MINUTES OF STOKENCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 11th March 2026

Longburrow Hall, Stokenchurch at 7.30pm

Present:- Cllr; Robin Thomas (Chairman), Cllr Camilla Baker, Cllr Racquel Burnham, Cllr Sonia Bhatiani, Cllr Valerie Jenkinson,, Cllr Andrew Seddon and Cllr Cian Wheeler.

The Meeting Started at 19.35hrs

Public Forum

In attendance: Three (3) members of the public

A Parishioner asked why the Extraordinary Meeting of 4th March 2026, was cancelled. Cllr Thomas advised that although the meeting had been advertised on facebook, it had inadvertently **not been** posted on notice boards or the parish council website, so it could not proceed. A note to that effect had been posted on website and Notice Boards. The meeting held on that date was a Council Working Group meeting.

A parishioner asked if we had a Clerk and the Chairman advised that recruitment was on-going.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence

Apologies were also received from Cllr Robert, Carrington.

2. Declarations of interest (Agenda items)

None.

3. To confirm the minutes of 4th February 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2026, was proposed by Cllr Baker, Seconded by Cllr Jenkinson with Cllr Burnham abstaining agreed as a true records of the meeting. Cllr Thomas duly signed same.

4. **Buckinghamshire Councillors**

Cllr Adoh enquired if we had heard anything about the Kings Arms and we advised that nothing had been received by us and that it was all in the hands of the Courts.

Cllr Adoh advised that a meeting was being held with SSEN on 19th March regarding the electrical installation works which were being undertaken between Stokenchurch and High Wycombe impacting on traffic movements along the A40.

Cllr Adoh advised that an exploratory investigation on the Marlow Road would be held on 18th and 19th March 2026. The Council raised concerns over the condition of Marlow Road and also the A40 where it leaves the Wycombe Road proceeding west towards Aston Rowant. This section is currently labeled as Failed. Cllr Adoh advised that she was aware of this and frequent visits are undertaken to monitor its condition.

Cllr Adoh was fully aware of the strain that incidents on the M40 place on the A40 and surrounding roads and their impact on local residents.

Cllr Adoh reported that the Community Board had met and that information about Youth Groups had been communicated widely. Cllr Jenkinson advised that she had not heard anything and Cllr Adoh will rectify this.

Cllr Adoh reminded Councillors that they should look at the Bucks Local Plan and their Neghbourhood plan as HMG require a large number of houses to be constructed in Buckinghamshire.

Cllr Adoh informed the meeting that work will shortly be starting on the conversion to housing of the old Roberts Stores at 56-68New Road.

5. Bills Payable – February 2026.

These were presented to the Council for approval and, upon the proposal of Cllr Jenkinson and seconded by Cllr Baker, were agreed without division. These were then signed by the Chairman.

6. Monthly Accounts;- February 2026.

The Chairman advised that he had the statement from Lloyds for February 2026 but in the absence of further documentation, approval of this item will be deferred until the next meeting. It was mentioned at this point that the invoice for the Asbestos check was still outstanding, and arrangement will be made to settle same.

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7. **Monthly Bank Reconciliation;- February 2026**.

The Chairman advised that these were still awaited and approval would be deferred until the next meeting.

8. Planning

None

9. Clerk Report.

None

10.Sanitary Bins Contract.

Cllr Seddon drew the Councils attention to the provision of Sanitary Bins and the three quotations for consideration. The Council reviewed the quotes the quotation from Capital Hygiene at a cost of £420.00, was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Seddon and agreed without division.

11.Fire Assessment – Approval and Implementation

The Fire Assessment had been undertaken, though access to the external storage cupboard was, at the time, still outstanding. It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Bhatani that the company are requested to provide a date next week in order that access to the storage area can be co-ordinated.

12.Future SPC Meeting Dates.

It was requested by the RFO that having the meeting on the 1st Wednesday of the month made producing the financial figures for the previous month difficult. It was suggested that we move this to the 2nd Wednesday of the month with immediate effect.

It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Seddon and agreed without division the following dates;-
April Meeting –Wednesday 8th April.
May Meeting – Wednesday 13th May, Parish Council AGM. Wednesday 20th May Annual Parish Meeting.
All subsequent Meetings will be on 2nd Wednesday of the Month with the exception of August when there is no Parish Council Meeting. The Website and Notice Boards will be updated accordingly.

13.Implementation of No Hedge Cutting Sign.

Cllr Seddon presented a poster highlighting the Bird Nesting Season which is from March to July. The poster was intended to make parishioners aware of the season. It was also made known that in certain circumstances such as footway/roadway obstruction or where the hedging was deemed dangerous that the hedges could be cut. The adoption of the poster was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Seddon and agreed without division.

14.**Cancellation of ICCM Membership**.

Membership of the ICCM – Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management- costs around £105 per annum and the Council were asked by Cllr Seddon if retaining such membership was worthwhile. After a short discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Jenkinson and agreed without division to discontinue membership.

15.Removal of Memorial Plaques from within Longburrow for Restoration.

It had come to the notice of Cllr Seddon that the condition of the memorial plaques inside Longburrow were in need of some restoration. Cllr Seddon had made enquiries and provided they could be removed successfully from their current positions, the firm Hertfordshire Headstones had offered to restore them at no cost to the Council. Cllr Seddon proposed that this offer be accepted. It was seconded by Cllr Jenkinson and agreed without division.

16.Approval of Hallmaster.

The current Hall Booking system is perceived to be a bit archaic and Cllr Seddon had looked at the Hallmaster booking system, which is used successfully by Studley Green Community Centre. The cost of such a system would be **£195 including VAT without invoicing and £279 including VAT with invoicing**. and one had 90Days in order to get the system operational. It was proposed by Cllr Burnham, seconded by Cllr Bhatiani and agreed by all to explore this system in more detail with a view to its implementation.

17.Approval of Precept Announcement.

The Parish Council had recently determined the precept for 2026/2027 and to that end the Chairman read out the announcement which required approval for circulation by way of the Council website Cllr Burnham asked for some grammatical amendments (removal of dashes -) to be made. It was then proposed by Cllr Wheeler, seconded by Cllr Seddon and agreed by the Council that after such removal the announcement could be circulated.

18.Approval of Studley Green Noticeboard Restoration

The Notice Board at Studley Green was in need of restoration and it was proposed to remove the Noticeboard at New Road, transport it to Studley Green, remove the old Studley Green Noticeboard and use parts of it to refurbish the Noticeboard at Longburrow. Cllrs Seddon and Wheeler would manage this project at No Cost to the Council. It was agreed unanimously to proceed with this project.

19.Cemetery Fees Update.

Cllr Seddon raised the question of Cemetery Fees which had last been increased in 2022. After due discussion it was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Bhatiani and agreed by the Full Council that from 1st April 2026 the new rates would apply;-
Single Grave £500. Double Grave £900. Triple Grave £1400. Re-open Grave £250.

20.Approval of Minutes and Agendas to now be uploaded onto the Website.

Cllr Seddon asked if the Council Agendas and Minutes could now be loaded onto the Website as some were unsigned by previous Chairs.. It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Burnham and agreed by the Council that advice from Mel Woof would be sought prior to such uploading. NOTE Reply below from Mel Woof

You will be able to redact the signature of the previous chairman on the web version, however you must maintain it on the originals which are stored by law in perpetuity. There is no law permitting us to destroy the originals.

These days I recommend a business signature and a private signature for those in a public facing role where there signature will be seen by an unmanaged audience.

21.Implementation of Volunteer Policies/Agreements.

It was proposed by Cllr Seddon, seconded by Cllr Wheeler and agreed without division.

22.Update on Heras Fencing – Kings Arms Hotel.

Cllr Bhatiani and Cllr Seddon will liaise with John Lee and report at Next Meeting.

23.Update on Heras Fencing and Rubbish Left on Swilley Pond.

The situation at Swilley Pond is that the Fencing is still in situ as is the rubbish. It was proposed by Cllr Burnham, seconded by Cllr Bhatiani that the owners – Stokenchurch Estates – be given 28 Days to remove the Fencing and Rubbish otherwise Stokenchurch Parish Council would take ownership of the Fencing and the site. It was also noticed that no rent had been paid for the leasing of the site by Stokenchurch estates for some time.

24.Reviewing Grass Cutting Contracts and Tenders.

This item is Deferred till next Meeting.

25.Yearly Playground Inspection – ROSPA

Cllr Seddon asked if the Playgrounds were inspected annually and by whom, as there was a 2 Day ROSPA Course that would cost £350 and that this may be better use of Council resources. Cllr Burnham advised that the Playgrounds were inspected annually by a ROSPA accredited company and that she would liaise with Cllr Seddon on this.

26.POLICIES.

The following Policies with the exception of **DRONE POLICY** were proposed by Cllr Bhatiani, seconded by Cllr Jenkinson and agreed without division to be adopted by the Parish Council. These will now be uploaded onto the Website;-
Sickness & Absence Policy. Whistleblowing Policy. Co-Option Policy. Equality & Diversity Policy. FOI Policy.
GDPR & Data Protection Policy. Grievance and Disciplinary Policy. Health & Safety Policy.
Illegal – Unauthorised Encampment Policy. Lone Worker Policy. Expenses Policy. Complaints Policy.
Community Facilities Governance Policy. Expenses Claim Form.

27.Internment Form.

The Council were asked to consider a Proposed Internment Form which would assist all parties involved in these sad occurrences. It was proposed by Cllr Wheeler, seconded by Cllr Jenkinson and agreed without division that this form be adopted by the Parish Council with immediate effect.

28.Social Engagement Group.

The Establishment of this Group aims to improve the Communication process between the Parish Council and Parishioners. Cllrs Bhatiani, Burnham, Seddon and Wheeler are now members of this Group.

29.Memorial Bench/Tree Policy Application Form.

Cllr Seddon raised the question of Memorial Benches and Trees that parishioners may request to be installed or planted within the village. It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Seddon and agreed without division that Benches had to be composite and that Trees had to be Native to the UK.

30.ITEM CANCELLED.

31.Clerks Discretionary Spend Allowance Review.

It was proposed by Cllr Burnham, seconded by Cllr Jenkinson and agreed by the full council that the sum of £500 be approved as the Clerks Discretionary Spend Allowance.

32.Stockfields Hedge Cricket ground, Marlow Road Cemetery .

A request for remedial cutting of the hedging on the Cricket Ground had been received and it was noted that the Marlow Road cemetery also required some remedial work. Cllr Jenkinson will obtain 3 quotes and is aware that the Stockfields Hedge where it boarders the Cricket Ground is an urgent requirement.

33.Cemetery Land Purchase.

It was proposed that Cllrs Bhatiani and Burnham and approved by the Full Council that Cllrs Baker and Seddon arrange a meeting with Mr Holmes to discuss the possibility of acquiring more land for the Cemetery.

34.Great British Spring Clean.

The campaign runs from 13th – 29th March 2026 and the Parish Council agreed to participate on Saturday 28th March. Cllrs Burnham and Seddon offered to obtain all the necessary equipment and it was proposed by Cllr Bhatiani, seconded by Cllr Wheeler and agreed by Full Council to proceed with this event.

35.New Printer Purchase.

This was deferred till the next meeting.

36.Radio Tower Planning- Proposed Development OPUS456.

There was currently no planning application, so the Council will keep a watching brief.

37.**Internal Auditor Appointment.**

Cllr Seddon advised that we needed to enagage asap an Internal Auditor, and that he is aware of someone who would be suitable. It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Burnham and agreed by Full Council for Cllr Seddon to pursue this requirement urgently.

38.Change of Bank Proposal.

It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson and seconded by Cllr Wheeler that the Parish Council move their accounts to Unity Bank which specializes in Parish Councils. The Full Council agreed unanimously to this request.

39.CCLA Additional Councillors.

It was proposed by Cllr Jenkinson, seconded by Cllr Bhatiani and agreed unanimously by the Full Council that the following Councillors be added to the mandate;-**Cllrs Burnham, Jenkinson, Seddon and Wheeler**

The Meeting Closed at 21.32hrs.

Session of Meeting Closed to the Public

The Meeting Started at 21.45hrs

40. Staffing Matters.

In order to resolve the current staffing situation the following was agreed upon;-

i. That Lee Kelly, who Cllrs Bhatiani and Jenkinson has met, has offered her services as an interim RFO, at the rate of £150 per week or £600 per month, to enable us to get through the upcoming internal audit, agar and to support finding a permanent replacement. This would be for approximately the next four to five months, and thereafter to provide external oversight. Those same Councillors proposed and seconded the motion respectively and it was agreed unanimously by the Council that the appointment of Lee Kelly as Interim RFO be implemented.

ii. That the adverts for Clerk and Administrator are sent to Mel Woof at BMKALC and that Mel be asked if there are any other places that the advertisments should be sent to. Cllr Wheeler will also submit it "Reed Employment".
The salary scale would not be included in the advert but it was felt that salary point **(LCP13 of £15.06 or LCP14 of £15.31perhour)** would be suitable for the Administrator.
The Clerk Rate would be salary point **(LCP18 of £16.35 or LCP19 of £16.90 per hour).**
Cllr Thomas said that he would submit the adverts to Mel Woof tomorrow -12th March 2026- and that the closing date would be Friday 27th March 2026.
Cllr Jenkinson proposed and Cllr Bhatiani seconded and the full Council approved this action.

The Meeting Closed at 22.10hrs.