

Stowe Nine Churches Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th December 2025 at 8.00pm.

Present:- Cllrs S Henley, A Brodie, S Mitchell, C Newitt and J Stanley

Interim Clerk- Mrs L Carter, Cllr David Smith (WNC) and 12 members of the public

2345. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Overton and Callar

2346. Declarations Of Interest

Councillor Stanley declared an interest in the payment to the School Rooms and the CIL related works there as a trustee of the building.

2347. Update from Unitary Councillors

Councillor David Smith advised that National Highways had issued a notice alleging Criminal Damage to the Highway to the site owners at Stowe Hill. The Head of Planning Enforcement at WNC had confirmed that they would respond to all breaches of planning and development control.

Cllr Smith also advised that the Draft budget had been published which included proposals to charge for car parking in Daventry, Towcester and Brackley, a confirmed increase for Green Waste Bins and an overall increase in WNC Council Tax of 4.99%.

2348. Approval of Minutes

Councillors approved the minutes of the Council meetings on 15th September and 13th October 2025 for signature.

2349. Matters for Discussion outstanding from previous meetings.

None

2350. Planning

i) Applications: -

WND/2025/5001/FULL Land to the Rear Of Bank House Main Street Church Stowe - Erection of single dwelling.

A number of residents attended to object to this application, which was a significant change from the previously approved design. The main concern was that the previous Paragraph 84 approval was for a design with minimal visual impact which respected the views of the Church and Manor House. The new design would stand out within the landscape and did not meet the paragraph 84 principles of iconic and innovative design and should be considered by the Design Review Panel. The plans were commended for the Biodiversity Net Gain and the landscape design but there were some errors in the Heritage Impact Assessment which failed to acknowledge the land's location in the curtilage of a Grade II Listed building and the protective covenants that applied.

The Clerk was asked to submit the Council's objections on that basis, and residents were encouraged to submit their own comments.

WND/2025/2097/FULL – Old Dairy Farm, Main Street – Building for agricultural use with vehicular access and hard standing (retrospective re-submission) – No decision as yet.

WND/2025/3640/S73 - 46 Main Street Church Stowe - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) to amend positioning of a skylights etc. – **Granted**

WND/2025/3832/FULL & WND/2025/3833/LBC - The Old Stables Main Street Upper Stowe - Replacement of existing rear residential extension with a single storey rear extension, including minor alterations to the existing dwelling. **Granted**

ii) Grand Union and Oxford Canal Conservation Management Plan

Following consultation, this plan was approved by WNC as Supplementary Planning Document.

Details of the plan and how it affects property owners in the plan area could be found at

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/designated-heritage-assets/conservation-areas>

The area covers a small part of the parish adjacent to the canal and would impact those properties within the area in terms of future plans.

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2351. CIL Payments

The Council had received a CIL payment of £2,516.76 for DA/2021/0356 and was considering allocating it to improving the toilets at the Old School Rooms to benefit the community.

This had been advertised in the newsletter with requests for alternative suggestions. None had been received but there had been an offer to raise any additional funds required, and the Trustees were happy with the proposals.

Quotations had been sought from four plumbing contractors to carry out the work, three of whom had responded. The quotations were discussed and it was AGREED to award the contract to Muggleston's Plumbing and Heating in the sum of £2,380

2352. Statement of accounts/accounts for payment.

- i) Cllrs AGREED the payments made since last meeting
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Website | £384.00 |
| Handyman | £350.00 |
| Clerk Salary (Aug – Oct) | £661.00 |
| HMRC (Including late payment charge) | £244.57 |
| Insurance | £304.00 |
| Expenses for planters | £67.25 |
| Newsletter printing | <u>£90.00</u> |
| TOTAL | £2100.82 |
- ii) Cllrs APPROVED payments to:-
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Clerk Salary - Nov-Dec | £519.00 |
| HMRC | £130.00 |
| Bank Charges (monthly) | £4.25 |
| Election Charge (WNC) | £64.50 |
| CPRE | £60.00 |
| Hall Hire | <u>£70.00</u> |
| TOTAL | £847.75 |
- iii). Cllrs NOTED the balance at Lloyds Bank of £9763.89 at 30 November 2025, which included the CIL payment.
- iv). Cllrs NOTED that Lloyds Bank had introduced bank charges to parish councils, clubs and societies of £4.25 per month.
- v) Cllrs NOTED that Quotations for the Council's insurance had been circulated prior to the payment and that all other payments made were agreed or contractual
- vi) Cllrs APPROVED signature by the Chair of the Invoices and Bank Statement as per the Council's Financial Risk Assessment.

2353 Budget and precept - To agree the budget for 2026-27 and the required precept.

A draft budget of £7,929 had been prepared for consideration and amendment as necessary, with a recommendation of increasing the precept by £227.00 (3.8%) to £7,500.00, assuming that no further changes are necessary. This would allow the Council to meet up to £500 of costs towards the refurbishment of the toilets at the Old School Rooms if required.

Councillors APPROVED the draft Budget of £7,929.00 and AGREED to increase the precept by 3.8% to £7,500.00

The Chair and Clerk were AUTHORISED to sign the Precept Request for submission to WNC.

2354 Audit 2024-2025

Annual Internal Audit Report – Members considered the issues and recommendations in the report from the internal auditor appointed by NCalc for 2024- 2025 and the Interim Clerk's Report and noted the action in relation to the bank account.

2355 Review of Insurance Cover

Councillors reviewed the Insurance Documents provided and considered the cover provided to be adequate and appropriate for the Council's needs.

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2356 Scheme of Delegation

A Scheme of delegation for the Council was circulated to members which would allow some payments and decision to be made between the quarterly meetings, with the agreement of the Chair. All such decisions and payments would be reported to Councillors at the next available meeting. Councillors Approve the Scheme of Delegation.

2357 Contract for Interim Clerk

The Interim Clerk was employed in August 2025 for 'at least six months'. Members AGREED that she remained on an Interim Contract until the end of March before moving to a permanent contract from 1st April 2026. From April the contracted hours would be 5 per week at SCP 13 (15.06 per hour), with a £50.00 contribution toward travel costs for each quarterly meeting

2358 Speedwatch

The PCSO had offered to attend the parish with a speed gun to address the issues of speeding in Upper Stowe, but needed a volunteer to assist her. Councillors AGREED to accept the offer and to look for volunteers via the Neighbourhood Watch group. One resident asked about Church Stowe as Main Street, coming from Upper Stowe, is also a problem. It was felt that this location could be covered on the same day.

Concerns were expressed regarding the speed of local farmers driving through the village and it was AGREED that the Clerk would write to them following the March meeting when relevant names could be supplied.

2359 Defibrillators

- i) Batteries – The replacement date for batteries in both locations needed to be checked
- ii) Registration – The defibrillators are currently both registered on The Circuit to the Clerk. She would arrange for these to be changed to the current 'guardians'?
- iii) Bleed Kits – following the training last year it was agreed that Bleed kits would be provided in both phone boxes alongside the Defibrillators. The Clerk was checking on providers and likely costs.

2360 Highways and Footpaths

- i) Gravel Path/Right of way – The clerk was still waiting for a response regarding the annual cut of this path.
- ii) Update on Potholes etc. The Clerk had contacted Highways regarding the state of the roads in the Parish and would circulate the response when received.
- iii) Dangerous tree reported to WNC – the works had been completed by the adjacent land owners
- iv) To consider the appointment of a Footpath Warden – Ms Mitchell-Hall had agreed to be the Footpath Warden – the Council noted their thanks for her offer.

2361 Village Maintenance/Lengthsman

The Handyman continued to work in the parish and had repaired and oiled the bench in Upper Stowe and treated the other benches. Provision had been made in the budget for him to continue next year.

2362 Asset of Community Value

Councillors were advised that the latest application for the listing of the Old School Rooms as an Asset of Community Value had been successful and would remain in place until December 2030.

2363 Village Newsletter

Cllr Overton had agreed to continue to produce the newsletter and residents would be encouraged to receive it by e-mail. The next edition would be circulated in January to cover the period to Easter. It was AGREED to include advertising for businesses based in the parish.

2364 NCALC and Training for Councillors

'Off to a Flying Start' training was available through NCALC on 2nd February and the Clerk was asked to book Cllrs Mitchell and Stanley on the course.

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2365 Matters for information and discussion

Use of 'The Pound' for materials storage – The Clerk had reported this to the WNC Enforcement Team who would investigate and respond in due course. Issues relating the St Alnoth's Barn had also been reported.

Request for Funding from CAB - The Council had received a request from Citizens Advice West Northants and Cherwell for grant funding. After being assured that the Council had the power to support CAB under the Local Government Act LGA 1972 s142, Councillors AGREED to a grant of £100.

2366 Future Meeting dates

The proposed date of the next meeting is Monday 9th March 2026.

Signed *S Henley*

9th March 2026