

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday 6th December 2023

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair
Cllr K. Mansell
Cllr S. Back
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk
Cllr P. Dumke ~ Vice Chair
Cllr N. Blown
PC Richard Jones

Members of the public: Ten (10)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace opened the public session at 7.00pm and thanked the Councillors, the ten (10) members of the public & PC Richard Jones for attending.

Part A. Public Discussions

A member of the public spoke to address the newly painted yellow lines that had been installed by Medway Council along Button Drive. Concerns were raised that some households on this road, who had multiple cars, were taking advantage of the limited number of parking spaces and were not moving their cars for days on end

Cllr J. Wallace spoke to introduce local Police Officer, Richard Jones. Accordingly, she invited him to speak concerning general policing of double yellow lines.

Alternative parking solutions were mooted and an idea of tarmacking over part of the Recreation Ground, to allow for extra spaces, was discussed.

Another member of the public spoke to ask the Parish Council for permission to use the Lower Stoke Car Park on Saturday 22nd June, in order to hold a charity event to raise money for Cancer Research. Accordingly, he spoke of his fundraising ideas where the members gave their feedback. The member of the public was also referred him to speak to Medway Council, to confirm he was remaining compliant with their current licencing conditions.

Finally, two local contractors spoke to introduce themselves and to promote their business, expressing an interest to work alongside the Parish Council.

Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items None.

The main meeting offiicially opened 7.13pm.

1. Apologies for absence

Min 7781:23 None.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Min 7782:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to declare and interest concerning planning application MC/23/2467 (Orchard View) being a neighbour and knowing the proprietor in a personal capacity.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

3. **Minutes from the previous Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6th September 2023**
a). **To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th October 2023.**

Min 7783:23 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th October 2023, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr S. Back and seconded by Cllr N. Blown that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

b). **To receive and approve the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Tuesday 24th October 2023.**

Min 7784:23 The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Tuesday 24th October 2023, were circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr N. Blown and seconded by Cllr S. Black that the minutes be approved as a correct record. This motion was carried after it was unanimously agreed.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes (not otherwise on the agenda)**

Min 7785:23 None.

5. **Vacancies**

a). **To receive an application for co-option from Mr S. Hall.**

b). **To receive an application for co-option from Mr T. Hall.**

Min 7786:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen referred the members to the applications for co-option she had received from Mr S. Hall and Mr T. Hall (Father and Son), which had been enclosed in their meeting packs.

Both Mr S. Hall and Mr T. Hall were invited to speak, upon receipt of a brief synopsis from both gentlemen it was proposed by Cllr S. Back to accept Mr T. Hall's application and to co-opt him onto the Parish Council. This proposal was seconded by Cllr N. Blown and was unanimously agreed.

After careful consideration it was proposed by the Vice-Chair, Cllr P. Dumke to accept Mr T. Hall's application and to co-opt him onto the Parish Council. This proposal was seconded by Cllr K. Mansell and was unanimously agreed.

Accordingly, both of the new Councillors signed their declarations of acceptance of office in front of the Parish Councillors, which was witnessed and signed by the Responsible Officer (also Mrs J. Allen).

A discussion ensued in regard to arranging for a finance training session, which was hoped could be held ahead of the next meeting.

6. **Ward Councillor report**

a). **A report by Ward Councillor Chris Spalding**

Min 7787:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to report that Ward Cllr C. Spaulding have given his apologies for the evening however he had sent no report in his absence.

7. **Planning**

a). **Applications**

Min 7788:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to remind the members of her declaration of interest ref: **Min 7782:23**. She handed over the meeting over to the Vice-Chair, Cllr P. Dumke and temporarily left the room.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Min 7788:23 Cllr P. Dumke spoke to confirm receipt of two (2) applications and the members discussed each in turn.

- **MC/23/2467 - Orchard View, Lower Stoke, ME3 9RD**
- **MC/23/2444 - Court Lodge Farm, The Street, Upper Stoke**

None of the Parish Councillors had any comments in relation to either of these applications and as a result of this it was unanimously decided not to submit an objection.

b). Decisions

Min 7789:23 The Vice-Chair, Cllr P. Dumke spoke to confirm receipt of one (1) new planning decision since the last meeting, details of which are shown below:

- **MC/23/1814 – Former White Horse PH Site, The Street, Upper Stoke**

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 7790:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen was asked to chase Medway Council for an update on the enforcement investigation for 'Sturchfield'.

Cllr J. Wallace was invited back into the room at 7.25pm, where she resumed control of the meeting.

8. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 7791:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace referred the members to the bank statements provided in their meeting packs where she talked them through the bank balances shown.

b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for November 2023.

Min 7792:23 The members carefully evaluated the Parish Council's financial performance against the budget for November 2023, where they concluded that these balances were acceptable.

The Clerk was also instructed to amend the heading on the Parish Council's budget spreadsheet from 'Royal British Legion' to 'Poppy Appeal'.

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

Min 7793:23 The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they concluded that these payments were acceptable.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 7794:23 After careful consideration the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by the Vice-Chair, Cllr P. Dumke seconded by Cllr K. Mansell and unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£613.11	November 2023 Wages
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home office – November 2023
HMRC	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£18.20	Tax & NI charges (October 2023)

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

HMRC	Min 1436:18	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£18.40	Tax & NI charges (November 2023)
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£41.16	Broadband & Telephone line rental for November 2023
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV: 20
KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£9.59	50% costs towards 2 x laminating pouches INV: 52218
Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£11.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website December monthly direct debit
Mazars	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£300.00	External Audit 2022/2023 INV: 2265529
RBL Poppy Appeal	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£22.50	Additional Payment from Stoke Village towards 2023 Poppy Appeal
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£51.13	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for November 2023
TOTAL			£1,251.08	

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

Min 7795:23 None, although the Clerk was asked to chase the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party for an update and to enquire if they needed the Parish Council to apply for grant funding on their behalf.

9. Management of the Council's land and property

a). To review the play park inspections for:

- i Button Drive Playparks Road Playpark**
- ii Heron Way Playpark**
- iii Upper Stoke Playpark**

Min 7796:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to advise that there was no change to any of the play equipment in all three (3) parks. She addressed however her concerns that the playpark in Upper Stoke was very muddy, in particular the entrance leading into it.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke to enquire if the main gate could be opened instead. Concerns were raised that if the main gate was left unlocked that the area could attract unwanted visitors.

The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace invited PC Richard Jones to speak, where he too spoke in support of the Parish Councillors concerns and urged the members to leave any entrances, especially where vehicles could potentially enter, firmly shut and locked.

b). Cleaning of play equipment.

Min 7797:23 Cllr K. Mansell reported that the equipment was now being cleaned on a regular basis and the bins were being emptied.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

c). Defibrillator

Min 7798:23 The members spoke collectively about the further ideas they had had on how to install a defibrillator in Middle Stoke, without access to a heated cabinet.

They spoke of a possible solution of using solar power, following a suggestion from a member of the public, and about the grants available through the British Heart foundation towards the cost of a new device.

10. Highways & Transportation

a). Footpaths

Min 7799:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to address her concerns that there was a huge channel of ground that had opened next to the 's bend' travelling towards Allhallows, along Stoke Road.

Cllr T. Hall also spoke to raise his concerns that none of the paths had been gritted around the village.

b). Lighting

Min 7800:23 No report.

c). Highways and verges

Min 7801:23 No report.

d). Pot holes

Min 7802:23 Cllr K. Mansell spoke to complain about several potholes she had identified, located close to the entrance/exit of Mallard Way, which Cllr T. Hall supported.

e). Fly tipping

Min 7803:23 Cllr S. Hall spoke to confirm that several abandoned tyres had been fly tipped near to the 's bend' of Cuckolds Green Road.

f). Grass cutting

Min 7804:23 No report (as it was identified that grass cutting was out of season presently!).

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 7805:23 The Parish Councillors spoke collectively about the ongoing leaking manhole cover on the A228 / Grain Road. They identified that the manhole cover, located closest to the entrance on Lower Stoke, had stopped leaking however, there had also been an issue with a collapsed manhole cover, which Ward Cllr C. Spaulding had dealt with.

11. Communications

To receive an update on the following methods of communication:

a). Website

Min 7806:23 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to report that the planning applications tab had disappeared from the members webpage.

The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke in response to confirm she had not removed it but, she was happy to look into getting it reinstated as a matter of urgency.

b). Social Media Page

Min 7807:23 It was proposed by Cllr K. Mansell to make the Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, an additional administrator on the Parish Council's social media page. This proposal was seconded by the Vice- Chair Cllr P. Dumke and was unanimously agreed.

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

c). Parish Council owned tablets

Min 7808:23 It was agreed that the Clerk would speak to KALC concerning the use of personal devices to communicate regarding Parish Council business.

The members also spoke of transferring to a different, more user friendly, email provider.

12. Events

a). Christmas 2023

Min 7809:23 A discussion concerning the Christmas tree lighting celebrations that had taken earlier that month ensued.

It was agreed that the event had not been well organised this year and needed to be planned much sooner next year.

The Parish Councillors spoke collectively of closing the car park for the event in December 2024, and also spoke of live entertainment and building a gazebo, in which they could serve refreshments.

Min 7811:23 Mrs J. Allen also spoke to alert the Parish Council to the 80th Anniversary of D-Day in June 2024, which she knew a lot of the Parish Council's nationwide were planning to celebrate.

It was agreed that an item for this event should be placed on the agenda for formal consideration at the next meeting.

Finally, Cllr S. Back spoke to inform the members that he might be able to arrange first aid cover for free for this event, using his contacts as a current volunteer for the St John's Ambulance.

13. Correspondence – Annex A

a). Closure of Lower Stoke GP Practice

Min 7812:23 Cllr K. Mansell read the response the Parish Council had been sent by the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, concerning the closure of the Lower Stoke GP Practice. Please see Annex A for a copy of this document.

The members also spoke collectively about who they could complain to concerning its closure, where the Clerk was also deployed to follow this up.

14. Meeting Dates 2024

a). To ratify the proposed meeting dates for 2024.

Min 7813:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen referred the members to the list of proposed meeting dates for 2024, which she had circulated in the meeting packs and as per shown below.

Date	Venue	Time
Wednesday 24 th January 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 6 th March 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 17 th April 2024 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

Wednesday 1st May 2024 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING & ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 5th June 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 3rd July 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
SUMMER RECESS		
Wednesday 4th September 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 2nd October 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 6th November 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 4th December 2024 FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING	Village Hall	7.00pm

After careful consideration it was proposed by Cllr S. Back and seconded by Cllr K. Mansell to accept the list of dates and to publish this document in the public domain. This proposal was unanimously agreed.

15. **Any other business – Annex B**

Min 7814:23 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen spoke to inform the members that the Deputy Chief Executive at KALC (Mr C. Powell) was currently off on long-term sick leave. Owing to this the Councillor Training course, scheduled to take place on Saturday 27th January in High Halstow had been cancelled temporarily.

Min 7815:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace read out loud an update from the Rivermead Inclusive Trust, concerning their project to convert the old Primary Stoke Academy building into a fully functioning school again. Please see Annex B for a copy of this report.

Min 7816:23 Finally the Chair, Cllr J. Wallace spoke to remind the meeting that Medway Council would be holding a 'Surface Water Management Plan' meeting in the Village Hall on Wednesday 13th December, between the hours of 5.00pm & 7.00pm.

16. **Close of meeting**

Min 7817:23 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace closed the meeting at 8.25 pm. She thanked everyone for attending, wished the meeting a Happy Christmas and invited everyone to stay for some refreshments afterwards.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 24th January 2024	7.00pm	The Village Hall
---	---------------	-------------------------

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

ANNEXES

ANNEX A

13a). Correspondence – Closure of Lower Stoke GP Practice

Min 7812:23

Response to Aspire Medical Health re proposed permanent closure of the surgery in Lower Stoke

We are very disappointed at your decision to permanently close the surgery in Lower Stoke. This comes at a time when the population on the peninsula is increasing at an alarming rate due to the many new housing developments in the area. Now is the time to be expanding medical facilities not decreasing them.

The surgery in Lower Stoke provided a much-needed service especially for the elderly and families with young children. Sadly, over the years the services provided gradually declined until the surgery eventually closed prior to the pandemic. This was done without consulting patients who then had no choice but to travel to the main surgery in Hoo or even to Balmoral Road in Gillingham. This was not and still isn't ideal for those who rely on public transport which isn't always very reliable and can be a time consuming and uncomfortable journey for a sick person to make. Some patients may have already transferred to another practice but others have been hoping that the Stoke surgery will re-open.

The Village Hall Management Committee were pleased to offer the premises as a medical facility when the previous accommodation became unsuitable. There had always been a surgery in Lower Stoke and the Committee were happy to work with the local health authority to ensure that this provision remained in the village. It was considered necessary then and is necessary now. Every effort should be made to re-open and provide the level of service that is required.

ANNEX B

15). Any other business

Min 7814:23

Project for Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 6th December 2023

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust continue to be fully committed to the project based on the site of the former Stoke Primary School. A lot of background work continues to go on and we are hoping come the New Year we will start to see people starting to be on site to begin work on putting the design into practice. As discussed previously this should not change the aesthetics of the building as all we are planning to adapt / change is to have a building placed at the back of the school which will be the Art / DT block and this will be placed in the position of many of the existing structures (which are rotten) and will be placed at the back of the site so it does not impact on the views of residents looking out of their gardens. There is also a planned a drop section at the back of the site so the minibuses can turn and drop off pupils safely. This will also allow vehicles to be kept off the road so as not to disrupt traffic on the road.

The final change which may impact is the planned car park which will run at the back of the school where the playground is. I have already shared plans of this with members of the council and hopefully those whose gardens directly back onto the school playing field are aware. Although this will have some car parking it will be sensitively planted with trees and shrubs so as to not spoil the outlook for residents.

In relation to the project work in the background the following is happening:

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

1. We are hoping the project will be signed off by the Regional School Commissioners Office via the Headteacher board in early December. We have had positive feedback that this should happen without any problems.
2. The local council have agreed via the appropriate committees to agree to increased funding to cover the cost of the build. This should match with the estimates which we submitted to the council around how much the project would cost in relation to the building alterations required.
3. The council are currently putting together the planning application along with various surveys. The asbestos one was the last one completed on 17th October. This raised a few concerns. As a result, they do need to get an asbestos company in to help with a more intrusive survey on the hutted classrooms over on the swimming pool side of the building just to determine what additional work is needed on them and this is scheduled for December. Until this piece of work is completed, we won't be in a position to confirm the September opening just in case it needs more work than we were anticipating. I can hopefully update on this at the next Parish Council Meeting.
4. The planning application should be submitted at the beginning of December and will coincide with the council putting together the tender documents which will go out in January.

This is where we currently are and hopefully, we will be in a position to provide more details at the next meeting. On behalf of all the team at the Rivermead Inclusive Trust can I take this opportunity to thank you for all of your support around this project and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I look forward to coming to the next meeting to provide more details and moving forward I am really hoping we can really become involved in the village and work with and support a great local community.

Kind regards,

Paul Dadson

Project Lead for the Rivermead Inclusive Trust