

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

MINUTES

Tuesday 14th July 2026

Parish Council Meeting

The Rivermead Trust, School Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees:

Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair	Cllr J. Bansil – Vice-Chair
Cllr S. Hall	Cllr T. Hall
Cllr S. Back	Medway Cllr M. Pearce
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk	

Members of the public: Three (3)

PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, opened the meeting at 7.03pm.

pm and thanked the Parish Councillors & members of the public for attending.

Part A.

Public Discussions

- A member of the public spoke to complain that the village had not been kept in the loop regarding the numerous road closures. They felt that Haven should be financially compensating the village shops and businesses directly affected by the disruption. Concerns were also raised about the local bus service, with fears that if the village remains cut off from this service for too long, Arriva might decide to terminate the service altogether, leaving the community of Stoke without a bus service.

A discussion concerning this matter ensued, and the Vice-Chair confirmed that she would be happy to visit the Haven Holiday Park in Allhallows to speak with the Park Manager face-to-face regarding the concerns raised.
- Another resident spoke to enquire further about the safety netting that had been installed following the overhead power cable upgrades that were taking place. It was understood that some residents were receiving updates on these works through the Causeway One Network application on their mobile phones.
- Finally, complaints were received regarding the proposed application for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) by Eku Energy on land off Ratcliffe Highway, High Halstow. Residents expressed their disappointment that designated industrial land at Kingsnorth on the Isle of Grain could not be made available for this project and that, instead, the proposal would result in the use of valuable fertile farmland.

Part B.

Public Discussions on any agenda items

None.

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The meeting opened at 7.10pm.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Min 9720:26 The Clerk was asked to record that an apology for absence had been received from Cllr P. Dumke minutes before the meeting, owing to prior work commitments.

2. **To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations,**

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers. To consider any dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

Min 9721:26 None.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting**

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June 2026

Min 9722:26 The members confirmed that they had received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June 2026.

It was proposed by Cllr S. Hall and seconded by Cllr S. Back that the minutes be approved as a correct record. The motion was unanimously agreed.

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

Min 9723:26 Cllr J. Wallace enquired whether the Clerk had contacted Medway Council to determine if the Parish Council was able to advertise its vacancies in a Medway-wide publication.

She also asked whether the Clerk had provided Cllr S. Hall with copies of the Parish Council's vacancy advertisement for display at various locations throughout the village.

The Clerk responded that no formal task had been assigned to her to contact Medway Council regarding placing an advertisement in the publication; however, she would be happy to do so.

She also confirmed that she had provided Cllr S. Hall with copies of the advertisement for him to arrange their display.

5. **Vacancies**

a). To discuss the Parish Council's current outstanding vacancy.

Min 9724:26 It was noted that the Parish Council had not yet received any applications for the vacant position. It was acknowledged that Cllr S. Hall would be distributing copies of the vacancy poster for display throughout the village, and that the Clerk would make enquiries about advertising the position in Medway Council's Medway Matters publication.

It was agreed that the matter would be reviewed further at the September meeting.

6. **Medway Councillor report ~ Annex A**

a). To receive an update on the most recent Medway Council news from Medway Cllr M. Pearce.

Min 9725:26 Cllr J. Wallace passed the floor to Medway Councillor M. Pearce, who read the report he had kindly prepared in advance of the meeting.

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He highlighted a number of matters, including enhancements to the green spaces at Mallard Way and Heron Way, potholes, the recent removal of Grain Fire Station from the list of potential closures, and the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), which had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

A full copy of the report is attached at Annex A.

7. Tasks agreed at the last meeting

a). To receive an update on the tasks agreed at the last meeting.

Min 9726:26 The members reviewed the outstanding actions from the previous meeting, and the Clerk was instructed to follow up on the following items:

- **Peninsula's Police Constables.**

It was understood that the Peninsula's Police Constables had recently changed, and the Clerk was attempting to establish who now worked alongside PC J. Waterman and which officers were responsible for policing the area. Once clarification had been obtained, the Clerk agreed to circulate the details to ensure that residents were kept fully informed about how to contact their local policing team.

- **Replacement Swing Seats**

The Clerk presented Members with a quote for some public play park quality-grade swing seats for the Button Drive Play Park, at a cost of £119.00 per seat, including chains.

Following a brief discussion and upon checking the balance of funds available within the Parish Council's designated budget, the Clerk was authorised to purchase two (2) of these items.

- **Pollarding of the Lower Stoke Car Park Tree**

It was understood that Members had yet to source a quote for the pollarding of the large tree located in the Lower Stoke Car Park.

Accordingly, the Clerk was asked to make contact with a contractor previously used and to consider advertising the work on social media to invite local contractors to get in touch and provide quotes.

Min 9727:26 The conversation then turned to the chevron signs on the S-bend on Allhallows Road/Stoke Road, where it was acknowledged that one of the signs was missing.

It was agreed that Cllr S. Hall would obtain photographic evidence of the missing sign for the Clerk to raise the matter directly with Medway Council and/or the relevant Highways Authority.

8. Planning

a). Applications

Min 9728:26 The Parish Councillors acknowledged receipt of the one (1) planning application received, as detailed below.

Following an in-depth discussion, Members agreed that they had no objections to the proposed roof alterations.

- **MC/26/1306 - Orchard View, High Street, ME3 9RD**

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b). Decisions

Min 9729:26 None.

c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9730:26 The members acknowledged that, following the concerns raised at the previous Parish Council meeting (Min 9682:26), the Clerk had reported the industrial-sized washing machines located at the Lower Stoke Garage site to Medway Council's Planning Department.

- ENF/26/0189 - Stoke Garage, High Street, Lower Stoke

9. Finance

a). Bank balances

Min 9731:26 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, referred members to the bank statements included in their meeting packs and guided them through the account balances, as detailed below:

Date	Account	Balance
14/07/2026	Current Account	£1,294.23
14/07/2026	Deposit Account	£75,193.34

b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for June 2026.

Min 9732:26 The members carefully reviewed the Parish Council's financial performance against the agreed budget for June 2026.

The Chairman confirmed receipt of the Parish Council's Excel spreadsheet and advised that she would liaise further with the Clerk to establish the formula used within the document.

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

Min 9733:26 The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they agreed that these payments were acceptable.

d). Accounts for payment.

Min 9734:26 After careful consideration, the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr S. Hall, seconded by Cllr T. Hall and unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£780.74	May 26 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£234.70	Tax & NI charges (May 2026)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home May 2026
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£58.59	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for April 2026
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV: 1988
Nexus Data Systems Ltd	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY BACS	£96.00	Domian renewal for stokekent- pc.gov.uk INV: 100236
Gallagher Insurance Brokers	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£1,738.09	Annual Insurance Premium INV: G6684479

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Go Cardless	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	DIRECT DEBIT	£23.99	Stoke Parish Council Hugo Fox Website INV: TBC
Go Cardless	Min 8095:24	DIRECT DEBIT	£20.99	Hugo Fox Email Package INV: 27602
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£71.72	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for May 2026
TOTAL			£3,189.82	

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

Min 9735:26 None.

10. Management of Land and Property

a). To receive the play park inspection report from the month of May 2026 for:

i). The Button Drive Playpark (Lower Stoke).

ii). The Heron Way Playpark (Lower Stoke).

iii). The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).

Min 9736:26 Cllr S. Back reported that there had been no change to the condition of any of the play equipment.

He further advised that, due to the length of the grass in the Heron Way Recreation Ground, he had cut it himself, which he felt would be beneficial ahead of the school summer holidays.

A vote of thanks was extended by the Parish Councillors to Cllr S. Back for undertaking this work on behalf of the community.

Min 9737:26 The Clerk also reported that the Parish Council's independent annual play park inspection had been ordered. She understood that the inspection company was currently operating with a lead time of approximately 12 weeks and was therefore awaiting confirmation as to when the village would reach the front of the queue for inspection.

b). Lower Stoke Car Park Lease

Min 9738:26 The Clerk informed Members that the solicitor had now been instructed and, following an email she had circulated a week or so earlier, the necessary searches had been ordered.

However, as there were three (3) separate title deeds relating to the car park, the searches were expected to take longer than originally anticipated and incur additional costs above those outlined in the original quotation.

She also confirmed that the solicitor had received correspondence from Medway Council's legal representative and was currently in the process of raising enquiries on behalf of the Parish Council.

12. Highways, Transport & Upkeep

To receive any reports relating to:

a). Footpaths

Min 9739:26 It was acknowledged that Cllr S. Back was still pursuing MHS Homes regarding the condition of the footpath in Lower Stoke; however, progress on the matter remained slow.

b). Lighting

Min 9740:26 No report.

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c). Highways and verges

Min 9741:26 No report.

d). Pot holes

Min 9742:26 No report.

e). Fly tipping & Street Cleaning

Min 9743:26 Cllr S. Back enquired whether the Parish Council would consider purchasing two (2) solar-powered camera traps to help tackle the fly-tipping that had been occurring regularly on Hoppers Lane, Cuckolds Green Road and Stoke Road, at a cost of £35 per camera.

Concerns were raised regarding the recording of individuals without appropriate signage being in place. It was therefore agreed that the Parish Council should first investigate the regulations surrounding the use of recording equipment before any purchase was made.

It was agreed that Cllr M. Pearce would provide the relevant departmental email address to the Clerk, enabling contact to be made and assistance sought in pursuing the matter further.

Queries were also raised as to whether Hoppers Lane falls under the responsibility of Allhallows Parish Council or Stoke Parish Council.

f). Grass cutting

Min 9744:26 The Parish Councillors commented that Medway Norse had been observed since the last meeting undertaking grass-cutting works in Stoke and the surrounding area.

g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road

Min 9745:26 No report.

h). Noticeboards.

Min 9746:26 It was acknowledged that the new noticeboard for Middle Stoke had been received from the supplier and that the Clerk was still in the process of obtaining permission to install the new board on the green triangle in Middle Stoke, following a change in personnel at Medway Council.

i). Button Drive Playpark repainting

Min 9747:26 The Clerk confirmed that she had instructed the contractor and was now awaiting confirmation of a date on which the works could be carried out.

j). Parish Council's Store room at Stoke Village Hall

Min 9748:26 Cllr J. Wallace spoke to address the condition of the Parish Council's storeroom, expressing concerns about the lingering smell of damp resulting from the previous roof leak.

She also raised concerns regarding the quantity of old and outdated paperwork stored within the room that was no longer required and asked the Parish Councillors to consider setting aside a day during a weekend in September to clear the room, dispose of unnecessary items and undertake a general clean of the area.

Following consideration, the members agreed to meet at the Parish Council's Store room on Sunday 13th September from 10.00am to carry out the previous listed works. It was also agreed that the Parish Council would liaise with the Village Hall committee to ensure they did not obstruct any events that might be prearranged to be happening at the Hall.

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13. Communications

To receive an update on the following methods of communication:

a). Website.

Min 9749:26 The Clerk informed Members that the Parish Councillors' home addresses had now been removed from the Parish Council's website, in line with correspondence received from Medway Council's Monitoring Officer.

b). Social media page.

Min 9750:26 No report.

14. Internal Committee Updates

a). Neighbourhood Plan ~ Annex B

Min 9751:26 The Clerk referred to an email update received from the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, a copy of which had been included within the Members' meeting packs. Please see Annex B for a copy of this report.

It was acknowledged that a meeting needed to be organised to update residents on progress.

However, it was noted that the Chairman of the Committee had limited availability during August and that there was now very little time available before the commencement of the school summer holidays.

b). Stoke Village Hall

Min 9752:26 The Clerk read an electronic update she had received from Mr N. Blown on behalf of the Stoke Village Hall Committee, which read as follows:

"Some maintenance has been carried out to the main hall with decoration being the priority. We have had some support via donations and work has been carried out by volunteers. The small hall has been cleared, with NHS removing some of the equipment and remedial work carried out again with the support of volunteers.

The committee has new members and continues to work on improvements and sourcing funding from various sources. The focus is on leasing the small hall so that there is a regular source of income which will enable the SVHC to increase loan payments and continue improvements to the main hall."

c). Stoke Community Project

Min 9753:26 It was noted that there was no update available from the Stoke Community Project at this time.

15. External Committee Updates

a). KALC.

Min 9754:26 The Clerk confirmed that she had made contact with the KALC Clerk and that there was currently no schedule of dates available for the Medway Area Committee meetings for 2026/2027.

It was noted, however, that the next KALC meeting was due to take place on Thursday 16 July, and the Clerk invited a volunteer to attend on behalf of the Parish Council.

b). Rural Liaison Board

Min 9755:26 Cllr S. Hall confirmed that he had attended the last Rural Liaison Committee meeting, which had taken place on Wednesday 24 June, where Members received two (2) interesting presentations on dark skies and water management.

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He confirmed that he would check whether the notes from the meeting had previously been circulated and, if not, would forward them to the Clerk for distribution to Members.

c). SSE

Min 9756:26 The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace, confirmed that, to the best of her knowledge, the next SSE meeting remained scheduled to take place in September 2026.

16. Contractor Works

Min 9757:26 The Clerk was reminded to obtain quotations for the tree surgery works required in the Lower Stoke Car Park and to follow up with the contractor regarding a date for the repainting of the play equipment at the Button Drive Play Park.

Min 9758:26 In the absence of any further business, Members also discussed a recent email that had been received concerning a Road Safety Audit that may be required in connection with a proposed development in the neighbouring village, which was likely to have an impact on Stoke residents.

It was agreed that, once further information had been received, an Extraordinary Meeting should be convened to consider the matter formally and in greater detail.

17. Events

a). Christmas 2026

Min 9759:26 It was acknowledged that Cllrs J. Wallace and J. Bansil were in the process of arranging a meeting to discuss the proposed Christmas 2026 event and to consider possible arrangements.

18. Date of next meeting

Min 9760:26 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace, reminded Members that no Parish Council meeting was scheduled to take place during August. She advised that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Wednesday 2nd September at 7.00pm in the Stoke Village Hall.

19. Close of meeting

Min 9761:26 The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, closed the meeting at 8.06pm and thanked the everyone for attending.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 2nd September 2026 Parish Council Meeting	7.00pm	The Village Hall
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ANNEXES

ANNEX A

6a). Medway Councillor report ~ To receive an update on the most recent Medway Council news from Medway Cllr M. Pearce REF: **Min 9725:26**

(Report to follow).

ANNEX B

14a). Internal Committee Updates ~ Neighbourhood Plan REF: **Min 9751:26**

From: Peter Egan
Sent: 16 June 2026 08:40
To: Stoke Parish Council
Subject: Neighbourhood plan, presentation to the community.

Hi Jenny,

I am just following up, the neighbourhood plan is now complete and we need a date to present it to the community, this needs to be a session where we can put up some boards, talk through the plan and discuss it with the community.

I would recommend it doesn't fall on the same night as a council meeting as if people turn up with questions we will need time to answer them.

I would recommend the end of July, to keep us time to publicise it. I am away most of August and the second to last week in July, so can we avoid these.

Happy to discuss.

Regards
Peter Egan

Tasks agreed 14/07/2026

Cllr J. Bansil to visit the Haven Holiday Park to speak with the Park Manager face-to-face.

Clerk to upload the approved minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd June 2026 onto the Parish Council's webpage.

Clerk to contact Medway Council regarding advertising in the Medway Matters publication.

Cllr S. Hall to distribute copies of the Parish Council's vacancy posters throughout the village.

Clerk to purchase two (2) replacement swing seats for the Button Drive playpark.

Clerk to obtain quotations for the pollarding of the large tree in the Lower Stoke Car Park, including contacting a previous Parish Council contractor and advertising the work on social media for interest from local contractors.

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Cllr S. Hall to provide the Clerk with photographs of the missing chevron sign to enable the matter to be reported to Medway Council.

Clerk to arrange payment for the agreed expenditure.

Clerk to continue liaising with the Parish Council's solicitors and to seek progress updates in order to expedite the purchase of the Lower Stoke Car Park.

Cllr M. Pearce to provide the Clerk with the relevant departmental email address to enable her to enquire about the legislation and regulations relating to the recording of individuals involved in fly-tipping.

Members to meet at the Stoke Parish Council Store Room on Sunday 13th September at 10.00am to sort, clear and clean the storeroom.

Clerk to liaise with the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee to organise a public presentation meeting for residents.

Cllr S. Hall to forward the notes from the last Rural Liaison Committee meeting to the Clerk for circulation to all Members.

Tasks carried over

Clerk to circulate email addresses for the Peninsula's Police Constables.

Clerk to follow up with the inspection company to obtain an anticipated date for the Parish Council's independent annual play park inspection.

Cllr S. Back continue to chase MHS homes concerning the poor condition of the footpath between Heron Way & the High Street, in Lower Stoke.

Clerk to continue liaising with Medway Council to obtain permission for the installation of the new noticeboard on the green triangle in Middle Stoke.

Clerk to follow up with the contractor to obtain a date for the repainting of the play equipment at the Button Drive Recreation Ground.

Clerk to chase for copy of KALC minutes from the last two (2) meetings and circulate to all members.

Clerk to contact KALC regarding the possibility of establishing a preferred suppliers list.

Cllrs J. Wallace and J. Bansil to meet to discuss plans for the Christmas 2026 Village Event.

Cllr S. Back to investigate the possibility of installing flashing speed signs in the village.