

Stowford Parish Council



Minutes of Ordinary meeting held on 18th March 2025

These minutes are provisional until they are signed by the chair at the next meeting of the parish council.

Meeting No 732

Present: Cllrs Leroy St Louis (Chair), Richard Alexander, John Govett, Lorna St Louis,
Cllr C. Edmonds (WDBC), P van Delft (clerk)

Meeting opened 7.32pm

1. Apologies – Cllr Law
2. Dispensations & declarations of interest
3. Members of the public open forum – two members present, no issues raised
4. Minutes of previous meeting 731 were signed as a true and accurate record of that meeting, proposed Cllr Lorna St Louis, seconded Cllr Alexander, approved.
5. Cllr Edmonds of WDBC reported that the new Okehampton railway station was scheduled to complete work in February 2026, it is anticipated that approximately 150,000 people in North Cornwall and West Devon have potentially been reconnected to the rail network as a result of the reopening of the Okehampton to Exeter railway line. Also reported were the government's proposals for re-organising local government, there is no indication at this stage that re-organising would affect town and parish councils. The reorganisation will look at ways of how District and Unitary councils across Devon can deliver economies of scale in the future. Government is asking councils to submit their initial proposals by 21st March with final proposals by 28th November this year. The initial proposal is that West Devon Borough council may combine with South Hams, Teignbridge and Torbay to make a unitary council.
6. Table Tennis – Council initiative to help with health & fitness, also purchase of bats & balls etc. Cllr Leroy St Louis confirmed that he had secured the purchase of a second table tennis table for £100, collection was made using a hired vehicle plus diesel, some minor repairs were required, total cost of £223. WDBC provided a grant of £150 to help towards the purchase of the T.T.T and equipment.
7. Finance –
 - 7.1 Approval to purchase table tennis table and associated equipment, it was resolved that a budget of up to £50 is used for the equipment still needed, proposed Cllr Govett, seconded Cllr Alexander, all were in favour. **Action: The R.F.O. to arrange purchase of the equipment.**
 - 7.2 Payments for approval – P van Delft – clerk salary (Jan Feb) £344.40
HMRC – PAYE for clerk £ 14.60
Lewdown Residents Association – Newslink grant £200.00
Stowford St John – Graveyard maintenance grant £100.00
Portgate Methodist Circuit – Graveyard maintenance grant £100.00
P van Delft – Clerk administrative costs £122.54
Stowford Parish Hall – Hall hire £ 60.00
Cllr Leroy St Louis – refund assoc. to table tennis table etc. £223.00
Proposed Cllr Alexander, seconded Cllr Govett, all in favour.
 - 7.3 R.F.O. Reported a credit balance of £4055.97 after approved payments, proposed Cllr Alexander, seconded Cllr Govett, all in favour

- 7.4 Banking arrangements – Options to mitigate monthly fees – The RFO provided information relating to credit balances over the past 4 years, also the various interest rates that are available to the council should it open a deposit account. If a deposit account was opened with a reserve of £3,300 then the new current account charges could be mitigated by up to 50% should the council choose to use the existing bank providers. The alternative option by using the Hinkley Building Society was thought not to be so beneficial despite higher rate of interest. Cllr Govett informed that an alternative deposit account was available providing 6.25% interest. **The R.F.O. to review and report back.**
- 7.5 Approval to purchase reply/letter box. It was resolved that after obtaining permission from the Parish Hall committee to install a letter box that a budget of up to £50 can be used to purchase one. Proposed Cllr Allexander, seconded Cllr Lorna St Louis, all in favour.
8. Parish Councillors vacancies – two parishioners expressed an interest in joining the council.
9. Parish Questionnaire – The chair provided a second draft questionnaire, much discussion took place on the format with additional comments from two attending parishioners. It was thought that the Parish Hall Committee may also wish to contribute therefor making it more of a “ Stowford Parish Community” questionnaire. The clerk informed that there are approximately 125 households in the parish but would provide more accurate details later. The chair to review the questionnaire including the new suggestions he will also communicate with the Parish Hall Committee to possibly broaden the questionnaire further. **Action: the chair and the clerk.**
10. Highways – Road sign damage/repair. Cllrs Law and Leroy St Louis reported to D.H. and W.D.B.C
11. Correspondence – Caroline Harris provided her costs for the Payroll services for the year 2025-26.
12. Dog fouling, nuisance dog(s), dog(s) of leads – Mobile Liaison Officer report and update.
Cllr Edmonds reported that as far as the M.L.O. is concerned the issue has been resolved, and that The dog(s) now appear to be on leads. The nearby dog kennels have also reviewed how they clean up after their dog walks and also appear to be compliant. The chair thanked Cllr Edmonds for looking into the matter and for providing his support into this serious problem. The chair also wished to thank the M.L.O. for the work that had been done to resolve the matter.
It was resolved that the M.L.O. should continue with periodic checks to ensure compliance is maintained.
13. Reports from Councillors. No issues raised.

Date, time, place of next meeting – Annual Parish Meeting & ordinary meeting on 8th April, 7.30pm at Stowford Parish Hall.