

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



50 Pepys Way, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3LL

MINUTES

Wednesday 5th July 2023

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair Cllr P. Dumke ~ Vice-Chair
Cllr K. Mansell Cllr J. Van Niekerk
Cllr S. Back Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: One (1)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Part A. Public Discussions

None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

The members spoke collectively about an email that had been sent by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding, which expressed concerns regarding the notice period for the meeting. In this email he claimed there had been insufficient notice given and that the timings did not allow for three (3) clear working days' notice, which was a statutory requirement for the Parish Council.

In response to this email the Clerk was invited to speak, where she informed the members that she had uploaded the notice for the meeting on the Parish Council's webpage the Thursday before the meeting was due to take place, which she believed did allow over three (3) clear days' notice. She spoke further to advise that the agenda and the printed notices had also been placed on the noticeboards early on the Saturday morning, as well as on the Parish Council's social media page later that day, which was not a statutory requirement.

She referred the members to an email she had been sent by KALC, which advised that according to NALC's guidelines, Saturdays were classed as a working day.

A lengthy discussion ensued. After careful consideration the members concluded that they felt sufficient notice had been given and that the meeting should be allowed to go ahead.

The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace opened the meeting at 7.10pm and thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 7636:23 An apology for absence was received from Cllr N. Blown, who had prior work commitments.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 7637:23 None.

3. Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2023.

Min 7638:23 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2023, were circulated.

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It was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell and seconded by Cllr P. Dumke, that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

b). To receive and approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 28th June 2023.

Min 7639:23 The minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 28th June 2023, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell and seconded by Cllr P. Dumke, that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

4. Disclosure of any other business of an urgent nature

Min 7640:23 The Clerk, was instructed to contact Ms G. Bussley of Medway Council to ask for a further update on the flooding consultation, as discussed during the Annual Parish Meeting.

5. Vacancies

a). To discuss any applications received relating to the Parish Council's outstanding vacancy.

Min 7641:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, advised that she had received no applications relating to the current outstanding vacancy, where she recommended the members considered advertising the post now the local elections had passed.

A discussion ensued and it was agreed that the Clerk should promote the vacancy using the Parish Council's webpage, social media account and on the village noticeboards.

6. Ward Councillor report

a). A report by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding

Min 7642:23 It was noted that Ward Councillor Chris Spalding had not sent a report for the month of June and July, despite being invited to provide one.

7. Planning

a). Applications

Min 7643:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to confirm receipt of one (1) new planning application, which had also subsequently been refused by Medway Council later that month.

- **MC/23/1251 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street,**

b). Decisions

Min 7644:23 Taking into account the aforementioned decision, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to inform the members that there had been two (2) new planning decisions made since the last meeting. Both of which had been declined.

- **MC/23/1251 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street,**
- **TPA/22/1449 - Copperfields, 4 Dickensian Close,**

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 7645:23 The members referred to a conversation held previously regarding a brick-built dwelling that was being constructed within the grounds of 'Sturch Field, ref: **Min 7593:23**. It was acknowledged that owing to the lack of plans submitted to Medway Council, this matter had been reported to the Unitary Authority for further investigation.

Min 7646:23 A conversation ensued regarding planning application MC/23/0106, Land at Middle Stoke, 1 & 2 Jubilee Cottages. The members referred to the further letters they had received from Medway Council advising that a revised application, with a reduced number of proposed dwellings, had been submitted.

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After careful consideration it was agreed that the Clerk should respond to Medway Council to advise that the members objection to the revised application still stood.

8. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 7647:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace referred the members to the bank statements provided in their meeting packs and she talked them through the balances. After careful consideration the bank balances were deemed as acceptable.

Min 7648:23 Cllr J. Wallace spoke further to ask the Clerk to promote the box of mugs, that had been left over from the Kings Coronation event.

It was agreed that a notice to promote these mugs, free to any collector(s), would be placed on the members webpage, social media account and on the village noticeboards.

b). To agree the proposed new budgets 2023/2024, as discussed at the Financial Working Party on 20/06/2023.

Min 7649:23 The members spoke in detail about the proposed new budgets, as discussed at the Financial Working Party Meeting on 20/06/2023.

It was proposed by the Vice-Chair Cllr P. Dumke, seconded by Cllr K. Mansell and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council should adopt these budgets for the financial year 2023/2024.

c). To agree the financial performance against the budget for June 2023.

d). Accounts paid since the last meeting to be ratified.

e). Accounts for payment.

f). Payment requests to be discussed for approval and payment.

Min 7650:23 It was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell and seconded by Cllr P. Dumke, that points c, d, e & f be approved en bloc, this motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£542.52	June 2023 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£1,412.32	Backpay from 2019 to present (SEE ITEM 24)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – June 2023
HMRC	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£851.11	Tax & NI charges (Including backpay balance)
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£41.16	Broadband & Telephone line rental for June 2023
Colin Davis	Min 1992:20	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£69.00	Litter picking and Cleaning INV: 3732
The Play Inspection Company		TO BE PAID BY BACS	£282.60	Annual Play Inspection Reports INV: 61950
KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£97.62	50% costs towards new office Shredder INV: 44896

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KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£22.17	50% costs towards document wal- lets, punched pockets & new Stapler INV:44353
Martin Fielder- White		TO BE PAID BY BACS	£80.00	Internal Audit 2022/2023 INV: 007
Cartridge People	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£344.90	4 X Ink Cartridges for Office Printer INV: GB230625-LA5444984-1
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£27.99	Replacement Laptop Battery INV: GB-137685251-2023-13740
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£34.99	Replacement Laptop Battery INV: GB-137685251-2023-13696
Diggers Gardening Services	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£20.00	Cleaning of car park for Coronation Event INV: 2023/1
Mrs K. Mansell	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£66.00	Cutting of spare keys for Village Hall
Blakes Security Systems Ltd	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£139.00	Replacement door lock for Store Room including 4 x keys INV: 23487
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£43.16	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for June 2023
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£168.65	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for Backpay
TOTAL			£4,278.19	

g). Signatories

Min 7651:23 Following Cllr B. Stone's decision not to seek re-election at the Local Elections in May, it was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell that Cllr P. Dumke should be added as the replacement signatory to the members bank account in his position as Vice-chair. This proposal was seconded by Cllr S. Back and was unanimously agreed.

9. Management of the Council's land and property

a). To review the play park inspections for:

i Button Drive Playparks Road Playpark

Min 7652:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to advise that following a report compiled by Parishioner Ms S. Horne, the Button Drive playpark required further attention owing to the build-up of bird droppings on the play equipment and the deterioration of the bird deterrents (cable ties) on top of the apparatus, which required replacing.

ii Heron Way Playpark

iii Upper Stoke Playpark

Min 7653:23 Cllr K. Mansell provided a verbal report following the most recent play Inspections of the Heron Way & Upper Stoke playparks, where she highlighted the need to have the equipment repainted in order to preserve it from further deterioration. In addition to this she spoke of potential trip hazards she had identified, where some of the rubber safety matting had shrunk.

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Accordingly, she urged the members to consider having these mats replaced in the not-too-distant future.

She closed her report in informing the members that the shrubbery that surrounded the play park was growing through the fencing and needed to be cut back, that fly tipping in the Heron Way Park was still present and that she had arranged for a contractor, to provide a quote to clean the equipment on a regular basis, to carry out a site visit on Wednesday 12th July.

b). To review the reports from the Annual Play Park Inspection Company

Min 7654:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to address the large potholes that surrounded the entrance to the Upper Stoke Play Park, where she aired her idea of moving the entry gate to a more user friendly location.

The conversation then digressed to the replacing the mats in the playpark following Cllr K. Mansell's earlier concerns and the comments listed in the annual play inspection report.

Cllr P. Dumke spoke in response to advise that upon further investigation he estimated that the new matting would cost approximately £80 per square meter.

Finally, the members spoke about formally asking Ms S. Horne to become a play park officer for the Parish Council, following her assistance over the past few months.

c). To receive an update on the installation of three Platinum Jubilee trees.

Min 7655:23 The members acknowledged, that following the installation of one of the new Platinum Jubilee trees on the green in Upper Stoke (opposite the church), that the tree sadly looked as though it had died, owing to an extended period of hot and sunny weather during the spring. Whilst it was understood that a couple of residents in Upper Stoke had kindly been watering the sapling, the members agreed to keep a watching brief and make a decision if the tree required replacing later in the year. Accordingly, the Clerk was deployed to contact the previous Chairman to enquire how many of the Platinum Jubilee trees had been planted to verify their locations.

The conversation digressed to the pot plants that had been placed in the Lower Stoke car park, where Cllr J. Wallace informed the members that she had been watering them, but again they required further tender loving care, as they were very dry and the pots had not been lined before planting.

d). Defibrillator

Min 7656:23 Cllr S. Back spoke to inform the members that in his position as a St John's Ambulance Volunteer that he understood applications to apply for a decommissioned defibrillator were due to commence in October this year, where he had already mooted an idea of applying for two (2) units for the village.

Min 7657:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, also asked the members to address an email she had received from a resident, requesting the Parish Council to consider making a grant towards the defibrillator fund for Upper Stoke, where it was acknowledged that the community had already raised £565 towards this project. A discussion ensued.

It was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell and seconded by Cllr P. Dumke, that the members provided the community with a grant of £565.00, to match Upper Stoke's existing fundraising efforts. This proposal was carried, following an unanimously show of hands.

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10. Highways & Transportation

a). Footpaths

Min 7658:23 No report.

b). Lighting

Min 7659:23 No report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 7660:23 No report.

d). Pot holes

Min 7661:23 No report.

e). Fly tipping

Min 7662:23 No report.

f). Grass cutting

Min 7663:23 No report.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 7664:23 The members identified that the manhole cover on the A228 / Grain Road was still leaking. Accordingly, they asked the Clerk to keep chasing Medway Council to establish the latest update on its status of repair.

h). Button Drive recreation ground outer fence

Min 7665:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen informed the members that she needed to speak further with the resident who owned the property adjacent to the boundary.

11. To review the Council's Sub Committee Memberships

a). Personnel

Min 7666:23 The members discussed membership of the Parish Council's Personnel subcommittee, where it was agreed that all of the Parish Councillors should be included in this group.

b). Planning

Min 7667:23 The members discussed membership of the Parish Council's Planning subcommittee, where it was agreed that all of the Parish Councillors should be included in this group.

c). Finance

Min 7668:23 The members discussed membership of the Parish Council's Finance subcommittee, where it was agreed that all of the Parish Councillors should be included in this group.

12. To review the Council's Working Party Memberships

a). Playparks

Min 7669:23 Cllr J. Wallace made reference to item 9b, ref: [Min 7654:23](#), where the members had previously mooted the idea of formally asking Ms S. Horne to become a play park officer for the Parish Council, accordingly they asked the Clerk to defer this item until the next meeting.

b). Policies

Min 7670:23 The members discussed membership of the Parish Council's Policies Working Party, where it was agreed that all of the Parish Councillors should be included in this group.

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13. To review the Council's representatives for external bodies

a). KALC

Min 7671:23 It was proposed by Cllr J. Wallace, seconded by Cllr K. Mansell and unanimously agreed, that Cllr N. Blown should be elected as Stoke Parish Council's KALC representative.

b). Police Liaison

Min 7672:23 It was proposed by Cllr S. Back, seconded by Cllr K. Mansell and unanimously agreed, that Cllr J. Van Niekerk should be elected as Stoke Parish Council's Police Liaison representative.

14. Communication

a). Update on the Parish Council's new webpage and associated email addresses

Min 7673:23 The members acknowledged that the Clerk had recently refreshed their webpage with up-to-date correspondence and new photographs, courtesy of Mr T. Peake.

b). Social Media Page

Min 7674:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen informed the members that she was still managing the Parish Council's Social Media page.

c). Parish Council owned tablets

Min 7675:23 Following Cllr P. Egan's decision not to seek re-election at the recent Local Elections, it was acknowledged that he was still to return his Parish Council owned tablet, which he had been asked to hand back.

15. Village Hall

a). To receive an update on the status of the Village Hall

Min 7676:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to inform the members that following a recent quote to carry out the repairs to the Village Hall roof, she understood that the required works would equate to approximately £31,000.

In accordance with this quote, she disclosed that the committee were looking into the possibility of sourcing funding via the means of a grant from an external body.

16. External Contractors

Min 7677:23 The members discussed the need for quotes to replace the matting in the play-parks, as discussed in item 9b.

They also urged Cllr K. Mansell to persuade the Village Hall Committee to obtain a further quote to carry out the repairs to the Village Hall roof, to confirm the price quoted was the most competitive.

17. Stoke Community Project

a). To receive a report from the Stoke Community Project concerning their latest projects.

Min 7678:23 The Clerk Mrs J. Allen advised that following an email from Ms J. Barrett of the Stoke Community project, she understood the team had recently been involved in a fundraising quiz that had taken place in the Stoke Village Hall on Saturday 10th June and that they had a float organised to take place in the Isle of Grain Carnival, on Saturday 22nd July.

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18. Feedback to Public Questions

To receive a response/update on the last public questions raised, following the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2023.

Min 7679:23 It was accepted that there had been no questions raised from the public during the meeting held on Wednesday 24th May.

19. External Committee Updates

a). KALC - ANNEX A

Min 7680:23 Please see Annex A for a copy of Cllr N. Blown's report, following the latest KALC meeting.

b). Rural Liaison.

Min 7681:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to provide a verbal report from the last Rural Liaison meeting, where she advised that she understood Medway Council had agreed to divide a pot of money set aside for Parish Council projects (which no-one, not even the leader of Medway Council knew how to access!). Accordingly, she understood that Stoke Parish Council should receive an 11th proportion of these funds, which she thought would equate to over £3,500.

She closed her report in advising that the majority of the meeting had been centred around the Thames Crossing, including reports on the baseline tunnel and assessment transport numbers. She advised that the infrastructure group in charge of the project were looking further into the associated commercial areas caused by the crossing, the affects of both industrial and local traffic around the immediate area and the spoil from the clearance of the sites.

20. Correspondence

Min 7682:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen reported that she had received confirmation in writing from the HMRC that they had returned the Parish Council's overpayment balance on their PAYE account.

21. Any other business

Min 7683:23 Cllr P. Dumke spoke to address the barriers that had been left outside the village shop by Southern Water, where in response to this, Cllr J. Wallace reported that she had already rung the suppliers and asked for the apparatus to be collected as soon as possible.

Min 7684:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen also spoke of an email she had received from a resident in Upper Stoke, asking for the Parish Council to consider installing some paving slabs or a hard standing under the post box in Upper Stoke.

A conversation ensued. Cllr P. Dumke spoke to advise that upon initial assessment he was unsure if paving slabs in this location would be a suitable, as he felt they could cause a potential trip hazard. It was agreed that a further site visit would be required to look into any possible alternative solutions.

22. Date of next meeting

Min 7685:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to inform the members that the next meeting would take place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 6th September.

23. Section 100A(4)

Min 7686:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace read out loud the statement listed on the agenda in relation to Section 100A(4).

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Accordingly, it was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell that the public be excluded from the next item, which was seconded by Cllr P. Dumke and was unanimously agreed.

The one member of the public left at 8.50pm.

24. Personnel

Min 7687:23 A personnel matter was discussed in closed session.

Cllr P. Dumke spoke to propose the members grant the Clerk a salary increment in line with the up-to-date NALC pay scales and that the Parish Council award any back payments due. This proposal was seconded by Cllr S. Back and was unanimously agreed.

25. Grant Application for Veolia

Min 7688:23 A discussion ensued in relation to the members proposed Grant Application for Veolia, where several ideas for the contents of the application were put forward.

26. Close of meeting

Min 7689:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace closed the meeting at 9.00pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 6th September	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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ANNEXES

ANNEX A

19a). External Committee Updates – KALC

Min 7677:23

Meeting Wednesday 21st June Wainscot Village Hall.

Medway Council Parish Grant Fund: £40,000 set aside for parish councils to apply for.

CFO Medway Council proposed that no Parish council can apply for a Grant if they hold more than 30% of their budget in their account.

It was agreed at the council meeting that all parishes will receive £3,600 pounds, regardless of the size of the Parish. The Council are looking at more support for smaller Parishes.

There will be a planning and environment meeting, there have been questions raised about air quality in the 4 Elms area.

Medway Council, looking at any new developments and as part of the development plan, it must include sustainable drainage.

Boundary changes mean that Hoo and Chattendeane now have seventeen parish councillors.

Local parish councils are now forming neighbourhood plans, Cliffe have included off street parking and integral garages in any new developments. Integral garages must be able to accommodate the larger vehicles that are more common. Integral garages cannot be converted to rooms by the homeowner.

New councillors appointed to Parish councils conduct tours of the Parish with standing councillors.

Medway Council has installed CCTV in Knights Road and Pottery Road, as part of an anti-social behaviour measure.

Parish Wardens, Chain saw course.

Funding accessed by other parishes:

- Section 106 green spaces funding
- Medway Valley country partnerships.
- Public Works loan
- Homes England KCC funding