

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 4th June 2025

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

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

Members of the public: None (0)

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 for attending.

Part A. Public Discussions

None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The meeting opened at 7.30pm.

1. Apologies for absence.

Min 9264:25 It was acknowledged that the Clerk had received apologies for absence from Cllr P. Dumke, who gave no reasons for his absence.

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 9265:25 None.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7th May 2025.

Min 9266:25 The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday, 7th May 2025, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr S. Back and seconded by Cllr S. Hall that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was unanimously agreed.

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

Min 9267:25 None.

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5. Vacancies

a). To discuss the Parish Council's current outstanding vacancy.

Min 9268:25 The Clerk informed the members that the by-election period for the parish council's outstanding vacancy had now passed and that Medway Council had given permission for the parish council to co-opt a new member.

In response to this update a discussion ensued where the Clerk was instructed to promote the Parish Council's vacancy by co-option on Stoke Parish Council's website, social media account and on the village noticeboards.

6. Tasks agreed at the last meeting

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

Min 9269:25 The members evaluated the tasks agreed at the last meeting and the Clerk / Parish Councillors were asked to continue working on the following points:

- Clerk to add the approved minutes onto the Parish Council's webpage.
- Clerk to correspond further with the Men in Shed's group concerning a new noticeboard for Middle Stoke.
- Clerk to report large pothole on Sharnal Street in High Halstow to Medway Council.

7. Ward Councillor(s) report

a). A report by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding

Min 9270:25 It was acknowledged that there was no ward councillor report from Cllr C. Spalding, and he had not sent any apologies for his absence either.

8. Planning

a). Applications

Min 9271:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, confirmed there had been no new planning applications submitted since the last meeting.

b). Decisions

Min 9272:25 The parish councillors acknowledged receipt of one (1) new planning decision. Details of which are shown below.

Discharge of Conditions

- **MC/25/0787 – Land at Walnut Tree Farm, Grain Road**

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9273:25 None.

9. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 9274:25 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
27/05/2025	Current Account	£2,102.93
16/05/2025	Deposit Account	£48,616.79

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b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for May 2025.

Min 9275:25 The members carefully evaluated the Parish Council's financial performance against the budget for May 2025. After a brief discussion they concluded that the balances were acceptable.

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

Min 9276:25 The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they agreed that these payments were acceptable.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 9277:25 After careful consideration, the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr S. Hall, seconded by Cllr T. Hall, and unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£757.48	May 25 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£225.25	Tax & NI charges (May 2025)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office May 2025
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£56.75	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for May 2025
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV: 354
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV: 067
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£23.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV: TBC
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£11.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV:14621
Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package INV:14746
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£68.30	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for May 2025
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£67.12	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for June 2025
Stoke Community Project	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£770.00	Costs towards VE Day Celebrations, (covered by Medway Council's Grant).
KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£9.59	50% costs towards laminating pouches INV: 85247
TOTAL			£2,176.46	

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

Min 9278:25 None.

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f). To receive an update on the audit process for 2024/ 2025.

Min 9279:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, informed the members that the internal auditor was currently away on holiday, but she had spoken with him before he had left and had organised for him to carry out a full assessment of the Parish Council's accounts for the financial year 2024/2025 upon his return.

She closed her report by informing the members that the audit paperwork needed to be returned to the external auditors by Monday, 30th June.

It was therefore agreed to hold a brief extraordinary meeting on Wednesday, 25th June, to review the results of the internal audit and to approve the documentation to return it ahead of the closing date.

10. Management of Land and Property

a). To receive the play park inspection report from the month of May 2025 for:

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

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

iii). The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).

Min 9280:25 The members spoke of several complaints they had received concerning the removal of the swings in the Heron Way Recreation Ground and the length of time it was taking to repair the back fence.

Accordingly, the Clerk was asked to chase the contractors to try to establish a timeline for the repairs to be carried out.

Min 9281:25 The conversation then digressed to the playpark in Upper Stoke, and Cllr J. Wallace addressed the overgrown trees which were making the playpark look really dingy and uninviting. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council would try to speak to the farmer, who managed the land behind the park, to establish the ownership of the trees that outline the play area.

b). Defibrillator

i). Lower Stoke.

ii). Middle Stoke

iii). Upper Stoke

Min 9282:25 The Clerk informed Cllr S. Back that she had received several reminders to check the defibrillators from 'The Circuit' website to ensure they were in optimal condition.

In accordance with these emails Cllr S. Back confirmed that he would check on all the defibrillators and report back to the Clerk with his findings.

11. Highways, Transport & Upkeep

To receive any reports relating to:

a). Footpaths

Min 9283:25 Cllr S. Back reported that he was still chasing MHS homes concerning the poor condition of the footpath between Heron Way & the High Street, in Lower Stoke.

b). Lighting

Min 9284:25 Cllr J. Wallace reported that unbelievably Medway Council had repaired the broken street lamp on the corner of the High Street & Grain Road, despite previously denying any responsibility for it.

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c). Highways and verges

Min 9285:25 The two loose kerb stones that typically bordered the verge outside the Village Hall were brought to the members' attention by Cllr S. Hall.

He said that during the last weekend, the children in the village had been using these kerbstones as ramps, and concerning, they had been abandoned in the middle of Cuckolds Green Road when they had finished with them, which worried him since he thought they could lead to an accident.

As a result, he told the members that he had already complained to Medway Council about these kerbstones and requested that they be put back in place as soon as possible.

d). Pot holes

Min 9286:25 The members readdressed the large pothole located close to Fisherwood House on Sharnal Street in High Halstow, where they identified that this pothole had not even been highlighted to motorists as a hazard by Medway Council.

In light of this, it was decided that Cllr S. Hall would photograph of the pothole and forward it to the Clerk, who would then notify Medway Council of its existence.

e). Fly tipping & Street Cleaning

Min 9287:25 Cllr S. Hall reported that there was a new pile of rubbish that had been fly-tipped along Cuckolds Green Road, which the parish councillors agreed needed to be reported to Medway Council.

f). Grass cutting

Min 9288:25 The Clerk reported that she was currently in discussions with Medway Norse to (hopefully) take back ownership of the Parish Council's green spaces & associated grass cutting budgets for the financial year 2026/2027.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 9289:25 No report.

h). Noticeboards

Min 9290:25 The Clerk reported that she was in discussions with the Men in Sheds group through email concerning the repair of the noticeboards, where she was asked to go back to them to ask them to provide a quote to build a brand-new noticeboard for Middle Stoke.

12. Communications

To receive an update on the following methods of communication:

a). Website.

Min 9291:25 No report.

b). Social media page

Min 9292:25 No report.

13. Internal Committee Updates

a). Neighbourhood Plan

Min 9293:25 No report.

b). Stoke Village Hall

Min 9294:25 Cllr N. Blown informed the meeting that the Committee had decided to reimburse the Parish Council a balance of £50 per month following the replacement of the Village Hall roof.

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It was understood that once the Doctors Surgery premises could be renovated and reopened for business, that the committee would look to review the balance with a view of increasing the amount.

In addition, Cllr. N. Blown addressed Cllr. P. Dumke's worries about scheduling an independent inspection survey for the new village hall roof, which he believed was necessary for insurance purposes every 12 to 18 months. Consequently, he affirmed that the Village Hall committee would be looking into this point at their upcoming meeting, which had been scheduled to take place next week.

Min 9295:25 Since the construction on the new roof had been finished, the Clerk, Mrs. J. Allen, was reminded to chase the roofing contractors to obtain a copy of their certificate of guarantee.

c). Stoke Community Project

Min 9296:25 No report.

14. External Committee Updates

a). KALC

Min 9297:25 The Clerk acknowledged that she was still attempting to ascertain the date of the next KALC meeting, which she agreed to notify all members of as soon as she had it.

b). Rural Liaison

Min 9298:25 It was acknowledged that the next Rural Liaison Meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 25th June, at 6 p.m. at the St George's Centre, where Medway Council would be hosting an 'Open Meeting' from 6.30 p.m. to provide a presentation on the local plan, which ALL parish councillors had been invited to attend.

Following a quick discussion, it was determined that this meeting conflicted with the parish council's already scheduled extraordinary meeting. Consequently, they decided that Cllr S. Hall should represent the Parish Council at the Rural Liaison Committee meeting.

15. Contractor Works

a). Village Hall Roof post installation inspection

Min 9299:25 The members rediscussed the need for a Village Hall roof inspection, following Cllr N. Blown's report under item 13b, ref: **Min 9294:25**.

It was agreed that the Village Hall Committee should pay for the required roof inspection and that the Clerk should forward copies of the quotes she had already sourced on to Cllr N. Blown.

16. Events

a). '80th Anniversary of VE Day Celebrations' held on Saturday 10th May 2025.

Min 9300:25 As a result of the very successful VE Day celebrations held on Saturday, 10th May, the Clerk was instructed to write to the Stoke Community Project to thank them for all their hard work.

17. Correspondence

a). 'Hoo Peninsula Gathering to discuss 'Upcoming New Medway Local Plan' on Monday 9th June at Hoo Village Hall, 6.30pm.

Min 9301:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred to an email she had received from Ward Cllr R. Sands inviting the parish councillors to attend a 'Hoo Peninsula Gathering' to discuss the

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Medway Council's new Local Plan on Monday 9th June at Hoo Village Hall from 6.30pm.

A discussion ensued where it was agreed that either Parish Councillors Shane Back, Nigel Blown or Shaun Hall would attend this meeting to represent Stoke Parish Council, where the members would decide amongst themselves, nearer the time.

18. Date of next meeting

Min 9302:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, spoke to remind everyone that the next Parish Council Meeting would take place on Wednesday 2nd July at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

In response, Cllr S. Back stated that he might need to give apologies in advance for this meeting, as he wasn't sure if he might be working that night.

19. Section 100A(4)

Min 9303:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace advised that as there were no members of the public present she did not need to read out Section 100A(4).

20. Confidential Matters

To receive an update on the following matters:

a). Village Hall Constitution + Doctors Surgery Update.

Min 9304:25 Cllr J. Wallace, the Chair, gave the members an update on the discussions she and the Clerk had had with the solicitor and Lauren Edwards' local MP's office. As a result of these discussions, it was decided that the Parish Council should go ahead and organise for a schedule of works to be carried out for the dilapidations to the Doctors Surgery premises which included a boiler test and an electrical report.

b). Lower Stoke Car Park

Min 9305:25 Cllr J. Wallace, the Chair, gave the members an update on the discussions she and the Clerk had had with the local MP's office, Lauren Edwards' concerning the Lower Stoke Car Park.

c). Insurance policy for 2025/2026

Min 9306:25 The members reviewed the two (2) insurance quotes the Clerk had sourced for the Parish Council.

After a brief discussion, it was proposed by Cllr S. Hall, seconded by Cllr S. Back, and unanimously agreed to accept the quote from Gallagher Insurance Brokers on behalf of Hiscox's Insurance at a cost of £1,619.94.

d). Response to correspondence

Min 9307:25 Following a brief discussion, it was concluded that the members did not need to respond to the correspondence they had received, which they identified as more of a memorandum.

21. Close of meeting

Min 9308:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, closed the meeting at 8.50 pm and thanked the members for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 2nd July 2025 Parish Council Meeting	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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Tasks agreed 04/06/2025

Clerk to upload a copy of the Parish Council's approved minutes from Wednesday 7th June onto the Parish Council's webpage.

Clerk to advertise Parish Council's vacancy by co-option on the Parish Council's noticeboards, social media page & website.

Clerk to speak further with the Men in Sheds group regarding new noticeboard of Middle Stoke.

Clerk to pay the agreed expenditure costs.

Cllr S. Hall to send photos of large potholes along Sharnal Street to the Clerk to enable her to re-report the deep pothole to Medway Council.

Clerk to organise extraordinary meeting to take place on Wednesday 25th June to approve the 2024-2025 audit.

Parish Council to speak to farmer regarding overgrown trees surrounding the Upper Stoke playpark.

Cllr S. Back to check all three (3) defibrillators in the village and notify the Clerk to enable her to update the details on 'The Circuit' webpage.

Clerk & Cllr S. Back to speak further with the Men in Sheds group regarding the deterioration of the steps on the older climbing frame at the Button Drive playpark.

Cllr S. Back continue to chase MHS homes concerning the poor condition of the footpath between Heron Way & the High Street, in Lower Stoke.

Clerk to organise for the chair and another member to have access to their parish councillor email in-box.

Clerk to chase roofing contractor for a copy of their guarantee certificate.

Clerk to check date of next KALC meeting and to notify the Parish Council members accordingly.

Parish Council to report fly tipping at Cuckolds Green Road to Medway Council.

Parish Councillors to collectively organise for at least one representative to attend the next Rural Liaison Board meeting, due to be held on Wednesday 25th June.

Parish Council to report loose kerb stones on Cuckolds Green Road to Medway Council.

Clerk to forward onto Cllr N. Blown copies of the quotes for a post installation roof inspection.

Cllr N. Blown to ask Village Hall Committee to pay for the post installation roof inspection.

Clerk to write to Stoke Community Project to personally thank them for their work at the 80th Anniversary of VE Day Street Party.

Parish Councillors to collectively organise for at least one representative to attend the 'Upcoming New Medway Local Plan Meeting' on Monday 9th June at Hoo Village Hall, 6.30pm.

Clerk to organise for quotes for the various reports to be carried out at the Doctors Surgery.

Clerk to organise for the Parish Council's Insurance via Hiscox Insurance Company Limited.