

Stoke upon Tern Parish Council

CHAIRMAN: Cllr Phil Butters

CLERK: Mr. G Bould

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr P Butters, Cllr S Planton, Cllr S Bartram, Cllr D Moore and Cllr J Scott.

Clerk: Mr G Bould.

In Attendance: Shropshire Councillor Donna Edmunds and Flight Lieutenant Lee Morrison – RAF Shawbury
1 Parishioner.

17.26. Welcome, Public Session and Partner updates.

The Chairman welcomed all Members, Partners and Parishioner to the meeting and in doing so invited their comments.

The Parishioner present highlighted the activity underway at St Peters Church Cemetery, Warrant Road for which the Parish Council had provided grant support.

Flight Lieutenant Lee Morrison from RAF Shawbury highlighted Night flying, details of which can be found on the Station's Facebook, Twitter and the website. Hi-vis kits can be ordered for horse riders, and any community project ideas can be forwarded in the normal way to be assessed. The use of drones and model aircraft is strictly controlled in military airspace; details can be found on the Civil Aviation Authority's website. There is also a 10k run on the newly laid airfield on the 28th March 2026.

Shropshire Councillor Donna Edmunds then reported on Shropshire Council's Council Tax increase and the potential relief for Parishioners who are eligible. Members agreed that it would be useful to publish this information in the next newsletter. The Councillor also updated members on the scrutiny panel looking at the spending and provisions within the local authority in terms of potholes and the culture within the council leading to poor communications which has been raised directly with the leader.

The Chairman thanked the Parishioners and Partners for their contributions and moved on to the next item of business.

18.26. To receive apologies for absence and any necessary approvals: Cllr K Newby, Cllr. L Bearman, Cllr P Waters, Cllr M Gilbert (illness) and Cllr S Burrell (family matters) PC Iain McIntosh - West Mercia Police (shift patterns). In agreeing the apologies members also agreed six months leave of absence due to family matters to Cllr Burrell and due to illness to Cllr's Newby, Bearman and Waters.

19.26. Declarations of Interest: None.

20.26. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 21st January 2026: Cllr Butters proposed and Cllr Planton seconded the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st January 2026 which were unanimously agreed and signed by the Chairman in the presence of members.

21.26. Clerk's Report: The Clerk updated the Parish Council on their report, the content of which was noted. In doing so the following items were highlighted. Members agreed that the Parish Council pursues the transfer of Langley Dale play area from Shropshire Council to be developed as a community asset in conjunction with a number of partners. Subject to a successful transfer a risk assessment and management plan could then follow on. The replacement picnic benches for the Millennium Green as previously agreed are in the process of being ordered. Members further supported the idea that a 'wet land' project be developed between the stream and Millennium Green. Cllr Planton agreed to undertake a site visit and view the site from the opposite side of the stream to assess the potential of the idea and to provide a report in due course. **Members agreed that the gov.uk new email addresses need to be activated and become live from the 1st April 2026.**

22.26. Updates- Local Plan/Place Plan, Tern Hill including a Community Benefit Society: Members unanimously agreed the updated joint statement for submission to Shropshire Council on Tern Hill for the local plan process once the dates are announced. The delay occurred due to both the engagement of Keele University and latterly Harper Adams University, both of whom are committed to the overall site development as seen within the document. It will also enable the concept of a wider community benefit society for the area to be developed through their engagement using graduates to undertake the research.

23.26. Shropshire Together – devolved services update: The last joint meeting held agreed to 'pause' the discussions on the said devolution discussions with Shropshire Council at present, to wait and see what the next 'offer' could entail. Instead those member councils present agreed to concentrate on the potential of an enhanced environmental grant that could offer a better service delivery model and financial viability in the medium to longer term. The date of the next joint meeting is the 17th June 2026, with a focus on service delivery models that could be achieved through an enhanced grant. These should to be set out and returned for the 3rd June 2026. In practical terms this work stream would be undertaken by the highways working group for Stoke upon Tern reporting back to the next Parish Council meeting prior to the June date. The joint meeting also considered the best way to lobby Shropshire Council via a resolution to the area committee of SALC to increase the grant.

24.26. VAS data update – Eaton upon Tern & Wistanswick: Members were updated on the data from the VAS sign at Wistanswick. The volume and speeds remain the same. It has not been possible to retrieve the data from Eaton upon Tern as the collector is ill at present. In terms of moving the signs Morelocks have gone into administration so conversations are underway with both Shropshire Council and Highline Electricals about this and other related issues. Once a solution is found, this will be reported through to the Parish Council in due course.

25.26. Cemetery Developments – progress on the bench: Members agreed to progress the bespoke oak bench at the cemetery having received and agreed the quote of £1,546.32. Cllr Scott will also amend the risk assessment for the bench as it will now include memorial plaques. The Clerk has also met on site with the Probation Service and they have agreed to help with the environmental improvements to the site including taking over the mowing of the site in 27/28 which will require a cancellation of the existing contract.

26.26. Newsletter & Notice Boards: Cllr Bartram thanked all those involved in the delivery of the last newsletter and indicated the next copy deadline for articles and adverts will be May 2026. In terms of notice boards and in light of the agreed leaves of absence at minute 18.26 the following action was agreed. Glebe field, Langley Dale, Ollerton and Eaton upon Tern notice boards the Clerk to follow up. Cllr Bartram to find an alternative volunteer to display the calling notice on behalf of the Parish Council at Wistanswick. The Parish Hall has also agreed to upload the calling notice onto their social media platforms.

27.26. Planning Committee reports – including any updates on Ollerton Business Park: Members noted the report that had been circulated and the outstanding applications still to be resolved. In terms of Ollerton Business Park appeal the agreed actions have been undertaken and the views submit from the Parish Council to the Planning Inspector.

28.26. Wistanswick area projects: West Mercia Probation Service Community Payback Teams have commenced activity as part of three projects within Wistanswick. The first is the clearance and improvements to the oldest part of the URC Chapel cemetery which is over 100 years old. This will involve cutting back the overgrowth and the painting of a cast iron fence within the site. The second project relates to internal painting within the two main rooms, three toilets and two lobby areas within the Institute. The third project is in three phases and is the improvements needed at the old tip. Firstly, clearing the site, ready for the second phase, the spreading of sub soil and then the third phase the seeding with wild meadow flowers and under planting of the hedgerows. The total project will take at least twelve months or more to complete.

29.26. Highways matters – including a discussion on the Hodnet by-pass: A meeting of the highways working group has been arranged for the 28th April 2026 11am at Wistanswick Institute. This meeting will look at the area reporting for 'fix my street', the potential for ditch and drainage works in areas that suffer from flooding, footpath clearance works and any other items that could be developed as part of an enhanced Environmental Maintenance Grant (EMG) style of projects.

30.26. Report back on Rural Crime meeting: The Chairman agreed to circulate the notes taken at the recent meeting with the MP and PCC for members to be able to comment on at the next meeting.

31.26. Reports from outside bodies – Parish Hall (PH) Cllr Planton: The AGM is set for Saturday 18th April 2026 at 7.30pm then moving into a social event. Main project for development is a replacement roof for the PH, it was agreed to check the hard copy archive files held by the Parish Council for any plans and for a copy of the valuation report to be loaned via Cllr Planton for use by the management committee. The fundamental issue remains though in that until the Parish Hall commit to the development of a robust business plan that also overhauls their governance documents focusing in on outcomes, grant or loan funding for any projects will be very difficult to secure.

32.26. Market Drayton & Rural Parishes Community Covenant: Details of the 'soft launch' for the well being hub will be circulated to members. After some discussion about the type and style of community engagement that could perhaps be deployed by the project to widen its membership Cllr Planton agreed in the short term to attend meetings and report back. The Parish Council will need to find a representative in due course.

33.26. Financial Matter -including Cemetery fees for 26/27 and internal auditing for 25/26.

1. Members agreed to hold the Cemetery fees at the same rates for 26/27 with the inclusion of the costs of bench plaques. A hard copy to be displayed at the site and held on file. The Town Clerk at Great Dawley Town Council has agreed to undertake the internal audit for 25/26. The Parish Council will need to recruit a new internal auditor for 26/27.

2. The Parish Council agreed the following items of expenditure set out below to be paid through the internet banking facility with HSBC; the invoices signed by two qualifying signatories and dated. Members further noted the year to date bank reconciliation paper tabled with the bank statement duly signed and dated and held on file.

Shropshire Council (energy costs)	£507.91	LGA 1972
Clerks expenses (expenses)	£265.52	LGA 1972
Clerks Salary Q4 (salary)	£1,819.90	LGA 1972
HMRC (PAYE)	£574.72	LGA 1972
Highline Electrical Ltd (replacement street lantern)	£565.20	LGA 1972
Balfours LLP (rental)	£59.55	LGA 1972
Allsorts Design & Print Ltd (newsletter)	£229.40	LGA 1972
Hugo fox (December subscription)	£11.99	LGA 1972
Hugo fox (January subscription)	£11.99	LGA 1972
Hugofox (February subscription)	£29.99	LGA 1972

34.26. To agree any items for a future agenda: None.

35.26. Dates of future meetings: Members agreed the following meeting dates - 15th July, 16th September, 11th November 2026, 20th January (precept), 17th March and 19th May 2027.

Date of the next set of Annual meetings: Wednesday 20th May 2026 7.00pm Parish Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Chairman:

Date: 20th May 2026.

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