

STOKE ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes from the meeting held at Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall on
Thursday 10th September 2026 starting at 7.30pm

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

Also, in Attendance – Kate Egan – Parish Clerk

Items were taken out of order from the agenda.

1. Welcome by the Chairman.

Cllr Dan White welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Amanda Taylor 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 two members of the public in attendance. A local resident spoke about the possibility of a mural being installed at the Community Field, item 11(a).

6. Somerset Councillor Reports

Somerset Councillor Barry Clarke was in attendance and gave a verbal report. There is currently an initiative by Somerset Council to provide warm spaces in the County, funding is available. There is currently no planning enforcement being carried out, but the enforcement department have said they will concentrate on the issues with Planning East.

7. To consider the approval of the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 30th July 2026, previously circulated.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Parish Council held on 30th July as a true record. They were signed by the Chair.

11. To Be Resolved / Discussed

- (e) **To approve the use of up to £2,100 from the Parish Council's earmarked reserve for young people aged 11–18 to fund a community mural project at Stoke St Michael Playing Field, subject to final confirmation of costs, agreement of the mural designs and appropriate arrangements being in place for the participation of young people.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to use the Parish Council's earmarked reserve for young people aged 11-18 to fund a community mural project at Stoke St Michael Playing Field, subject to final confirmation of costs. The Clerk will liaise with the Community Field about the project.

8. 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.

There was no planning application to consider.

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

- (a) **2026/1281/HSE** Single storey side extension. Coombe Barn, Frog Lane, Stoke St Michael. **Decision** Somerset Council have approved the application.

10. Policies

To review and approve the following policies

- (a) **Data Protection**
- (b) **Dispensation Policy**
- (c) **Email Contact Privacy**

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the above three policies.

11. To Be Resolved / Discussed

- (a) **To reappoint Do the Numbers Ltd as the Internal Auditor for 2026/2027 at a cost of £260.00.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Do the Numbers Ltd as the Internal Auditor for 2026/2027 at a cost of £260.00.

- (b) **To note the change of dates for the April Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Council Meeting in May, these will now be held on Thursday 15th April and Thursday 20th May.**

The Council **NOTED** the change of dates for the April Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Council Meeting in May.

- (c) **To discuss any improvement to Moonshill Green and any ideas that may be considered.**

Following a brief discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to remove this item from the agenda until firm ideas are brought to the Council for consideration.

- (d) **To consider a resident's request to implement a similar scheme to that at Moonshill at Stoke St Michael Close, including placing stones around the edge of the open space to prevent vehicles parking on the grass.**

The Council **RESOLVED** not to implement a similar scheme to that at Moonshill, following correspondence received indicating that there would be limited support for the scheme.

- (e) **To consider going out for tender or obtaining quotes for the renewal of the grass cutting contract which is due to finish at the end of March 2027.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to obtain quotes for the renewal of the grass cutting contract. Quotes will be obtained and brought to either the next meeting or the one in November.

- (f) **To consider the parking of vehicles on council owned land at The Mead.**

This was deferred to the next meeting.

- (g) **To consider approving a contribution of £150.00 towards the cost of the Parish Clerk attending the National Conference in October.**

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve a contribution of £150 towards the cost of the Parish Clerk attending the National Conference in October.

- (h) **To note that the new National Planning Policy Framework was released on 17th August 2026.**

The Council **NOTED** the release of the new National Planning Policy Framework.

- (i) **To note the UK government has introduced a mandatory National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions across England from 31st October 2026. The new rules remove individual council's powers to set their own delegation criteria, replacing them with uniform matching standards.**

The Council **NOTED** the introduction of a mandatory National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions across England from 31st October 2026.

- (j) **To note the Local Government Services, Pay Agreement for 2026/2027, providing a 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027, with the increase and backpay to be included in the September salary payment.**

The Council **NOTED** the Pay Agreement for 2026/2027 providing a 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027.

12. Clerk / Councillors Report

- (a) Update from Cllr Simon Collins on the issues of reducing the speed limit on the parish boundary with Holcombe, the installation of signs at Withybrook and replacement of the village sign between Stoke St Michael and Holcombe. **Update** Currently waiting for an update on reducing the speed limit at Holcombe. The Chair of Holcombe Parish Council has submitted a request to Somerset Council asking whether it might be possible and the cost. Regarding the installation of signs at Withybrook the Parish Council is awaiting a reply from Sara Davies.
- (b) Update from Cllr Simon Collins on the clearance of hedges on Green Lane. **Update** This will be an agenda item at the next meeting due to the variance of costs received. Cllr Simon Collins will speak to the companies to ascertain the difference.
- (c) Update from Cllr Anna Mearns on traffic issues within the village. **Update** Cllr Anna Mearns gave a verbal update. Conversations are continuing at a national level, and although process is being made, it is happening slowly. The next LCN Highways meeting will be held on 13th October.
- (d) Update on the clearance of overgrown vegetation in Mill Lane – still awaiting a quote. **Update** The quotes will be chased and brought to the next meeting.
- (e) Update on the works being carried out to replace the bridge on the Millennium Green. **Update** Cllr Amanda Taylor is awaiting the method statement and talking to Somerset Council regarding the licence as they have a few queries.
- (f) Following the last meeting, Councillors updated the Clerk on the status of the grit bins within the village, this was forwarded to Somerset Council and they have been added to the refilling schedule planned for the Autumn.
- (g) The new gate between the Cemetery and Mill Lane has now been installed.
- (h) The Management Construction Plan for Yellowgate was published on the Parish Council Website. Curo held an informal drop-in session on Wednesday 26th August which was well attended and information was shared. A "Meet the Builder" event will be held in the winter once a site manager has been appointed.

- (i) Woodstock Homes are holding an information drop-in session in the War Memorial Hall on 16th September between 4pm and 6pm. This is to enable residents to ask questions regarding the potential development of up to 49 houses on Fosse Road.
- (j) Notice has been given that Somerset Council proposes to make various roads within the Parish of Ashwick a 40mph speed limit. Somerset Council, in consultation with the Police, is introducing a speed limit at Beacon Cross Crossroads from all approaches to improve road safety for all road users. By reducing vehicle speeds, the aim is to lower the risk and severity of collisions, creating a safer environment. Consultation period starts on 16th September and will last for 21 days.

13.. Finance

Bank Balances as at: - 2nd September 2026

Unity Current Account – £8,226.12

Unity Savings Account – £34,160.22

To note the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2025/2026: -

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority: The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertion in Section 1, Box 10, but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified.

The Council **NOTED** the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2025/2026

(a) Receipts

Burial Fees - £371.00 – received 05.08.26

Total Receipts £371.00

To Note the second half of the precept was received at the beginning of September, amount received £15,562.50

(b) Payments

Scribe – August monthly support - £44.40 – paid by DD

Unity Trust – September bank charges - £7.00 – paid by DD

Clerks' wages and expenses for August £588.60

Stoke St Michael War Memorial – Hall Hire - £36.00

Primrose Garden Maintenance – Grass Cutting - £355.20 – paid on 02.08.26

Ionos – Final invoice for website hosting - £13.80 – paid DD

Ionos – Annual domain renewal and hosting of emails - £8.36 – paid DD

Jim Murtagh – Replacement gate at the cemetery - £810.00

Stoke St Michael War Memorial – Payment of Grant - £3,000

D Barron – removal of wasp nest from Millennium Green - £100.00

Total Payments £4963.36

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the above Receipts and Payments.

14. Correspondence

(a) Briefing sheet for Parish and Town Councils August 2026 – forwarded 04.08.26

(b) Briefing Sheet for Parish and Town Council September 2026 – forwarded 27.08.26

15. Matters to report / items for next agenda

(a) Organising a working party to carry out maintenance on the Millennium Green.

16. Date and time of next meeting:

Thursday 22nd October 2026 starting at 7.30pm, to be held at the Stoke St Michael War Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed 8.41pm