

# Stoke St Mary Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Stoke St Mary held on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026, at Stoke St Mary Village Hall at 7.30pm

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**Councillors Present:** Cllrs Colin Fisher (Chair), Dan Fallance, Patricia Fallance (Vice Chair), Rob Hossell, Rebecca Pow, Graeme Watt, Tania Watt

**Apologies:** None received

**In attendance:** Greg Lean (Crown Estate)  
Cllr Sarah Wakefield (Somerset Council) (SC)  
16 Members of Public (MoP)  
Clerk – Sarah Fisher

1. The Chair welcomed all present and thanked all the volunteers and various community groups (History Society, Parochial Church Committee, Pop Up Pub committee, Open Gardens/Somerset Day celebration) and Councillors for their support and work over the last year.

The Chair pointed out that there are elections for the Parish Council in May 2027, and that there are likely to be vacancies. He encouraged anyone interested in being a Councillor to get in touch with him, to discuss what is involved.

2. **Apologies** – none received

3. **Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting** (1<sup>st</sup> May 2025) were approved

The meeting was based around a slide presentation which has been published on the parish council website.

4. **Crown Estate plans for Barns at Higher Broughton Farm.**

Crown Estate (CE), presented updated plans for development of the barns. He stressed these are not final and open to comments.

CE reported that the plans remain modest;

- 3 x 2 bed semi detached 2 storey dwellings
- 2 x 3 bed semi detached 2 storey dwellings
- 3 x 2 bed bungalows

And added that the design avoids the homogenous block appearance of big estates, but attempts to relate back to farm buildings, and uses a mix of brick and render. Buildings remain (with one minor exception) within curtilage of existing barns.

There were both negative and positive comments/questions from MoPs:

- Questions as to whether two parking spaces per property was sufficient
- These designs are an improvement on the current state and preferable to large development
- CE confirmed that all properties will have solar panels and Air Source Heat pumps and be A rated/economical to run

- Concerns about sewage; CE confirmed this will be via a package treatment system
- Were there considerations for rain water harvesting? Not currently/question of viability
- CE confirmed that none of the properties will be classified as “affordable housing”
- CE confirmed that the lagoons will most likely be filled and remediated
- What will happen to the dutch barn? CE: some discussions underway with potential purchasers but not for development
- The site will be much better than it is now and should generate CIL funding
- Questions re outside lighting – CE have no plans for street lights but there might be low level lighting adjacent to properties
- Will CE develop the site or will it be sold to a developer? CE said they would prefer to build themselves (and retain a few for rental) but this can’t be confirmed. There were some concerns expressed by MoPs that if the site were sold to a developer it is likely to be exploited beyond the existing plans
- The plans are low impact/makes sense
- Request to call the development “The Barns”, not Higher Broughton Farm.

Chair summed up that, with a few minor tweaks, the scheme looks good and is welcomed by the village.

CE hopes to submit plans in next few months.

Three MoPs left the meeting.

## 5. Review of 2025/26

The Chair thanked all volunteers, of all types and many community groups, for making Stoke St Mary a good place to live.

Cllr Hossell confirmed;

- The speed limit changes in Shoreditch were now complete, with a reduction to 30 mph, and new and refreshed road markings and signage.
- The Speed Indicator Device has finally been installed on the road approaching Haydon
- There is potentially grant funding available for a second Speed Indicator Device, which could be shared between the Corfe Road (we are in discussions with Taunton Racecourse/Neroche PC about speeding issues) and the village of Stoke St Mary.

Cllr Graeme Watt reported:

- Flood Control Strategy in three steps:
  - o Road drains 2024/25
  - o Water courses 2025/26
  - o Water sources 2026/27
- Partial completion of Somerset Rivers Authority funded £12k drainage project
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- **Forthcoming Flood Resilience Workshop** on Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2.30 – 7pm in the village hall. This will be a drop in event, offering home owners advice and guidance, presentations and examples of kit. This will be promoted nearer the event.

Cllr Graeme Watt thanked all the many volunteers who have made all the above happen.

## **6. Somerset Local Plan**

Chair updated the meeting on the timings for the local plan which will cover 20 years and is required to deliver 75k homes for Somerset.

Call for sites started Jan 2025, results have been consistently delayed and now promised before June 2026, as consultation starts 19th June 2026, initially for five weeks.

Chair confirmed that PC will call a meeting when results and implications for Stoke St Mary PC are known, though it is expected that there will be significant plans for the Taylor Wimpey owned land over Orchard Portman. Chair warned that widespread community engagement will be essential to our response.

Cllr Wakefield (SC) explained that the government have changed the way Local Plans are prepared and there is now only 30 months preparation time. Elections 2027 will affect timing. Call for sites are from landowners as well as developers, and all these sites have to be evaluated. SC have had a problem in recruiting and retaining planners and there is a log jam in planning.

Chair suggested that SC had left recruitment too late in their tenure, and relied on an inadequate AI programme, and that the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) should have been available months ago but will not now be available until June 2026.

## **7. Parishioners Forum**

A MoP shared with the meeting a brochure produced by Taylor Wimpey describing large scale plans for a "Taunton Garden Village Project" which included plans for the development of Greenways Farm as a retail centre, and an amphitheatre, showing access via Ash Road, the Thurlbear Road and Stoke Road. The MoP believed this would be the first stage of a huge scale housing/town development across the Taylor Wimpey land. This document has apparently been circulating for 15 months. The exact number of homes proposed was not clear, but the suggestion was 10k.

Cllr Wakefield confirmed she had been present at a meeting about such a project but was not clear on details and stressed the plans were very early stage.

Cllr Pow thanked the MoP for sharing this document and proposed the PC are involved in the process as a key stakeholder.

It was agreed that an FOI would be submitted by the PC to SC to establish the extent and duration of the discussions between SC and Taylor Wimpey.

An MoP raised concerns about the change of use currently underway at Greenways Farm. Many of the farm buildings had been clad in metal and the site was being used for car repairs, etc, generating a significant increase in traffic/deliveries. MoP was unable to report direct to SC because there is no reference number for the farm yard (required for online reporting). Cllr Wakefield agreed to pursue this with SC planning enforcement team.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm