

**STOKE BY NAYLAND PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD 6 MAY 2025
7.30PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Sean Fry (SF) – Chairman
Martin Nielsen (MN) – Vice-chairman
Adam Sedgwick (AS)
Vivienne Klimowicz (VK)
Fred Grosch (FG)

Apologies: Steve Green (SG), Stevie Bezencenet (SB), BDC Councillor Isabelle Reece (IR)

In attendance: James Dark, Parish Clerk (JD), SCC Councillor James Finch (JF) (7.30-8.00)

25.5.1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

SF was elected chairman and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form. MN was elected vice-chairman and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

25.5.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See above. Linda White (LW) was not present but had not sent apologies.

25.5.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

None.

25.5.4 PUBLIC FORUM

None present.

25.5.5 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS; REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE; REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

25.5.5.1 Planning and environment committee membership

MN, SF, VK, FG AS, SB and SG were appointed.

25.5.5.2 Planning and environment committee terms of reference

The committee's terms of reference were reviewed and no changes made.

25.5.5.3 Review of councillors' responsibilities

Recreation Ground Committee

It was agreed that LW should continue reporting to the parish council on relevant Recreation Ground matters.

Village Hall Committee

It was noted that FG is the parish council's representative on the committee.

LAWC

It was noted that AS had been appointed as trustee, on the Parish Council's nomination, for a fixed term of four years starting January 2022.

Grasscutting and footpaths

It was agreed that SG should continue as lead councillor for grasscutting and footpaths.

Assets

FG agreed to continue as lead councillor, with LW lead councillor for the war memorial.

PCC

AS agreed to continue as lead councillor for liaison with the PCC.

Police liaison

SF agreed to continue as lead councillor.

Primary School

VK agreed to continue as lead councillor for liaising with the school.

Public transport

It was agreed that SB and VK would continue as lead councillors for day to day public transport issues, arranging assistance from other councillors as necessary.

25.5.6 MINUTES

25.5.6.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 4 March 2025 were approved and signed.

25.5.6.2 Actions from previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda

None outstanding not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

25.5.7 REPORTS OF/REQUESTS TO BDC & SCC COUNCILLORS

25.5.7.1 District Councillor's report

IR had sent her apologies. Her written report was noted.

25.5.7.2 County Councillor's report

The written report and oral updates were noted.

25.5.7.2.1 Highways and traffic

Potholes and flooding

JF was briefed on blocked gullies causing flooding and potholes on the B1068 into Thorington Street. He said he would continue to press SCC's community liaison engineer to accelerate action to remedy the issue and repair the road.

School St traffic

JF reported that SCC Highways is continuing to resist requests for a meeting with residents and has requested residents' view of potential solutions to address speeding. It was pointed out that a list drawn up by residents had already been sent to SCC.

Action: It was agreed that VK would re-circulate the list to parish councillors for discussion at the July parish council meeting. The list would be re-sent to JF for distribution to SCC Highways with the parish council's top three proposed interventions identified.

Potential SID purchase

MN reported that he had prepared a submission to SCC for sites to locate a new speed indicator device in preparation for a potential purchase one.

25.5.8 FINANCIAL MATTERS

25.5.8.1 Annual accounts 2024-25

Following review of the accounts it was noted that one number was in the wrong cell, but this did not impact the total figures. With that amendment the accounts were reviewed approved and signed.

25.5.8.2 Certificate of Exemption for 2024-25

It was agreed that the conditions for exemption from limited assurance review and submission of the AGAR to the external auditor had been met, and that the parish council would certify itself as exempt. It was noted that the council's phone number input to the certificate was missing a digit. With this amendment, the Certificate of Exemption was reviewed, approved and signed for the clerk to send to the auditor.

25.5.8.3 Annual Governance Statement 2024-25

The Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was reviewed, approved and signed.

25.5.8.4 Accounting statements 2024-25

The accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return were reviewed, approved and signed.

25.5.8.5 RFO's report

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

The CIL report for 2024-25 was reviewed, approved and signed.

The dates for exercise of public rights were agreed as 3 June to 14 July 2025, with flexibility for the clerk to amend the period at his discretion should SALC return the internal audit report later than 3 June.

The internal auditor's letter of engagement was approved.

The need for the existing litter and dog bins was reviewed and it was agreed that all should be retained.

25.5.8.6 Orders requested for payment

It was agreed to approve orders listed on the RFO report totalling £2,670.75, plus payment of four invoices received since the circulation of the report - £201.60 to CO10 for grasscutting; £16.50 to CAS for website hosting; £64.20 to SF for providing refreshments for the APM; £44.36 to the clerk for stationery expenses.

25.5.8.7 Funding for consultant for Boxted Bridge hearing

MN reported that the need for this funding had not arisen as Essex County Council had agreed that a statement from the consultant could be read out at the committee hearing considering ECC Highways' application to remodel Boxted Bridge.

25.5.8.8 Church clock maintenance

It was agreed to accept a quote for three year's maintenance although the cost had increased significantly to £715 plus VAT. It was noted that this increase effectively covered six years of inflation including a period of high inflation in recent years.

25.5.9 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS, REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND INTERESTS

25.5.9.1 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were reviewed. It was agreed that papers and motions for the full council and committee meetings must be submitted to the clerk in time for issue with the agenda unless the chairman gives an exception.

Action: Clerk to amend the Standing Orders for approval at the July meeting.

25.5.9.2 Policies

Policies on roadside advertising, GDPR and volunteering were reviewed. No changes proposed.

25.5.9.3 Register of interests

It was agreed that it is good practice for this item to remain on the agenda for the annual meeting and that a link should be sent with the agenda.

Action: Clerk to send parish councillors a link to the register of interests and councillors to confirm if their interests are up to date or changes are required at the July meeting.

25.5.10 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

It was noted Babergh District Council had advised that there is a need to formalise objections to changes to the village envelope ahead of drafting of the new version of its Joint Local Plan.

Action: AS to draft a proposal for submission to BDC, which would be considered at the June planning and environment committee meeting.

25.5.11 COUNCILLORS' AND CLERK'S REPORTS

25.5.11.1 Box Valley South undergrounding scheme

No progress to report.

25.5.11.2 Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday

It was noted that laying the wreath would not put any obligation on a councillor to attend the church service.

Action: SF to confirm that this arrangement is acceptable to LW.

25.5.11.3 Volunteering arrangements

FG reported that an advert is ready for submission to the LSPN and local Facebook page subject to SG's agreement.

Action: FG to submit the advert once agreed with SG.

25.5.11.4 Post Box, Butt Road

It was noted that the Post Office had not installed a replacement post box on Butt Road despite the parish council receiving a notification from Babergh District Council in August 2024 that the PO's contractor would be seeking to do so.

Action: Clerk to contact the contractor for an update.

25.5.11.5 Website

Contact had been made with CAS to take over hosting of the new website a quote received including for clerk training. A potential webmaster was being sought for the community section of the new site. It was envisaged that if these arrangements can be put in place, and the new site finalised with the necessary functionality added, it could become the website for parish council documents.

Action: SF/MN to present a fully costed proposal for potential transition to the July parish council meeting.

25.5.11.6 Downs path

It was noted that a letter had been received from a resident requesting that a path be provided/fully reinstated the length of the route from the almshouses to the village. Correspondence had also been received from Tendring Hall Estate setting out their objections to the final section of a path being on certain parts of estate land. It was considered that further work is required with SCC Highways before a decision can be taken on how to proceed.

Action: Clerk to respond to the estate and resident saying further work is needed with SCC Highways on the potential for a path before a full response can be provided.

25.5.12 TO AGREE ITEMS FOR REPORT IN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- Dog mess
- Post box
- Ability for residents to report full litter bins/dog bins to BDC
- Work chasing SCC on repairing B1068 into Thorington St

25.5.12 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- School St traffic
- Annual parish meeting
- Website

25.5.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 1 July 2025 at 7.30pm, Village Hall. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm.