

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 5th March 2025

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair Cllr P. Dumke
Cllr K. Mansell Cllr N. Blown
Cllr S. Back Cllr T. Hall
Cllr S. Hall Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk

Members of the public: Thirteen (13)

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 members of the public for attending.

Part A. Public Discussions

A member of the Stoke Community Project spoke to enquire if the Parish Council would grant them permission to host their 'Big Lunch' event in the Lower Stoke car park on Sunday 22nd June.

The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, spoke in response to confirm that she would need to establish the future of the car park first, following correspondence from Medway Council to advise that they were considering 'disposing' of the car park.

A resident then spoke to Mr P. Dadson, Director of School Improvement of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust, to ask for clarification on the height of the new proposed fence which will surround the school.

Mr P. Dadson stood up to thank the Parish Council for inviting him to attend the meeting and to introduce his colleague, Mr Darren Hayes. He spoke further about the proposed security mesh fencing for the site, which would be completely see-through. He advised that the fencing was required to be so tall owing to the educational needs of the students who would be based on site; however, the Trust was working in unison with Medway Council to ensure the fence line does not cause any damage to the existing trees or residents' boundaries.

In response to Mr P. Dadson's report, the Stoke Community Project representative spoke to enquire if the school would consider hosting the 'Big Lunch' event in September if the car park was unavailable. A discussion ensued, and concerns were raised that the building works would still be ongoing. It was agreed that Mr P. Dadson would liaise further with the group to finalise the arrangements.

The Stoke Community Project lead spoke again to promote their Easter Disco event, which had been scheduled to take place on Saturday 19th April in the Nags Head Public House Garden. In response to their request for assistance, Cllr N. Blown kindly offered his help with any catering requirements.

Another resident spoke to raise his concerns regarding the continuous water leaks at Allhallows Road, where he asked the Parish Council for their help in addressing the matter with Southern Water.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Finally, a parishioner spoke of a report she had recently read where she understood the recent flooding events in the village needed to be logged on a particular register, which had apparently not happened.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

Cllr J. Wallace invited Mr P. Dadson, Director of School Improvement of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust, to provide a brief update on the renovation works to the old 'Stoke Primary Academy' building.

Mr P. Dason confirmed that Medway Council had now gone to tender for the back extension of the building, where contractors had been appointed. As part of these works, a rear single-storey extension had been agreed upon, which would provide space for an additional three (3) classrooms. Alongside this extension, it was confirmed that the internal reconfigurations still needed to take place and a new entry porch added to the front of the building to allow for wheelchair access.

The Director of School Improvement spoke further to inform the meeting that the developers had a 30-week contract, which was due to end on Friday, 29th August; however, owing to a transition period for the students, he felt that Trust would need access to the building from mid-July.

It was understood that until the Trust was happy with the building works, the project still belonged to Medway Council. Owing to the spate of recent power cuts, the school had organised their own power supply into the building so as not to draw on the village's limited resources.

A tree survey had recently taken place, and Mr P. Dadson spoke of his concerns that the school and its surrounding grounds had previously been labelled as 'contaminated', where he mooted the idea that this could have been connected to the asbestos that had previously been found on site.

Mr P. Dadson closed his report in confirming the contractor's hours and the parking arrangements whilst the works were taking place. He reminded the meeting that in the Trust's first year on site, the building would only house between 30 and 36 students, owing to their precalculated phasing-in period.

The public session closed, and the meeting opened at 7.33pm. The majority of the members of the public left; however, two (2) remained.

1. Apologies for absence.

Min 9128:25 None. In fact, it was acknowledged that there was a full complement of councillors.

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 9129:25 None.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

3. Minutes of the last meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 22nd January 2025.

Min 9130:25 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday, 22nd January 2025, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr S. Hall and seconded by Cllr T. Hall 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 9131:25 None.

5. External Reports

a). Report by Mr P. Dadson of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust.

Min 9132:25 The chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, referred the meeting to Part B of the public = session, where Mr P. Dadson had already provided his report.

6. Tasks agreed at the last meeting

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

Min 9133:25 The members evaluated the tasks agreed at the last meeting and asked the Clerk was asked to continue working on the following points:

- Clerk to contact UK Power Networks Customer Services RE: broken street lamp on the corner of the High Street & Grain Road.
- 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 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.
- 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.

7. Ward Councillor(s) report

a). A report by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding

Min 9134:25 It was acknowledged that there was no ward councillor report from Cllr C. Spalding, and he had not sent any apologies for the meeting.

8. Planning

a). Applications

Min 9135:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, confirmed that there had been one (1) new planning application submitted since the last meeting, details of which are listed below.

- **MC/25/0381 - 2 Tudor Farm Cottages, Stoke Road**
Since this application was so new, the Clerk was asked to observe this application and notify the parish councillors once the associated documents were showing on the planning portal.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

b). Decisions

Min 9136:25 The parish councillors acknowledged receipt of three (3) new planning decisions. Details of which are shown below, all of which had been approved with conditions.

- **MC/24/2594 - Mill Croft, Allhallows Road**
- **MC/24/2390 - Stoke Garage, High Street, Lower Stoke**
- **MC/24/1721 - Land At Court Lodge Farmhouse, The Street, Upper Stoke**

The members collectively discussed the application for Stoke Garage, where they understood that as part of Medway Council's conditions the 'burger van' to needed be removed from the site.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, also alerted the members to a complaint she had received concerning the lack of disabled access there was into the new shop.

The members spoke in response to this complaint to remind the clerk that residents are also able to submit their own concerns to Medway Council using their online planning portal webpage.

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9137:25 The parish councillors addressed the other matter shown below.

- **MC/25/0006 - Land Off Lower Rochester Road Wainscott, Rochester**
A discussion ensued, and it was eventually decided that the Parish Council should not submit a comment; however, as individuals, they were free to do so.

9. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 9138:25 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	£1,042.04
17/01/2025	Deposit Account	£53,002.53

b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for January 2025 & February 2025.

Min 9139:25 The members carefully evaluated the Parish Council's financial performance against the budget for January 2025 & February 2025. After a brief discussion they concluded that the balances were acceptable.

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

Min 9140:25 The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they agreed that these payments were acceptable.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 9141:25 After careful consideration, the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr T. Hall, seconded by the Vice-Chair, Cllr P. Dumke, and unanimously agreed.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package INV: 12256
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£11.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV: 12111
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£62.21	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for January 2025
Medway Council	Min 5077:21	DIRECT DEBIT	£212.50	Lower Stoke Car Park Lease Qtr 4 INV: (TO FOLLOW)
Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package
Lower Stoke Methodist Church	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£50.00	Donation for use of hall on 22/01/2025.
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£200.56	Tax & NI charges - November 2024 (underpaid previously)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£129.80	Tax & NI charges - June 2024 (Forgotten to make payment previously)
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£757.48	February 25 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£181.40	Tax & NI charges (February 2025)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – February 2025
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£56.75	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for February 2025
KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£8.10	50% costs towards pink paper INV: 79341
KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£59.08	50% costs towards paper & notebooks INV: 81338
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all two (2) play parks INV: 59
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all two (2) play parks INV: 64
TOTAL				£2,066.85

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

Min 9142:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, addressed the need for a replacement battery for the defibrillator in Lower Stoke, which was currently functioning on an old and expired battery.

Cllr S. Back spoke in support of the purchase of a new battery, where he advised that the device was currently usable in its current condition.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

After careful consideration, the Clerk was instructed to purchase a new battery at a cost of £280.00, which was proposed by the Vice-Chair, Cllr P. Dumke, seconded by Cllr T. Hall, and unanimously agreed.

f). To consider the readoption of the Parish Council's Financial Regulations.

g). To consider the readoption of the Parish Council's Financial Risk Assessment.

Min 9143:25 The members carefully reviewed the parish council's financial regulations & financial risk assessment, where it was proposed by Cllr S. Back to readopt these policies. This proposal was seconded by Cllr S. Hall and was unanimously agreed.

10. Management of Land and Property

a). To receive the play park inspection report from the months of January 2025 & February 2025 for:

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

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

iii). The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).

Min 9144:25 The members discussed the recent removal of the swing seats from the frame due to the condition of the fence behind in the Heron Way recreation ground. The Clerk was asked to chase the landowners for an on-site meeting to address the removal of the brambles behind the fence and to repair the fencing itself.

Min 9145:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, was also asked to verify who was carrying out the play park inspections now.

b). Renovations to Playpark(s)

Min 9146:25 The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, informed the meeting that the parish council had been successful in obtaining a grant from SSE towards the costs of repainting the play equipment in the Heron Way Play Park.

In accordance with this acceptance, the Clerk was tasked to source a comparative quote to the one they currently held.

c). Cleaning of play equipment

Min 9147:25 It was understood the play equipment in all three (3) playparks was still being cleaned on a fortnightly basis.

d). Defibrillator

i). Lower Stoke.

Min 9148:25 The members discussed the possibility of asking SSE for a grant for a new defibrillator for Lower Stoke, as it was acknowledged that owing to the urgent roof repairs required to the Village Hall, the Parish Council would be using the majority of their reserves.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, mooted the idea of also asking 'London Hearts' if their defibrillator grant was still running and if so applying so the parish council could also obtain a new heated cabinet.

e). Lower Stoke Car Park

Min 9149:25 The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, referred the members to the letter contained within their meeting packs where Medway Council had written to the Parish Council to advise that they were considering 'disposing' of the Lower Stoke Car Park.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

She confirmed that in response to this review, she had sent a letter on behalf of the Parish Council to verify what the car park in Lower Stoke is used for and what pivotal role it plays in the community, where she was now waiting to hear back from the Unitary Authority.

11. Highways, Transport & Upkeep

To receive any reports relating to:

a). Footpaths

Min 9150:25 Cllr S. Back commented that the kerb stone along the footpath the runs from Heron Way to Mallards Way were being loose. In response to this he had notified MHS Homes accordingly.

b). Lighting

Min 9151:25 The members agreed to temporarily park the issue with the street lamp on the corner of the High Street & Grain Road until they could establish what was happening with the car park.

c). Highways and verges

Min 9152:25 No report.

d). Pot holes

Min 9153:25 The members agreed to temporarily park the repair of the large pothole in the Lower Stoke Car Park until they could establish what was happening with its potential sale.

e). Fly tipping & Street Cleaning

Min 9154:25 Cllr S. Hall reported that the fly-tipped large flat-screen TV had finally been collected by Medway Council.

f). Grass cutting

Min 9155:25 No report.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 9156:25 No report.

h). Salt / Grit Bins.

Min 9157:25 No report.

i). Flood signs

Min 9158:25 No report.

j). Noticeboards

Min 9159:25 Cllr N. Blown spoke to remind the members that at the end of January's meeting, when Ms T. Robb was showing the parish councillors around the building, including the 'Men in Sheds' workshop, there was a brief discussion held concerning asking this group to help the parish council with the repair/replacement of their two existing wooden noticeboards.

12. Communications

To receive an update on the following methods of communication:

a). Website.

Min 9160:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, confirmed that the clerk's new parish council email address was now functioning, and she would organise for the chair and vice-chair to have access next to trial the parish councillor addresses.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

b). Social media page

Min 9161:25 The Clerk confirmed that she had recently uploaded the details concerning the fence and the swing unit in the Heron Way playpark onto the parish council's social media page.

13. Internal Committee Updates

a). Neighbourhood Plan – ANNEX A

Min 9162:25 Cllr J. Wallace read out loud the latest update she had received on the Neighbourhood Plan; please see Annex A for a copy of this update from Mr P. Egan.

b). Stoke Village Hall

Min 9163:25 Cllr N. Blown spoke to report that the Village Hall Committee had recently voted to accept the quote for £540.00 to place a temporary plastic covering on the Village Hall roof. It was also understood that any further renovation works to the Village Hall were temporarily on hold until part of the roof had been replaced.

Finally, it was reported that the Doctors Surgery had recently sent an email to confirm that the Lower Stoke Branch was now officially closed; however, the committee was yet to receive a formal written resignation from the practice.

c). Stoke Community Project

Min 9164:25 From a discussion held during the public session, it was understood that the Stoke Community Project was holding an Easter Disco on Saturday 19th April in the Nags Head Public House Garden and that they were also planning to hold a 'Big Lunch' event in either the month of June or the month of September, depending on location.

14. External Committee Updates

a). KALC

Min 9165:25 It was understood that the next KALC meeting was due to take place during the month of April.

b). Rural Liaison

Min 9166:25 Cllr J. Wallace reported that the next Rural Liaison meeting was being held this evening; however, she had been unable to attend owing to the parish council meeting being held on the same night.

15. External Contractors

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

Min 9167:25 The Clerk confirmed that the bin contained within the Button Drive playpark had finally been removed and that she was still waiting to learn of the details of the quote to repair the rear fence at the Heron Way playpark.

16. Events

Min 9168:25 A discussion concerning combining the Big Lunch event with VE Day celebrations ensued.

17. Correspondence

Min 9169:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to confirm receipt of a letter from Medway Council concerning the possible disposal of the Lower Stoke Car Park. As discussed under item 10e ref:

Min 9149:25 .

18. Any other business

Min 9170:25 None.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

19. Date of next meeting

Min 9171:24 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to remind everyone that the next Parish Council meeting had been scheduled to take place on Wednesday 2nd April, at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

20. Section 100A(4)

Min 9172:24 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace read out loud the statement listed on the agenda in relation to Section 100A(4). She proposed the public be excluded from the next item which was seconded by Cllr S. Back and was unanimously agreed.

20. Confidential Matters

To receive an update on the following matters:

a). Lower Stoke Car Park (continued).

Min 9173:24 A further conversation concerning the sale of the Lower Stoke Car Park by Medway Council ensued, and a discussion was held concerning the organisation of a petition.

b). Village Hall Roof & Constitution + Doctors Surgery Update.

Min 9174:24 The members spoke in detail about the possible contents of a new village hall constitution and the status of the doctor's surgery.

21. Close of meeting

Min 9175:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, closed the meeting at 8.45 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 2nd April 2025 Parish Council Meeting	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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Tasks agreed:

Clerk to upload a copy of the Parish Council's approved minutes from Wednesday 22nd January onto the Parish Council's webpage.

Clerk was asked to observe Medway Council's Planning Portal for documents uploaded to planning application MC/25/0381 - 2 Tudor Farm Cottages, Stoke Road.

Clerk to pay the agreed expenditure costs.

Clerk to purchase new battery for Lower Stoke defibrillator.

The Clerk to chase landowner for an on-site meeting in order to address the removal of the brambles and repair to the back fencing at the Heron Way Recreation Ground.

Clerk, to verify who is carrying out the current playpark inspections.

Clerk to source a comparative quote to repaint play equipment at Heron Way.

Cllr S. Back to chase MHH Homes to carry out repairs to the kerb stones that along the Heron Way to Mallards Way footpath.

Clerk to organise for chair and vice-chair to have access to their new parish councillor email addresses.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

ANNEXES

ANNEX A

13a). Internal Committee Updates - Neighbourhood Plan

REF: **Min 9162:25**

From: Peter Egan

Date: Mon, 3 Mar 2025 at 13:08

Subject: Neighbourhood Plan.

To: Stoke Parish Council

Hi Julie,

As requested, please find an update on the Stoke Neighbourhood Plan below.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee have since the last update in 2024, been undertaking progressing with the evidence gathering work for the Neighbourhood Plan via a online survey, flyers were posted in every residence in the parish and placed in local businesses. Unfortunately, only 62 submissions were undertaken, please see the link below for the results. The committee has also been consultation with Medway council and have confirmed that with Kent and Medway not progressing to a Mayorship, that the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan is still valid.

Over the next few weeks, the initial Plan will be drawn up based in the evidence work to date, and reviewed with Medway Council prior to examination by the Parish Council and community for agreement on the initial approach. Once agreement is gained a final draft will be compiled that will be sent for audit.

On completion of the audit, the Plan will be handed to Parish Council for submission to Medway Council for agreement and following community vote.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?AnalyzerToken=v3AcrTukdJPUqjtPul-SZFfe2aZ8xSf9t&id=rWI5rs4SkkCfMe5wpFUmqfTWT8GHeUZntUkZp1e85bRUN0dNSzRWW1k2OV-RVRVJDSk41OEFGMlk2MC4u>

Please let me know any questions.

Regards

Peter 'Casper' Egan