

**STAUNTON ON WYE GROUP  
PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of a meeting of Staunton on Wye Group Parish Council held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 at 7.30 p.m. at Staunton on Wye Village Hall, Herefordshire.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Nigel Sellar (Chairman) and Councillors B Arthur, L Boddington, M Jones, E Pearson-Gregory and S Williams.

**In attendance:** David Thame (Clerk)  
Councillor Robert Highfield (Herefordshire, Castle Ward)  
One member of the public.

**2025/89. To Receive Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Andrews and W Shepherd. Councillors J Price and R Skryme were absent.

**2025/90. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

None

**2025/91. Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meetings on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 (copies previously circulated) as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman accordingly.

**2025/92. Public Session**

Councillor Highfield reported that Herefordshire Council's funding position had been damaged by government grant priorities, in particular its failure to understand the needs of sparsely-populated rural areas.

Councillor Highfield drew attention to Locality Stewards' changed role. They would now move from the public realm contractor to in-house and perform the function of inspectors. It was hoped new vehicles and technology could speed-up the regular inspection of highways.

A member of the public spoke about the timetable and format of works to improve SY2A (byway open to all traffic, Little London).

**2025/93. Lengthsman Work, Drainage and Local Drainage Fund**

The Council considered tasks for the lengthsman, and related drainage and highways issues including an application to the Public Rights of Way Fund to support drainage and improvement on SY2A (byway open to all traffic, Little London). The Clerk reported that the new Lengthsman Contract with Herefordshire Council for 2026/27 indicated basic grant support of £1,305, compared to £2,540 in 2025/26. The Parish Council budget had allocated £2,500 spending for lengthsman's purposes, meaning a further sum of £1,195 was available. There was also the prospect of separate applications to the Public Rights of Way Fund and the Local Drainage Fund. Herefordshire was not in a position to guarantee that funding would continue into 2027/28.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council agree to the Lengthsman Contract with Herefordshire Council for 2026/27 and that the Clerk and Chairman be authorised to sign accordingly.

The Clerk reported that Herefordshire Council was encouraging a drainage application for SY2A, as a preliminary to restoring the surface of the highway. They had asked the Parish Council to undertake both tasks. He had approached the Lengthsman for a price. The Clerk indicated that the Parish Council's cash flow and insurance position introduced a high level of risk if it were undertaking repairs to the surface.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that, on receipt of an acceptable quote, the Clerk is authorised to make an application to the Public Rights of Way Fund to improve drainage on byway open to all traffic SY2A (Little London), but that Herefordshire Council be invited to complete repairs to the surface of the highway.

#### **2025/94. Resurfacing of Highways/Pot Holes**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman and Clerk meet with the newly-appointed Locality Steward to highlight areas in need of patching (as opposed to potholing), particularly on access to the A438 and the whole length of the C1090.

The Clerk reported correspondence from residents about resurfacing for vehicle use the extension of U94023 (Weavers Orchard) at the point it has become a footpath SY10. Herefordshire Council advised it was not their responsibility to maintain the surface other than as a footway. It was understood that a housing association had undertaken repairs in the past and that responsibility may lie with the landowners. It was **RESOLVED** to invite Councillor Highfield to mediate between residents, landowners and housing association to find a solution.

#### **2025/95. Lengthsman's Hi-Vis**

The Clerk reported that purchasing hi-vis vests for the Lengthsman printed with the parish name was likely to cost around £50, and magnetic decal signs for his van around £150. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that, in order to improve the visibility of the service, both branded hi-vis and magnetic decals be acquired.

#### **2025/96. Neighbourhood Development Plan (Minute 2025/79)**

The Council considered the Clerk's report (previously circulated, now attached) on the extent to which an NDP which did not make site allocations, of the kind the parish currently has, is likely to be possible given changes to the National Planning Policy Framework now under consultation, on the timetable for a review and on the likely financial resources required to complete it. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council re-affirms its intention to proceed to review the Staunton on Wye Neighbourhood Plan, and that this form the focus of the forthcoming annual parish meetings.

#### **2025/97. Section 106 Allocation (Minute 2025/50, Minute 2025/78)**

The Clerk reported that the Parochial Church Council of the Church of St Mary, Staunton on Wye and Staunton-on-Wye Endowed Primary School have each expressed an interest in benefiting from section 106 allocations (copies of letters circulated to members). It was **RESOLVED** to note the expressions of interest, in addition to those already received in respect of the Village Hall and the playground, and that they form part of the wider consultation on the deployment of section 106 funding.

#### **2025/98. Annual Parish Meetings (Minute 2025/81)**

The Council considered the next steps including arrangements for the annual parish meetings, due to

be held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025. It was **RESOLVED**, that further to the resolution recorded at Minute 2025/81, refreshments be provided, and that publicity including a leaflet be prepared, and that the Clerk is authorised to take whatever steps are necessary in consultation with Councillor Arthur and the Chairman.

#### **2025/99. Risk Assessment**

The Council considered the draft risk assessment prepared by the Clerk and the Finance Working Group (previously circulated, now attached). After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the risk assessment be approved, subject to review during the next financial year.

#### **2025/100. Annual Review of Effectiveness/Response to Internal Auditors Report: Risk Management and Internal Controls (Minute 2025/18)**

The Council considered the annual review of effectiveness including response to internal auditors report 2024/25, as prepared by the Clerk and the Finance Working Group (previously circulated, now attached). The Council's Risk Management Policy, adopted in September 2025, requires an annual review of effectiveness on risk management and internal control. The Clerk met with the Finance Working Group (Councillors Boddington, Jones and Sellar) on 11 February 2026, and the report records the conclusions.

It was **RESOLVED** that, recalling its resolution of May 2025 fully and unreservedly accepting the findings and recommendations of the internal audit, in particular to begin quarterly verification of bank reconciliations and regular presentation of the cash-book with budget monitoring; and noting that these practices have become regular; and that a reserves policy, risk management policy, risk register, discipline and grievance policy, revised asset register, information technology policy, data protection and freedom of information policies have been adopted and implemented, agrees the responses to the internal auditor's recommendations identified in the report prepared by the Clerk and the Finance Working Group, and that in the coming year the Council will review two further areas of risk: insurance, which has not been reviewed recently and may no longer be suitable, given the increase in lengthsman activities; and improved analysis of planning applications and their policy consequences.

#### **2025/101. Asset Register**

The Council considered, in the light of the report referred to in minute 2025/100 above, the revised asset register (previously circulated, now attached). After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to approve the asset register for 2025/2026, and the revised register for 2024/25, and that it is the Council's policy that the asset register will include items at the original purchase price.

#### **2025/102. Restatement of Accounts & Correction of Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25**

The Council considered, in the light of the report referred to in minute 2025/100 above, a restatement of accounts for 2024-25 in respect of receipts, payments and fixed assets. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The incorporation of the War Memorial Committee's turnover, omitted in the 2024/25 annual return, requires a restatement of the Council's payments and receipts.
- (2) That additional receipts to 31 March 2025 £31,650.96 and payments £1925.94 will be recorded, and that the Council was therefore not permitted to exempt itself from external audit, having failed to meet the provision of The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, regulation 9(2) that the higher of payments or receipts should be under £25,000. Accounts will need to be restated.
- (3) The War Memorial account shows payments of £38,585.99 and receipts of £8,860.97 which shall be incorporated in the annual governance and accountability return for 2025/26, with the consequence that the Council will not be able to exempt itself from external audit because the

higher of payments or receipts are above £25,000 as indicated by The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, regulation 9(2).

### 2025/103. Annual Governance and Accountability Return, Assertion 10

It was **RESOLVED**, for the avoidance of doubt, that the Clerk is data protection officer, that training in data protection and privacy be undertaken, that the Council continue to provide transparency data quarterly and as part of the agenda pack for each meeting, and that the Council has reviewed the security of data and is satisfied.

### 2025/104. Financial Report

The Council received the Clerk's financial report, together with the cash book and budget monitoring (attached) which showed bank balances at 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were T1 current account £1,639.57 and deposit account £7,502.79. The War Memorial Fund stood at £4,234.09 and therefore the Council's unallocated funds (that is, funds other than the War Memorial Reserve, see below) therefore stand at £4,908.27. The Clerk reported that this was barely adequate to meet anticipated expenses.

Councillor Boddington reported that she had completed the quarterly verification of bank reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, and was satisfied.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Boddington to complete the quarterly verification of bank reconciliation to 31 March 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, is authorised to settle all invoices relating to the Lengthsman's scheme and Local Drainage Fund so that payment can be made before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, and to make the relevant claims to Herefordshire Council for reimbursement before 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments, and to indicate the completion of the process two Councillors initial and date each invoiced:

PV55	Society of Local Council Clerks	£79.00
PV58	HALC (2026-27 membership)	£676.19
PV59	Clerk's travel	£54.00
PV60	Clerk's administrative expenses	£29.70

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the following payments made under delegated powers or existing resolutions, and to indicate the completion of the process two Councillors initial and date each invoiced:

PV42	Autela Payroll Services	£90.00
PV43	D H Thame (storage box)	£11.00
PV44	HMRC Tax month 9	£84.21
PV45	Salary tax month 9	£335.95
PV46	Printplus (War memorial book)	£1418.00*
PV47	Staunton on Wye Village Hall	£106.00
PV48	HALC (in-house training)	£330.00
PV49	GWG Tree & Garden Care (drainage work)	£110.40
PV50	GWG Tree & Garden Care (drainage work)	£441.60
PV51	HMRC tax month 10	£84.21
PV52	Salary tax month 10	£335.95
PV53	Jarvis Eleemosynary Trust	£10.00
PV54	Berrys Chartered Surveyors	£240.00*

PV56	Salary tax month 11	£335.95
PV57	HMRC tax month 11	£84.21

\* payments made from the War Memorial Reserve, see Clerk's report.

### **2025/105. Planning**

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the use of a planning checklist to aid consideration of planning applications (copy attached), and to review the success of the approach in one year.

### **2025/106. English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill**

It was **RESOLVED** to write to MPs and Peers, including Lord Lisvane, to request them to clarify the role of parish council's in the devolved planning process.

### **2025/107. Spatial Development Strategies**

The Clerk reported a consultation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on areas for producing spatial development strategies. It was **RESOLVED** not to respond to the consultation.

### **2025/108. Herefordshire Parish Charter (Minute 2025/80)**

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt Herefordshire Council's Parish Charter (circulated in December).

### **2025/109. Noticeboards (Minute 2025/51).**

It was **RESOLVED** to vary the resolution agreed at Minute 2025/51 to purchase, at an estimated cost of below £150, a simple external notice board solely for the Council's use and to request permission to affix it to the village hall wall adjacent to the public board, and that an equivalent board be provided for Monnington to be affixed to the telephone box.

### **2025/110. Local Policing**

It was **RESOLVED** that quarterly police priorities should be anti-social behaviour, farm theft and control of dogs.

The meeting closed at 9.09 p.m.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_