

STONESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at Stonesfield Primary School on Wednesday 2nd July 2025 at 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllrs C Renshaw (Vice Chair), L Bate, P Lowe and S Powell.

Other present: The Parish Clerk. 0 members of public.

25/914 To receive and accept apologies for absence: Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs U Rice (Chair), D Brown, J Huband and S Warr.

25/915 Public Participation: There was none.

25/916 Declarations of interest: There was none.

25/917 To approve the minutes of the meeting 4th June 2025: It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes as a true record. A correction was made by the Clerk on 'Items to be considered for the next meeting' to add the word 'of' 'To discuss the cutting **OF** the hedges' Village Hall.

25/918 Actions Register: The register was reviewed and updates noted.

- IT Policy: Cllr P Lowe would like to revisit the policy to discuss a section. **ACTION:** to be added to the September meeting.
- AGAR: Submission confirmed; awaiting feedback.
- Additional signatories: Progress made; Cllrs C Renshaw and P Lowe have now signed the bank mandate. The Clerk to send to the bank to be processed.
- Defibrillator pads at St James Centre confirmed due in October. **ACTION:** Cllr C Renshaw still to add the Clerk to the Village Hall Defib portal.
- Maintenance audit/project: **ACTION:** Item to be added to the September meeting.

25/919 Planning applications:

1) APPLICATION NO: 25/01356/HHD

PROPOSAL: Installation of swimming pool and erection of pergola, construction of detached garage with garden store and log store and refurbishment of existing outbuilding to create additional living space. Associated hard landscaping works to include new walling, fencing and stone piers.

LOCATION: Stonesfield Manor Combe Road Stonesfield

Parish Council Comments: No objection.

25/920 To receive reports from County and District Councillors: None of the Councillors were present – apologies had been received.

- 1. OCC Cllr Andy Graham report:**
- 2. WODC Cllr Genny Early report:**
- 3. WODC Cllr Tim Sumner report:**

25/921 To receive reports from Parish Councillors: There were no reports given.

25/922 To receive reports from Stonesfield PC working groups:

1. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:

- a) **To receive any updates and to review and approve any recommendations formally submitted by the NP Steering Group:** A detailed report was received from Cllr P Lowe which was accepted and agreed. This is attached as a supporting document to the minutes.
- b) **To note any additional matters raised for future agenda consideration:** There were none to note.

25/923 Finance:

- a) **Payments:** To approve ratification of payments. (**Paper 2**)
- b) **Defib pads:** To approve the payment of £70.02 for replacement defibrillator pads at the St James' Centre. The current pads expire on 1st July 2025. As the defibrillator is a village asset and the Parish Council previously funded its relocation, it is proposed that the Council covers the cost of this essential safety maintenance.
- c) **PayPal account:** To consider and approve the creation of a PayPal account for the Parish Council to enable purchases without a debit card (e.g., antivirus protection or online services essential for the Clerk's admin duties). Payments made via this method will be reported to Council by the Clerk in line with her delegated authority for urgent or operational spending.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following:

- a) The payment schedule as set out in **Paper 2**.
- b) A payment of £70.02 for replacement defibrillator pads at the St James' Centre (pads expire 1 July 2025).
- c) The creation of a Parish Council PayPal account with a £300 spending limit under the Clerk's delegated authority for operational purchases (e.g., software or online admin tools). **ACTION:** Update the Financial Regulations to reflect the approval of the PayPal account and delegated spending.

Proposer: Cllr C Renshaw

Seconder: Cllr P Lowe

All in favour

25/924 HR Committee and Working Groups Membership: To review and approve the membership of the HR Committee and all Parish Council Working Groups.

The Council reviewed and approved the updated membership of the HR Committee and the Parish Council's working groups. Councillors confirmed or updated their participation as follows:

1. HR Committee

Cllrs L Bate, P Lowe, C Renshaw

2. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG)

Cllrs J Huband, P Lowe, S Powell

3. SAFER Working Group

Cllr C Renshaw

4. Communications Working Group

Cllrs U Rice – Chair, J Huband, S Warr

5. The Glebe Working Group

Cllr S Powell

6. The Common Working Group

Cllrs J Huband, S Powell

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the above members to the HR committee and the PC working groups. The Safer and Glebe working groups will need at least one more member.

ACTION: Group membership and outside bodies representation to be added to the September meeting.

Proposer: Cllr S Powell **Seconder:** Cllr C Renshaw **All in favour**

25/925 Purchases: To consider and approve the purchase of an Owl video conferencing device to support the Clerk's duties: **(Paper 3)**

The members considered the proposal for the purchase of an Owl video conferencing device to support the Clerk's ability to attend meetings remotely, when necessary (e.g., during severe weather or exceptional circumstances), with the aim of ensuring accurate and effective minute-taking and important council governance advice when not physically present.

The Clerk advised that this request was in line with a request she made at the time of her interview and appointment, where it was agreed that appropriate provisions would be provided to enable flexible working when required.

It was **RESOLVED** to **decline** the purchase of the Owl device at this stage, with a review to follow after winter. Cllr C Renshaw would take minutes and items deferred if necessary.

It was noted that this decision is in conflict with the support originally discussed and agreed with the Clerk upon her appointment, particularly in relation to enabling remote attendance when necessary. The Clerk expressed concern, reiterating that as the Council's Proper Officer, she should be present at all PC meetings.

Proposer: Cllr C Renshaw **Seconder:** Cllr S Powell **All in favour**

25/926 General Plan of Community Engagement – Any updates.

Cllr U Rice was not in attendance to give an update.

25/927 Scheme of Delegation: To consider and approve the proposed Scheme of Delegation, which outlines the responsibilities and decision-making authority of the Full Council, the Clerk (as Proper Officer), the RFO and the HR Committee, including procedures for urgent expenditure and planning comments between meetings **(Paper 4)**

It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the Scheme of Delegation.

Proposer: Cllr C Renshaw **Seconder:** Cllr P Lowe **All in favour**

25/928 Bins: To consider and approve the installation and servicing costs of a dual bin to be located at the shop. There is a one-off installation charge of £45, and a weekly emptying charge of £8.37, fixed until April 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the installation and servicing costs of a dual bin. **ACTION:** Clerk to send a location photo of where we would like the bin to go to WODC.

Proposer: Cllr C Renshaw **Seconded:** Cllr L Bate **All in favour**

25/929 Community Orchard: Update and next steps.

Cllr C Renshaw and Cllr S Powell provided an update following an informal meeting regarding the Community Orchard. A 5 year working plan (Terms and conditions) to be produced for the Glebe for PC approval.

25/930 The Common – Cricket Pitch Fencing and Boundary Issues: To discuss and approve next steps. To consider a report (circulated by email 19.6.25 and 25.6.25) from Cllr J Huband following a site visit with Cllr S Powell regarding fencing replacement and boundary clarification on the Common. To discuss the next steps and approve any urgent work to be carried out from the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the urgent work to be carried out and to go with the metal post option (200 m) £979.20. Council agreed to proceed with the Clipex (metal) fencing option with minor price changes accepted if quotes have changed. **ACTION:** The Clerk to get in contact with the farm manager at the College. The College will install the fencing as part of a student project.

Proposer: Cllr S Powell **Seconded:** Cllr C Renshaw **All in favour**

25/931 Village Hall: To discuss the cutting of the hedges.

The PC confirmed it is responsible for maintaining a small stretch of hedge by the village hall car park. The hedges were cut late last year or early this year. It was agreed to trim one side one year, the other side the next, to manage workload and cost. The Council agreed this alternating schedule should continue. The hedges must be cut regularly, regardless of the schedule. Overgrowth narrows the roadway and causes congestion, especially during events like football matches. Clarification sought whether the Playing Fields group, who now have a new hedge trimmer, could be asked to do it (as the PC contributed to that equipment).

It was noted that: The Playing Fields Committee may have used a Parish Council grant to purchase the trimmer. There was uncertainty whether that means hedge trimming should now be done at no cost to the Parish. It was agreed more information was needed before confirming any arrangements or costs. The Council agreed in principle to continue with annual hedge cutting, alternating sides. **ACTION:** The Clerk obtains more information before any arrangements or costs are approved.

25/932 Biodiversity Policy/Plan: To discuss the Biodiversity Plan circulated to all councillors and agree the next steps. The PC decided to defer this item to the September meeting.

25/933 Clerks Report: The following items were noted.

- AGAR submitted
- Meadow Clary survey noted success
- Traffic regulation and flood fencing noted
- New Clerk phone number operational

- Shop grant project noted (painting/windows) the PC to notify the shop landlord/owner and give them details of grant funding to help.

25/934 Deferred items from previous meetings:

- Biodiversity Plan/Policy

25/935 Items to be considered for the next agenda:

- **OCC delegated agreement model:** To discuss funding given to PCs to hire a contractor to take over some grass/hedge maintenance. Concerns had been received from a resident regarding the current state of vegetation and maintenance around the village. Gutters, verges, and areas such as Longore, Laughton Hill, Woodstock Road, and the area around the Evenlode bench.
- To discuss a village maintenance list/schedule for the PC's self-employed handy man
- Neighbourhood Plan
- IT policy review

25/936 Date of the next Full Council Meeting: It was noted that there is no meeting in August. The date of the next full Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 3rd September 2025 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting closed at 8.07 pm

Supporting document – Stonesfield Parish Council Meeting 2nd July 2025

NPSG - Feedback from Meeting on 11 June.

- Talked through process of dealing with feedback primarily from residents and WODC
- discussed some of the themes emerging, the main one being the need to incorporate something on young people, tightening of some unclear wording and how an abstract might be helpful further down the line for those who found the document too long and complex.
- Comments were being meticulously reviewed and there was a flow chart showing the process being used by the team reviewing
- The strong feeling of the meeting was we need to get on with submitting a final document so we can get on and implement it and divert resources to other priorities rather than spending time writing and rewriting. To that end, the aim is to bring a revised draft to 2 September PC meeting.
- Ursula also said she would touch base with the Chief Planning Officer on a few issues and would write to him, in particular to refute the few, but serious comments we'd had about bias in the process.

SG meeting 30 June

- New ToR were agreed.
- In future mins will come to PC
- We discussed when the revised draft will be available- aiming for 20 Aug to give PC members 2 weeks to read before the PC meeting. It is proposed to make this easy to see what's changed.
- We discussed LGSs, the need to acknowledge letters from Landowners and more detailed responses and some initial thoughts on recommendations for changes to designation based on the feedback we've had and further consideration.
- So, need to alert PC members that there will significant documentation to look at from 20 Aug namely
 - The revised text for the Plan incorporating amendments arising from the comments received from WODC, Stonesfield residents and the statutory consultees.
 - The formal responses to the green spaces landowners would also be provided to the PC at that time, or possibly earlier.

Addressing comments from Cllr Warr

- Scope.

It was agreed very early on, based on WODC's recommendations and by reading a lot of other Plans that we would base our Plan on Charlbury's. The Survey, policies and format were all based on that. Whilst it is perfectly possible to include other things, the NP is a formal document and not a shopping list to cover everything the village might want. We can capture other things separately which is what the PC agreed to do, but also they could happen anyway with out a NP. However, changes will be made based on feedback, such as the need for policy/aspirations for young people which will be included. *[the PC confirmed this was a satisfactory approach to the scope].*

- Re how the allegations of bias in the feedback will be addressed which Ursula suggested tackling "head on" in the meeting.

The SG was set up to not be biased, using known expertise and having no 'group' in a majority and reporting to the PC, with PC members on the Group. UR was going to raise it as part of her letter to the Chief Planning Officer to refute the allegations. There will also be clear statements in response to the individual comments containing these allegations within the spreadsheet compiled by Pete Smyth which will be publicly available.

It is also worth adding that WODC's feedback to the Draft NP was that the Draft NP demonstrates a strong community focus and well documented evidence base. With the consultation exercise, on the draft plan the PC was getting feedback it represented what residents wanted and it had over two thirds positive support; taking feedback on board we should get that support higher.

- Re the letter to the Chief Planning Officer,

UR sent this and has forwarded his reply which looked positive; this has been shared with members.