

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Wednesday 3rd September 2025

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees:

Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair	Cllr P. Dumke (Vice-Chair)
Cllr N. Blown	Cllr S. Back
Cllr S. Hall	Cllr T. Hall
Cllr J. Bansil (by co-option)	Ward Cllr M. Pearce
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk	

Members of the public: Four (4)

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

A member of the public expressed concern that the trees outside the Village Hall needed to have their branches pruned since they were starting to jut into the road.

The BT building on Cuckolds Green Road, behind the village hall, was also the subject of complaints about overhanging foliage and inadequate maintenance, casting doubt on who was responsible for it.

In response to these concerns, Cllr J. Wallace spoke and requested that the Clerk convey these complaints to the Village Hall committee in advance of their next meeting, which had been scheduled to take place the following week.

Cllr N. Blown also spoke to let the meeting know that, in his capacity as Village Hall trustee, he had made notes and would be bringing these matters up at their next meeting.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

The meeting opened at 7.10pm.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 9352:25 None.

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 9353:25 None.

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3. Minutes of the last meeting

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

Min 9354:25 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday, 2nd July 2025, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr S. Back and seconded by Cllr T. 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 9355:25 None.

5. Vacancies

a). To receive an application for co-option from Ms J. Bansil.

Min 9356:25 The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, referred the members to Ms J. Bansil's application for the position of Parish Councillor, which had been included in their meeting packs for consideration of co-option.

The parishioner, who was sitting in the public gallery, was invited to speak to provide a brief bio about herself.

Ms J. Bansil spoke, and after careful consideration, it was proposed by Cllr T. Hall to accept Ms J. Bansil's application for co-option. This proposal was seconded by Cllr S. Back and was unanimously agreed.

Accordingly, Cllr J. Bansil was invited to take a seat with the members, where she signed her declaration of acceptance of office, which was witnessed by the Clerk.

6. Tasks agreed at the last meeting

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

Min 9357:25 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 chase the repair of the large potholes along Sharnal Street.
- Clerk to send Cllr J. Wallace the Parish Council's financial spreadsheets.
- Clerk to forward invoice for the repairs to the village hall roof onto Cllr J. Wallace.

7. Ward Councillor(s) report

a). To receive an update on the most recent Medway Council news from a Medway Councillor.

Min 9358:25 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to welcome Ward Councillor Michael Pearce to the meeting, who had very kindly offered to attend in order to provide a report concerning the latest news at Medway Council.

Ward Cllr Michael Pearce stood up and provided a very comprehensive report, which included items such as:

- Devolution
- Fly tipping
- The future of the Lower Stoke Car Park
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Medway Council's Local Plan
- His request for all the postboxes on the Peninsula to be repainted

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Concerns that the minibus that the Leigh Academies Trust had arranged to take kids from the village of Stoke to their primary school in Allhallows would be ceasing operations starting the next year were also addressed by Cllr J. Wallace in response to allegations that the parents were abusing the service.

Ward Cllr M. Pearce assured the meeting that he would investigate this issue because he believed that this facility should be kept. He recommended that rather than discontinuing the service entirely, it should be means tested

The fact that SEN children were now travelling daily from the Gillingham area to the new specialised school at Stoke was also brought up by a member of the public, and a road safety audit was discussed because there was no secure path for pedestrians to use between the villages of Allhallows & Stoke.

Following Ward Cllr M. Pearce's report, the meeting continued at 7.45pm.

8. Planning

a). Applications

Min 9359:25 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to address the two (2) new planning applications that had been received since the last meeting, where the following comments were made:

- **MC/25/1623 - Land At Middle Stoke, Adjacent To 1 & 2 Jubilee Cottages, Grain Road, Middle Stoke**

The members agreed to look further into why this application had been showing as resubmitted.

- **MC/25/1495 - East of Lower Stoke and West of wall end, Accessed Via Grain Road, Isle Of Grain**

It was acknowledged that this application was related to Southern Water improvements.

b). Decisions

Min 9360:25 The parish councillors acknowledged that the following four (4) planning applications had also been decided upon by Medway Council.

Approval with Conditions

- **MC/24/2334 – Shant Cottage**

Prior Approval Not Required

- **MC/25/1492 - East Of Lower Stoke, Northwest Of Wall end And North And South Of Grain Road, Isle Of Grain**

Discharge of Conditions

- **MC/25/1175 - National Grid Grain LNG Terminal Grain Road Isle Of Grain**

Withdrawn by Applicant

- **MC/25/1409 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street, ME3 9RT**

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c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9361:25 The members acknowledged that an appeal to construct a single and two storey rear/side extension, and an attached garage to the below property had been dismissed:

- **MC/25/0381 - 2 Tudor Farm Cottages, Stoke Road, ME3 9SF**

9. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 9362:25 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
30/08/2025	Current Account	£1,057.75
30/08/2025	Deposit Account	£49,856.17

b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for July & August 2025.

Min 9363:25 The members carefully evaluated the Parish Council's financial performance against the budget for July & August 2025. After a brief discussion they concluded that the balances were acceptable.

It was also acknowledged that the Clerk had applied for a refund for the VAT that had been charged to the Parish Council's account following the repair of the village hall roof.

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

Min 9364:25 The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they agreed that these payments were acceptable.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 9365:25 After careful consideration, the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr S. Hall, seconded by Cllr S. Back and unanimously agreed.

July / August 2025

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£757.48	July 25 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£225.25	Tax & NI charges (July 2025)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office July 2025
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£56.75	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for July 2025
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV: 616
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£23.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV:16770

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Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package INV:15626
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£67.12	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for August 2025
The Play Inspection Company	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£323.82	Annual Play Inspection 2025 INV: 79167
Diggers Gardening Services	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£60.00	De-weeding & cleaning of the Lower Stoke Car Park INV: 012025
Mr M. Fielder-White	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£80.00	Internal Audit 2024/2025 INV: 009
Satswana	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£180.00	Annual Subscription for outsourced Data Protection Officer INV: M3355
Medway Council	Min 5077:21	DIRECT DEBIT	£212.50	Lower Stoke Car Park Lease Qtr 2 INV: (TO FOLLOW)
TOTAL			£2,169.90	

August / September 2025

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£757.28	August 25 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£225.45	Tax & NI charges (August 2025)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office August 2025
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£56.75	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for August 2025
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV:762
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£23.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV:17708
Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package INV: 17379
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£67.12	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for August 2025
Mrs J. Allen	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£37.15	Various expenses
TOTAL			£1,353.73	

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

Min 9366:25 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen informed the members of the Parish Council that upon speaking to the Mortley's Group concerning the repair of the back fence at the Heron Way play park that she had been asked to look into purchasing some mesh to help finish the repairs.

She confirmed that having recently been provided a link to the type of materials required and an idea of the number of metres of materials they required that she would look at an approximate price.

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A discussion ensued, and the members decided to examine these specifics at their next meeting because they were worried that the Parish Council might have to pay a large sum of money, depending on how many metres were typically sold for each roll of mesh.

10. Management of Land and Property

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

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

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

iii). The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).

Min 9367:25 After receiving an email from SSE confirming the success of their £2,000 grant application, the members talked about a budget for repainting the play equipment in the Heron Way Playpark.

Consequently, the Clerk was requested to contact the contractors to arrange a work schedule, confirm when the play equipment could be painted, request a copy of their risk assessment, and find out if the play equipment would be fenced off with Heras fencing whilst the works were underway.

b). To discuss the condition of the Stoke Parish Council Store Room following the replacement of the Village Hall roof.

Min 9368:25 Following the replacement of the Village Hall roof, which had experienced water intrusion as a result of the deterioration of the previous roof covering, the Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, addressed the state of the Parish Council's storeroom.

Cllr P. Dumke recommended over boarding the internal ceiling, skimming the space, and installing a water-resistant plasterboard to stop additional damp problems.

After a thorough discussion, the members decided to postpone any plans to renovate the store room until the weather improves in the spring of the next year, even though it was deemed that the roof should now be dry enough to begin construction.

11. Highways, Transport & Upkeep

To receive any reports relating to:

a). Footpaths

Min 9369:25 No further comments were made, although the members were aware that Cllr S. Back was still pursuing MHS Homes regarding the state of the footpath in Lower Stoke that runs between Heron Way and the High Street.

b). Lighting

Min 9370:25 The members agreed to issue a vote of thanks to Mr N. Filmer, the Interim Surveyor of the Valuation & Asset Management department of Medway Council, for organising the repair of the light situated on the corner of the High Street and Cuckolds Green Road that shines into the Lower Stoke Car Park.

c). Highways and verges

Min 9371:25 No report. Cllr T. Hall, however, spoke to inform the members that he had been assisting the Village Hall Committee in sweeping away the debris and leaves from the pathway that runs alongside the Village Hall.

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d). Pot holes

Min 9372:25 The members understood that following this meeting, the Clerk was going to ask Medway Council again to look into the large pothole situated outside Fisherwood House on Sharnal Street in High Halstow.

Cllr S. Hall also spoke of the ongoing battle with potholes on Newall Farm Road.

Finally, the members issued a vote of thanks to Ward Cllr M. Pearce, who was seated in the public gallery, for all his hard work in organising the resurfacing of the Bells Lane roundabout in Hoo.

e). Fly tipping & Street Cleaning

Min 9373:25 The Clerk was reminded by Cllr S. Hall to request that the abandoned shopping trolley be removed from Cuckold's Green Road. However, a quick conversation about this topic ensued, and some of the members wondered if the trolley could prove to be useful for collecting rubbish along the roads the street cleaner does not cover.

f). Grass cutting

Min 9374:25 It was acknowledged that the grass verges and the greenery at 'S' bend along Allhallows Road had all recently been cut back and that MHS Home had recently attended to their areas of green space around the village.

The Clerk expressed concern, however, that the weeds were out of control in front of and beside the noticeboard in Middle Stoke. She also mentioned that weeds had now grown in front of and around the Middle Stoke defibrillator, which might now be difficult to reach in the event of an emergency.

In response to this report, Cllr N. Blown suggested that the Parish Council contact either Mr K. Mortley of Mortley's Group or Mr D. Pappin of the Middle Stoke Airfield to see if they could take down the weeds using their power tools.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 9375:25 No report.

h). Noticeboards

Min 9376:25 The members acknowledged that the Clerk was in discussion with Men in Sheds group concerning repairs or a quote to replace the noticeboard in Middle Stoke.

12. Communications

To receive an update on the following methods of communication:

a). Website.

Min 9377:25 No report. The Clerk however was reminded to look into setting up a new parish council email address for Cllr J. Bansil.

b). Social media page

Min 9378:25 No report.

13. Internal Committee Updates

a). Neighbourhood Plan

Min 9379:25 The Clerk was asked to chase a report from the Neighbourhood Plan committee in time for the next meeting.

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b). Stoke Village Hall

Min 9380:25 In his capacity as trustee for Stoke Village Hall, Cllr N. Blown advised the members that the committee had been busy planning lots of fundraising events, which now included a Halloween party on the 25th of October and additional boot fairs.

In addition, he mentioned that the committee members were considering a donation of kitchen cabinets from Howdens to replace the current units in the kitchen area as part of their continuing renovation effort, and that work had begun to renovate the flooring.

He went on to say that he was aware that the Village Hall committee owed the Parish Council money to help cover the cost of replacing the roof, and as a sign of their continued support, they had decided to give the Parish Council a small sum every month until they could increase their payments once the doctor's office space could be used for leasing or renting out.

c). Stoke Community Project

Min 9381:25 No report.

14. External Committee Updates

a). KALC

Min 9382:25 Cllr N. Blown advised he had been unable to attend KALC's last meeting, which had been organised to take place on Wednesday, 30th July.

b). Rural Liaison

Min 9383:25 It was understood that the next Rural Liaison meeting had been scheduled to take place on Tuesday 16th September.

c). SSE

Min 9384:25 Cllr J. Wallace advised that following the most recent SSE meeting, the Parish Council's grant application to repaint the play equipment at the Heron Way playpark had been approved.

She added that the majority of grant funding applications had also been approved that night, and she questioned whether the Parish Council should apply for financial aid to replace the Middle Stoke noticeboard, which was nearing the end of its useful life, when the next round of funding was announced.

15. Contractor Works

Min 9385:25 There was no report; however, the Clerk was reminded to get in touch with the contractors about the Heron Way playpark's play equipment renovation.

16. Correspondence

Min 9386:25 The Clerk referred the members to the paperwork in their meeting packs, which was due to be discussed in closed session.

17. Date of next meeting

Min 9387:25 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, spoke to remind everyone that the next Parish Council Meeting would take place on Wednesday 1st October at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

A Christmas tree and any upcoming events for the following months were also discussed by the members.

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18. Section 100A(4)

Min 9388:25 The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace read out loud the statement listed on the agenda in relation to Section 100A(4).

Accordingly, it was proposed by Cllr S. Back that the public be excluded from the next item. This proposal was seconded by Cllr T. Hall and was unanimously agreed.

The meeting closed to the public at 8.13 pm and the four (4) parishioners left.

19. Confidential Matters

To receive an update on the following matters:

a). Village Hall Constitution + Doctors Surgery Update.

Min 9389:25 The members discussed the Village Hall Constitution and the vacant doctor's surgery premises. The Parish Councillors received an update on both points.

b). Personnel Matters

Min 9390:25 A personnel matter was discussed.

20. Close of meeting

Min 9391:25 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 1st October 2025 Parish Council Meeting	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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Tasks agreed 03/09/2025

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

Clerk to correspond with the Men in Shed's group concerning the noticeboard for Middle Stoke and the deterioration of the steps on the older climbing frame at the Button Drive playpark.

Clerk to chase Medway Council regarding the large pothole along Sharnal Street.

Clerk to forward financial spreadsheet onto Cllr J. Wallace.

Clerk to investigate costs for replacement mesh for the Heron Way playpark and circulate costs onto members.

Clerk to send copy of invoice for repairs to the Village Hall roof onto Cllr J. Wallace.

Clerk to pay the agreed expenditure costs.

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

Parish Council to speak with either Mr K. Mortley or Mr D. Pappin regarding the overgrown weeds in Middle Stoke.

Clerk to organise Parish Council email address for Cllr J. Bansil.

The Clerk to chase for report from the Neighbourhood Plan committee.

Clerk to chase the contractor regarding schedule of works for the repainting of the Heron Way playpark.