



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF STOKE SUB HAMDON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 7th MAY 2025
THE COUNCIL OFFICE, NORTH STREET WORKSHOPS, STOKE SUB HAMDON, TA14 6QR**

Parish Councillors Present: Cllr S. Nelms, Cllr M. Hullet, Cllr D. Burton, Cllr M. Dullaghan,
Cllr G. Middleton. Cllr R. Lewis, Cllr R. Merrick, Cllr A Salter

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

Members of public: 6

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

25/97 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Merrick proposed Cllr Nelms continue as Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Middleton and members agreed unanimously. Cllr Nelms duly signed the acceptance of office form.

25/98 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Burton proposed Cllr Salter continue as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Hulett and members agreed unanimously. Cllr Salter duly signed the acceptance of office form.

25/99 RECORDING OF MEETING

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

25/100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Foley.

25/101 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr Nelms declared an interest in item 25/114 as a trustee of HYFCT.

Cllr Hulett declared a personal interest in item 25/113 (d) and (k)

Cllr Burton declared an interest in item 25/113 (d) and (k) as a trustee of the Sports & Rec Trust and also a personal interest in item 25/117 (a).

Cllr Merrick declared an interest in item 25/113 (d) and (k) as a trustee of the Sports & Rec Trust

25/102 CASUAL VACANCIES

Two expressions of interest had been received from electors for the current councillor vacancies. Members **AGREED** unanimously to co-opt Deborah Russell and Paul Berry and they signed their acceptance of office forms and joined the meeting.

25/103 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the minutes of the full council meeting, held on 2nd April 2025 and the additional meeting held on 17th April 2025 as a true & correct record of the meeting. Cllr Nelms signed the minutes.

Meeting closed at 7.08pm to allow for public questions and observations.

25/104 PUBLIC SESSION

All members of the public wanted to discuss the problems of parking within the village; the proposed parking charges by Somerset Council and the associated consultation which hasn't yet begun. The newsletter had contained incorrect information about the consultation, and Cllr Pearlstone confirmed that all elements of parking charges, residents parking etc. will be consulted on and notification will be widely publicised. The Chair confirmed that the council are well aware of the traffic issues throughout the village and are working with the Speedwatch Group and Somerset Council to try and remedy the current issues.

25/105 SOMERSET COUNCIL REPORT

A report had previously been circulated by Cllr Pearlstone, reporting that the large road sign had been cleaned and white lines re-painted on North St. There is still no progress regarding the vegetation growing on the A303 slip-roads. The clerk was asked to write to the MP about this.

The meeting re-opened at 7.30p.m

25/106 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

After a request from the RFO to allow for bank reconciliations for some of the meetings that fall very early in the month, the following dates were confirmed as meetings of the parish council during the municipal year 25/'26:

2025

4TH JUNE, 2ND JULY, 3RD SEPTEMBER, 8TH OCTOBER, 5TH NOVEMBER AND 3RD DECEMBER.

2026

7TH JANUARY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 4TH MARCH AND 8TH APRIL.

Meetings will begin at 7pm and take place in the Parish Office unless advertised otherwise.

25/107 SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

To following members were confirmed as representatives to serve on the committees listed below for the year 25/'26:

Planning Committee – Cllrs Hulett, Lewis, Middleton & Berry

Staffing Committee – Cllrs Nelms, Foley, Burton (Chair) and Salter

The Finance Group members remains as Cllrs Merrick, Lewis, Middleton and Hulett.

Members of these committees (and group) will meet as required and report to full council at the following parish council meeting.

25/108 MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL ASSOCIATIONS

Members decided not to renew membership of SW Councils for the coming year.

Members **AGREED** to renew membership for 2025/'26 to SALC, combined with NALC, at a cost of £910.76. There has been a considerable increase in this year's fee due to increased demand for advisory services particularly about devolved services. The clerk was asked to write and express disappointment at the huge increase.

Using Standing Order 2(a), the Chair brought forward the following item for consideration prior to approval of payments (Item 25/113 Finance).

25/115 SECURITY SYSTEM

The contract with PG Security contract had auto-renewed at a cost of £120 + VAT.

Members **AGREED** that it was no longer required and asked the clerk to write and give notice to cancel the auto-renewal.

25/109 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

The clerk had written to the Road Records department about locations of new dog bins and also asked some questions about bin emptying. No further information has been circulated by Somerset Council about when the bins will cease to be collected. No reply had been received prior to the meeting.

25/110 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT COVERED BY AGENDA ITEMS)

- (a) The clerk report on the following progress of remedial works associated with the Memorial Hall and Stonehill play areas:
Memorial Hall – re-painting of the basketball court. The clerk provided two quotes, and Cllr Burton had received an offer of help. Decision deferred to the next meeting.
Stonehill – Repairs to the vandalised surface below the swings. Different quotes and options for a new material had been sourced by the clerk & the Chair. After consideration, Cllr Merrick proposed using Star Rubber Environmental to repair all the wet pour areas raised in the annual inspection. This was seconded by Cllr Dullaghan and all members **AGREED**. The clerk was asked to confirm arrangements and also to request a grant from the Sports and Recreation Trust who had previously offered help.
- (b) Parish council support of Cole Lane residents – to be actioned.

25/111 WORKING/TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Progress Reports from the following Working/Task & Finish groups:

- (a) Castle School 150th Anniversary WG
Cllr Nelms is yet to meet with the headmaster, but Cllr Hulett, via the History Group confirmed that commemorations will begin in September with an exhibition of photographs.
- (b) Stakeholder WG
Cllr Hulett will publish the colourful map and list of agreed relationship managers on the website.
- (c) Speedwatch WG
Cllr Dullaghan confirmed that the 6 monthly report had been circulated and the group are looking to purchase a fixed device. Cllr Nelms suggested a long term objective for the parish council should look at traffic calming throughout the village. Montacute had 5 years of data reporting before successfully reducing the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph. This must remain a priority for the parish council by working with Somerset Council (Highways) and the Speedwatch Group to remedy the current issues.
 - Members **APPROVED** unanimously the purchase of 2 x replacement batteries for the SID at a cost of £49.35 including VAT each. The RFO will place the order.
- (d) Allotments WG
Cllr Salter provided an update on all 3 allotment sites:
North St – 1 plot recently vacated, but 2 on the waiting list. The school allotment is coming along well.
Furlands- all holders agreements now signed. The East side of Furlands is still a jungle.
Stonehill – 7b and 7c need clearing and there are 3 people on the waiting list.

- Members **AGREED** to the request to rework two allotments at Stonehill and to convert some unused land into an additional plot at a cost of approximately £1,092.70 by Premier Landscaping.
 - Members **AGREED** to the request to clear plot 5b at Furlands at a cost of £600 by Premier Landscaping.
- (e) Dog and Waste Bins WG – see previous item 25/109.

25/112 PARISH OFFICE

There was a brief discussion about renewing the Parish Office tenancy. Cllr Merrick was in favour of keeping the office for the myriad of benefits it offers the community as well as for the parish council. Members **AGREED** unanimously to renew the tenancy at a cost of £2,000 + VAT per annum and the clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangements.

The RFO reminded members that there will need to be a new budget line allocation which can be organised for the quarterly budget review in July.

25/113 FINANCE

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

Mr T M Heath	RFO Duties	£283.68
Mrs Gilly Lowe	Democratic services	£664.97
Mrs Gilly Lowe	Expenses	£37.80
Cloudy IT	IT Services	£90.36
EVIS	Ranger Duties	£700.00
S&RT	Maintenance	£4,000
PG Fire & Security	Support Contract	£120.00
SALC	Affiliation	£910.67
S&RT	Grant	£500.00
Stable Print	Printing of newsletter	£210.00
UK Debt Office	PWLB	£4,774.85
Evis	Grounds Maintenance	£750.00
Ionis	Web and Mail	£21.00
Tesco	Clerks Phone	£7.98
100 Green	Gas Usage	£18.21
100 Green	Gas Usage	£16.33
Lloyds	Bank Charges	£9.35

- (b) Members **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the bank reconciliation statement as of 30th April 2025.
- (c) Members **NOTED** the content of the Responsible Financial Officer's finance report.
- (d) Council **NOTED** the annual contribution of £4,000.00 towards the maintenance and upkeep costs, as at Paragraph 5 of Reference A, for the Recreation Ground Management Fee, in accordance with Reference B.
- (e) **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR**
 Council **REVIEWED** the 2025 internal audit report provided by Parish and Town Auditing Services, and where applicable **AGREED** to a set of forward actions and associated owners. The RFO highlighted the auditor's recommendations which included the increased value from £25k to £30k for the new procurement policy, the regular inspection of play areas to be recorded for insurance purposes, and that the 5 year investment bond should be included on the asset register.

The clerk will organise online play area inspection training for a certain number of councillors who can then inspect the play areas on a rota system at least once a month.
Cllr Nelms said that they were all very pleased with the report and thanked the RFO for all his hard work.

(f) **ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

Cllr Merrick proposed, and Cllr Middleton seconded that members resolved to **APPROVE** the 2024/2025 Annual Governance and Accountability Return accounting statement.

All members **AGREED** and Cllr Nelms signed the statement.

(g) **EXPLANATION OF VARIANCE**

Members **REVIEWED and APPROVED** the 2024/2025 Explanation of Variance Statement after the RFO read aloud his suggested explanations. Cllr Middleton proposed and Cllr Burton seconded this proposal and all members **APPROVED** the explanation statement.

(h) **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Members considered questions from the 2024/2025 Annual Governance Statement and **AGREED** to the responses to each question.

(i) **PUBLIC RIGHTS**

Council **NOTED** the commencement of the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for accounts ending 31st March 2025 on Tuesday 3rd June 2025.

(j) **INTERNAL AUDITOR**

Members **APPROVED** the appointment of Parish and Town Auditing services for the coming year at a cost of £295.00.

(k) Council **APPROVED** the grant request from the Sports and Recreation Trust for programme printing for the May Fayre at a cost of £500.

(l) Council reviewed the renewal quotation from Gallagher Insurance for 2025/'26 and consider next steps.

Cllr Merrick suggested that the asset register be reviewed item by item to align the insurance cover appropriately as the premium had increased significantly. As this was time sensitive, members **AGREED** that this could be done outside of a full Council meeting. Cllrs Middleton, Merrick, Dullaghan and Salter agreed to work on the review and advise the RFO so a revised quotation could be sought.

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

(B) HYFC

Three quotes to repair the floor in the back room were considered, and after consideration, members **AGREED** that Stuart Tayler should be engaged to carry out the work. This will complete the last of the legacy work agreed to by the parish council. In the future, any internal work required is the responsibility of the trust; external work is the parish council's responsibility. Cllr Nelms has sourced a wheelchair ramp that can be used when required to provide wheelchair access, and the trust had come to the conclusion that a disabled parking space was not easy to arrange and is no longer required. Quotes to repaint the window frames are still being sought.

(c) SECURITY SYSTEM

This item was moved forward on the agenda.

(D) RANGER TASKS

(a) In Cllr Foley's absence there wasn't a report on progress during April 2025.

- (b) Council **CONFIRMED** the following tasks for the Parish Ranger: Tunwell grass needs cutting back; nettles cleared at Stonehill play area.

(E) PLANNING

Members are asked to provide comments on the following planning applications:

- (a) 25/00702/HOU – 12, Becksfield, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, TA14 6PB
Proposal: Demolition of existing structurally failing Conservatory and erection of Garden Room.
After a brief discussion, and comments from the agent on behalf of the applicant, members **AGREED** they supported this application with no comments.

- (b) 25/00735/LBC – 46, North Street. Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6QQ
Proposal: Retrospective consent for removal of plastic conservatory, changing corrugated roofing to reclaimed tiles, works to windows, replacement door, and internal alterations to studwork and doors, including removal of internal ladder and creation of ensuite bathroom.
After discussion, 5 members **AGREED** to object to this application, with 2 members disagreeing, and 3 abstentions. The clerk was asked to submit the following comments online:
The property in question has been subject to extensive internal alterations that affect the character of the interior of the building and external alterations without recourse to listed building consent. The façade of the building has been left unaltered. Even if these alterations are considered to be repairs, the requirement is for consultation with the Planning Department of Somerset Council prior to carrying out works such as this. Members feel that agreeing to retrospective consent without any consequences after such significant changes to the interior of this Grade II Listed Building has two potentially detrimental effects:
- *It will belittle the considerable efforts of other listed building owners in the conservation area to comply with the requirements for listed building consent.*
 - *It may set a precedent for future disregard of the requirements for Listed Building Consent.*

(F) HIGHWAYS MATTERS

The clerk was asked to check that double yellow lines opposite Princes Close are on the list due to be repainted by Highways over the summer.

Also to explore extending the double yellow lines around the corner by the Memorial Hall where people park and reduce visibility.

(G) CRIME, DISORDER AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

No new issues reported.

(H) CORRESPONDENCE

None.

(I) ITEMS OF INTEREST AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Christmas Lights WG
- HYFC lease extension request

(J) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 21st MAY at 7pm** in the Memorial Hall. The next ordinary meeting of the parish council will take place on **Wednesday 4th JUNE**, starting at 7:00pm. GM & MD sent apologies.

25/123 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Council **AGREED** 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 (confidential financial and sensitive discussion)

25/124 YOUTH CLUB PROVISION

The council confirmed that their intention is to continue to provide a youth club in the village.

Members **AGREED** to ask CYP to work directly with them for as long as the amount previously agreed as a grant to HYG allows.

This will provide time for the council to source funding for future improved youth services provision.

Data provided by CYP will help formulate future plans.

END OF MINTUES