

Stoke St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Stoke St Mary Parish Council held on Thursday, 19th March 2026, at Stoke St Mary Village Hall, at 7.30pm

Public Session

There were three Members of Public (MOP) in attendance, there were no comments/questions.

25.70 Attendance and Apologies

Councillors Present: Cllr Daniel Fallance, Cllr Patricia Fallance, Cllr Colin Fisher (Chair), Cllr Rebecca Pow, Cllr Graeme Watt, Cllr Tania Watt

Apologies: Cllr Rob Hossell, Cllr Sarah Wakefield (Somerset Council)

In attendance: Sarah Fisher (Clerk)

25.71 Declarations of Interest – none

25.72 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2026 were circulated in advance of the meeting and were approved and signed by the Chair

25.73 Finance

a) Balances (as at 13th March 2026)

Current A/c: £444.73

Deposit A/c: £9,529.10

95 Day notice A/c: £7,105.21

Cllr Tania Watt confirmed these balances as correct.

b) Expenditure approval:

| | £ | |
|--|--------|----------|
| i. Burial Grant | 300.00 | APPROVED |
| ii. Contribution to Somerset Communities Raging against Poor Planning campaign | 150.00 | APPROVED |
| iii. SSM Village Hall hire 20 th May for Flood Resilience Session | 38.00 | APPROVED |

c) Budget – the revised budget for 2026/2027 was approved and will be made available on the website

25.74 SSM Open Gardens & Somerset Day – request for a donation – Liz Fothergill explained how the requested contribution of £250 towards this event would be spent. The PC approved the request and also approved a further £250 towards the purchase of some items to support future social occasions. Sourced from the £500 allocated against the Half Moon Inn budget.

One MOP left the meeting.

25.75 To consider a request for a donation to Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance – PC agreed to make a nominal donation of £50, but due to financial constraints of a small parish, it should be made clear that this is a one off donation, but as a rural community we recognise the considerable value of the Air Ambulance service. Clerk will write and also offer to host collection boxes at future social events.

25.76 Clerk's report/action list from previous meeting

a) Defib in Shoreditch – Clerk reported that, despite initial enthusiasm from Sovereign (owner of caravan park at Shoreditch), permission to host a defibrillator was not forthcoming, and the deadline for grant applications to British Heart Foundation passed on 28th Feb. There may be future grants available later in the year if Sovereign were to cooperate.

- b) **To consider the purchase of a dog poo bin at Church End** – Clerk explained that the bin at Church End was not emptied for several months due to a collapsed adjacent wall, resulting in the bin overflowing, and dog poo bags being left on the ground. One resident requested that we provide a dog poo bin. Cost from Somerset Council (SC) would be £280 to purchase/install, plus weekly emptying (£6.50 per week, annual cost £338). A second bin by the bus shelter is also used for dog poo and may need to be considered for a specialist bin if we are to be consistent. PC agreed that, with the resumed emptying of litter bins, a specialist bin should not be necessary, and the cost was not currently justified. The situation will be monitored and reviewed if necessary.
- c) **SSM display banners** – Clerk reported that the two banners (used for promoting events) were in need of some TLC or replacement (between £70 and £104 each). It was agreed we would keep existing banners but purchase some additional adhesive panels which could be removed after each use, and replaced with new, by users. PC approved spend up to £50 for adhesive panels.
- d) **Format for Annual Parish Meeting (9th April)** – Chair to introduce, followed by short session from Cllr Graeme Watt on Flood Resilience, highways and volunteers, followed by presentation from Crown Estate with updated plans for Barns at Higher Broughton Farm plus Public session.

25.77 Review of Parish Online mapping service – Cllr Graeme Watt and Chair reported the mapping service was a very useful tool and a good time saver (for example in preparing the Land Drainage Consent application for the Somerset Rivers Authority work). The PC agreed to subscribe to this service (£70 pa) once the free trial was over.

25.78 Acquisition of second Speed Indicator Device (SID) – Chair reported that Avon & Somerset Police Community Trust had granted SSM PC £2,700 towards a second SID in the parish. SC's requirements in terms of managing SIDS is now more demanding so we will need to appoint a "monitor" but PC agreed we should proceed with this project, and SID can be shared between SSM village and road towards Corfe

25.79 Risk Review – updated version with four amendments (on planning, highways, flood controls and Rights of Way) was approved and will be published on website

25.80 Councillor Portfolios

Drainage/flood control – Cllr Graeme Watt reported that further ditch clearance (approved, min no 25.53) should take place before year end. Also to be invoiced before year end (£500 plus VAT). Part B of SRA work – application submitted 3rd March 2026. Environmental surveys may be required (otters and voles).

Volunteer activities – Cllr Graeme Watt reported that four volunteer activities have taken place since January meeting, with thanks to Paul, Glenn, Pete and Suzanne for their support.

Highways/Traffic/Speed management – Shoreditch speed limit change – Cllr Hossell's written report confirmed that all the work has now been completed by SC. **Traffic towards Corfe** – Cllr Hossell reports that Patrick Davis of Taunton Racecourse has been in touch with local parishes as there are concerns about speeding on the road that goes past the racecourse, particularly on race days. Trying to set up a meeting in April. Chair of Neroche PC is also involved.

Speed Indicator Device (SID) in Haydon – Chair reported that the post has finally been erected by SC for SID in Haydon. Volunteer activity is being arranged to install SID.

Rights of Way – Cllr Pat Fallance reported the Village Walk is planned for Good Friday, and walk will be followed by tea/cakes. Chair recently had discussion with MoP re state of surface by Fyrze Cottage, which at times over winter has been become deep and hazardous. SC responsible for surface so Clerk will report. Issue will be raised at Annual Parish Meeting to establish appetite for remedial work. Cllr Graeme Watt suggested that surfacing work would be high cost and would need SSM PC to source grant funding, if SC refused to act and the PC tried to do the work themselves.

Play Area – Cllr Pat Fallance reported that the play area continues to be kept neat and tidy, though bin lid is broken, but usable.

Village Hall – Cllr Tania Watt reported that net income is reduced as expenditure has increased (oil and electricity prices) and bookings have dropped somewhat. Reserves are to be used for programme of maintenance, including replacement of double glazing panels in windows, redecoration. Quiz night to be trialled to raise funds for Village Hall. Cllr Dan Fallance said Pop Up Pub was extremely successful. The fence/gate between the car park and garden were unsafe and to be removed. Thanks to Paul for refurbishing the broken bench in the garden.

Police – Cllr Dan Fallance reported that rural crime in the area remains high, there has been one arrest. Cllr Dan Fallance will request increased police presence over weekend of Open Gardens.

Taunton Garden Town – nothing to report

LCNs – nothing to report since January update

25.81 Planning

Cllr Hossell circulated his report in advance of the meeting:

Somerset Local Plan – SC have stated that the HELAA (Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment) will be released in April, incorporating the developer submissions in the “Call For Sites”, submitted in early 2025.

Higher Broughton Barn Farms – architect’s plans to be presented at Annual Parish Meeting (9th April).

New Planning Applications – none received

Recent Planning Applications -

37/25/0013- erection of log cabin to be used as temporary dwelling at Stoke Court Farm, Ash Road, Stoke St Mary. We submitted our comments supporting this application, but noting that the applicant had agreed to neighbour’s request to move it further south. Decision of Refusal was made on 27th Feb 2026.

Chair to write to SC planning department raising concerns that small scale applications seem to be unfairly treated compared to those for large scale developments.

25.82 Date of next meeting: Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday, 9th April at 7.30pm
PC meeting - Thursday, 21st May at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 9.18 pm.