

# STOKE PARISH COUNCIL



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

## MINUTES

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Parish Council Meeting

Village Hall ~ 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllr J. Wallace ~ Chair  
Cllr S. Hall  
Cllr J. Bansil  
Medway Cllr G. Crozer  
Mrs J. Allen ~ Clerk  
Cllr S. Back  
Cllr T. Hall  
Medway Cllr M. Pearce  
Medway Cllr R. Sands

Members of the public: Four (4)

### **PUBLIC SESSION ~ NOT PART OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, opened the meeting at 7.00 pm and thanked the Parish Councillors, members of the public and the three Medway Councillors for attending.

#### **Part A. Public Discussions**

A member of the public asked what was happening with the sale of the Lower Stoke car park.

Complaints were also raised concerning the closure of the Ratcliff Highway earlier that day, which had forced multiple lorries through the village, and as a result, there were calls to install speed bumps and flashing speed signs.

Cllr S. Back responded to these complaints by saying that, given the recent opening of the Rivermead Trust's new location in Stoke, he would be pleased to investigate the possibility of flashing speed signs.

Speaking about the "Alliance of Peninsula Parish Councils" group, Medway Cllr R. Sands told the meeting that since it had recently been very difficult to arrange a date for all of the Peninsula's parish councils to meet, the group had chosen to visit each parish council at its meetings.

To support the 14,000 people living on the Hoo peninsula and to have a unified voice, he discussed the necessity of maintaining this group.

He then spoke of rural housing concepts to help keep families in the same village, since it was acknowledged that many families had been priced out of where they had grown up due to exorbitant house prices or rental rates.

Medway Cllr R. Sands concluded his report by stating that he or a group representative hoped to attend as many Parish Council meetings as they could to keep locals informed about Medway Council's activities, to learn about peninsula-wide complaints, and to address any queries parishioners might have.

Lastly, a second member of the public asked if the hedge next to the Allhallows Road allotments could be trimmed back because it appeared to be growing at least two feet from its base.

#### **Part B. Public Discussions on any agenda items**

None.

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The meeting opened at 7.22pm.

1. **Apologies for absence**

**Min 9436:25** It was noted that Cllr P. Dumke had apologised for his absence just prior to the commencement of the meeting.

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 9437:25** None.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting**

**a). To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025.**

**Min 9438:25** The members attested to receiving the minutes of the Wednesday, 1st October 2025, Parish Council meeting.

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

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

**Min 9439:25** None.

5. **Medway Councillor report**

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

**Min 9440:25** Medway Councillor Michael Pearce graciously stood up to provide his report.

He mentioned that following the various issues with flooding in the village, he had spoken to Medway Council and requested that the village's drains be cleaned. In addition to this, he affirmed that he had contacted the appropriate authorities to see if funds could be made available to buy the flood warden some appropriate equipment. However, if this was not feasible, he was confident that he could use some of the funds from his ward improvement grant to help.

Speaking further about the village's traffic congestion, Medway Cllr M. Pearce acknowledged that he was aware of the several trucks and mobile homes that had lately been rerouted through the village due to road closures in St Mary Hoo.

He continued by telling the group that, in light of the Stoke Primary Academy school's closure several years ago and the absence of a secure path between the two villages, he was still in the process of negotiating with the Leigh Academies Trust to retain the school bus service that runs from Stoke to the Peninsula East Primary Academy.

In light of the school's recent improvements, he urged the community to attend the coffee afternoon that the Rivermead Trust had scheduled for Monday, 10th November, from 3 to 4 p.m. at their new location in Stoke.

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Finally, he advised that the next Medway Council meeting would take place on Thursday 13th November. He understood that this meeting would pick up where the last one left off because of an incident at the prior meeting that prevented several of the agenda topics from being discussed.

## 6. Tasks agreed at the last meeting

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

Min 9441:25 The members evaluated the tasks agreed at the last meeting and the Clerk / Parish Councillors were asked to continue working on the following points:

- Clerk to forward invoice for the inspection of the village hall roof onto Cllr J. Wallace.
- Clerk to enquire if contractors will be using Heras fencing when repainting the Heron Way play equipment.
- Clerk to chase contractors to carry out the final repairs to the Heron Way Recreation ground back fence.
- Clerk to obtain minutes from the last KALC meeting and circulate to members.

## 7. Planning

### a). Applications

Min 9442:25 Cllr J. Wallace acknowledged receipt of two (2) new planning applications, which had been submitted since the last Parish Council meeting. She addressed each in turn.

- **MC/25/2056 - Land at Walnut Tree Farm, Grain Road**

The members concurred that this planning proposal was a modification of the previously approved application.

- **MC/25/2045 - 2 Tudor Farm Cottages, Stoke Road**

Following a brief discussion, the members decided they would make no comment.

### b). Decisions

Min 9443:25 Since the previous meeting, the parish councillors acknowledged receipt of one new planning decision.

- **MC/25/1495 - East Of Lower Stoke And West Of Wallend, Accessed Via Grain Road**

### c). Appeals and Other Matters.

Min 9444:25 None.

## 8. Finance

### a). Bank balances

Min 9445:25 The Chair, Cllr J. Wallace referred the members to the bank statements provided in their meeting packs. She talked them through the balances (details of which are shown below):

Date	Account	Balance
30/10/2025	Current Account	£3,303.86
30/10/2025	Deposit Account	£46,541.37

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**b). To agree the financial performance against the budget for October 2025.**

**Min 9446:25** The members carefully evaluated the Parish Council's financial performance against the budget for October 2025. After a brief discussion they concluded that the balances were acceptable.

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

**Min 9447:25** The members evaluated the payments made since the last meeting, where they agreed that these payments were acceptable.

**d). Accounts for payment.**

**Min 9448:25** After careful consideration, the below payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr S. Back, seconded by Cllr T. Hall and unanimously agreed.

**October / November 2025**

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Staff Wages	Min 1436:18 (JA) Min 8014:24 (JB)	PAID BY BACS	£757.48	October 25 Wages (JA & JB)
HMRC	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£225.45	Tax & NI charges (October 2025)
Mrs J. Allen	Min 1436:18	PAID BY BACS	£35.00	Use of home October 2025
The People's Pension	Min 1775:20	DIRECT DEBIT	£56.75	Both Employer & Employee Contributions for October 2025
Mr J. Treveil	Min 7703:23	PAID BY BACS	£130.00	Deep Clean of all three (3) play parks INV:985
Cloud Next	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£119.98	Premium Hosting Renewal INV: 233304
RBL	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	PAID BY CARD	£50.00	Poppy Wreath & Donation
James Smith Fencing	Min 9411:25	PAID BY CARD	£296.40	Fencing for Heron Way Play Park INV: 000096901
Medway Council	Min 5077:21	DIRECT DEBIT	£212.50	Lower Stoke Car Park Lease Qtr 3 INV: (TO FOLLOW)
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: TBC
KPS Office Supplies	TO BE AGREED RETROSPECTIVELY	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£70.78	50% costs of Stationery INV: 94340
Vodafone Telephone & Broadband	Min 1451:18	DIRECT DEBIT	£66.42	Broadband, Landline & Mobile Telephone line rental for October 2025
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£2,065.74</b>

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

**Min 9449:25** None.

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**f). To receive an update on the 2024/2025 External Audit.**

**Min 9450:25** The members were informed by the Clerk, that the external auditors had contacted her with several questions, which she had addressed, and she was now currently awaiting their response.

**9. Management of Land and Property**

**a). To receive the play park inspection report from the month of October 2025 for:**

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

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

**iii). The Street Playpark (Upper Stoke).**

**Min 9451:25** Speaking about the weeds growing in the Heron Way playground, Cllr S. Back assured the members that he would either remove the plants or treat them with weed killer.

**Min 9452:25** The conversation then digressed to the Button Drive playpark, where Mrs J. Allen reported that she had received a price from the Men in Sheds group in Stoke for £250 to renovate the climbing frame staircase, repaint it, install a non-slip surface, and treat it for corrosion.

After careful consideration it was proposed by Cllr T. Hall, seconded by Cllr J. Wallace and unanimously agreed to proceed with the quote from Men in Sheds group at a cost of £250.00.

**b). Heron Way Play Park Fencing**

**Min 9453:25** The members understood that the Clerk had ordered the new fencing material for the Heron Way Play Park, which had directly been shipped to the contractors, and she was now waiting to hear a date as to when the final repairs would be taking place.

The Clerk was reminded to continue pursuing the contractors to complete the final repairs after a discussion held earlier in the meeting.

**10. Highways, Transport & Upkeep**

**To receive any reports relating to:**

**a). Footpaths**

**Min 9454:25** Although he was still pursuing the matter, Cllr S. Back confirmed that there had been no improvement in the state of the footpath in Lower Stoke that was managed by MHS Homes.

**b). Lighting**

**Min 9455:25** No report.

**c). Highways and verges**

**Min 9456:25** Following the road closure in St Mary Hoo, Cllr S. Hall addressed the condition of the kerb stones on the double 'S' bend at Allhallows Road/Stoke Road, which had recently been damaged by the numerous HGV lorries travelling through the village. It was agreed that this matter would need to be referred to Medway Council to prevent the kerbstones from becoming further damaged.

**d). Pot holes**

**Min 9457:25** No further report.

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## **e). Fly tipping & Street Cleaning**

**Min 9458:25** Cllr S. Hall advised that fly-tipping problems were still occurring on the village's rural roads, where he informed the meeting that he keeps reporting them to the unitary authority.

## **f). Grass cutting**

**Min 9459:25** With permission from the Chairman, Medway Councillor M. Pearce spoke to confirm that he was now pursuing Medway Norse to help the Parish Council regain management of their green spaces and grass cutting for the upcoming financial year.

## **g). Leaking manhole cover on A228 / Grain Road**

**Min 9460:25** No report.

## **h). Noticeboards**

**Min 9461:25** The Clerk reported that she was still liaising with the 'Men in Sheds' group concerning the repair of the Middle Stoke noticeboard; however, she felt the noticeboard in Middle Stoke was so severely damaged it would be a waste of funds to keep repairing it.

She proposed requesting a grant from SSE to buy a new noticeboard that would be identical to the one in Lower Stoke during their upcoming funding tranche in January 2026.

After careful consideration the members unanimously agreed with this suggestion, and accordingly the Clerk was instructed to complete the SSE application form to ask for funding for a new noticeboard.

Following a conversation about relocating the noticeboard to the green triangle in Middle Stoke, the clerk was also instructed to ascertain the land's owner's credentials.

## **11. Communications**

**To receive an update on the following methods of communication:**

### **a). Website.**

**Min 9462:25** The Clerk acknowledged that she was still attempting to organise access to the new Parish Council email address for Cllr. J. Bansil.

### **b). Social media page**

**Min 9463:25** No report.

## **12. Internal Committee Updates**

### **a). Neighbourhood Plan**

**Min 9464:25** Cllr J. Wallace reported that she understood the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group had received positive feedback on the first draft of the neighbourhood plan, and they were now working on the necessary revisions.

### **b). Stoke Village Hall**

**Min 9465:25** Cllr J. Wallace stated that Mr N. Blown had been unable to attend the meeting to present his report; however, she was aware that the committee had been working hard to move forward with their plans to update the interior décor of the building where the kitchen floor had just been repainted, and she understood the team was working hard to negotiate some free kitchen cabinets from Howdens.

**Min 9466:25** Additionally, the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, stated that she had applied to Medway Councillor M. Pearce for some ward grant funding to help cover the expense of replacing the curtains in the village hall.

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## **c). Stoke Community Project**

**Min 9467:25** The Clerk was tasked with making sure the Stoke Community Project received the remaining grant funds from the Parish Council in time for their Seniors afternoon event at the end of November.

## **13. External Committee Updates**

### **a). KALC**

**Min 9468:25** The members agreed to appoint a new representative once they had a full complement again; in the meantime, the Clerk was asked to obtain a copy of the minutes from the last meeting, which was understood to have taken place at the end of October.

### **b). Rural Liaison**

**Min 9469:25** Cllr S. Hall informed the members that he had attended the most recent meeting of the Rural Liaison Committee, which took place on Tuesday, 4th November, and where the main focus of the meeting had been surrounding the government's reorganisation plans. He closed his report by advising the members that he would circulate the slides from this meeting once he had received them and that he understood that the next meeting was not due to take place until March 2026.

### **c). SSE**

**Min 9470:25** Please refer to the discussion held under item 10h, ref **Min 9461:25**.

## **14. Contractor Works**

**Min 9471:25** The Clerk was reminded to continue pursuing the contractors for the completion of the back fence repairs and a start date for repainting the play equipment in the Heron Way playpark.

## **15. Correspondence**

**Min 9472:25** None.

## **16. Events**

### **a). Christmas 2025**

**Min 9473:25** The members spoke about their plans for their Christmas lights switch-on event, which had been scheduled to take place on Sunday 30th November at 5:30 p.m. They also gave the Clerk instructions to communicate with the contractors regarding the tree's erection and its decoration.

The discussion then digressed to the purchase of additional sets of lights for the Christmas tree, where it was agreed that the Clerk would need liaise separately with the parish councillors once she knew the tree's approximate dimensions.

## **17. Date of next meeting**

**Min 9474:25** The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, spoke to remind everyone that the next Parish Council Meeting would take place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 7.00pm.

Before the location was announced, the clerk reported that Mr P. Dadson of the Rivermead Trust had personally offered the Parish Council use of the school hall for their December meeting and possibly allow a short-guided tour afterward.

Following a brief discussion the members graciously accepted this invitation and Cllr J. Wallace announced that their meeting would be taking place at the Rivermead at Stoke, School Hall.

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**18. Section 100A(4)**

**Min 9475:25** The Chairman, Cllr J. Wallace read out loud the statement listed on the agenda in relation to Section 100A(4).

Accordingly, it was proposed by Cllr S. Back that the public be excluded from the next item. This proposal was seconded by Cllr T. Hall and was unanimously agreed.

**The meeting closed to the public at 8.15 pm and the four (4) parishioners and three (3) Medway Councillors left.**

**19. Confidential Matters**

**To receive an update on the following matters:**

**a). Village Hall Constitution + Doctors Surgery Update.**

**Min 9476:25** The members discussed the Village Hall Constitution and the situation with the vacant doctor's surgery premises.

**b). Lower Stoke Car Park Lease**

**Min 9477:25** The members spoke about the Lower Stoke Car Park Lease, where the Clerk was asked to organise for a private valuation.

**20. Close of meeting**

**Min 9478:25** The Chair, Cllr. J. Wallace, closed the meeting at 8.42 pm and thanked the members for attending.

**The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:**

<b>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025</b> <b>Parish Council Meeting</b>	<b>7.00pm</b>	<b>The Rivermead at Stoke,</b> <b>School Hall</b>
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**Tasks agreed 05/11/2025**

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

Clerk to establish ownership of the hedge next to the Allhallows Road allotments.

Clerk to upload a copy of the Parish Council's approved minutes from Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October onto the Parish Council's webpage.

Clerk to forward a copy of the invoice from the inspection of the village hall roof onto Cllr J. Wallace.

Clerk to chase contractors for a start date to paint the play equipment in the Heron Way Recreation Ground and to enquire if the contractors will be using Heras fencing to keep the children out whilst the works are being carried out.

Clerk to pay the agreed expenditure costs.

Clerk to chase Mazars LLP for results of external audit.

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Clerk to instruct the Men in Shed group to refurbish the staircase to the children's climbing frame in the Button Drive play park.

Clerk to chase contractors regarding final repairs to the Heron Way Recreation Ground back fence.

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 chase contractors regarding final repairs to the Heron Way Recreation Ground back fence.

Cllr S. Hall to report damaged kerb stones on the double bend at Allhallows Road/Stoke Road to Medway Council.

Clerk to continue liaising with Ward Councillor M. Pearce regarding regaining control over the grass cutting at the Stoke Recreation Grounds.

Clerk to submit grant application to purchase a new noticeboard for Middle Stoke.

Clerk to organise access to the Parish Council's email addresses.

Clerk to speak with the Mortley's Group regarding the Christmas Tree for the Lower Stoke Car Park.

Clerk to submit grant application to purchase a new noticeboard for Middle Stoke.

Clerk to finalise access to the Parish Council email address for Cllr J. Bansil.

Clerk to ensure grant payment has been sent to the Stoke Community Project in time for their event.

Clerk to chase for copy of KALC minutes from the last meeting and circulate to all members.

Clerk to speak with the Mortley's Group regarding the Christmas Tree for the Lower Stoke Car Park and then liaise with members regarding additional lights.

Clerk to accept the Rivermead Trust's invitation to use the school hall for the December Parish Council meeting and to advertise its alternative location in good time.

Clerk to organise private valuation of the Lower Stoke Car Park .