

STOKE LACY PARISH COUNCIL (SLPC)

MINUTES FROM THE ORDINARY MEETING OF STOKE LACY PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN STOKE LACY VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2026 COMMENCING 7 PM

Present: Cllrs Charlie Barrett, Janet Ivison (Chair), Anne Reece, Jo Williams and James Wilson.

In attendance: Cllr Jonathan Lester (Ward Councillor).
Mr John Davies (Parish Footpath Officer).
Mr John Thompson (Parish Footpath Officer).
Mr Paul Hayden (Clerk).

Public: Two .

117/26 APOLOGIES

No apologies required.

118/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & WRITTEN DISPENSATION REQUESTS

118.1/26 No declarations of interest made at this meeting.

118.2/26 No written requests for dispensation received.

118.3/26 No grant of request for dispensation required at this meeting.

119/26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the draft minutes of the ordinary meeting of the parish council held on the 8th July 2026 be approved as a correct and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

120/26 PUBLIC SESSION

120.1/26 Members considered the verbal report from the Ward Councillor. Key points included:

- There were no official council meetings in August.
- Cllr Lester as Leader of the Council has written to Andy Burnham as Prime Minister specifically pointing out the disparity of the Government's Fair Funding Review and the disproportionate impact on Herefordshire residents.
- On English devolution, Worcester plan to form two unitary councils covering north and south Worcestershire; Gloucestershire will form one very large unitary council, but there is now a legal challenge from a number of councils which has paused the entire devolution process.
- Cllr Lester expressed his concern about future funding for Herefordshire.
 - £20 million of savings were required this year to achieve a balanced budget.
 - A further £20 million of savings are anticipated next year.

- All areas of expenditure, discounts and the use of AI technology are being reviewed to reduce costs.
- A civil enforcement officer last month was seriously assaulted in the performance of their duties.
- Key items for the forthcoming Cabinet meeting include:
 - Progress on the bypass project and approval of the next phase.
 - Budget delivery and performance.

120.2/26 There were no local resident views on parish matters raised at this meeting.

121/26 HEREFORDSHIRE WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Clerk informed Members that the Local Government Boundary Commission is due to publish its report on the 29 September 2026. No indication has been given regarding the likely outcome.

RESOLVED: The Ward Councillor requested to keep Members informed of developments.

122/26 BROMYARD POLICE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

The promised visit from the Safer Neighbourhood Team did not happen and no written report has been received.

123/26 PARISH FOOTPATH OFFICER'S (PFO's) REPORT

Members considered the written report from the Parish Footpath Officers, which confirmed that there are currently no known issues affecting footpaths within the parish.

The Chair acknowledged the excellent condition and accessibility of the parish's Public Rights of Way (PRoW) footpaths, including stiles, footbridges, waymarkers and signage, and attributed this to the dedication and hard work of the two Parish Footpath Officers. The Chair also highlighted the successful project to replace stiles with self-closing gates, improving accessibility for walkers, and the installation of the new footbridge on SL2, both of which had required considerable negotiation and perseverance.

The Clerk thanked both officers for their valuable contribution to the development and improvement of PRoW processes within Herefordshire Council. The Ward Councillor noted that the maintenance of the county's 2,100 miles of Public Rights of Way is heavily dependent on parish volunteers and recognised the improvements made by the Herefordshire Council PRoW Team whilst acknowledging that further work remains to be done.

Members noted that both Mr Thompson and Mr Davies have formally stepped down as Parish Footpath Officers and that replacements are now being sought.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk write formally to Mr Thompson and Mr Davies thanking them for their enthusiasm, dedication and hard work.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk work with Cllr Williams to develop and implement a recruitment campaign for new Parish Footpath Officers.

124/26 PUBLIC REALM VOLUNTEERS

Members considered the response received from Herefordshire Council regarding the use of unpaid volunteers to undertake public realm maintenance activities.

As Highway Authority, Herefordshire Council will only permit volunteers to undertake vegetation clearance and litter-picking activities along the A465 where a footway is present and where appropriate personal protective equipment is worn. Where no footway exists, issues must be reported through Herefordshire Council's website, following which the authority will undertake the work if deemed necessary. Members expressed disappointment with this response.

RESOLVED: The Clerk is requested to investigate the feasibility of establishing a volunteer group, including training requirements and the provision of suitable tools and equipment, to undertake public realm maintenance where permitted, and report back to the next meeting.

125/26 FINANCE

125.1/26 Members received and accepted the finance reports from the RFO.

125.2/26 Members considered the following payments:

125.2.1/26 Village hall hire charge April to June 2026 £84.00.

125.2.2/26 Autela Payroll Services inv. no. 17432 £60.00 plus VAT.

125.2.3/26 PAYE months 4 & 5 2026/27 £240.66.

125.2.4/26 Clerk's July & August 2026 salary.

125.2.5/26 Reimburse Clerk admin charge £14 & defib battery £280.00 plus VAT.

125.2.6/26 PIP Printing Cider Press Aug/Sept Invoice 80947 £135.05.

RESOLVED: All payments were approved.

RESOLVED: Cllr Reece to ask PIP Printing to provide the Clerk with a pdf version of the Cider Press to support their invoice and which can also to be published on the parish website.

RESOLVED: To transfer £5k from the current account to the interest-earning reserve account.

126/26 PARISH COUNCIL SUMMIT TUE 14 JUL 26

Members considered the verbal report from Cllrs Ivison and Reece who thought this to be a successful meeting.

127/26 STOKE LACY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) POLICY REVIEW

Members considered the verbal report from Cllr Wilson and the Clerk following their review of the existing Neighbourhood Development Plan policies.

Their conclusion was that the current policies remain relevant and continue to provide an appropriate level of protection against undesirable development within the parish. No amendments are considered necessary at this time.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk continue to monitor the emerging Local Plan and any changes to Government planning policy and advise Members of any implications for the Stoke Lacy Neighbourhood Development Plan.

128/26 STOKE LACY PARISH COUNCIL SECTION 106 LIST

Members considered the Clerk's request to identify parish priorities that could be funded through future Section 106 developer contributions.

It was noted that many projects included on previous lists have now been successfully delivered, including speed indicator devices, village gateways and improved road markings.

RESOLVED: That Members forward suggestions for future project priorities to the Clerk as soon as possible.

129/26 SPEED DATA

Members considered the verbal report from Cllr Wilson regarding data collected from the recently installed speed indicator devices.

The principal measure used for road safety purposes is the 85th percentile speed. Current data indicates that 85% of vehicles are travelling between 34 mph and 36 mph within the 30 mph speed limit.

Members expressed the hope that this figure would continue to reduce towards compliance with the 30 mph limit. Overall, it was felt that the speed indicator devices represent a valuable addition to the parish council's wider speed reduction measures and complement ongoing police enforcement activities.

RESOLVED: Cllr Wilson requested to present a speed data report at future Parish Council meetings.

130/26 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL NATURE RECOVERY TEAM SUPPORT

Members considered correspondence from Herefordshire Council's Nature Recovery Team announcing the publication of their Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the county and offering to support parish councils fulfil their biodiversity duty under the Environment Act 2021.

RESOLVED: Cllrs Barrett and Wilson requested to arrange a meeting with Vernon Amour of Wye Valley Brewery (who is recognised for his biodiversity expertise) to discuss biodiversity initiatives and help shape thinking on biodiversity strategy for the parish council.

131/26 MICK RALPHS PLAQUE UNVEILING

Members received an update from Cllr Ivison regarding arrangements for the unveiling of the Mick Ralphs commemorative plaque.

Members noted that Mick Ralphs' two sons wish to participate in the ceremony. One son, a professional musician, is unavailable until November due to touring commitments. The plaque has now been completed and received.

RESOLVED: That the unveiling ceremony be postponed until late March or early April 2027 to coincide with Mick Ralphs' birthday on 31 March and to benefit from more favourable weather conditions.

132/26 STAFF APPRAISAL PROCEDURE & DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

Members considered a proposal from Cllr Wilson to engage an external provider to deliver HR support services for the Parish Council.

The proposal would require a commitment of either three, five or seven years (with a break-out option at 3 years), at a cost ranging from £175 to £235 per month plus VAT, depending on the contract term selected.

RESOLVED: The Clerk requested to circulate discipline and grievance policies he had previously prepared for another parish council for consideration at the next meeting.

A resolution was passed requesting members of the public to leave to allow discussion of a confidential employee matter.

133/26 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2026/27

Members considered The National Joint Council for Local Government Services pay award applicable for the period 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027.

RESOLVED: That the pay award be implemented with immediate effect.

134/26 MATTERS TO BE RAISED AT THE NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER 2026

Parish council summit report.
Herefordshire Ward Boundary Review.
Herefordshire Council wildfire plan.
PFO recruitment.
Public realm volunteer report.
Speed data report.
Herefordshire Council nature recovery team support.
Staff appraisal, discipline and grievance policies.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.35 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

These minutes were approved as a correct and accurate record of the meeting at the ordinary meeting of the parish council held on Wednesday the 14th October 2026 and signed by the Chair.