STOKE ST GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 8th June 2026 in The meeting room. Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory at 7.30pm

Present: John Hardy (Chairman), Jessie Cartwright (Vice Chair), Lawrence Bostock, John Hembrow, Peter House, Samantha Smith, Becky Goodchild (Clerk), 1 member of the public. David Fothergill (arrived later).

Apologies for Absence: Ann Finn, Julie Monro. David Fothergill to arrive later.
Apologies accepted.

419. Approve and sign minutes of the May meeting:
The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

420. Declarations of interests and dispensations: None

421. Questions and comments from the public (limited to 15 minutes in total): A member of the public asked

- who is responsible for maintenance of the **pétanque area at the village hall** as weeds are growing there. When pulled up the hardcore comes up with them. The PC advised not to pull up the weeds. It was thought that the Village Hall committee is responsible for its' maintenance.

- The **hedge on the right on exiting the Village Hall** needs trimming as it obscures the driver's view up the road. The PC advised that the Village Hall committee is responsible for keeping it trimmed back.

422. Chairman to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office form: Form signed.

423. Planning

36/26/0007/CQ: Application for prior approval for proposed change of use from agricultural building into 2 dwelling houses (Class C3) and associated building operations at Meare Green Farm, Frog Lane, Meare Green

For information only, no comment required.

424. Highways

- Dropped kerbs in Polkesfield by the bus stop – The PC discussed the request for a dropped kerb near the bus stop for residents with disabilities wanting to cross the road. The LCN Link Officer has asked if the PC would consider paying for a Section 171 licence and to pay for a contractor to install 2 dropped kerbs. However the PC would need to budget for this and request

extra monies in the precept to cover the cost. The PC believe it is the responsibility of Somerset Council to fund this work, especially as they are encouraging bus usage. (See further discussion later in meeting)

Clerk to respond to LCN Link Officer.

- Huntham Lane path – The path by the entrance to the garages (with dropped kerb) is in a state of disrepair. However it is not clear who owns this section of path. The LCN Link Officer has asked the PC if they would consider adopting it if it is shown to be unadopted. The PC considered that it could be owned by the garage owners as it might effectively be part of a private drive between the road and the garages. (See further discussion later in meeting)

Clerk to relay the above to the LCN Link Officer.

425. Footpaths

- Kissing gate on Woodhill

The member of the public present advised the PC of a meeting about Phase III where gates and pathways will be made more accessible. Footpath clearance is planned. Discussion took place regarding placement of a kissing gate on Woodhill but there is uncertainty about what exactly was agreed regarding it being made of wood/metal, and who was to pay for it.

Clerk to clarify the situation with the previous clerk as to what was agreed.

-Request for contribution from Rights of Way Area Warden

A request was received by the ROW Area Warden for a financial contribution towards costs of work done in the parish (e.g. upgrading of stiles to gates, replacement bridges, way marking, vegetation clearance). On discussion the parish council agreed that the work carried out is much appreciated but as it is funded by Somerset Council, and the PC have not accounted for such a contribution in their budget, that they would have to decline the request. Councillors have contributed in practical ways such as installation of gates etc.

Clerk to respond to ROW Area Warden with PC's response.

(DF arrives 8.18pm)

426. Highways continued

- Dropped kerbs in Polkesfield by the bus stop (discussion continued from earlier in meeting) – The PC asked for DF's advise on this issue. DF suggested contacting the Service Manager of Transporting Somerset (John Perrett).

Clerk to email the Service Manager of Transporting Somerset to ask if Somerset Council can install dropped kerbs.

427. Somerset Councillor report

DF gave his monthly report of news from Somerset Council including the following:

-An independent review of Somerset Council's financial management has awarded a 1 out of 5 stars. SC has acknowledged the findings and will be expected to demonstrate progress against the review's recommendations.

-£18.9 million spent on consultants since 2023

-Four-Day Finance Chief Costs £290k

-Planning Enforcement backlog

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-Motion Secures Cross-Party Support for SEND Improvements. Somerset Council has unanimously backed a motion calling for urgent action to improve delays in Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs).

-£318,000 Outstanding from Housing Developer Contributions

-Vaping survey open Feedback requested from schools, colleges and organisations working with children and young people on the challenges associated with vaping. Closes 19 June 2026. https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/public-health/vaping-survey-2026/

-Alcohol Support Survey: Somerset Council is seeking feedback to better understand why some people who may benefit from support with alcohol use do not access help from Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS). Closes 15 June 2026. https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/public-health/alcoholneedssurvey/

Food Waste Recycling Pledge: Somerset Council is encouraging residents to pledge to recycle their food waste as part of a county-wide campaign to reduce waste and increase recycling. Residents who take the pledge before 31 July 2026 will be entered into a prize draw to win a year's supply of compostable liners for their kitchen caddy. Feedback gathered through the accompanying survey will help shape future waste reduction campaigns. Find out more and take the pledge here: https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/waste/pledge-to-recycle-food-jun-jul2026/

428. Flooding

-Survey with drain camera – Following the last meeting the clerk advised that she contacted West Country Drainage Services about the possibility of undertaking a drain survey using a camera. WCDS responded that they would require a site plan showing the areas that need checking. They also suggested an alternative to a drain survey which would be to use a combi tanker to jet and suck away any debris from the lines and gullies. It was agreed to obtain a quote for this.

DF suggested that Road Records (HighwaysDept) should have plans showing where all the drains are

Clerk to request a quote for the combi tanker.

Clerk to request site maps of areas of concern from Road Records.

429. Huntham Lane path (discussion continued from earlier in meeting) - DF advised that Road Records might also be able to tell us if Somerset Council own this section of path by the entrance to the garages (with dropped kerb).

Clerk to ask Road Records if Somerset Council owns this section of path.

430. Playing Field – Injury at the play area – A member of the public brought an injury to the attention of JM. This was agreed to be an issue for the Playing Field Management Committee.

431. Heart of the Village – SS advised that the open surgery on Saturday had been well attended, with supportive comments made. Notes will be published.

Accounts have been submitted to the accountant.

Recruitment is underway for a deputy shop manager with interviews completed.

SS advised that HoTV currently has 4 committee members but they need a secretary and a

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chairperson.

432. Councillor and Clerk training – to be removed from the agenda for now.

433. **Financial matters**

- CIL money remaining (£4162.34) to be spent by October 2027 – This can be used for specific things e.g. play equipment replacement, community infrastructure. There is time to consider what this money might be used for but suggestions included

- new benches outside the pub
- traffic calming outside the school
- virtual path by the school (as in Creech St Michael)
- The clerk advised that she had submitted the 2025/26 CIL annual report (produced by the previous clerk) to Somerset Council.

-Defibrillators: Pads for all 3 defibrillators to be replace July/Aug – It was agreed that we need 1 person for each of the defibrillators who will be responsible for regular checking of use and expiry dates of pads/batteries, and reporting back to the clerk. The 3 defibs are placed on Curload, The Royal Oak, and at Coates English Willow. A notice will be put into the Newsletter asking for volunteers. If anyone would be willing to be involved in this please contact the clerk or a member of the parish council. It was suggested that we put a post on Facebook and a poster in the shop asking for volunteers.

Clerk to check with AF where we have previously purchased the pads from. Clerk to ask the Burrowbridge clerk where they purchase theirs from.

-Insurance renewal: 1 year or 3 year agreement? (Extension granted for payment of premium to be made after this meeting) – All agreed on the long term 3 year agreement which should keep the premium down.

Clerk to inform insurance company of 3 year agreement

-Annual leave for clerks – It was suggested that the clerk could be paid in place of annual leave as it is difficult for time to be taken off as the regular clerk duties still need to be done each month.

Clerk to ask SALC what the standard approach is to annual leave for clerks.

JHa and JC to produce a contract for the clerk.

The following payments were approved:

DATE of invoice	PAYEE	DETAIL	AMOUNT
1-6-26	Rebecca Goodchild	Clerk salary	£327.81
26-5-26	Rebecca Goodchild	Reimbursement for purchase of refreshments for APM	£24.90
31-5-26	Sally Taylor	Parish Clerk duties for May and handover mtg	£274.40
5-5-26	ICO (Information Commissioner's Office)	Data protection annual fee Order ref: 002b6a551204	£52.00
1-5-26	Josh Williams	Grass cutting Inv 88	£115.00
	G Wagen James	Strimming and mowing	£185.40

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6-4-26 18-5-26		**Inv 3788 (£123.60) Inv 3789 (£61.80)**	
4-5-26	**Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Ltd**	**Annual insurance renewal**	**£532.56**
31-5-26	**Cumbria Clock Co Ltd**	**Annual servicing of parish clock on 28-5-26**	**£288.00**
15-5-26	**Somerset Association of Local Councils Ltd**	**Councillor training (Councillor essentials part 2: Finance & Governance 11/05/26) Inv 3182**	**£25.00**
6-3-26	**Rockwell Print & Sign**	**Printing of Newsletter (Spring 2026)**	**£84.00**
1-6-26	**Williams Hall**	**Meeting Room hire 23-4-26**	**£5.25**

Previous month's invoices to be signed – The invoices approved for payment at the May meeting were signed by JH as having been paid.

External audit – The PC agreed to have an audit of the previous 3 year's accounts as good practice.

Clerk banking access and signatories – JHe advised that he and the clerk had met and started the process of requesting access for the clerk to the PC bank account. Await response from Lloyds. More councillor signatories are needed as currently only JHe and AF can authorise payments that have been agreed by the PC.

JHe and JHa to attempt again to set JHa up as a signatory.

434. Other items for discussion –

PC filing cabinet – The PC discussed where the filing cabinet could be stored as it contains old records which the clerk does not need much access to. Storage at the Village Hall was considered.

Clerk laptop – The PC agreed that the clerk could request help with setting up the new laptop from Mark Curtis Computers.

Newsletter – The clerk advised that the Summer Newsletter will be sponsored by Mother Hubbard Storage.

Clerk to invoice Mother Hubbard Storage for the printing cost.

AGAR – The clerk advised that she had emailed the completed AGAR (annual return) forms and supporting documents (produced by the previous clerk) to the external auditor.

Meeting closed at 9:35pm

The next meeting will be on Monday 13th July 2026 at 7:30pm
at the Williams Hall, Stoke St Gregory.

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