

STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes from the meeting held at Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall on
Thursday 30th July 2026 starting at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Keith Hambly, Dan White (Chair), Anna Mearns, Simon Collins, John McEntee and Kate Gould

Also, in Attendance – Kate Egan – Parish Clerk

1. Welcome by the Chairman.

Cllr Dan White welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Amanda Taylor, Phil Howard 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

There were no declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda.

(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 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). Cllr Phil Howard has a written request for dispensation in relation to Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall for one year (expires May 2027). Cllr Keith Hambly has a written request for dispensation in relation to Stoke St Michael Community Field for one year (expires May 2027).

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

There were no requests for dispensation as appropriate

5. Public Session.

There were four members of the public in attendance. A member of the Playing Field Committee spoke about the grant application which was later discussed under item 11(a).

6. Somerset Councillor Reports

Somerset Councillor Barry Clarke had sent apologies.

7. To consider the approval of the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th June, previously circulated.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Parish Council held on 25th June as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair.

8. Co-Option of a Parish Councillor

Two residents had put themselves forward for co-option to the Parish Council. Each candidate was invited to explain why they wished to become a Parish Councillor, and Councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions. Both candidates received a proposer and a seconder. Following a vote, Kate Gould received the majority of votes and was duly co-opted to the Parish Council. The Chair welcomed Cllr Kate Gould to the Council.

Cllr Simon Collins joined the meeting at 7.49pm, he did not partake in the vote for Co-Option due to the late arrival.

(a) Signature of the Office of Acceptance Form

Cllr Kate Gould signed the Office of Acceptance Form.

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

(a) **2026/1281/HSE** Proposed single storey side extension. Coombe Barn, Frog Lane, Stoke St Michael. **Recommendation** The Parish Council recommended approval.

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

(a) **2026/0825/OUT** Application for outline planning permission with some matters reserved for 4x two storey dwellings with details of access / appearance / landscaping / layout. Land at 365815 146981 Fosse Road, Stoke St Michael. **Decision** Application has been withdrawn.

(b) **2026/0930/APP** Approval of details reserved by condition 4 (Construction Stage Surface Water Management) on consent 2024/1441/REM. Land South of Fairbanks, Coalpit Lane, Stoke St Michael. **Decision** Somerset Council have granted approval.

(c) **2026/0985/HSE** Erection of a detached annexe with associated landscaping. Batch Farm, Limekiln Lane, Stoke St Michael. **Decision** Somerset Council have granted approval.

11. Grants

(a) **Grant from the Community Field for the installation of a defib at the playing fields, amount applied for £195.00.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the grant for £195 to the Community Field for the installation of a defibrillator at the playing fields.

12. Policies

To review and approve the following policies

- **Volunteer Policy**
- **Safeguarding Policy**
- **Equal Opportunities Policy**

Following a slight amendment to the Volunteer Policy the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the above policies.

13. To Be Resolved / Discussed

- (a) To support Holcombe Parish Council with plans to request from Somerset Council to reduce the speed limit on Edford Hill from the National Speed Limit down to 30mph.**

The Council **RESOLVED** in principle to support Holcombe Parish Council with plans to request from Somerset Council to reduce the speed limit on Edford Hill from the National Speed Limit down to 30mph. Cllr Simon Collins with liaise with Holcombe Parish Council.

- (b) To consider quotes for replacing the gate between the cemetery and Mill Lane and appoint a company to carry out the works.**

Following a discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to ask Jim Murtagh to replace the gate between the cemetery and Mill Lane at a cost of £675 + VAT.

- (c) To consider appointing Jim Murtagh as the Parish Council's preferred tree surgeon. Any tree works will be subject to the Council obtaining and considering quotations before works are approved and instructed.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Jim Murtagh as the Parish Council's preferred tree surgeon. Any tree works will be subject to the Council obtaining and considering quotes before works are approved and instructed.

- (d) To consider quotes for trimming the hedges once a year on Green Lane – to follow.**

Quotes are still being obtained, this will be brought back to the next meeting.

- (e) To discuss possible enhancement for the open spaces at The Mead.**

It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda until some ideas have been put forward and someone is willing to lead on it. The item can be brought back to a future meeting.

- (f) To consider the application from the War Memorial Hall to hold a Duck Race in September on the Millennium Green.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the application from the War Memorial Hall to hold a Duck Race in September on the Millennium Green. This is on the provision that a copy of their insurance is supplied and the works on the replacement bridge have finished.

- (g) To consider the provision of village gateway signs and to note that following an inspection by Cllr Dan White, only the gateway sign on the Holcombe approach requires replacement.**

Cllr Simon Collins will contact Somerset Highways to ask about a replacement sign.

- (h) To consider the ongoing issue of overgrown vegetation on Mill Lane following further complaints received, and to determine whether to appoint a contractor to undertake the necessary clearance works.**

Although Mill Lane is the responsibility of Somerset Council, the Parish Council is considering arranging a one-off cut to improve access along the lane. Quotes will also be obtained to reduce the hedge alongside the Cemetery, which is owned by the Parish Council, and to remove the overgrown vegetation along the whole lane. Cllr Dan White will also carry out some of the work involved.

- (i) To consider whether Councillors wish their home addresses to be published in accordance with the provisions of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to remove all Councillors home addresses from the Council's website and public register of interest's forms.

14. Clerk / Councillors Report

- (a) Following the internal auditor's recommendation to update the Register of Interests for Councillors, new forms were sent out to all Councillors but not all have been completed and returned. **Update** Councillors will be sent reminders.
- (b) Following the discussion for Councillors to have photographs on the website, only three photographs have been received.
- (c) The new litter bin has been delivered and waiting installation at the bus shelter opposite the Mead. **Update** Cllr Dan White will liaise with Cllr Simon Collins to find a solution as there is no post to attach the bin.
- (d) Update from Cllr Anna Mearns on traffic management within the village.

Cllr Anna Mearns gave a verbal report on the Safer Routes for HGVs initiative. She had attended a meeting the previous day, which was well supported by parish councils, haulage companies and other stakeholders working together to improve the safety and accessibility of freight routes through local villages.

She reported that lobbying of Somerset Council for improvements at Beacon Crossroads had resulted in the approval of a new 40mph speed limit around the junction, which is expected to be implemented within the next six months, subject to the completion of seasonal lining works. The junction will continue to be monitored, with further improvements remaining under consideration as part of Somerset Council's wider programme of highway safety works. Cllr Mearns also advised that the condition of the Old Frome Road/Old Wells Road had been raised.

The next Safer Routes for HGVs meeting will take place on 13 October and is open to parish councils and residents. Local MPs have been invited to attend to discuss proposed national measures, including the reintroduction of a local share of the Aggregate Levy and the development of a national sat-nav policy to direct HGVs onto appropriate routes. These discussions are also being supported by the Local Government Association and the Road Haulage Association.

- (e) An email was sent to Somerset Council's Public Rights of Way team regarding the proposed closure of the footpath at Yellowgate and the possibility of a temporary diversion. They have since contacted the applicant to explore whether a temporary route can be provided through the site during the works.
- (f) The Council's contract with IONOS has been updated to remove the old website. Access to the previous email accounts and the domain name has been retained.

15. Finance

Bank Balances as at: - 23rd July 2026

Unity Current Account – £1,972.04

Unity Savings Account – £44,160.22

Approval of the bank reconciliation

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliation, this was signed by the Chair.

Review and to note the quarterly budget report

The Council **NOTED** the quarterly budget report

Receipts

(a) Bank Interest – £231.23 – received 30.06.26

(b) Forsey & Sons – Burial Fees - £77.00 – received 21.07.2026

Payments

(c) War Memorial Hall – Hall Hire - £36.00

(d) Primrose Garden Maintenance – Grass Cutting – Two Invoices - £1623.76

(e) Adjustment to Bank Interest - £0.27 – paid 30.06.26

(f) Somerset Council – Emptying of Bins - £1115.40

(g) Staff Salary and expenses – July - £414.60

Transfers

(h) Transfer of £10,000 from the reserve account to the current account

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the above payments and receipts plus the additional payments below

(i) Scribe – Monthly support - July and August - £88.80 – paid by Direct Debit

(j) Unity Trust Bank – Monthly Charges – July and August - £14.00 paid by Direct Debit

(k) PKF – External Audit - £252.00

16. Correspondence

No correspondence had been received to forward to Councillors.

17. Matters to report / items for next agenda

(a) Signage on Fosse Road

(b) Grit Bins

(c) Community Mural

18. Date and time of next meeting:

Thursday 10th September 2026 starting at 7.30pm, to be held at the Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed 9.15pm