invoices in the future. Cllr Foley will liaise with the Ranger for future regular reporting.
- (b) Council **RE -CONFIRMED** a prioritised list of tasks for the Parish Ranger to include the same items as before: clearing kerbside from Langlands etc. Cllr Foley to make contact see previous item.

#### **25/083 PLANNING**

- (a) 25/00659/TCA – 30, North Street, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, TA14 6PS  
*Proposal: Notification of intent to fell No.2 trees within a Conservation Area.*

This was to **notify** members only.

- (b) 25/00326/FUL – Land to rear of 50, North St, Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6QQ  
*Proposal: Proposed erection of two dwellings and two double garages.*  
After discussion, Cllr Foley proposed supporting the application, seconded by Cllr Middleton. This was rejected using the Chairman's vote for reasons of access for emergency vehicles and the narrow nature & visibility onto the highway.

#### **25/084 HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

No new issues to report.

#### **25/085 CRIME, DISORDER & COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Cllr Nelms had reported a recent incident to the police, and Cllr Bailey reported theft of heavy plant machinery at the Ham Hill visitor centre works (see earlier item 25/073).

#### **25/086 CORRESPONDENCE**

This item had been moved to the beginning of the meeting – see earlier minute.

#### **25/087 ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Parish office; allotment clearance costs; bins; HYFC quotes.

#### **25/088 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025**, starting at 7:00pm in the Parish Office. This is the Annual Meeting of the parish council.

#### **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** to exclude press & public.

#### **25/078 HYG**

Cllrs Nelms & Salter had met with representative from HYG to agree the points in a Memorandum of Understanding. After discussion, and whilst appreciating the efforts made, members voted unanimously to reject the proposal as it is now too detailed and reads more like a formal contract.

The clerk was asked to contact HYG and send them a new MoU with simple conditions around weekly sessions, number of attendees, regular reporting and confidential raising of any concerns. It will include a 3 day deadline for a response as members felt too much time & energy was being spent on discussions with a grant applicant.

Meeting closed at 9.52 pm

Approved by.....

Date.....