

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

A Meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held at The Forge, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath on the 9th June 2025.

Present: Councillors Peter Williams (Chair), Liz Eden (Vice Chair), Sue Abel, Dan Bright, Paul Eden, Malcolm Gulliver, Jean Jackson, Liz Miller and Paul Pittaway.

In attendance: Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk), Chris Cooke (Parish Lengthsman) and 2 members of the public.

074/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Jill Howe, Alyson Jewson and Chris Jewson.

075/25 Declarations of Interest

Sue Abel stated a personal interest in St Michael & All Angels Church together with the Heritage Friends Group.

076/25 Requests for Dispensation

None.

077/25 Adjournment of Meeting for Public Question Time

(1) Members of the Public

One of the members of the public asked whether there had been any progress with the issues caused by dog walkers in Brickhouse Lane. The Chair and D/Cllr David Nicholl gave an update but it was pointed out that it was mainly a highways issue. With regard to dog walkers using private land, that was an issue for the landowners.

(2) County Councillor Gaynor Jean-Louis

was absent.

(3) District Councillors David Nicholl and Harrison Rone-Clarke

D/Cllr David Nicholl reported that the consultation period on the draft Local Plan would be announced on Wednesday 11 June.

078/25 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12 May 2025

Having spotted an omission in the draft minutes, the Clerk asked the Parish Council to defer approving the minutes until the next meeting. This was agreed.

079/25 Planning Application

1) 25/00549/FUL – Oakdene, Copyholt Lane, Stoke Pound – Material change in use of land to residential, operational development to replace an outbuilding, the laying of hardstanding and associated works

2) 25/00545/CPE - Oakdene, Copyholt Lane, Stoke Pound – Lawful Development Certificate to establish use of land and outbuildings in connection with the residential use of the property Oakdene

The Parish Council had no comments to make on these applications.

3) Update on Previous Planning Applications

The update was noted.

080/25 Urgent Decisions taken since the Council's last meeting

The Chair reported that he had met with a representative from the Church and Ian Gerard and agreed to additional mowing 3 times a year behind the graves adjacent to the John Corbett Trail at a cost of £50. He had also agreed to Chris Cooke carrying out repairs to the tarmac surface on the Trail.

The large notice board at Stoke Heath Recreation Area had been replaced.

On the 24 June, work would start on the well at Shaw Lane Recreation Area with a view inspecting what was there before it was capped. The Chair pointed out that to make the well as a feature would cost in the region of £15,000. The Council agreed that such an expenditure could not be justified.

081/25 Finance

(1) Invoices for Payment for May 2025

The payments totalling £7,033.19 were unanimously agreed as follows:-

	Cost £	Method
Direct Debits Payment		
Cartridge World – Copier Rental	23.79	-
Sub total	23.79	-
Payments made since the last Parish Council Meeting		
P. Williams	790.00,	Online
Zurich Insurance	1712.54	“
Zurich Insurance	182.29	“
Clerk's net salary for May 2025	XXXX	“
Sub total	4079.56	-
Payments to be authorised at the Parish Council Meeting		
Clerk's Expenses – May 2025	40.49	Online
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax/NI on Clerk's salary – May 2025	547.55	“
C. Cooke	1387.80,	“
IDG Garden Services	954.00,	“
Sub Total	2929.84	-
Total Value of Payments for May 2025	7033.19	

(2) Financial Management Statement for May 2025

was noted.

082/25 Audit 2024/25

(1) Internal Auditor's Report

After a brief discussion, it was unanimously resolved to approve the Internal Audit Report produced by Ruth Mullett for 2024/25.

(2) Summary of Receipts and Payments as at 31 March 2025

The Parish Council approved the summary of receipts and payments for 2024/25 and agreed that they could be signed off by the Chairman and the Clerk.

(3) Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

- (i) Having reviewed Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return which had been issued in advance of the meeting and responded 'YES' to each of the assertions, the Council unanimously resolved that the Chairman and the Clerk should sign.
- (ii) Having reviewed Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return setting out the Annual Accounting Statements for the financial year 2024/25 which had been circulated as part of the agenda for the meeting, the Council unanimously resolved that the Chairman and Clerk should sign.
- (iii) The Council unanimously approved the dates for the Notice of Public Rights being 24th June to the 4th August 2025 to be displayed on the Council's website and notice boards.

083/25 Approval of Revised Financial Regulations

After initial comments by the Clerk, Paul Pittaway pointed out that under paragraph 13.3, the word 'biannually' should be replaced with 'biennially'. It was then agreed to unanimously to adopt the new Financial Regulations.

084/25 Film Night – 30 August 2025

After it was confirmed that the Council wanted to go ahead with the film night, the discussion centred on which film should be chosen for the event. It was agreed that the favoured options appeared to be Mufasa as the preferred option with Wicked as the second option.

085/25 Parish Lengthsman's Report

Chris Cooke reported that he was still facing the same problems with lack of contact or interest from the County Council's Highways Officers and similarly with officers at Bromsgrove District Council. A particular issue with the District Council being bins not being emptied on time. The Clerk agreed to speak to the District Council officers.

086/25 Correspondence

The Clerk raised the following items of correspondence:-

1. He had received confirmation from Bromsgrove District Council that the application for a grant of £30,000 via Community Infrastructure Grant Scheme had been successful. This meant with the Council's approval, the proposed refurbishment of the play area at Stoke Heath Recreation Area could go ahead. It was agreed unanimously to proceed with the project.

2. A request had been received from a local resident to install a shelter at Ryefields Road Recreation Area. After discussion, it was agreed not to agree to the request.

A request had also been made for a second waste bin on this site. The Clerk was asked to look into the likely cost.

3. The Head of Stoke Prior First School had informed the Clerk that further damage had been caused to the fence between the school and the Ryefields Road Recreation Area. The Clerk added that he had asked Ian Gerrard to check the site at random times and the school had made the Police aware of this latest incident.

087/25 Councillors Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

Dan Bright commented on the parking and traffic issues along Shaw Lane particularly around the 2 bridges plus Westonhall Road which was often used as a cut through for HGVs.

Malcolm Gulliver asked who owned the grass verge outside the Boat and Railway Inn as it was being used as a seating area. It was thought that permission may be required from the County Council and Dan Bright was asked to speak to the Landlord.

Sue Abel asked whether the bench on the Hanbury Road could be repainted. The Chair agreed to ask Chris Cooke to look into it.

With regard to the upkeep of the John Corbett grave, Sue Abel suggested that it might be possible to approach the John Corbett Trust which was managed by a firm of solicitors in Worcester. She and the Clerk agreed to make further enquiries.

088/25 Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the Parish Council's next meeting would be held on Monday 7 July 2025 commencing at 7.30pm at The Forge, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Chairman