

STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes from the meeting held at Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall on
11th September 2025 starting at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Dan White, Keith Hambly, John McEntee (Chair), Peter Rhodes, Phil Howard, Anna Mearns, and Amanda Taylor

Also, in Attendance – Kate Egan – Parish Clerk

1. Welcome by the Chairman.

Cllr John McEntee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Simon Collins and Matthew Rice

3. Absent

No Councillors were absent

4. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

(a) To receive declaration of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda

Cllrs Keith Hambley and Amanda Taylor declared an interest in item 10(a).

(b) To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests

Cllr Anna Mearns has a written request for dispensation in relation to the Millennium Wood for four years (expires September 2027). Cllr Keith Hambly has a written request for dispensation in relation to Stoke St Michael Community Field for one year (expires October 2025). Cllr Amanda Taylor has a written request for dispensation in relation to Stoke St Michael Community Field, Stoke St Michael Community Events and Stoke St Michael Woodland Group for four years (expires January 2028)

(b) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.

A written dispensation has already been granted for Cllrs Keith Hambly and Amanda Taylor regarding Stoke St Michael Community Field, they are able to take part in the discussion but not vote.

5. Public Session.

There were sixteen members of the public in attendance all wishing to speak in relation to the repair of the culvert, the re-opening of the road to heavy vehicles and pedestrian safety.

6. Somerset Councillor Reports

Somerset Councillor Barry Clarke was in attendance and gave a verbal report which included the planning application backlog and the current parking charges consultation.

7. To consider the approval of the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 24th July 2025, previously circulated.

Following a slight amendment the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 24th July as a true record, these were signed by the Chair.

8. Planning Applications – If other planning applications are received between the date of this notice and the date of the meeting, they may be considered.

(a) 2025/1377/LBC Replace the existing tiles to the ground floor extension. Raise the existing parapet by 250mm. Remove a section of stonework and install a cavity tray with weep holes and rebuild the cavity wall with the removed stone. Remove two existing windows to the kitchen and replace with double glazed timber units. **Decision** Due to the timescale for responding, this was considered under delegation authority and the majority recommended approval.

- (b) **2025/1388/PAA** Prior Approval for a proposed change of use of agricultural building to 3no. dwellinghouses (Class C3). Land at 366231 146430 Long Cross Bottom, Stoke St Michael. This is a **notification** only and in line with Somerset Council's constitution and the adopted scheme of delegation and terms of reference, the decision for this application is delegated to the planning officers.

9. Planning Applications – Responses to be noted from Somerset Council

- (a) **2025/0473/LBC** Erection of guest annex and gym following demolition of stables / outbuilding. Batch Farm, Limekiln Lane, Stoke St Michael. **Decision** Application withdrawn
- (b) **2025/1322/HDG** Removal of 6 x 5m sections of hedgerow to facilitate water main re 146482 Long Cross Bottom, Stoke St Michael. **Decision** Somerset Council have stated no objections.

10. Grants

(a) Grant application from the Playing field – amount applied for £5,500

The Chair of the Playing Field was invited to speak about the grant application from the Community Field. The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the grant application for £5,500.

11. Update on the new Assertion 10

To note the information on the new Assertion 10 in the AGAR for 2025/2026. A PowerPoint presentation was sent out to Councillors explaining the new assertion - the website will require some updating.

The Council **NOTED** the information on the new Assertion 10.

12. Adoption of GDPR Policies. Copies of the policies were sent out prior to the meeting

- (a) IT Policy
- (b) Bring Your Own Device Policy
- (c) Freedom of Information Policy
- (d) Internal Control Policy
- (e) Privacy Policy
- (f) Publication Scheme
- (g) Retention and Disposal Policy
- (h) List of Documents to be retained or disposed
- (i) GDPR Audit

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve all the above policies apart from the IT Policy and Bring Your Own Device Policy, which will be brought back to the next meeting.

13. To Be Resolved / Discussed

(a) To consider installing a litter bin at Moonshill Close.

The Council **RESOLVED** to install a new litter bin at Moonshill Close at a cost of £150.90 plus VAT. It will add £338 to the cost of emptying the bins within the Parish.

(b) To note the National Pay Award has been awarded at an increase of 3.2%, this will be reflected in the August payroll.

The Council **NOTED** the National Pay Award had been awarded at an increase of 3.2% and it was reflected within the August payroll.

(c) To consider creating a leaflet / questionnaire on the works surrounding the Bridge and other Highways issues.

Following a detailed discussion, it was agreed to hold a drop-in session on Saturday 27th September from 10am until 1pm in the War Memorial Hall.

(d) To consider the Parish Council's response the Local Transport Plan (LTP) currently out for consultation by Somerset Council. Deadline for responses is 28th September 2025.

It was **NOTED** that Councillors would submit a response individually.

14. Clerk / Councillors Report

- (a)** Update from Cllr Phil Howard on the Emergency Plan Working Group. **Update** Progress is being made and more detail is being added including contact details.
- (b)** Update on the meeting between Somerset Councillor Barry Clarke, Peter Rhodes, and Anna Mearns regarding pedestrian safety once the bridge is repaired and the meeting on 20th August. **Update** This was covered within previous items on the agenda.
- (c)** Update from Anna Mearns on the Highways LCN Working Group on 21st August. **Update** This was covered within previous items on the agenda.
- (d)** Update from Cllr Keith Hambly on the footpath towards Cookwood. **Update** The local Ramblers have been contacted regarding the work to be carried out on the footpaths towards Cookwood. Al Stewart also met with the Rights of Way Officer from Somerset Council and agreed that the overgrown vegetation would be removed. The Council would like to thank Al for all his hard work in keeping the footpaths clear within the Parish.
- (e)** Correspondence has been received from the Senior Bridge Engineer at Somerset Council regarding the culvert. The culvert will be strengthened using a culvert lining solution. The finished structure will be capable of carrying full highway loading; thus, the current temporary concrete chicane will then be removed and the 7.5 tonnes weight restriction will also be removed. **Update.** The works are planned to commence on Monday 13th October and will last for three weeks. Working hours will be 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday. The road will be closed to all traffic (not pedestrians). A signed diversion will be in place.
- (f)** The Parish Council agreed in January 2025 to cover the costs for tree works in the Churchyard and J M Murtagh were appointed as the contractors. Unfortunately, this got missed by the tree surgeon, apologies have been received and the works will be carried out on the 17th and 18th of September.
- (g)** The Highway Maintenance Department have issued a request on the status of the Grit Bins within the Parish so they can be added to the refilling schedule ready for the winter. Councillors have very kindly checked the status of the bins and the information has been forwarded.
- (h)** The two swing gates from Stoke Hill to the Community Field have been reported as being damaged. This has been reported to Somerset Council – reference number 83462.
- (i)** To note a request was received from the War Memorial Hall Committee on 3rd September for permission to hold the Duck Race on the Millennium Green on Sunday 7th September. **Update** Permission had not been granted as the request was only received three days before the event. The Duck Race proceeded with the War Memorial Hall accepting all the risks.

15. Finance

Bank Balances as at: - 4th September 2025

Unity Current Account – £4,144.09

Unity Savings Account – £62,503.79

To note the External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/2025

Based on our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority – None.

The Council **NOTED** the External Auditor's Report for 2024/2025

Receipts

(a) Memorial Fees - £74.00 – received via bacs 25.07.25

(b) Burial Fees - £146.00 – cheque received

(c) National Grid – Wayleave Payment - £30.15 – cheque received

(d) Memorial Fees - £19.00 received via bacs on 12.08.25

Payments

(e) Clerks' salary and expenses – August - £596.92

(f) Primrose Garden Maintenance – Grass Cutting (July) - £772.12

(g) Primrose Garden Maintenance – Grass Cutting (August) - £772.12

(h) Ionos – website hosting - £13.80

(i) Unity Trust Bank – Bank Charges (August) - £6.00

Transfers

(j) Transfer of £10,000 from the current account to the Reserve Account

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the above payments and receipts.

16. Correspondence

(a) Parish Information Sheet to reduce backlogs in development management – forwarded 26.07.25

(b) Councillor training – forwarded 26.07.25

(c) Information on Community Health and Wellbeing Grants – forwarded 26.07.25

(d) Conservative Briefing Sheet for Parish and Town Councils – August 2025 – forwarded 01.08.25

(e) Notice of Parish Briefing and Q&A session on the local transport plan consultation – forwarded 14.08.25

(f) Councillor training sessions for September and October – forwarded 19.08.25

17. Matters to report / items for next agenda

(a) Quotes for replacement of the bridge on Millennium Green

18. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 23rd October 2025 starting at 7.30pm, to be held at the. Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall.

19. Under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Council **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

(a) Repairs to the Lychgate Roof

Youngs Roofing Ltd were appointed to repair the Lychgate Roof at a cost of £6727.50 plus VAT.

Meeting closed 9.58pm