

STAMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 March 2025 at 7.30pm at the village hall, Stambourne.

PRESENT:

Mr Neil Pyman (Chair)
Mrs Val Kerrison
Mr Martin Fall
Mrs Karen Grant
Mr Andrew Drysdale

CLERK:

Mrs Deborah Hilliard

In attendance:

Cllr Richard van Dulken (BDC)
6 members of the public

The Clerk made a statement regarding public participation at meetings.

Questions and statements were invited from members of the public:-

Mr Tarbin read out a statement regarding the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2024 and stated that neither he nor others had refused to pick up dog poo and this was contrary to the minutes of that meeting. Mr Tarbin stated that his only comment had been to point out that dog poo bags could be placed in public litter bins. Mr Tarbin said that the Parish Council should retract the statement and apologise, amend the minutes and publish the apology in the newsletter.

Mr Ellis questioned that statement made by the Clerk at the beginning of the meeting regarding public questions and statements, advising that he had no replies. He was of the opinion that Parish Councillors had been drilled on procedure by the Clerk that they did not have to answer or reply. Mr Ellis then said he had a conversation with the Vice-Chair some time ago and was advised to put his points in writing to the Clerk, stating that he had done this 4 months ago and had no reply.

Mr Pyman (Chair) stated that the November meeting was disrupted.

Mr Ellis advised that that was not an answer and alleged that the disrupted meeting was primarily caused by the Chair but acknowledged that it was regrettable and should not have happened. Mr Ellis then stated that all the parish councillors should resign and that parish councillors did nothing to prioritise meeting people.

There were no further questions and the meeting began.

25/16 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Peter Schwier (ECC) and Nathan Robbins.

25/17 Declaration of interests, personal or prejudicial

None.

25/18 Minutes of meeting held on 23 January 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed.

25/19 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

In response to the question raised by Mr Tarbin regarding the minutes of the November 2024 meeting, which stated:-

“Requests for people to take their dog bags home rather than putting in the litter bins during the trial were refused by the members of the public who maintained that putting it into litter bins was acceptable.”

The clerk responded to explain that minutes were not verbatim, but a summary of the meeting and key points and questions made.

25/20 Membership

- Election of Parish Councillor – it was noted that Nathan Robbins had been elected uncontested to Stambourne Parish Council. Debbie advised that Nathan Robbins had been unable to attend today's meeting due to a prior commitment. Debbie confirmed that she had been in contact with Mr Robbins and provided him with the meeting dates for the remainder of the year and had sent him the Declaration of Interests form and Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.
- Resignation of Parish Councillor – It was noted that Mr Michael Crago had resigned as a Parish Councillor. Mr Crago's length of service was noted, and it was agreed to arrange a gift and card to pass onto him in recognition of his service to the village over many years.
- Casual Vacancy – It was noted that the casual vacancy triggered by Mr Crago's resignation expired at 5pm on 20 March 2025. Debbie confirmed she had received notice from Braintree District Council that as no 10 electors had claimed a poll, the Parish Council were able to co-opt. Mrs Wendy Anderson had previously expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council and it was proposed and unanimously agreed to co-opt Wendy Anderson to Stambourne Parish Council as of 20 March 2025. Debbie reported that Mrs Anderson would be able to vote on items further down the agenda.

25/21 Report of District Councillor

Cllr Van Dulken reported. Points noted were:-

- The Councillors' Community Grant would be available for the next financial year.
- A date for the Local Plan Review call for site review was awaited.
- Waste bin review – The consultation had taken place and a decision would be made on 27 May 2025.
- Hedingham Medical Centre – Work was due to start in September and it was expected to be open in approximately 18 months' time.
- Devolution – Greater Essex proposal. The County Council, Southend, Thurrock and the Boroughs and Districts would disband and be replaced with 4 or 5 unitaries which would take County Council responsibilities particularly Highways and social care. A mayor will be elected in 2026 and elections for new councillors would take place in 2027, these councillors will then shadow the current District and County Councillors for a year with the new unitaries coming into 2028.
- BDC has agreed its budget for the 2025-26 financial year.

Questions asked:-

What is the latest on Wethersfield Air Base? It was still scheduled to take up to 800 migrants, at the moment numbers were approximately 600.

What powers will the new Mayor get from central government? It will be a strategic position. Mayors have been in place in some cities for about 20 years and have been successful. There will be funding attached to that, and they will be responsible for Police and Fire services.

25/22 Pavilion

Points noted were:-

- Windows – Work on the windows was underway with the window shutters removed and windows temporarily boarded up.
- CCTV – Andrew Drysdale reported. He advised he had not been able to get another quote for the proposal. It was agreed that the original quote be re-circulated for consideration. It was also noted that Mr Hodge had a quote.
- Toilet Seats – It was agreed that Martyn Fall would order the replacement toilet seats for the pavilion which had been broken during bonfire night.

25/23 Playingfield

To be considered at the end of the meeting.

25/24 Highways

The following points were discussed:-

- The highway matters already reported to ECC as shown on the agenda were noted.
- Potholes – it was noted that there were many potholes throughout the parish, many of which had been reported in months ago and were still not repaired. After some discussion it was agreed to contact Cllr Schwier regarding this matter.

25/25 Footpaths

There were no issues to report. It was noted that the paths were drying out well after the winter.

25/26 Planning

- Application Number 25/00488/FUL - Windyridge , Chapel End Way, Stambourne – no comment.
- Application Number 25/00514/LBC - 2 Greenfields Cottages, Great Yeldham Road, Stambourne – no comment.
- Application Number 25/00532/HH - 2 Greenfields Cottages, Great Yeldham Road, Stambourne – no comment.

25/27 Correspondence

Debbie reported she had been contacted by the Essex Film Office which were interested in using the playing field as a location for a low budget production. It was noted that plans were at an early stage. Debbie confirmed she had told the Essex Film Office that dates would be needed and a donation to the parish council for use of the site.

25/28 Finance

- Creamer Fund donation/provision of bleed kits – Martyn advised that he had spoken to a representative of the Creamer Fund and further details were awaited.
- Banking arrangements

- To agree new signatories – It was noted that with Michael Crago's resignation a new signatory would be needed. It was proposed that two more signatories would be appropriate. It was agreed that Andrew Drysdale would become a signatory and Parish Councillors were asked to consider who else could be proposed.
- To move to online banking – Debbie proposed that with the change in signatories it was an appropriate time to move the Parish Council banking arrangements online banking to enable BACS payments. It was agreed that Debbie will start the process.

Accounts Paid (since last meeting)

Mrs D Hilliard (reimbursement – toilet rolls for pavilion)	£4.99
Stambourne Village Hall (annual rent)	£60.00
Nicom IT Services (domain)	£57.60
Community Heartbeat Trust (Chapel End Way)	£277.80
Mrs D Hilliard (wages)	£889.89
Mrs D Hilliard (part cost printer inks/stamps)	£11.70

Monies received

ECC 2 nd verge cut	£672.04
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Monies to be received

BDC Cllrs Community Grant (for swing)	£438.00
Additional amount to Bonfire Fund	TBC

Estimated balances at 14 March 2025

Notional Current Account	£18,191.62
Reserve Account	<u>£4,190.31</u>
	£22,381.93
Balance of Bonfire fund	<u>£10,908.89</u>
	£11,473.04

25/23 Playing field

- Grass protection mesh – Martin confirmed he had installed the extra socket post to make a new entry point for vehicles onto the playing field. Martyn, Neil and Andrew agreed to look at the site before deciding the most appropriate course of action to install the mesh.
- Dogs on Playing field – Neil proposed that every councillor present would be asked to give their view on the trial and next steps, after which proposals should be made and those proposals put to a formal vote. Councillors' views were noted as:
 - There have been no complaints, and the trial appeared to work well. I like the idea of winter walking, and I like it being a safe place for children to go in nice weather with no dogs and there is the surrounding area to walk dogs. I like the balance of winter access for dogs in the summer have it dog-free.
 - No complaints during the trial and I also feel that the wintertime walking would be a way forward.
 - I think it has worked well with dogs on leads. I am in favour under certain circumstances. I do not think that in the summer dogs should come before children. I have had a look at other villages to see what they do. Generally speaking, dogs on leads would be the preferred option.

- The trial has gone well. I think the winter access in line with beaches with dates from October to March, a big window would work. I understand what the public said about the footpaths in winter but now they are drying up well. There are many footpaths here, more than some other areas. I understand about the roads and cars speeding and we are trying to introduce a speedwatch scheme for that. The beach route would be fair to everybody - fair to people who would like to use it without dogs and fair to dog walkers by allowing them on the playing field when paths are wet in winter.
- There was a big event on the playing field last year and there were many dogs, and I cannot see the problem if dogs are on leads as the people in the village seem responsible and would clear up after their dogs. There are a few people who might have access issues for footpaths. Could it be considered that dogs could be walked on the playing field in the summer before a certain time in the morning when very few children would be there.

Proposals put forward were noted as:-

- (a) All year-round access with dogs on leads
- (b) Winter walking on leads from 1 October to 30 April.

Parish Councillors were asked to vote on the proposals. Voting was confirmed as 1 vote in favour of option (a) and 4 votes in favour of option (b). The majority vote was agreed as option (b) Winter walking on leads from 1 October to 30 April.

25/24 Date, time and place of next meetings

22 May 2025 APA/AGM
17 July 2025
18 Sept 2025
20 November 2025

All are Thursdays at 7.30pm unless shown otherwise

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at approximately 8.30pm.

Signed: 

Dated: 22-5-25