

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 22nd January 2025

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair
Cllr T. Hall
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk
Cllr N. Blown
Cllr S. Hall

Members of the public: One (1)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, opened the meeting at 7.00 pm and thanked the Parish Councillors and one (1) member of the public for attending.

Part A. Public Discussions
None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items
None.

The public session closed and the meeting opened 7.02pm.

1. Apologies for absence,

Min 9085:25 The Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, confirmed that she had received apologies for absence from Cllr. P. Dumke & Cllr. K. Mansell, who had prior commitments, and Cllr. S. Back, who was at a meeting elsewhere.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations,

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers. To consider any dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

Min 9086:25 None.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th December 2024

Min 9087:25 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th December 2024, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr S. Hall and seconded by Cllr N. Blown that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

4. Matters arising from the minutes (not otherwise on the agenda)

Min 9088:25 None.

5. Tasks agreed at the last meeting

a). To receive an update on the tasks agreed at the last meeting.

Min 9089:25 The members evaluated the tasks agreed at the last meeting and asked the Clerk to make a note of the following new points for action:

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

- Clerk to contact UK Power Networks Customer Services RE: broken street lamp on the corner of the High Street & Grain Road.
- Cllr J. Wallace to speak further with landowner RE: fencing in the Recreation Ground at Heron Way.
- Clerk to contact local contractors to obtain quote for repair to the Recreation Ground fencing at Heron Way.
- Parish Council to repair pot hole(s) in Lower Stoke Car Park once weather improves
- Clerk to report large potholes on A228 / Grain Road (in particular the large pothole past Middle Stoke opposite the speed camera)

6. Ward Councillor(s) report

a). A report by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding

Min 9090:25 The members learnt that Cllr C. Spalding had not sent any apologies for his absence or sent a report to be read on his behalf.

7. Planning

a). Applications

Min 9091:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace confirmed that there had been two (2) new planning applications submitted since the last meeting, where the Parish Councillors discussed each in turn.

- **MC/25/0068 - Stoke Primary Academy**
The members discussed the application submitted to increase the height of the boundary fence from 2m high to 3m high. No comments were made.
- **MC/24/2594 - Mill Croft, Allhallows Road**
The members discussed the application submitted to construct a single storey detached annexe in the garden. As this dwelling was based at the rear of the property, the Parish Councillors commented that they had no objections.

b). Decisions

Min 9091:25 The Parish Councillors acknowledge receipt of one (1) new planning decision, which had been approved with conditions:

- **MC/24/1973 - Stoke Primary Academy, Allhallows Road**

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9092:25 The Parish Councillors addressed the other matter listed in their meeting packs and as per shown below.

- **MC/24/0291 - Land Adjacent Fenn Street & Ratcliffe Highway, St Mary Hoo**
The members discussed the application in finer detail and spoke of the various complaints they had already received from residents living in the neighbouring villages.

Min 9093:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke of another application she wanted list on the next agenda, where she recommended the members considered lodging an objection to a further proposed 800 new homes on the land off Lower Rochester Road in Wainscott. Which she felt would add to the volumes of traffic already using the Four Elmes Hill Roundabout. (MC/25/0006).

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

8. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 9094:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace referred the members to the bank statements provided in their meeting packs. She talked them through the balances (details of which are shown below):

Date	Account	Balance
17/01/2025	Current Account	£1,609.50
17/01/2025	Deposit Account	£54,941.36

b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for December 2024.

Min 9095:25 The members carefully evaluated the Parish Council's financial performance against the budget for December 2024. After a brief discussion they concluded that the balances were acceptable.

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

Min 9096:25 The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they agreed that these payments were acceptable.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 9097:25 After careful consideration the below payments were accepted having been proposed by Cllr S. Hall, seconded by Cllr N. Blown and unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£757.48	January 25 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£181.40	Tax & NI charges (January 2025)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – January 2025
B&Q	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£170.00	20 x Bags of Rock Salt INV: 1046685214
Forvis Mazars LLP	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£252.00	Internal Audit 2023/2024 INV: 2462478
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£56.74	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for January 2025
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£757.28	December 24 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£181.40	Tax & NI charges (December 2024)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – December 2024
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£61.01	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for November 2024
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	PAID BY BACS	£80.00	Deep Clean of all two (2) play parks INV: 56
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£11.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV: 10605

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£61.71	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for December 2024
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£11.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV: 11351
TLC Direct	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£132.40	5 x Hasp & Staple Locks & 5 x Combination Padlocks INV: A20275397119
Flowers by Frankie Davison	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£45.00	Chairman's Christmas Gift
Shane Back	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£170.00	20 x Bags of Rock Salt INV: 1046342499
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£56.75	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for December 2024
TOTAL			£2,983.45	

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

Min 9098:25 The Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, informed the Parish Councillors that the defibrillator battery for the device in Lower Stoke had stopped working. As a temporary measure, the old and expired battery had been placed in the unit until a new battery could be sourced.

The Clerk spoke further to advise that when the defibrillator was recalled during spring 2023, CU Medical Systems disclosed that the device would likely not sustain any further system upgrades due to its age. In response to this conversation, she asked the members to consider the possibility of purchasing a new defibrillator, where she indicated there were previously grants available.

A discussion ensued, and after careful consideration, the Clerk was instructed to look into the possibility of a grant and report back to the members with her findings at the next meeting. A vote took place, and it was proposed by Cllr. S. Hall, seconded by Cllr. N. Blown, and unanimously agreed to provide the Clerk with a £1,000 grant to replace the whole defibrillator and cabinet if there were grants available to assist with the costs.

f). Precept 2025 / 2026

Min 9099:25 The members discussed the precept balance for 2025/2026. They referred to various conversations held during the Finance Committee Meeting in November regarding budgets, additional costs, and forward planning.

Comments were made that following a large increment last year, the Parish Council was able to take on an additional member of staff, install a wind and solar-powered cabinet with a defibrillator in Middle Stoke, and coordinate the installation of several grit bins with salt throughout the village.

The conversation then digressed to additional costs this coming year, which included the replacement of the Village Hall roof, the refurbishment of the Heron Way Recreation Ground, and the increase in National Insurance contributions, to name a few.

After careful consideration, it was proposed by Cllr. S. Hall, seconded by Cllr. N. Blown, and unanimously agreed to increase the precept balance for 2025/2026 to £33,300.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Accordingly, the Clerk completed the 2025/2026 precept requirement form in front of the Parish Councillors where it was signed by the Chairman and two (2) other Parish Councillors.

9. Management of Land and Property

a). **To receive the play park inspection report from the month of December for:**

i). **The Button Drive Playpark (Lower Stoke).**

ii). **The Heron Way Playpark (Lower Stoke).**

iii). **The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).**

Min 9100:25 Cllr. N. Blown reported that there was no change to any of the play equipment in all three (3) parks. Concerns, however, were raised regarding the condition of the fencing at the Heron Way Recreation Ground, which was now understood to be leaning quite considerably into the park.

Min 9101:25 The conversation then digressed to the entrance to the Upper Stoke play park, where it was agreed that the members should consider changing the gate opening.

Cllr. N. Blown spoke of his idea of repurposing the Upper Stoke Playpark into a picnic area where he suggested that the Parish Council should consider organising a social media survey. The members discussed further their visions of transforming this space into an eco-friendly area with 'living seats' and a dining area with scenic views.

The members also spoke of the possibility of asking a local business for sponsorship, should the residents be receptive to this idea.

b). **Cleaning of play equipment**

Min 9102:25 It was understood that the play equipment in all three (3) playparks was still being cleaned on a fortnightly basis.

c). **Defibrillator**

i). **Middle Stoke**

Min 9103:25 The Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, reported that the solar and wind-powered defibrillator cabinet had now been installed, and she had been to check on the defibrillator.

She confirmed that she would register the unit using the manufacturer's warranty and suggested the members considered labelling the defibrillator with the name and address of who owns it in case it was ever used and removed from the village.

Finally, she confirmed that she would organise for the defibrillator cabinet to speak to the Stoke Parish Council mobile telephone number, which would apparently advise her if the cabinet was ever opened and the status of the battery, etc.

10. Highways, Transport & Upkeep

To receive any reports relating to:

a). **Footpaths**

Min 9104:25 No report.

b). **Lighting**

Min 9105:25 It was acknowledged that the issue with the street lamp on the corner of the High Street & Grain Road was still ongoing.

c). **Highways and verges**

Min 9106:25 No report.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

d). Pot holes

Min 9107:25 It was acknowledged that the large pothole in the Lower Stoke Car Park still needed to be filled in, and the Clerk would be reporting the large potholes on A228 / Grain Road, as discussed previously in the meeting.

e). Fly tipping & Street Cleaning

Min 9108:25 Cllr S. Hall reported that he would be asking for the large flat-screen TV, which had been dumped almost directly opposite the village hall, to be removed.

f). Grass cutting

Min 9109:25 No report.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 9110:25 It was understood that the problematic sinking manhole cover had recently been addressed by Medway Council.

h). Salt / Grit Bins.

Min 9111:25 The members issued a vote of thanks to Cllr. S. Back in his absence for labelling the new grit bins, fitting a clasp and shackle lock with a combination padlock to each, and sourcing some suitably sized bags of rock salt to ensure each bin was half full.

i). Flood signs

Min 9112:25 No report.

j). Noticeboards

Min 9113:25 The Clerk Mrs. J. Allen, expressed her feelings that the noticeboards in Middle Stoke and Upper Stoke were not fit for purpose.

A discussion ensued, and the members spoke of eventually purchasing a new noticeboard for Middle Stoke and relocating the board on the green triangular space. In response to this idea, the Clerk was asked to write to Medway Council to seek permission and to place a notice on social media to confirm if any of the residents had any objections.

11. Communications

To receive an update on the following methods of communication:

a). Website.

Min 9114:25 The Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, confirmed that Hugo Fox was now in communication with Nexus Data Systems for a TAC code to finish organising the setup of the Parish Council's email addresses.

b). Social media page

Min 9115:25 The Clerk was reminded to upload posts concerning the Upper Stoke Play Park and the possible relocation of the noticeboard for Middle Stoke.

12. Internal Committee Updates

a). Neighbourhood Plan – ANNEX A

Min 9116:25 Please see Annex A for a copy of the latest email update from Mr. P. Egan.

b). Stoke Village Hall

Min 9117:25 Cllr. J. Wallace referred to the two (2) quotes Mrs. K. Mansell had previously sourced for the Committee in her position as treasurer, which she noted were over eighteen (18) months old.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

She also spoke of the letter the Village Hall Committee had written to the Parish Council asking for financial assistance in funding the new roof covering, where the Clerk was instructed to write back to the committee to confirm that the Parish Council would take ownership of this project and see it through to the end; however, they would only take financial responsibility for the roof and none of the internal decoration.

The conversation then digressed to possibly organising an up-to-date asbestos report and organising a meeting with the solicitor to discuss the contents the new constitution, where it was recommended that the Chairman and the Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, initially meet with her.

c). Stoke Community Project

Min 9118:25 No report.

13. External Committee Updates

a). KALC

Min 9119:25 It was understood that the next KALC meeting was due to take place at the Frindsbury Extra Hall on Wednesday, 29th January.

b). Rural Liaison

Min 9120:25 No report.

14. External Contractors

a). To discuss and approve any new work requests or discuss any existing orders

Min 9121:25 The Clerk was instructed to chase the local contractor regarding the removal of the bin in the Button Drive playpark and to also ask them to provide a quote to repair the leaning fence at the Heron Way playpark.

15. Events

a). Christmas 2025

Min 9122:25 It was agreed that the Christmas Lights Switch-on Event would take place this year on Sunday, 30th November. A discussion ensued, and the Clerk was asked to organise for the Christmas tree to be delivered much sooner this year and for a further Events Working Party meeting to take place during the month of September.

16. Correspondence

a). wHoo Cares local history board

Min 9123:25 The Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, spoke to address an email she had received from wHoo Cares who were still chasing for details of the exact location they could install their proposed local history board.

A discussion ensued, and the Clerk was asked to obtain the dimensions of this board and to speak further with the Village Hall Committee to iron out the details.

b). Meeting Dates for 2025 - ANNEX B

Min 9124:25 The Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, circulated a list of meeting dates for 2025.

Following feedback from the members, the Clerk was instructed to make several amendments. Details of which are shown in Annex B.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

17. **Any other business**

Min 9125:25 The Chairman, Cllr. J. Wallace, spoke to remind the members that the Parish Council's WhatsApp Group is purely an information platform and that it should not be used for any other purpose.

18. **Date of next meeting**

Min 9126:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, spoke to remind everyone that the next Parish Council Meeting would take place on Wednesday 5th March at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

19. **Close of meeting**

Min 9127:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, closed the meeting at 8.43 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 5th March 2025 Parish Council Meeting	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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Tasks agreed:

Clerk to upload the revised minutes from the 'Parish Council Meeting', held on Wednesday 4th December 2024, onto the Parish Council's webpage.

Clerk to speak further with UK Power Networks RE: broken street lamp on the corner of the High Street & Grain Road.

Cllr. J. Wallace to speak further with landowner RE: fencing in the Recreation Ground at Heron Way.

Clerk to chase the local contractor regarding the removal of the bin in the Button Drive playpark and a quote to repair the leaning fence at the Heron Way playpark.

Parish Council to repair pot hole(s) in Lower Stoke Car Park once weather improves.

Clerk to report large potholes on A228 / Grain Road (in particular the large pothole past Middle Stoke opposite the speed camera).

Clerk to list Planning Application MC/25/0006 (Land Off Lower Rochester Road Wainscott) in the members meeting packs for discussion at the next meeting.

Clerk to pay the agreed expenditure costs.

Clerk to look into the possibility of a grant to replace defibrillator and cabinet in Lower Stoke.

Clerk to send signed Precept form to Medway Council.

Clerk to organise a social media survey regarding the possible repurposing of the Upper Stoke Play Park into an eco-friendly picnic area with 'living seats' and a dining area with scenic views.

Clerk to register Middle Stoke's defibrillator under the manufacturer's warranty, organise the labelling of the defibrillator with the Parish Council's name and address, and ensure that the defibrillator cabinet is connected to the Stoke Parish Council mobile telephone number.

Cllr. S. Hall to report large flat-screen TV, which had been fly-tipped.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Clerk to write to Medway Council to seek permission regarding the replacement of Middle Stoke noticeboard and to place a notice on social media to confirm if any of the residents have any objections.

Clerk to write to the Village Hall committee to confirm that the Parish Council would take ownership of the replacement roof but none of the internal decoration.

Clerk to organise a meeting with Chairman and solicitor to discuss the contents of the proposed new village hall constitution.

Clerk to organise for the Christmas tree to be delivered earlier this year and for a further Events Working Party meeting to take place during the month of July.

Clerk to send dimensions of history board to Parish Councillors and speak further with the Village Hall Committee to organise its exact location.

Clerk to amend list of meeting dates for 2025 and recirculate to Parish Councillors.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A

12a). Internal Committee Updates - Neighbourhood Plan

REF: **Min 9116:25**

----- Message -----

From: Peter Egan

Date: Thu, 16 Jan 2025 at 02:44

Subject: RE: Stoke Neighbourhood Plan

To: lawson, raymonda

Hi Raymonda,

Thank you for your email.

We have just finished our local survey and are now looking to conduct our last consultant prior to compiling the first draft of the neighbourhood plan for review and consultation with the council. I have included a link to the survey results below, was posted a copy of the survey to every house in the parish and placed copies in the businesses. Unfortunately, we only got 62 responses, but the points are still interesting.

We would like to know if the recent government plans to reconfigure Kents/Medway's local governments will impact our neighbourhood plan and the wider local plan.

Once we have completed our next review. We will reach out to your selves for guidance and support on the next steps. We are presently aiming for mid to late march.

Regards

Peter

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

ANNEX B

16b). Meeting Dates for 2025

REF: **Min 9124:25**

MEETING DATES 2025

Date	Venue	Time
Wednesday 22 nd January 2025 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Lower Stoke Methodist Church	7.00pm
Wednesday 5 th March 2025 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 2 nd April 2025 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 7 th May 2025 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING & ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 4 th June 2025 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 2 nd July 2025 EVENTS WORKING PARTY MEETING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	6.00pm 7.00pm
Wednesday 3 rd September 2025 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 1 st October 2025 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 19 th November 2025 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm