

# STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

## DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

### Parish Council Meeting

The Rivermead at Stoke School Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees:	Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair	Cllr P. Dumke ~ Vice Chair
	Cllr S. Hall	Cllr T. Hall
	Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk	

Members of the public: Six (6)

### **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, members of the public for attending. She also expressed gratitude to the school representatives for allowing them to use the hall.

#### **Part A. Public Discussions**

- A member of the public spoke to praise the village's Christmas tree.
- A discussion concerning Christmas lights ensued.
- A member of the public spoke to enquire if the children were able to help decorate the tree.
- An update on the status of the car park was also requested.

#### **Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items**

None.

The meeting opened at 7.13pm.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Min 9479:25 It was acknowledged that Cllr S. Back & Cllr J. Bansil had both submitted their apologies for absence, as it was understood that they had prior engagements or were on annual leave.

#### **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 9480:25 None.

#### **3. Minutes of the last meeting**

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Min 9481:25 The members attested to receiving the minutes of the Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Parish Council meeting.

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

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

Min 9482:25 None.

## 5. Vacancies

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

Min 9483:25 The members addressed their current vacancy and decided to keep reminding the residents of the opening in order to review the situation in January.

## 6. Medway Councillor report

### a). To receive an update on the most recent Medway Council news from Ward Cllr M. Pearce.

Min 9484:25 It was noted that Ward Cllr M. Pearce had sadly been unable to attend the meeting and that he had not submitted a report in his absence.

## 7. Tasks agreed at the last meeting

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

Min 9485:25 The members discussed the list of tasks agreed upon at the last meeting, and a discussion ensued concerning the recent repainting work that had been carried out at the Heron Way playpark. Cllr P. Dumke spoke to inform the members that he had only seen the contractor on site between the hours of 10.00am and 1.00pm for between 5 and 6 days and that he had been disappointed by the work carried out. He implied that the contractors had not applied an undercoat or a primer and that as a result you were able to flick bits of paint off of the play equipment. Following these comments, the Clerk was asked to refrain from paying the contractor until several members had been to the playpark to inspect the work carried out.

The conversation then digressed to the proposed roadworks, where it was acknowledged that the village would be negatively impacted by the planned road closures along the Ratcliffe Highway. The members discussed the idea of a one-way system, and they agreed it would be a good idea to try to address this matter with their local MP.

Finally, the members evaluated the agreed tasks and agreed to keep the following outstanding items:

- Cllr S. Back to investigate the possibility of installing flashing speed signs in the village.
- Clerk to establish ownership of the hedge next to the Allhallows Road allotments.
- 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 chase contractors regarding final repairs to the Heron Way Recreation Ground back fence.
- Clerk to continue liaising with Ward Councillor M. Pearce regarding regaining control over the grass cutting at the Stoke Recreation Grounds.
- Clerk to finalise access to the Parish Council email address for Cllr J. Bansil.
- Clerk to chase for copy of KALC minutes from the last meeting and circulate to all members.

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## 8. Planning

### a). Applications

Min 9486:25 Cllr J. Wallace acknowledged receipt of the new planning application, which had been submitted since the last Parish Council meeting.

- **MC/25/2257 - Land at Court Lodge Farmhouse, The Street, Upper Stoke**

Following a brief discussion, the members decided that they would make no comment.

### b). Decisions

Min 9487:25 The parish council members acknowledged receiving one new planning decision since the last meeting, in which the conditions had been lifted.

- **MC/25/1551- Stoke Primary Academy, Allhallows Road, Lower Stoke**

### c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9488:25 None.

## 9. Finance

### a). Bank balances

Min 9489:25 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
30/11/2025	Current Account	£1,465.74
30/11/2025	Deposit Account	£46,625.32

b). To review the income and expenditure for 2025/2026 to date

b). To review the income and expenditure for 2025/2026 to date

c). To review the budgets proposed for this financial year and to make any relevant amendments

d). To discuss additional costs, which were not included in the budget for this year

e). To discuss and set budgets for any new proposed projects for the financial year 2026/2027.

Min 9490:25 The Parish Councillors agreed to defer reviewing any of the income and expenditure figures and budgets until the next meeting, in the hope that more members would be able to attend.

### f). Accounts for payment.

Min 9491:25 After careful consideration, the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr S. Hall, seconded by Cllr T. Hall and unanimously agreed.

The Clerk was reminded to hold off on paying the contractors for painting the play equipment until further notice.

Min 9492:25 The Clerk was also instructed to order an additional set of batteries for the Christmas tree lights to ensure they remained lit for the whole of the festive season.

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November/December 2025

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£944.68	November 25 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£299.95	Tax & NI charges (November 2025)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home November 2025
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£71.44	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for November 2025
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV: 1145
Safeplay	Min 5077:21	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£5,310.00	Repainting of Heron Way Play Park INV: 32006
TLC	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£124.28	4 x sets of battery-operated Christmas lights and batteries INV: 18603078
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£5.49	Magnetic Squares INV: DS-AEU-INV-GB-2025-674620806
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£24.22	50 x Foam Glow Sticks INV: DS-AEU-INV-GB-2025-674620867
Amazon	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£6.99	50 x DL Envelopes (Street Cleaner) INV: GB500T4DBKFVDI
Online Rock Salt.co.uk	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£137.39	10 x Bags of Rock Salt INV: bd2cb8f
Cartridge People.com	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£344.57	4 x Toner Cartridges for office printer INV: GB251122-LA7041040
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£23.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV:TBC
Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package INV: TBC
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£66.42	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for November 2025
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£7,545.41</b>

**g). Payment requests to be discussed for approval and payment.**

Min 9492:25 Cllr S. Hall spoke to address the tree surgery quotes he had obtained for the trees in the Button Drive Play Park. After careful consideration the members agreed to accept the third quote for works equating to £650.00.

**h). To receive an update on the 2024/2025 External Audit.**

Min 9493:25 The Clerk affirmed that the external auditors had finally contacted her.

Whilst the Parish Council's accounts had been given a clean bill of health, she disclosed that a couple of snagging points had been identified, which required further attention for the 2025/2026 audit.

The members noted the remarks and gave the Clerk instructions to make sure they were corrected in time for the next audit.

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## 10. Management of Land and Property

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

- i). The Button Drive Playpark (Lower Stoke).
- ii). The Heron Way Playpark (Lower Stoke).
- iii). The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).

**Min 9494:25** The Clerk advised that she had received a response from the Men in Sheds group, who revealed that they would prefer to wait until spring to make repairs to the climbing frame staircase at the Button Drive playpark.

Following receipt of this update, the members decided to wait until the weather improves before tackling the repairs.

**Min 9495:25** Following receipt of their brochure and confirmation that they might be able to help the Parish Council source some grants for new play equipment, Cllr J. Wallace confirmed that she and Cllr S. Back had been in contact with a new play equipment manufacturer and that she was in the process of setting up a suitable date and time to meet with them

### b). Heron Way Play Park Fencing

**Min 9496:25** The Clerk acknowledged that she was still chasing the contractors to finish the last repairs to the fencing at Heron Way Play Park, although she found it to be a challenging situation owing to the fact that the contractors were doing the work free of charge.

### c). Lower Stoke Car Park

**Min 9497:25** In order for the Parish Council to sign a tenancy agreement for an additional five years, the Clerk affirmed that she was still pursuing Medway Council for a copy of the draft lease.

**Min 9498:25** The members also spoke about the purchase of the Lower Stoke Car Park, where they decided to talk further with Ward Cllr M. Pearce about his suggestion that the Parish Council might be able to "borrow" the funds directly from Medway Council to extend the time frame within which they would have to repay the balance.

## 11. Internal Committee Updates

### a). Neighbourhood Plan

**Min 9499:25** The members acknowledged that they had received no further updates concerning the Neighbourhood Plan.

### b). Stoke Village Hall

**Min 9500:25** Cllr J. Wallace read out a report prepared by Mr N. Blown of the Village Hall Committee.

This report verified that the Village Hall had now successfully reached out to the Doctors Surgery, who had agreed to clear the property. It was understood that the committee would carry out a comprehensive evaluation once the building had been evacuated to make sure the required repairs could be completed in good time to ensure the premises can be put back into use.

In order to ensure the Village Hall's sustainability, the committee reminded the meeting that the Village Hall's Christmas Fayre would take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> December and urged the residents to attend.

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**Min 9501:25** A conversation concerning the Village Hall's new constitution ensued, and Cllr P. Dumke asked for further information.

He also advised that he had recently received a complaint from a potential hall hire who could not get in touch with the bookings clerk. A discussion ensued concerning the display of the hall's clerk's contact details on all of the parish noticeboards.

## c). Stoke Community Project

**Min 9502:25** Although no official report had been received from the Stoke Community Project, the Parish Council acknowledged that they had recently held their seniors' afternoon tea event, and during the month of December they were holding their Children's Christmas Party and a village Santa run.

## 13. Contractor Works

**Min 9503:25** The members' Clerk was reminded to continue chasing the contractors regarding the repair of the Heron Way fence. They also spoke about organising a date to meet to evaluate the work carried out to repaint the play equipment.

Finally, Cllr S. Hall confirmed he would instruct the tree surgeons to commence work at the Button Drive Recreation Ground.

## 15. Correspondence

### a). Meeting Dates 2026

**Min 9504:25** The list of meeting dates below was approved by the members, and the Clerk was instructed to ensure these details were posted both on the Parish Council's website and the village noticeboards.

## MEETING DATES 2026

Date	Venue	Time
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</b>	<b>Village Hall</b>	<b>7.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</b>	<b>Village Hall</b>	<b>7.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</b>	<b>Village Hall</b>	<b>7.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING &amp; ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</b>	<b>Village Hall</b>	<b>7.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</b>	<b>Village Hall</b>	<b>7.00pm</b>

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<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026</b> PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	<b>7.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2026</b> PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	<b>7.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2026</b> PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	<b>7.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2026</b> FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING	Village Hall	<b>7.00pm</b>

**Min 9504:25** The conversation then digressed to the 2025 Christmas Tree lights switch-on event, held at the weekend, where Cllr T. Hall asked if the 2026 event could be planned from February next year.

The members decided that in order to allow the residents enough time to take their cars out of the car park, preparations with the contractors to dismantle the tree would need to be made as soon as possible.

## 14. Date of next meeting

**Min 9505:25** The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, spoke to remind everyone that the next Parish Council Meeting would take place on Wednesday 21st January at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Cllr J. Wallace thanked the Rivermead Trust for once again for allowing the Parish Council use of their School Hall and commented how wonderful it had been to see the building put back into use.

With permission from the Chairman, a member of the public also spoke to agree with these comments and advised that it was so nice to hear the children playing outside once again.

## 15. Close of meeting

**Min 9506:25** The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, closed the meeting at 8.06 pm and thanked the members for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026</b> Parish Council Meeting	<b>7.00pm</b>	<b>The Village Hall</b>
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## Tasks agreed 03/12/2025

Clerk to upload a copy of the Parish Council's approved minutes from Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November onto the Parish Council's webpage.

Clerk to continue advertising the Parish Council's outstanding vacancy.

Members to meet at Heron Way Recreation Ground to inspect the works to the play apparatus.

Members to address the idea of a one-way system with their local MP following news of planned road closures along the Ratcliffe Highway.

Cllr S. Back to investigate the possibility of installing flashing speed signs in the village.

Clerk to establish ownership of the hedge next to the Allhallows Road allotments.

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 chase contractors regarding final repairs to the Heron Way Recreation Ground back fence.

Clerk to continue liaising with Ward Councillor M. Pearce regarding regaining control over the grass cutting at the Stoke Recreation Grounds.

Clerk to finalise access to the Parish Council email address for Cllr J. Bansil.

Clerk to chase for copy of KALC minutes from the last meeting and circulate to all members.

Clerk to ensure the review of the income and expenditure items for 2025/2026, the review of the budget for 2025/2026, the review of additional costs, the setting of new budgets and any proposed new projects for the next financial year are included in the January 2026 agenda.

Clerk to pay the agreed expenditure costs (minus the painting of the play equipment invoice).

Clerk to order a further set of batteries for the Christmas tree lights.

Cllr S. Hall to instruct tree surgeons for works to the Button Drive Recreation Ground.

Cllr J. Wallace and Cllr S. Back to schedule a meeting with the new play park manufacturers to discuss the equipment at the Heron Way Play Park and to talk about potential renovations and grant funding.

Clerk to chase contractors regarding final repairs to the Heron Way Recreation Ground back fence.

Clerk to continue chasing Medway Council for a copy of the draft lease for the Lower Stoke Car Park.

Clerk to speak to Ward Cllr M. Pearce concerning the purchase of the Lower Stoke Car Park and the possibility of a loan from Medway Council.

Clerk to speak to the Village Hall regarding the offer of displaying the booking clerk's contact details in all of the parish noticeboards.

Clerk to upload a copy of the Parish Council's 2026 meeting dates onto both the members' website and the village noticeboards.

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Clerk to include events into the Parish Council's agenda from February 2026 onwards.

Clerk to liaise with contractor regarding the removal of the Christmas tree in the Lower Stoke car park and organise for these details to be widely publicised.

Clerk to ensure the Village Hall is booked for the Parish Council meeting due to be held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January.

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