

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Wednesday 7th May 2025

Annual Parish Council Meeting

Lower Stoke Methodist Church ~ 8.00pm

Attendees: Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair Cllr P. Dumke ~ Vice-chair
Cllr K. Mansell 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 directly after the Annual Parish Meeting at approximately 8.00 pm and thanked everyone for attending.

Part A. Public Discussions

None.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

1. Election of Chair Person

To elect the Chair Person of Stoke Parish Council for the 2025/2026 Council Year.

Min 9219:25 Cllr J. Wallace asked for nominations for the post of Chairperson for the 2025/2026 Parish Council Year.

In response to this request, Cllr N. Blown spoke to propose Cllr J. Wallace be nominated as the Chairperson. This proposal was seconded by Cllr T. Hall and was unanimously agreed.

As no other nominees were put forward, Cllr J. Wallace graciously accepted the post.

2. Chair Person's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

To receive the Chair Person's Declaration of Acceptance of Office or, if the Chair Person is not present, to resolve that such Declaration be made at or before the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

Min 9220:25 Cllr J. Wallace duly signed the declaration of acceptance of office, which was witnessed and signed by the Proper Officer, Mrs J. Allen.

3. Election of Vice-Chair Person

To elect the Vice-Chair Person of Stoke Parish Council for the 2025/2026 Council Year.

Min 9221:25 Cllr J. Wallace asked for nominations for the post of Vice-Chair for the 2025/2026 Parish Council Year.

Cllr N. Blown spoke to propose that Cllr P. Dumke be nominated for the post. This proposal was seconded by Cllr K. Mansell and was unanimously agreed.

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4. **Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

To receive the Vice-Chair Person's Declaration of Acceptance of Office or, if the Vice-Chair Person is not present, to resolve that such Declaration be made at or before the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

Min 9222:25 Cllr P. Dumke duly signed the declaration of acceptance of office, which was witnessed and signed by the Proper Officer, Mrs J. Allen.

5. **Apologies for absence**

Min 9223:25 None.

6. **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 9224:25 None.

7. **Minutes of the last meeting**

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd April 2025.

Min 9225:25 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday, 2nd April 2025, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr T. Hall and seconded by Cllr S. Back that the minutes be approved as a correct record subject to the correction of a couple of minor errors identified by Cllr K. Mansell. This motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

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

Min 9226:25 Cllr S. Back reported that the relevant repairs to the footpath and the kerb stones along the Heron Way / Mallards Way footpath had now taken place by MHS Homes.

Min 9227:25 The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, spoke to ask the Clerk to forward onto her a copy of the invoice for the temporary plastic covering that had been fitted to the Village Hall roof.

Min 9228:25 The conversation then digressed to the condition of the wooden steps on the climbing frame at the Button Drive playpark, where the members discussed asking the 'Men in Sheds' group to help them by making some custom-made steps. They also wondered if the Men in Sheds group would be able to construct a replacement noticeboard for Middle Stoke. Accordingly, the Clerk was instructed to make contact with Mr J. Sturnell to enquire.

Min 9229:25 Finally, Cllr S. Hall reported that there had been a large truckload of rubbish fly-tipped along Cuckolds Green Road again.

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9. **To review the Council's Sub Committee Memberships**

a). Personnel

b). Planning

c). Finance

Min 9230:25 After a brief discussion, it was proposed by Cllr T. Hall, seconded by Cllr S. Back, and unanimously agreed that all members of the Parish Council should be part of the aforementioned subcommittees.

10. **To review the Council's Working Party Memberships**

a). Playparks

Min 9231:25 Cllr S. Back spoke to volunteer himself for the Playpark Working Group, alongside his wife, Mrs K. Back, who had been assisting him in closely monitoring the condition of the playparks and their apparatus.

b). Policies

Min 9232:25 It was unanimously agreed that all members of the Parish Council should form part of the 'Policy Working Group'.

c). Events

Min 9233:25 It was unanimously agreed that all members of the Parish Council should form part of the 'Events Working Group'.

11. **To review the Council's representatives for external bodies**

a). KALC

Min 9234:25 Cllr N. Blown spoke to volunteer himself as the Parish Council's 'KALC' representative, where the members graciously accepted his offer.

b). Rural Liaison

Min 9235:25 Cllr S. Hall and T. Hall both spoke to volunteer themselves as the Parish Council's 'Rural Liaison' representatives. After careful consideration the members unanimously agreed to elect both members.

c). Lower Stoke Village Hall

Min 9236:25 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to volunteer herself as the Parish Council's 'Lower Stoke Village Hall' representative, where she confirmed that she would already be attending the Village Hall Committee meetings in her capacity as their new treasurer.

After careful consideration the members unanimously agreed accepted her offer.

Before moving onto the next item, Cllr K. Mansell also spoke to recommend that Cllr P. Dumke be considered as a representative for the Lower Stoke Village Hall committee, where she felt it would be advantageous to have two (2) representatives serving on the panel.

d). SSE

Min 9237:25 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to volunteer herself as the Parish Council's 'SSE' representative, where the members graciously accepted her offer.

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12. **To review and approve the Council's and/or employees' subscriptions to other bodies**

- a). KALC
- b). Rialtas
- c). Satswana

Min 9238:25 The members collectively discussed the Parish Council's subscriptions to KALC, Rialtas & Satswana.

After careful consideration it was unanimously agreed to continue with these payments for the forthcoming year.

13. **Ward Councillor(s) report** - ANNEX A

a). **A report by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding**

Min 9239:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred to the report that Ward Cllr C. Spalding had prepared and emailed her prior to the Annual Parish Meeting, held ahead of this meeting.

Please see Annex A for a copy of his report.

14. **Planning Applications**

a). **Applications.**

Min 9240:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, confirmed receipt of two (2) new planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting where the members addressed each in turn.

- **MC/25/0892 - 16 Burrows Lane, Middle Stoke**
After careful consideration, it was decided that the members had no comments.
- **MC/25/0787 - Land At Walnut Tree Farm, Grain Road, Lower Stoke**
Following a brief discussion, the members decided that they had no objections, as they recalled the previous dwelling situated at this location had suffered from fire damage.

b). **Decisions.**

Min 9241:25 The parish councillors acknowledged receipt of four (4) new planning decisions. Details of which are shown below.

Approval with Conditions

- **MC/25/0491 – Oakridge, Vicarage Close**
Construction of a single storey rear extension and conversion of the garage to a habitable room
- **MC/25/0068 - Stoke Primary Academy, Allhallows Road**
Replacement of existing 2m high boundary fence with 2.4m high mesh security fencing.

Refusal

- **MC/25/0381 - 2 Tudor Farm Cottages, Stoke Road**
Construction of a single and two storey rear/side extensions, and an attached garage. (including the demolition of the existing detached garage and rear single storey bathroom extension).

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Discharge of Conditions

- **MC/25/0349 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street, Upper Stoke**
Details pursuant to conditions 3 (details of roof areas, roof windows, and rainwater goods), condition 4 (samples of materials), condition 6 (cycle parking) condition 7 (electric charging points) and condition 8 (refuse storage) on planning permission MC/24/1721 for construction of a detached dwelling.

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9242:25 None.

15. Finances

a). Bank balances

Min 9243:25 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
02/05/2025	Current Account	£36,251.28
02/05/2025	Deposit Account	£46,156.79

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

Min 9244:25 The members carefully evaluated the Parish Council's financial performance against the budget for April 2025. After a brief discussion they concluded that the balances were acceptable.

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

Min 9245:25 The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they agreed that these payments were acceptable.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 9246:25 After careful consideration, the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr K. Mansell, seconded by Cllr P. Dumke, 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	£225.05	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: 194
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£11.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV: 13773
Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package INV: 13916
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£64.09	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for April 2025

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Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£62.21	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for March 2025
KALC	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£408.26	2025 / 2026 Subscription INV: 9404
Rialtas	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£352.80	2025 / 2026 Subscription INV: SM32673
Medway Council	Min 5077:21	DIRECT DEBIT	£212.50	Lower Stoke Car Park Lease Qtr 1 INV: (TO FOLLOW)
Topps Roofing Systems Ltd	Min 9210:25	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£31,380.00	Renewal of Village Hall Roof INV: INVJT0420a
The Lock Squad	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£120.00	Lock picking at Doctors Surgery INV: 20.04.2025
Trade Print	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£180.73	Correx Pallet Signs to 'Help Save the Lower Stoke Car Park'. INV: D28389104
VistaPrint	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£193.10	Banners & Posters to 'Help Save the Lower Stoke Car Park'. INV: VP_433QWFTF
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£8.99	Magnets to fix the 'Help Save the Lower Stoke Car Park' banner on notice board. INV: DS-AEU-INV-GB-2025-170709320
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£9.38	Pens for the petition to 'Help Save the Lower Stoke Car Park'. INV: GB501X85AU8TRI
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£14.95	Clipboards for the petition to 'Help Save the Lower Stoke Car Park'. INV: GB52GFE7FAEUI
Screwfix	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£22.99	Cable ties multipack for the petition to 'Help Save the Lower Stoke Car Park'. INV: A21251731044
TOTAL			£34,064.46	

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

Min 9247:25 None.

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

Min 9248:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, informed the members that she was still working on the 2024/2025 audit to send the AGAR and supporting documents to the internal auditor for assessment.

She confirmed that she hoped to have these documents ready for in time for the next parish council meeting.

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16. Management of Land and Property

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

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

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

iii). The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).

Min 9249:25 Cllr S. Back confirmed that there had been no change to the play equipment in all three (3) parks since his report last month. He urged the members, however, to take note of his comments regarding the condition of the wooden steps on the climbing frame located at the Button Drive play park, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

17. Highways, Transport & Upkeep

To receive any reports relating to:

a). Footpaths

Min 9250:25 Cllr S. Back referred the members to the report he had provided earlier in the meeting, ref: **Min 9226:25** .

b). Lighting

Min 9251:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, confirmed that following receipt of an email from Medway Council, she understood that the Unitary Authority had finally agreed to look at the broken street lamp located on the corner of the High Street & Grain Road.

c). Highways and verges

Min 9252:25 Cllr T. Hall reported that the kerb stones located outside the entrance to the Lower Stoke Village Hall were loose.

d). Pot holes

Min 9253:25 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to alert the members to a large pothole located close to Fisherwood House on Sharnal Street in High Halstow.

e). Fly tipping & Street Cleaning

Min 9254:25 Cllr S. Hall referred to his previous report in item 8, where he had informed the meeting that there had been a large truckload of rubbish fly-tipped along Cuckolds Green Road.

f). Grass cutting

Min 9255:25 The members complained that the grassy areas and green spaces in the village were now starting to look tatty because they were so overgrown and not being cut regularly by Medway Norse.

On a more positive note, however, it was acknowledged that Mr K. Mortley and Mr D. Pappin were keeping several areas in the village under control and that Cllr T. Hall was regularly mowing the grassy area located outside the BT building on Cuckolds Green Road.

g). Heron Way recreation ground fence

Min 9256:25 The members understood that the works to repair the Heron Way Recreation Ground fence were due to start imminently.

18. Village Events

a). 80th Anniversary of VE Day – Saturday 10th May 2025.

Min 9257:25 The members acknowledged that the 80th Anniversary of VE Day Street Party was taking place this coming weekend.

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They learnt that Cllr J. Wallace had asked for help in putting up the bunting outside the public house and that Cllr N. Blown had volunteered to help run the refreshment stall.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, expressed her concerns that the recently broken planter situated in the Lower Stoke Car Park could be classed as a trip hazard, and she enquired if any of the Parish Councillors had room to place the broken planter and its contents in their brown bin in time for the rubbish collection on Friday.

19. Correspondence

a). Lower Stoke Car Park.

Min 9258:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, referred the members to an email she had received from Mr N. Filmer, an interim surveyor at Medway Council, concerning the renewal of the lease for the Lower Stoke Car Park, which would include a break clause, should the unitary authority decide to go ahead and sell the car park.

Cllr N. Blown spoke in response to this letter to recommend that the parish councillors consider organising for an independent valuation of the car park and place a covenant on this piece of land to aid its future protection and to ensure this area can only be used as a public space.

The members also spoke collectively spoke about the possible introduction of parking charges, which might be charged to the local businesses to aid towards the car park's upkeep.

20. Reports and Circulars

Min 9259:25 None.

21. Any other business

Min 9260:25 Cllr K. Mansell referred to two (2) articles she had found very interesting in the most recent edition of the Village Voices publication.

One of these articles mentioned the introduction of a defibrillator grant through Taylor Wimpey (the construction company), which she thought could be advantageous for the parish.

22. Date of next meeting

Min 9261:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, spoke to remind everyone that the next Parish Council Meeting would take place on Wednesday 4th June at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

23. Section 100A(4)

Min 9262:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace read out loud the statement listed on the agenda in relation to Section 100A(4). Cllr P. Dumke then proposed the public be excluded from the next item which was seconded by Cllr S. Hall and was unanimously agreed.

24. Confidential Matters

To receive an update on the following matters:

a). Village Hall Roof, Constitution + Doctors Surgery Update.

Min 9263:25 The members spoke in depth about the recent works carried out on the Village Hall roof, where Cllrs K. Mansell & P. Dumke spoke of several snagging points they wanted Addressed first before payment to the contractor was issued.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, also provided the members with an update from the solicitor regarding the doctors' surgery and the new village hall constitution.

b). Sale of Lower Stoke Car Park.

Min 9264:25 Please see the discussion held under item 19a, ref: **Min 9258:25** .

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25. Close of meeting

Min 9263:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, closed the meeting at 9.07 pm and thanked the Parish Councillors for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 4 th June 2025 Annual Parish Meeting	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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ANNEXES

ANNEX A

13a). Ward Councillor(s) report by Cllr C. Spalding

REF: Min 9238:25

From: Councillor Chris Spalding

Sent: 07 May 2025 10:15

To: Clerk Stoke Parish Council

Subject: RE: Invitation to Stoke's Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 7th May 2025

Hello Jenny

Please give my apologies but I am unable to attend the annual parish meeting tonight.

As one of the three military veterans on Medway Council, I am heavily involved in the VE Day 80 commemorations taking place tomorrow and already have other commitments.

It was not helpful that I was only given seven days' notice of this event. Councillor's diaries tend to get filled weeks if not months in advance. Had there been more notice then perhaps I could have attended. This is not limited to yourselves. I was given a couple of weeks' notice for Allhallows annual parish meeting but by then I already had other commitments.

Next week at the Annual Meeting of Medway Council, the meeting's agenda and diary for the year will be approved.

You and the parish council may wish to note certain dates such as full council meetings and planning committee meetings.

We are now halfway through this council's term. I intend to shortly publish and deliver to all residents a newsletter covering the past two years, current issues and future matters.

In terms of immediate issues, I can advise the following; -

Car Park.

I am still working behind the scenes to secure the car park for the village.

The petition will at some point need to be presented to Medway Council. I am willing to do this and would suggest 17 July 2025 as the appropriate meeting.

Community Funding

I continue to make enquiries about grants and other donations for community funding such as the village hall roof and purchase of the car park.

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While not in a position to confirm or promise anything at the moment, there may be some good news in the near future.

Middle Stoke Development

It is my understanding there is interest in the development site in Middle Stoke that has outline planning permission.

Should the interest party proceed, I believe a new planning application will come in.

I am monitoring my weekly notifications list and will advise as and when I become aware of something definite.

Regards

Councillor Christopher Spalding

Tasks agreed 07/05/2025

Clerk to upload a copy of the Parish Council's approved minutes from Wednesday 2nd April onto the Parish Council's webpage.

Clerk to forward copy of invoice for temporary plastic covering onto Village Hall Committee.

Clerk to speak further with Hugo Fox concerning the addition of Medway Council's planning portal link onto the Parish Council's website.

Clerk to organise for chair and another member to have access to their parish councillor email address.

Parish Council to speak to Men in Sheds group for possible assistance in repairing the steps on the older climbing frame at the Button Drive playpark.

Parish Council to speak to Men in Sheds group for possible assistance in replacing noticeboard in Middle Stoke.

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

Clerk to pay the agreed expenditure costs.

Parish Council to report deep pothole outside Fisherwood House on Sharnal Street to Medway Council.

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

Clerk to source quote for an independent valuation of the Lower Stoke Car Park.

Clerk to investigate possible defibrillator grant through Taylor Wimpey as advertised in Village Voices publication.

Parish Council to liaise further with contractor regarding remedial works to the Village Hall following the replacement roof.