

STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 7 JANUARY 2025
AT 7.30PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Sean Fry (SF) – Chairman
Martin Nielsen (MN) – Vice-chairman
Adam Sedgwick (AS)
Linda White (LW)
Fred Grosch (FG)
Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Steve Green (SG)
Stevie Bezencenet (SB)

Apologies: BDC Cllr Isabelle Reece (IR)

In attendance: James Dark, Parish Clerk, SCC Cllr James Finch until 8.30pm

25.1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above. Apologies and the reasons given were accepted (SG unwell).

25.1.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

BDC Cllr Isabelle Reece (unwell).

25.1.3 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

25.1.4 MINUTES

25.1.4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meetings held 5 November 2024 were approved and signed.

25.1.4.2 Actions from previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda

- VK reported that she would follow up the possibility of One School clearing vegetation from the pavement on Sudbury Rd at an appropriate time.

25.1.5 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO BDC & SCC COUNCILLORS

25.1.5.1 District Councillor's report

The written report was noted. IR's apologies had been accepted.

LW reported that paths on Goldenlonds/Crossfields had not been cleared.

Action: Clerk to contact IR to request that the matter be brought to the attention of the district council's housing team as it impacts access to properties. It was felt this approach may be more effective than pursuing the matter through the public realm team.

25.1.5.2 County Councillor's report

The written report and oral update were noted.

Vacant cottages on former Middle School site

JF reported that SCC is planning to put the properties up for auction so that they are brought back into use.

Undergrounding cables

It was noted that UKPN had agreed to underground power supply to one house on School St following a fire on the street, but it was not clear whether this would entail burying an overhead line currently above the property. Members also questioned whether it was feasible for overhead lines to remain live after being brought down during the fire, as had been reported.

Action: Clerk to request clarification from UKPN over whether cables were live after being brought down during the fire.

It was noted that Dedham Vale National Landscape had responded to a request to revive the Box Valley South undergrounding scheme, which would include part of School Street, stating that it has limited resource to do so.

Action: AS to draft a response for clerk to send to DVNL highlighting the case for undergrounding on School St.

25.1.5.2.1 Traffic and highways issues

Traffic control/speeds

JF reported that he would continue to press SCC officers to meet residents on School St to discuss traffic concerns.

JF was asked to request that gullies are dug to relieve flooding on parish roads.

In IR's absence JF was asked to request that the district council's road sweeper clean School St as he has a direct contact. Markings outside the school have been obscured.

Potential purchase of speed monitoring equipment

An initial paper proposing purchase of a speed indicator device had been circulated before the meeting.

It was noted SCC would need to approve use of its existing SID posts and that there was a need to confirm the location of all existing posts.

It was agreed to approve purchase of the device in principal as this would help to address concerns over speed control.

Action: JF to clarify SCC's requirements, including any volunteer training, for approving placement of the device on SCC's existing poles.

Action: Clerk to clarify whether the council's insurance policy covers placement of the device on the poles as this would involve activity close to the highway.

Action: MN to co-ordinate work to clarify permission for operating the device and provide further details and quotes at the March meeting.

White lining

JF reported that SCC would be renewing white lining on key parts of the parish road network.

Kerbing near Butt Rd bus stop

JF reported that SCC highways does not consider repairing damage to the kerbing and clearance of the debris to be a priority.

25.1.5.2.2 Public transport

VK reported that she is continuing to work with the bus company on potential expansion of the parish service.

25.1.6 FINANCIAL MATTERS

25.1.6.1 RFO's report

Members received the RFO's report and were satisfied it was a correct record of the parish council's financial position.

25.1.6.2 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve orders on the RFO's report totalling £1,662.21.

25.1.6.3 Update to financial regulations

The clerk's proposals to adapt the NALC model financial regulations for the parish council were agreed. This included:

- Removal of a requirement for parish councillors to verify bank reconciliations, given the independent internal audit, limited transactions and the experience of the current clerk.
- Increasing to £2,000 purchases the clerk may approve in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
- Inclusion of the council's existing 3-stage process for agreeing project spend.

Action: Clerk to place the new regulations on the parish council website.

25.1.6.4 Request for funding from Dedham Vale Society

A letter from Dedham Vale Society was considered, requesting funding to cover the potential costs of a forthcoming legal challenge to the planned Manningtree station car park extension. It was agreed that DVS's challenge to the planned development would be aiming to protect important principles in preventing inappropriate development in National Landscapes and therefore is of direct important to the parish. The letter indicated that DVS would be liable for c.£37,000 if costs are awarded against it.

It was agreed that the parish council would donate up to £1,000 to DVS should the need arise and taking into account parish council finances at that time. This would be subject to the clerk confirming the parish council has the powers to fund a donation for this purpose.

Action: Clerk to inform DVS of the decision once funding powers confirmed.

25.1.6.5 Budget and precept for 2025/26

The draft budget report was agreed with no significant changes from the report presented in November. Therefore the BAU budget for 2025-26 was set at £13,297 with a further £19,850 allocated as reserves for projects. A number of these projects are anticipated to be delivered beyond 2025/26.

To meet this requirement it was agreed to increase the precept 3.5% to £14,500. This would equate to a 0.5% increase on a band D bill given the increase in the parish's council tax base.

25.1.7 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

25.1.7.1 Neighbourhood plan progress

It was reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Group may need to re-consider what it is possible to achieve given the current level of resources.

25.1.8 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

25.1.8.1 Website and transition to dedicated email addresses

It was agreed that parish council business should be conducted using the new dedicated email addresses.

The clerk requested that FG provide a full manual to enable him to update the parish council sections of the new website, prior to the transition from the existing website.

It was noted that an administrator would need to be appointed to manage the community pages on the new site.

25.1.8.2 Arrangements for volunteering

It was agreed that a note circulated by FG should be considered at the next meeting.

Action: All councillors were requested to consider how volunteering arrangements proposed could be prepared for and taken forward.

25.1.9 CLERK AND CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

A request had been received for the parish council to take over maintenance of a war grave in the churchyard and to provide and lay a wreath on the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

It was agreed that LW would take on responsibility for both these matters on behalf of the parish council and that the parish council would pay for the wreath and any other associated expenses.

Action: Clerk to inform the parishioner, who made the request, of this decision.

25.1.10 ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- 0.5% precept increase
- Remembrance Day arrangements
- Looking into SID purchase

25.1.11 OUTSTANDING ISSUES/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- SCC highways meeting with School St residents/speed control
- Volunteering arrangements

25.1.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25pm