

MINUTES OF THE STOKE CANON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7.30pm in The Bridge

The Annual Parish Meeting is not a Parish Council meeting. The Local Government Act states that every parish must hold an annual Parish Meeting per year. This meeting must be held between 1st March and 1st June and proceedings must not begin before 6pm. If there is a Parish Council the Chairman of the Parish Council (or vice-chair if the Chairman is unable to attend) must preside.

This meeting is an opportunity for parishioners to question people and organisations on any issues relating to the village. As the Annual Parish Meeting is not a parish council meeting it is not conducted in the same way or governed by the same rules as a parish council meeting. Members of the public are permitted to make statements on relevant matters during the meeting. Any resolutions passed do not bind the Parish Council.

Present: Cllr K Scott-Clarke (Chair), Cllr J Maunder (Vice Chair), Cllr D Boustred, Cllr M Kemp and Cllr Fabian King (EDDC). The Clerk and three members of the public.

Meeting commenced at 7:30pm

APM 1/26 Welcome and introductions by the Chair of the Parish Council

Introduction

Thank you for attending tonight's meeting and to thank my fellow councillors and our Clerk Tracy Watkins for all their hard work this year.

Highways report

Councillor Derek Boustred has provided us with a detailed report for the Highways issues that we have dealt with this year.

The most challenging event this year having been the flooding in January. Our thanks go out to Derek and all of our flood wardens in the village who supported villagers guided by our flood plan.

Playpark

The play park continues to be well used with both adults and children enjoying the variety of equipment available. The annual inspection report flagged issues with the multi-play unit meaning that it is out of use and will finally need replacing after many years of repairs. This is an exciting opportunity for a new piece of equipment to be installed in the park. Quotes are in the process of being obtained and funding options explored. Regular grass cutting for the park is now undertaken by Brian Hurkitt on a regular basis from Spring to Autumn.

The playing field continues to be well maintained on a voluntary basis by Scott Hunt and we thank him for his work.

Dog Fouling

There have been several complaints about the persistent issue of dog fouling around the village. EDDC Councillor Fabian King has kindly referred us to the Street Scene department and we await their support with this issue. We have put in place and regularly refilled four makeshift dog mess bag dispensers around the village (by the level crossing, at the cut through between river close and the High Street, at the start of the footpath to Bramford Speke and most recently on the High Street) and lately put up new stickers encouraging people to pick up after their dogs. All bins can be used for this waste. Villagers are encouraged to report any dog fouling to EDDC via their website.

Footpaths

The Sandy Lane Crossing issues of last year seem to have been resolved and the crossing has remained open. Thank you to Councillor Mike Kemp for his work with this. Mike has also arranged for the rotten signpost at the Stoke Canon end of the path to Bramford Speke to be replaced and for the removal of the safety fencing that was left at the end of the footpath. Mike continues to keep an eye on our footpaths.

Grass cutting (not done by EDDC)

Exeter Garden Services will cut the grass verges that the Parish are responsible for as well as along the footpath between Stoke Canon and Rewe.

Village defibrillator

This is found in an unlocked cabinet attached to the side of the Jubilee Hall. It is registered with 'The Circuit' which is a national database for defibrillators. The defibrillator is checked monthly and the online records updated. This is kept in full working order by Councillor Derek Boustred.

Planters

Thank you to the volunteers who have planted out and maintained the planters at the end of River Close. They are a cheerful addition to the village.

I would like to thank our County Councillors and District Councillors for their support over the last 12 months.

We also say a sad goodbye to Councillor James Maunder at the end of this meeting. Thank you James for all the hard work you have done over the years for the Parish, especially the practical jobs, including many repairs in the park. Thank you also for offering to continue to support the Parish Council with practical jobs that arise in the future.

And finally a big welcome to Kevin Wraight, we look forward to working with you over the coming year and beyond.

There are still up to 6 vacancies for Councillors, the more of us there are the more we can do for the village. Please contact any of us if you are interested in becoming a councillor

APM 2/26 **Apologies** - none were received.

APM 3/26 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 14th May 2025 (Appendix 1)

PROPOSED: Cllr Maunder **SECONDED:** Cllr Kemp **RESOLVED**

The Chair signed the Minutes as a true record.

APM 4/26 An update from Stoke Canon Parish Councillors on the work of the Council during 2025-2026

The Clerk – Finances

The Annual Internal Audit has been completed for 2025-2026 and governance requirements complied with. There was a clean bill of health from the internal auditor with a couple of points raised which the Council will consider and action.

The year-end accounts, Audit and AGAR report will be available to view on-line after they have been signed off at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

A meeting to discuss the budget for the coming year and to set the Precept claim was held on 6th November 2025. The minutes for this meeting are published on the website.

The cost of insurance, subscriptions, dog bins, bank charges, gardening contracts, payroll services and website and email hosting have all risen this year and have had an impact on carry forward amount. The Parish council had to replace the laptop but this came out of an earmarked budget.

Cost of electricity went down as the Clerk signed on with a new electricity supplier called Yu who do not make a standing charge. We had a large VAT refund of £956.40. Our audit fees reduced as we did not have to pay the external auditor, due to passing the internal audit last year and this.

We replaced a bench which was funded by a generous locality grant from our DCC Councillors. The Parish Council wanted to thank both Cllr Nat Vanstone and Cllr Henry Gent for their support. Thanks also to Cllr Fabian King (EDDC) for supporting the grant process.

Reserves for new replacement playpark equipment will be discussed after the year end accounts have been finalised. As the Council has a healthy carry forward amount it was decided to leave the Precept at the same amount of £11,000 for 2026-27.

Highways – Cllr Boustred

Stoke Canon Parish Council - Highways Report for Annual Parish Meeting 2026

The year started well with 83 million pounds being given to Devon Highways for road repairs. To date there has been no major improvements locally and there is still a lot of work required on our minor roads e.g. Stoke hill to Pinhoe. The roads suffered badly in the extreme winter weather.

Storm Chandra in January, resulted in serious flooding in the High Street and Green Lane. 25 properties were sandbagged with some having severe damage. Our Highways Officer, Ricky Cowtan, and Councillor, Nat Vanstone, have approached landowners and Network Rail to try

and improve the situation. In addition our drains have been inspected and cleared of debris. Our thanks to Ricky and Nat for their efforts.

A revised flood plan is now on our website and is available on request.

Openreach have done extensive work around the village to enable improved, faster broadband access. The work was carried out with minimal disruption and to my knowledge is now complete.

We have had a request for a 30mph speed limit on Stoke Hill. This we will fully support. There is also going to be a revised speed limit on the A396 between Cowley Bridge and Stoke Canon.

This is necessary due to subsidence. Surveys are being carried out to monitor this.

20mph zones are being considered throughout Devon and we will apply for one in Stoke Canon when more details are sent out.

Local volunteers have cleared weeds and branches from the roadside between Mill Cottages and the bridge. Our sincere thanks to them.

Serious road accidents on the M5 continue to result in congestion through Stoke Canon with large numbers of HGVs using the bridge. In addition there have been increasing reports of HGVs using Stoke Hill and Church Lane to avoid longer routes. We will apply to Highways for appropriate signage to discourage this practice.

Careless parking by the shop continues to be a problem.

We had 8 visits from the Community Service Team. They did an excellent job of weeding our paths and road edges and strimming where required. They will be returning again this year. The team also provided 2 lined planters made from recycled wood. These were painted by village volunteers and have replaced the dilapidated bollards at the bottom of River Close. They were planted out for the Spring with tulips, daffodils and wallflowers.

Money was raised by the Parish council and from villagers for a bench which was installed at The Mill bus stop.

The grass cutting contract for 2026 has been awarded to Brian Hurkett (playpark) and Exeter Garden Services who will cut the grass verges including the footpath to Rewe and Sandy Lane.

APM 5/26 Any other 'parish affairs' matters that people wish to raise

- Problems with HGVs using Stoke Hill as a cut through. Has gotten worse since the lights on the main road were put up. Why are the road works taking so long with the land slip? Cllr Boustred will contact Cllrs Vanstone and Gent as they sit on DCC Highways Committee.
- Bus stop opposite the Mill is getting very overgrown. Can we arrange to have the weeds cut back? This will be actioned.
- The Norman Trust may be able to help raise funding for the playpark equipment along with DCC. The Parish Council now need to get some quotes. Cllr Scott-Clarke will action this. Cllr King (EDDC) will send details of another local Council who are looking into playpark equipment and there may be a possibility to share costs.
- Problems with vans parking along the main street on the corner by River Close. Other people have raised this as an issue. Someone needs to speak to the owner. Can the yellow lines outside the shop be repainted? Can we ask Highways for yellow lines on corner where van parks. Cllr Boustred will add to

his emails to Cllrs Gent and Vanstone (DCC)

- Dog fouling – Cllr King (EDDC) will ask Street Scene about pavement stencils and signs.

Meeting closed at 7.54pm

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Appendix 1

STOKE CANON PARISH COUNCIL

THE ANNUAL PARISH AND ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

of Stoke Canon Parish Council was held in The Bridge
on Thursday 8th May 2025 at 7.00 pm.

Those present were Cllr Kate Scott-Clarke (Chair), Cllr James Maunder (Vice Chair), Cllr Derek Boustred, Cllr Mike Kemp, Cllr Fabian King (EDDC), 1 member of the public and the Parish Clerk, Tracy Watkins

MINUTES

25/25 Election of Chair

Kate Scott Clarke advised that she would be happy to stand for another year as Chair. **SECONDED** BY Cllrs Maunder, Boustred and Kemp. **RESOLVED** Cllr Scott-Clarke signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

26/25 Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Scott-Clarke **PROPOSED** Cllr Maunder as Vice Chair for another year. **SECONDED** by Cllrs Scott-Clarke, Boustred and Kemp. **RESOLVED**. Cllr Maunder signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

27/25 Election of representing Councillors

Cllrs Boustred and Kemp signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

28/25 Apologies - To receive any apologies for absence

There were no apologies received. Nothing has been received from County Councillors.

29/25 Declarations of Interest Under the Code of Conduct

Councillors are reminded of the requirement to declare any interest, including the type of interest, and reason for that interest, either at this stage of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of that interest. None declared

30/25 Minutes of previous meetings (circulated)

To resolve to adopt the minutes of the APM on 2nd May 2024 and the Ordinary meeting of the Council on 6th March 2025 as a true record. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder. All agreed. **RESOLVED**.

31/25 Report from the Chair

The Chair read out their annual report. This will be filed with the Minutes of this meeting and published on the website.

32/25 Report from County Councillor

The final report from Cllr Sara Randall-Johnson has already been circulated to Councillors

33/25 Report from District Councillor

The April report from Fabian King has already been circulated to Councillors

34/25 Public Question Time

Up to 5 minutes **Public Question Time** for members of the public to bring forward any issues not on the agenda (where a matter is already on the agenda members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak when that item is considered, within the framework of the Council's standing orders). Where a decision is required, the issue will be placed on the following agenda. **Question from Member of the Public** – When was the last time anyone inspected the bridge? A lot more traffic using it now and a higher number of heavy good vehicles.

Cllr Boustred advised he would contact the Highways Officer to find this information out and ask if one can be done now.

35/25 The Certificate of Exemption

To resolve to approve the Certificate of Exemption. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott- Clarke. **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder. **RESOLVED.**

36/25 The Annual Internal Audit Report

The report from the auditor has been circulated to Councillors. The recommendations have been noted and will be acted upon during this financial year. To resolve to approve this report and publish. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Boustred **RESOLVED.**

37/25 Annual Governance Statement

Circulated to councillors – to resolve to complete and approve this statement. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder **RESOLVED**

38/25 Annual Accounting Statement

Circulated to councillors – to resolve to agree and sign this statement. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Kemp **RESOLVED**

39/25 End of Year Bank Reconciliation and Explanation of Variances

Reconciled accounts and details of variances have already been circulated to Councillors. To be noted

40/25 Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Council's accounts – to resolve to agree the dates of publication from **Tuesday 3rd June 2025 to Monday 14th July 2025** thus including the first 14 days of July as required by law. The notice to be published on the website. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder. **RESOLVED.**

41/25 Financial Matters

To resolve to approve the end of year accounts and statements to 31st March 2025.
(circulated)

To receive the accounts summary to 30th April 2025 (previously approved by Cllrs Maunder and Scott-Clark).

2 x Payments to North Devon payroll for wages (February and March salary)

1 x Payment of £513.78 for replacement laptop (02.04.2025)

1 x payment of £47.00 to ICO (22.04.2025)

1 x Payment to EDF £8.19 (23.04.2025)

1 x payment to Yu for electricity of £0.85 (24.04.2025)

1 x Payment received of £5500 Precept (01.04.2025)

To **NOTE** the following payments were approved remotely in accordance with Financial Regulations:

Note: Payments approved by Councillors K Scott-Clarke and Cllr J Maunder in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

PROPOSED Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder. **RESOLVED**

To confirm appointment of signatories for cheque payments and approvers for all BACS transaction currently Cllr. Scott-Clarke and Cllr Maunder. Cllrs Boustred and Kemp to be added to the bank mandate. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke and **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder. **RESOLVED**

Budgets and account variations – To resolve to review the budgets and discuss the variations in accounts from 2023/24. Keep an eye on the budgets. Look at the playpark equipment this year. The grass cutting takes a large percentage of our budget and our current contractor is not keeping to the agreed schedule. Cllr Boustred has sourced another person to help and **PROPOSED** we use them to fill in the gaps **SECONDED** by Cllr Maunder. **RESOLVED** and **APPROVED**.

It has been highlighted that there is a mess over by the railway which needs clearing.

Cllr Boustred will find a contact. The broken dog bins need to be chased.

Clerk to do.

Variations were **APPROVED**. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke and **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder. **RESOLVED**.

42/25 Planning

To discuss any planning applications received since the last meeting

APPEAL BY: Mr R May

APPEAL REF: APP/U1105/W/25/3364022

PROPOSAL: Prior approval (Class Q) for a change of use of a building as an agricultural unit to 5no. dwellinghouses (Use Class C3)

LOCATION: Oakhay Barton, Stoke Canon, Exeter EX5 4ED

The application was supported at the start but was then rejected. Appealing the decision.

43/25 Asset Register (circulated)

Asset register to be checked and approved. Amended and will be published.

PROPOSED Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Boustred **RESOLVED**

44/25 Financial Risk Assessment (circulated)

To resolve to approve and publish the financial risk assessment. **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllr Maunder **RESOLVED**.

45/25 Policies (circulated)

To resolve to approve and adopt the following policies:

- Financial Regulations – add £500 limit to sign off
- Equality and Diversity
- Standing Orders
- Privacy Policy
- Transparency Code
- Internal Control Policy • Reserves Policy
- Complaints procedure

Approval of Policies **PROPOSED** Cllr Scott-Clarke **SECONDED** Cllrs Maunder, Boustred and Kemp. **RESOLVED**.

46/25 Any Other Business and Date of Next Meetings:

Cllr Kemp will take over as footpath warden as Andy Hill is bowing out after 3 years. The Council wanted to thank Andy for his work and support. Clerk to send Cllr Kemp the telephone number for the Public Rights of Way team.

Bench in bus stop by the Mill – Cllr Boustred will contact DCW for prices.

Planters in River Close also prices needed.

Meetings are held on the 1st Thursday bi-monthly. Thursday 3rd July, Thursday 4th September and Thursday 6th November 2025

Meeting closed at 20.15pm

Signed:

Dated:

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