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## MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025

**COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE:** C. Baker, R. Burnham, T. Ramsden, R. Thomas, L. Turvey, T. Young.

**UNITARY COUNCILLORS:** R. CARRINGTON

**MEMBERS OF PUBLIC:** 12

**DATE OF MEETING:** 01.10.2025

The minutes below relate to the meeting that took place at Longburrow Hall, Stokenchurch.

### MINUTES

Meeting opened at 19.35 by Chairman T Ramsden

#### OPENING

**Presentation from Carol Hayward, the chairman of The Best Kept Village.** Stokenchurch Parish Council was presented with the award of second place for the Best Kept Village. The Chairman of The Best Kept Village noted the judge's statements' an obvious great improvement from the previous year. Marking the village looked more floral, the painting of buildings and a better map. Chairman T Ramsden Thanks the parishioners and Councillors for their contributions.

- 1 To receive and accept apologies of absence.** None stated.
- 2 To receive any declarations of interest.** None stated.
- 3 Statement from the Chairman.**

"I wanted to take this opportunity to touch base on a couple of things. I'm aware that there was a Bucks Free Press article following the council's decision to go ahead with a financial freeze and pause on non-essential expenditure, and with that, concern has been caused. But not only that, there have been comments and statements made about the council.

I want to clarify that whilst a financial pause on non-essential expenditure was agreed, the council is in a financially sound position. As has been stated, the council has experienced back-dated charges to no fault of their own, and has been incorrectly charged by other parties, which our staff have been working to resolve. Not only this, but as our ex-chairman was kind to address, we have managed to keep the precept (the money received from parishioners) down to a minimum, relying on rents received by the council. As you may be aware, we decided to restrict Longburrow Hall bookings, which is a source of revenue for the council and of course, such actions will have financial implications. In any line of work, finances are reviewed, and the council has done just that. Again, to clarify, we are in a financially sound place, and I want to reassure parishioners of this.

We have had a couple of resignations from council members, and whilst we cannot speak for those councillors, I would like to speak of the pressures surrounding being on the council and remind Parishioners that your council is made up of volunteers and part-time staff. Councillors join because they first and foremost want to help and improve the community, giving up their time for the love of Stokenchurch. Finding the balance between the demands of Stokenchurch Parish Council, work and personal life is hard; the council requires a lot of time for all, but for the love of Stokenchurch coun-

cillors volunteer. We have an incredible team of staff who have been working hard to get Stokenchurch to where it needs to be and are discussing new and exciting projects. But, there unfortunately seems to be, as of late, a continuous campaign to discredit the council, give criticism of individuals on the council or staff, and I want to make it clear that we do not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment of our staff, councillors or the council.

If you're unhappy with something, then tell us. You can email the clerk, and we can work to improve.

Managing the various aspects of a council requires significant effort, and while we strive to be open, transparent, and informative, there are certain matters where complete transparency is not possible. However, we aim to strengthen the connection between the council and its parishioners, collaborate with parishioners to maintain a vibrant community, and support local businesses and parishioner initiatives. You can always email the clerk should you want to enquire about any parish council matter.

Everybody, I'm sure, is unified in the want for the place they live, and the community that surrounds them, to be a kind, positive and prosperous place. The council wants Stokenchurch to be just that.

#### 4 **Public Forum. The chairman gave a statement as they opened public forum.**

"As I open the public forum, I would like to take a moment to clarify our standing orders regarding public participation during our meetings. Following our previous meetings, and to ensure we can bring some order back to this section, I will be enforcing these guidelines more stringently.

Firstly, members of the public are welcome to make representations, answer questions, and give evidence on the business listed on the agenda. However, the total time allocated for public participation will not exceed 10 minutes, unless directed otherwise by the chair of the meeting.

Within this, each member of the public is allowed to speak for a maximum of 2 minutes.

Whilst questions and participation from the public are encouraged, they do not require an immediate response during the meeting, nor will they initiate a debate. Should you have queries relating to anything not on the agenda, this can be addressed to the clerk outside of the meeting."

**Parishioner 1:** Parishioner 1 discussed that they had previously spoken with Bucks councillors at their surgery in September, about the desire to paint the Stokenchurch Fire Station; however, with the announcement of the proposed closure of the Fire Station, they wanted to know what the next steps and what permission is required. Cllr V Jenkinson mentions that the Fire Station is used as a training space at the back of the station, and that the Parish Council do not own the building. Unitary Councillor R Carrington states they have been in contact with the Fire service following the announcement of the closure. He clarifies that the Buckinghamshire Milton Keynes fire authority states that following the elections, we are in a minority administration, which means that proportionality is reviewed, and the priorities have changed. The closure was previously raised in February; however, it was rejected. It has since been raised again. Unitary councillors have an extraordinary meeting on Wednesday 8th, and a petition has been raised which will be shared.

**Parishioner 2:** Parishioner spoke of the Japanese Knotweed in the church and clarified that this would not be the responsibility of the church, as she had seen there was a query on the agenda. The clerk confirms that staff are speaking with specialists and reviewing next steps. Parishioner 2 will send an email to the clerk to liaise on this matter further, as they are part of the church.

**Parishioner 3:**

#### 5 To confirm minutes of:

**Meeting 3rd September 2025.** Proposed: R Thomas. Seconded: C Baker. Abstained: L Turvey.

a Minutes confirmed.

**Meeting 3rd September 2025 (closed session).** Proposed: R Thomas. Seconded: C Baker. Ab-

b stained: L Turvey. Minutes confirmed.

**Extraordinary meeting 12th September 2025 (closed session).** Proposed: R Burnham. Seconded: V Jenkinson. Abstained: R Thomas. Minutes confirmed.

**6 Buckinghamshire councillors: To receive updates from Buckinghamshire Councillors.**

UC R Carrington thanks those that joined the Planning Committee West meeting last week, and mentions in particular the Mill Road application, stating that despite a lot of discussion and objection that the application still passed. UC R Carrington mentions the consultation of Buckinghamshire Local Plan has now started, as due to varying priorities and demands Bucks council had not yet put a Local plan in place. The consultation on the draft plan is now out for consultation for those that hold an interest, and urges those to submit comments, there is a timed deadline that of Christmas this year. UC R Carrington raises the concerns mentioned at the last meeting on Five Oaks, since the meeting, several enforcement actions have been called., along with environmental health actions, along with Police being aware of reports of ASB.

## FINANCE

**7 Bills Payable: September 2025.** Proposed: R Thomas. Seconded: C Baker. Bills payable confirmed.

**8 Monthly accounts: September 2025.** Proposed: V Jenkinson. Seconded: L Turvey. Monthly accounts confirmed.

**9 Monthly Bank Reconciliation: September 2025.** Proposed: R Thomas. Seconded: C Baker. Monthly Bank reconciliation confirmed.

## PLANNING

**10 PL/25/2695/FA: Greendale Farm Bigmore Lane Horsleys Green Buckinghamshire HP14 3UP. Front, side and rear first floor extensions and removal of chimney.**

The council gave no objections.

**11 PL/25/2764/FA: Woodmans Cottage, Ibstone Road, Stokenchurch, Buckinghamshire, HP14 3XS. Replacement of existing outbuilding with detached outbuilding and associated works.**

The council gave no objections.

**12 PL/25/2604/TP: Tesco Express, George Road, Stokenchurch, Buckinghamshire, HP14 3RN, Reduce by 2m branches of mixed species trees encroaching on building up to a height of 7m (G1 - Maple, Ash). Team to trim sides, prune and reduce by up to 2m in height mixed species hedges on boundary of yard and carpark (H1 and H2 - Pyracantha, Conifer).**

R Burnham abstained and did not take part in this vote. The council gave no objections.

## UPDATES

**13 Clerk Report:**

The Clerk updates on the incorrect council tax charges, and notes that the VOA has now corrected the errors, and we have received a back-dated refund. Swilley Pond has received and enforcement, which is now being looked into with our solicitors due to the Parish Council Owning the land, the next steps are being discussed. The fencing to Longburrow hall contractors have confirmed the work would be carried out next year, and the Finance working group will work this into the budget for next year. Japanese knotweed is currently being looked into with a specialist company and we are waiting for a survey to be carried out. ASB behaviour was raised with the clerk which has been raised to Thames Valley Police. Thames Valley Police have asked if any parishioners do experience ASB to ensure they report it to TVP.

## OTHER BUSINESS

**14 Vice-Chairman: To elect a Vice-Chairman to Stokenchurch Parish Council.**

The council resolved by majority to defer this to the next meeting.

**15 Playground Annual inspections: To note the reports received from the annual playground inspections and actions taken.**

The council confirmed the annual playground inspections. The clerk informed of the planned removal of some play equipment in the coming weeks.

**16 Cemetery Bench: The request to place a wooden bench within the cemetery.**

The council resolved to deny this request due to it being a wooden bench and it previously being confirmed in council composite benches would only be accepted due to maintenance and upkeep.

**17 Stokenchurch Medical Centre appointed representative: To appoint a new Stokenchurch Councillor as representative of the council to Stokenchurch Medical Centre.**

The council resolved C Baker as the new representative.

**18 Coffee on the green on common land: The request for permission of the Parish Council to place my airstream coffee unit on the common for the evening of Friday 31st October to sell Halloween themed / seasonal hot drinks and sweet treats to join in with the Halloween festivities approximately 5-8.30pm.**

This request had been updated following the submission of the agenda to:

1. The request to allow one of our airstream coffee units to pitch up either on the Kings car park or the green at weekends as a pop up which will be welcomed by the community.
2. The request for permission to pitch on 31/10 for Halloween (as per the initial request).
3. The request to organise around the 2nd week of December, to continue to organise our annual carols and brass band event on the Kings Common by the Xmas tree, serving hot festive drinks from the airstream coffee unit.

The council resolved to permit all 3 requests through a majority vote.

**19 Transport in Stokenchurch: The proposal to appoint Cllr L Turvey as Stokenchurch Parish Council Representative.**

Proposer: V Jenkinson. Seconded: C Baker. The council confirmed Cllr L Turvey as the Stokenchurch Parish council representative for transport. Cllr L Turvey mentioned a parishioner spoke with UC S Adoh to review the public transport in Stokenchurch and if this could be reviewed to make getting to Thame and High Wycombe easier.

**20 Longburrow Playground: To note the progression and purchase of the Longburrow Playground project with Proludic to commence 27th October 2025.**

It was noted the council has proceeded with the Longburrow Hall Playground project for £55,000 and work is planned to commence on the 27<sup>th</sup> October.

**21 Longburrow Playground: The proposal for additional work to the sum of £1453.00 to the Longburrow Playground Project for additional painting and supply of additional seat slats.**

Proposer: C Baker. Seconded: V Jenkinson. The council confirmed the additional work to complete the playground.

**22 Road Closure: To review quotes for the Traffic Management of Road Closure on Remembrance Sunday 9th November, and decide upon which quote to agree.**

The council gave an agreement in principle for the cost of £1535.00 + VAT to contract a traffic management company should no volunteers step forward following the suggestion to reach out for assistance. Proposer: R Burnham. Seconded: V Jenkinson. It was confirmed that Cllr V Jenkinson would organise the raising of the flag.

**23 Tree Management: The proposal to contract Duckworths Arboriculture LTD for Tree management for the sum of £2112.00.**

The clerk confirmed she has received further information which should help reduce the cost of this quotation. The council gave an agreement in principle for £2112.00 in the case that the further information does not reduce the cost quoted. Proposer: R Thomas. Seconded: R Burnham.

**24 Staffing committee members: To formally agree the members of the staffing committee.**

The council confirmed members to the staffing committee as all councillors.

**25 AGAR Assertion 10 GDPR Compliance: The proposal to subscribe to Breakthrough Communications for 12 months at the fee of £595.00, which will assist with our compliance with the new assertion 10 of AGAR 25/26.**

Following the proposal from V Jenkinson and seconded by R Thomas the council resolved to subscribe to breakthrough communications for a year.

- 26 Longburrow Hall Project: To confirm who will be leading the Longburrow Hall project, to review fees and costs of the hall to make it more sustainable.**

The council resolved that this project would be deferred back to the Longburrow Hall working group. The clerk would email the working group with pointers and direction of review.

- 27 Ashes on the cricket ground: To formally decide, as custodians of the Cricket ground, the request to spread ashes on the land.**

The council objected to this request. R Burnham abstained.

- 28 Council Tax: To note that Stokenchurch Parish Council received a refund of £6804.00 for over-charged Council Tax, and that the error of 2 line addresses for the same location has now been removed by the Valuation Office Agency.**

The council noted the refund for the overcharged Council Tax.

- 29 Donation update: To receive an update from Cllr V Jenkinson on the receipt of donations.**

Cllr V Jenkinson updates the council on donations received from an Ex-parishioner to the community. The Ex-parishioner kindly donated money to the Youth Club and Cubs & Brownies.

- 30 AGAR 24/25: To consider Stokenchurch Parish Council's external audit for the AGAR 24/25 submission and to note the publication of notice of conclusion on 26.09.2025.**

- 31 Energy Supply Contract: To review recommendations from our energy broker to enter our next fixed energy supply.**

Proposer: R Thomas. Seconded: T Young. The council resolved to proceed with YGP for the energy supply on a 3-year contract, giving the council a saving of around £2741.41

- 32 Working groups: To clarify the meeting dates of working groups ahead of the budget reviews for 26/27.**

The council confirmed the working groups would meet in the coming weeks.

## CLOSING

- 33 Next Meeting:** Confirmation of the next meeting on 5th November 2025.

Meeting closed at 21.11 by Chairman T Ramsden