

STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual General Meeting of Stoke Parish Council was held at The Forge, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath on the 12th May 2025.

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

In attendance: Neil Gulliver (Parish Clerk), D/Cllr David Nicholl and 1 Member of the Public.

060/25 Election of Chairman

Alyson Jewson, seconded by Chris Jewson, moved and it was unanimously agreed that Peter Williams be elected as Chairman of Stoke Parish Council for the ensuing year.

061/25 Election of Vice Chairman

The Chairman, seconded by Alyson Jewson, moved and it was unanimously agreed that Liz Eden be elected as Vice Chairman of Stoke Parish Council for the ensuing year.

062/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Jill Howe, Paul Pittaway and Chris Cooke (Parish Lengthsman).

063/25 Declarations of Interest

064/25 Requests for Dispensation

None.

065/25 Adjournment of Meeting to hear from Members of the Public

The member of the public present raised the issue of dog walking off the official footpaths in the Brickhouse Lane area. This activity was causing damage to crops and fences, disturbing local wildlife and litter and dog fouling was being left in the fields. In addition, the popularity of this area had caused a lay-by to be formed on Brickhouse Lane with a large pothole on the edge of the road. This lay-by was now being used as overfill parking for the TFM store. He was aware that the TFM store had suffered from thefts and that black rubber balloons associated with gas inhalation had been found nearby.

The Chair asked the Clerk to make the highways authority aware of the parking problem in the lane and the local SNT team. D/Cllr David Nicholl also agreed to raise the matter with Bromsgrove District Council.

066/25 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7 April 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 April 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

067/25 Planning Application

1) 25/00468/FUL – Land at Intall Fields Farm, Stoke Pound Lane, Stoke Prior – Proposed demolition of buildings and erection of 7 dwelling houses and associated works

The Parish Council remained totally opposed to this development and firmly believed that it would lead to further development at a later date. This development was on green belt land and under the NPPF supported the view that the land should be protected from development. Section 145 of the NPPF clearly stated that green belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. There appeared to be no evidence to support this case as exceptional and the

Parish Council were not aware of any decision by the planning authority to change the green belt boundary. Under Section 153 of the NPPF, the planning authority was required to ensure that substantial weight was given to any harm to the green belt including harm to its openness. The Parish Council was concerned that this site had never been identified as a site for development to meet local housing needs and would have an adverse effect on the local facilities which are already over-stretched.

With regard to the details of the proposed development, there was no provision for visitor parking therefore the only option would be to park on Stoke Pound Lane creating problems for highway safety on a road which was already used as a 'rat run' for cars and HGVs. There was no footpath provision on Stoke Pound Lane so any pedestrian traffic accessing the new houses would be required to walk on the highway. The road access to the site was too narrow to allow vehicles to access the site at the same time as another vehicle was leaving thereby creating potential congestion. The Parish Council also asked for clarification on the proposed use of the land to the rear of units 4-7.

068/25 Urgent Decisions taken since the Council's last meeting

There were no urgent decisions to be reported.

069/25 Finance

(1) Invoices for Payment for April 2025

The payments totalling £7,346.12 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		
NBB Recycled Furniture	239.94	Online
Clerk's net salary for April 2025	XXXX	"
Sub total	3583.69	-
Payments to be authorised at the Parish Council Meeting		
Clerk's Expenses – April 2025	100.62	Online
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax/NI on Clerk's salary – April 2025	544.07	"
Westcotec	3946.80,	"
R. Mullett	300.00,	"
IDG Garden Services	804.00,	"
Sub Total	5695.49	-
Total Value of Payments for April 2025	7346.12	

(2) Financial Management Statement for April 2025

was noted.

⁽³⁾ Chair's Allowance for 2025/26

The Clerk reminded Councillors that it had been agreed at the May 2024 meeting to increase the Chair's allowance by 5% each year. Therefore the budget for 2025/26 included an allowance of £790. It was then agreed to approve the increased allowance for 2025/26.

070/25 Request for Financial Contribution towards the Cost of Cutting the John Corbett Trail in the Churchyard

After initial comments by the Chair, a general discussion ensued regarding where the responsibility lay for the mowing of the churchyard. It was accepted that the ultimate responsibility lay with the District Church Council. However it was agreed by a majority vote to pay IDG Garden Services £300 towards the cost of cutting that part of the churchyard which formed part of the John Corbett Trail. It was also agreed that the Chair should meet on site with Ian Gerard to look at the possibility of other small areas being mowed which the Parish Council might consider paying for.

071/25 Parish Lengthsman's Report

Chris Cooke was unable to attend the meeting. The Chair did report that litter picking continued to be a major problem.

072/25 Correspondence

The Clerk raised the following items of correspondence:-

1. Michelle Baker would be starting the Tai Chi classes again at Stoke Heath Recreation Area from the 21 June to mid September, weather permitting.
2. A request had been received from the Landlord of the Boat and Railway to install picnic benches at the Shaw Lane Recreation Area and to serve alcohol and food. The Clerk pointed out that the Area had a 'no alcohol' notice. It was unanimously agreed to refuse the request.

073/25 Councillors Points of Information and Items for Future Meetings

Dan Bright commented that the Henbrook Hedgehog Centre had asked whether warning signs could be installed on Hanbury Road. The Chair pointed out that this was a matter for the highways authority and asked the Clerk to contact them.

073/25 Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the Parish Council's next meeting would be held on Monday 9 June 2025 commencing at 7.30pm at The Forge, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Stoke Heath.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Chairman