



Minutes of the Meeting of Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parish Council DRAFT

**Wednesday 16th July 2025,
At Croome National Trust SOQ meeting room**

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm

Parish Councillors: (# absent with apologies, ## absent without apologies)

Cllr Richard Hill (Chair)	(rep for Severn Stoke parish ward)
Cllr Laurence Freeman (Deputy Chair)	(rep for Croome parish ward) #
Cllr Ian Daly	(rep for Severn Stoke parish ward)
Cllr Susan Faulkner	(rep for Severn Stoke parish ward) #
Cllr Royston Garrard	(rep for Croome parish ward)
Cllr Laura McEwan-Hill	(rep for Severn Stoke parish ward)
Cllr Pat Preston	(rep for Severn Stoke parish ward) #
Cllr Ray Williams	(rep for Severn Stoke parish ward)

Responsible Financial Officer, Proper Officer and Parish Clerk Lisa Stevens

Other community representatives:

National Trust Michelle Fullard, General Manager South Worcs
National Trust Katherine Alker, Grounds Manager Croome
Worcestershire County Councillor Martin Allen
Malvern Hills District Councillor John Michael
Malvern Hills District Councillor David Harrison #
Volunteer Footpath Officer Richard Humphries #
Parish Lengthsman Simon Bott #
PC Jon Hand/Safer Neighbourhood Off. Dee Stanley/Police Comm. Support Officer Ashley Smith #
Friends of St. Denys' Committee John Henderson #
Tarmac Colin Stratford (Clifton Liaison Committee Chair Martin Allen) #

Residents in attendance: 8

48/25 Welcome and introductions.

- i. Declarations of interest (nil new).
- ii. Points of order (nil).
- iii. Resolved. Motion to accept apologies for absence (as above). Prps: LMH. Scnd: RH.
- iv. Adjustments required to facilitate participation (nil).
- v. There remain four vacancies on this parish council (duly noted). (*Update: Five as of end Aug due to resignation of SF – notice offering option to fill via election is up on noticeboards*)

49/25 Minutes of the previous meeting.

- i. **Resolved. Motion** to accept and approve the minutes of the meeting of 21st May and 11th June 2025. Prps: ID. Scnd: LMH. Duly **approved**. Cllrs approved the new format for minutes.

50/25 The meeting was adjourned for **Open Forum** (public question time). Residents noted the guidance provided for information on their seats.

- i. TR – Addressed the parish council on matters relating to the Old Village Hall Site. The resident fully appreciated the reasons for closure of the site, thanked the parish council for the leaflet keeping them informed, noted the signs placed on the entrances repeating the same information, asked when the site would be opened again and made statements about access and parking.
Cllrs: The resident was thanked for attending and was asked to provide questions in writing to the Parish Council, so that the full council can consider details when it next discusses the closure of the car park in general. The resident was requested to please outline their reasoning as to why the Parish Council should provide carpark access for specific individuals now that the parish hall has been demolished.

50/25 Open Forum continued.

- ii. CP – Addressed the parish council on matters relating to broadband provision at Croome. The resident noted that on a good day they receive 7mb, which is below the Ofcom minimum service regulation. BT have confirmed that the service can be upgraded at resident expense of £400,000. Croome Court has got fibre to its premises but this existing infrastructure does not have capacity to add anymore.
Cllrs: High Green had full fibre fitted to all houses in 2019 under the Gov. Rural Voucher scheme – is this still available? Residents could explore Air Band and Star Link? Could the County Council intervene as they have done in other parishes pairing up with companies that improve mobile phone and wifi provision?
Action: CCllr MA to pass all information on to the Broadband & Connectivity Team, Strategic Commissioning, Worcestershire County Council. CCllr noted that 96% of Worcestershire is connected to mega fast broadband and that this team is looking to close the gaps.
Action: Residents to provide contact details and GDPR permissions to CCllr MA.
Update post meeting: R.S of WCC has made contact with BT and has an option in the pipeline for the 6 houses in this situation. An update will be provided in due course.
- iii. EH – Addressed the parish council on matters relating to speeding in the parish. Agricultural vehicles are not sticking to the speed limits and pose a hazard due to lack of care and attention. Cllrs: Three speed monitoring events have taken place in Kinnersley (and also in Severn Stoke) and the average speeds did not qualify for enforcement. Most farming activity at this time of year is conducted by contractors. The parish council is already looking at additional 30mph roundels and 30mph signs at Kinnersley from the A38 and in Severn Stoke Birch Lane.
Resolved. Action. Motion for the **Clerk** to write to farmers. Prps: RH. Scnd: ID. Duly **approved**. Goodwins and Red Start Growers Ltd to be included amongst others. *Actioned 17/07*
Resolved. Action. Motion for the **Clerk** to write to West Mercia Police to ask for further enforcement at Kinnersley, Defford and High Green. Prps: RG. Scnd: RH. Duly **approved**.
Actioned 17/07
Action: CCllr MA to double check which restrictions are in place for Rebecca Road industrial site and whether enforcement is applicable at this location. *Update post meeting: No TPOs exist for access to Rebecca road site, including weight restrictions or otherwise. Existing TPO is for the Defford exit (turn left rather than turn right towards Defford) only. Vehicles using the Rebecca road entry unlikely to be enforceable.*
Motion for an additional VAS pole at Kinnersley. No proposer or seconder. The option to explore an extra VAS pole was declined on the basis that the volunteers are already at full capacity serving the existing ones.
- iv. JH – Significant gap in tarmac at London Arch. **Action: Resident JH** to report to WCC and also send what3words to Clerk so that she can chase. *Actioned by resident 21/07. Actioned by Clerk 31/07.*

Residents were thanked for their input and Standing Orders were reinstated. Residents remained for the rest of the meeting.

51/25 Planning and enforcement.

- i. To note Worcestershire **Parkway stakeholder engagement workshops** 14th & 15th July hosted by Homes England and Summix. Cllr Hill attended, as did DCllr DH and CCllr MA. Homes England will respond to the parish council about travel plans and infrastructure in due course.
- ii. **Resolved. Motion in support of Neighbourhood Plans.** Prps: ID. Scnd: LMH. Duly **approved**. Resolution Calling on the Government to Provide Dedicated Funding for Neighbourhood Plans. Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council acknowledges that Neighbourhood planning empowers local communities to shape the development and growth of their areas through the creation of Neighbourhood Plans. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans requires significant time, expertise, and financial resources, often placing a burden on parish and town councils. Neighbourhood Plans contribute to more democratic, locally-informed planning decisions and support the delivery of sustainable development aligned with community needs and aspirations.

Motion continued overleaf

Therefore it is Resolved to

- a) Call upon His Majesty's Government to provide increased and sustained funding to support the development, review, and implementation of Neighbourhood Plans. *Update post meeting: Actioned via letter to WCALC 20/08)*
 - b) Request that the Government ensures funding is accessible to all communities, to promote inclusivity and fairness in the planning process. *(Update post meeting: Actioned via letter to WCALC 20/08)*
 - c) Write to Dame Harriet Baldwin and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government to communicate this resolution and advocate for enhanced support for neighbourhood planning. *(Outstanding action as of 26/08).*
- iii. Standing Item: To consider (and as required, arrange an extra ordinary parish council meeting) planning applications received after date of publication of this agenda. Nil at time of publication.
 - iv. Standing Item: Devolution.
 - a) Duly noted. The published results and responses to the Local Government Reorganisation Survey and to note the slides from the Parish/Town Briefing – Local Government Reorganisation.
 - b) Duly noted. That the Clerk has sought WCALC advice about the possible requirement to renegotiate all leases (existing and supposed) for installation of public furniture on WCC verges and to renegotiate all bin emptying contracts with MHDC, in light of Devolution.

52/25 Community and Committee Representatives

- i. **County Councillor Martin Allen.** Updates received on Worcestershire On Demand Bus Services, WCC finances, SEND school provision and secondary school provision. See App 3.
- ii. **District Councillor John Michael.** SWDP review is in the last stages. It will not be possible for the district council to demonstrate a five year housing supply. Once ratified the SWDP will not give the district the planning protection that was hoped for.
- iii. **Volunteer Footpaths Warden (VFW)**
 - a) Duly noted that the VFW is assisting with report that footpaths adjacent to the Knights Hill pool are blocked with vegetation and the stiles from the main road to Madge Hill are hazardous. 5 reports have been made to WCC ref damaged stiles and missing footplates. Farmers of cropped fields have not kept public footpaths clear. **Resolved. Motion** to put VFW in touch with Savills once the parish council has met with the new representative. Prps: RH. Scnd: RG. Duly **approved**.
 - b) No progress regarding the blocked right of way (fence/gate structure) at Clifton adjacent to The Maltings/Roseland. **Resolved. Motion** to re-report to WCC and pass to County Councillor for action. Prps: RH. Scnd: RG. Duly **approved**. *Update post meeting: Re-reported by Clerk to WCC website 31/07. Outstanding to bring this up with the County Councillor.*
- iv. **Flood Bund.** The County Councillor will push for another update once the new administration have bedded in.
- v. **The Friends of St Denys' Committee.** Details of a Heritage Grant have been forwarded to the Committee. The programme will be delivered by the Architectural Heritage Fund and will run through until 31 March 2026. Cllr Daly noted that the committee will not be following up on this grant as it is not applicable unfortunately.
- vi. **The National Trust.** Overflow car park has been fully utilised in the dry weather. Proposals for the new car park, visitor centre and play area were available for viewing and a planning application will be submitted asap. Out of hours September theatre has been cancelled, with a possible replacement option being a 6pm to 9pm pre-booked music event and lights inside the house. Cllr Garrard posed a question about the Black Pear Joggers events and asked for clarification as to whether these fell within existing planning permissions.
- vii. **Tarmac.** Nil items.

- viii. **Lengthsman. Action:** The Lengthsman is to be instructed by the Clerk to cut back vegetation around speed signs across the parish. *Actioned 31/07*
- ix. **High Green VAS stats.** 5th May to 7th July West to East 33,000 vehicles. With 55mph being the highest recorded speed on 16th June.
- x. **Police.** Nil
- xi. **Site of Old Village Hall.**
 - a) Residents had received the following information as a summary of the current position: *We wish to inform you that the old parish hall site will be closed, effective immediately, until further notice. This decision has been made following concerns noted by residents and councillors of the current high risk of impermissible use of the site, and after careful consideration of lease obligations and insurance requirements. The decision to close the site has been made with the safety and security of all in mind. The Parish Council is actively monitoring the situation. We encourage all residents to reach out to the Parish Clerk if you have any specific concerns or require further information. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this time. Our priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents and their property.*
 - b) **Resolved. Motion** to keep the car park and site closed to all members of the public until further notice and until the situation with travellers can be reassessed. Prps: RG. Scnd: ID. Duly **approved.** Unanimous. *Update post meeting: additional keys have been cut in order to allow lengthsman access to maintain/mow the site.*
 - c) **Resolved. Motion** to move the bottle banks to outside the vehicle gate in order to preserve that facility. Prps: RG. Scnd: RH. Duly **approved.** *Update post meeting – bottle banks are now outside the gates, used and emptied as normal.*
 - d) **Resolved. Motion** for Cllr Hill to arrange a meeting with new Savills rep. **Agreed.**
 - e) **Hall Committee Update.** A request to amend the charitable objectives whilst the committee is without a hall to manage has been submitted to the Charity Commission. Nothing has been received back and so a repeat request has been submitted online, generating an automatic receipt issued by the Commission advising of a response date of 14th August. There is no phone number for the Charity Commission and the only option is to correspond by email. Feedback from the Commission is essential in order to progress towards a public vote at the next AGM (autumn 2025) Financial reports have been prepared for the AGM. Cllr Hill, S.Bott and G.Chatterton are liaising ref the heras fencing.

53/25 Broadband – already covered in public forum.

54/25 Knights Hill, Birch Lane and Stonnall Close

- i. Duly noted that additional dog fouling signs have been installed by the Clerk, c/o the DCllrs.
- ii. Duly noted that information has been provided to residents ref dog and general waste bins.
- iii. Duly noted 1 missing parish council sign 'no parking in turning area' on the agreed garden fence in the lower cul-de-sac. Agreed: No replacement, as it can be assumed to have been removed by residents.
- iv. Duly noted that WCC Highways have refused double yellow lines in Knights Hill cul-de-sacs due to the cost. They have agreed to investigate additional signage.
- v. **Resolved. Motion** to request MHDC to begin parking enforcement at Knights Hill now that the parish council signage has been in place for four months. Prps: ID. Scnd: RG. Duly **approved.** *Update post meeting – district council unable to provide enforcement as no TPO order is in place from the County Council.*

55/25 General parish projects

- i. **Phone box High Green restoration** - Work due to start imminently. Lengthsman has cleared vegetation from around the sides and top to allow easy access for cleaning and painting. *Update post meeting: The Clerk has emailed CCllr MA to apply for funding towards this project. 26/08. Update: end Aug. Contractor has changed employment and the tender process will need to be reinstituted unfortunately.*
- ii. To note that the dry weather has facilitated clearance of the **blocked drains at Croome corner/London Arch** by residents. Photos will be provided to the Clerk in due course and forwarded to the County Council as part of a request for annual clearance (4 yearly at present).
- iii. **Bin for A38 layby.** On order. Delivery date mid August. *Update post meeting – now due for delivery in September.*

56/25 Finance, admin and training

- i. **Resolved. Motion** to consider/motion to approve payment of accounts for this month and the previous month. Prps: RW. Scnd: RG. Duly **approved**. Appendix 1.
- ii. **Resolved. Motion** to receive and approve the latest bank reconciliation/quarterly report (as applicable). Prps: RH. Scnd: RG. Duly **approved**. Q1 report approved.
- iii. **Resolved. Motion** to receive the Clerk's timesheet. Prps: RH. Scnd: RG. Duly **approved**.
- iv. Press and social media policy. Next steps, or adoption. Amendments received from Cllr LMH and Clerk to action.
- v. To note that **N Power** (electricity suppliers for Stonnall Close) have updated the parish council contact details on their system for correspondence, but are unable to change the parish council username from the previous Clerks home BT email address without cancelling the parish council business account. Since correspondence is now directed to the correct email account, the **Motion** is to live with this situation. **Resolved**. Prps: RH. Scnd: RW. Duly **approved**.

57/25 Correspondence, dates for diary, items for future agenda.

- i. Cllrs may use this opportunity to report minor matters of info not included elsewhere on the agenda.
- ii. Items for future agendas:
 - Resident request for a reduced speed limit at Croome to 30mph. Scoping request to Highways has suggested that any amendment to speed limit should wait until results of yellow line trial.
 - Flooding at Kinnersley – Highways have declined involvement and have asked the PC to refer the enquiry to the land drainage team at the district council to investigate and action as necessary. Clerk yet to progress.
 - War memorial, progress with valuation.
 - New VAS battery required to be purchased – clarify which VAS is experiencing difficulty.... Westcotec or Elan City.

58/25 Date of the next meeting. Wed 24th September 7.30pm. Croome NT SOQ meeting room.

Signed Chairman

.....Date

Contact the parish clerk if you would like to receive agendas or minutes by email.

Proper Officer, RFO & Parish Clerk: Mrs Lisa Stevens, 9 The Limes, Kempsey, WR5 3LG.
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New website: <http://severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk>

Notes to minutes – Terms

- Once approved, the Motion/decision is called a “resolution”
- Resolved – Where a decision is made about a Motion.
- Duly Approved – Motions where a formal vote took place, accepting the Motion.
- Duly Accepted/Agreed – Motions where no formal vote took place but the action/recommendation within the Motion or debate is to proceed. Usually for non-financial matters or for items already agreed as part of an existing budget.
- Declined – Motion where a formal vote took place, with the Motion rejected.
- Duly Noted – Information not requiring a vote.
- Abstentions or votes against a Motion will be noted but the minutes will NOT always show individual names, unless Councillors have declared an interest and the transparency of that interest must be maintained.

Requests for this information in other languages/audio/large print will be reasonably considered.

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Appendix 1. Items already paid since last PC meeting June 2025 *(Approved under previous agenda or required payment under contract monthly)* **And Appendix 2. Items for payment July 2025 outstanding:**

Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman invoice June 2025 received 03/07/25	£306.65
Mr Simon Bott	Parish Hall Mowing June 2025 received 03/07/25	£60.00
Information Commissioner	Annual membership 2024 - 2025 Direct Debit Standing Order set up 2021.	£52.00
Npower (took over from EON)	Electricity bill for street lighting at Severn Stoke, Stonnall Close.	Awaiting invoice
Mr Phil Moore	Internal Audit 2024/2025.	£20.00
HMRC Shipley	EmployEE Income tax payment	£5.00
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Expenses & HMA (£26) July 2025	£43.15
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage June paid in July 2025	£302.96
Bank account service charge	Lloyds Bank monthly fee taking automatically from account.	£4.25

Appendix 3 – County Councillor Martin Allen report to parish council July 2025

WORCESTERSHIRE ON DEMAND BUS - Parts of Wychavon are going to benefit from a new On Demand Bus service, which will be limited to a 9 mile travel area. I have little other information about this service, but I will be watching to see if our residents can take advantage of maybe a trip to Pershore.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS - The first Cabinet meeting took place in the last week of June. The report to be discussed was the finance report of the financially situation. The cabinet member for responsibility for finance did not attend. I am unaware as to the reason why. The meeting was just over 20 minutes, and some cabinet members arrived late for the meeting, and one cabinet member was prevented from voting due to their late attendance. I asked a question about Veterans and the Worcestershire On Demand Bus and was assured by the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jo Monk that she and her party would continue to support the veterans.

NEW SEND SCHOOL IN MALVERN - There has been some speculation if the new SEND school in Malvern would not go ahead. Last week in full council I understand that the Cabinet Member for Responsibility said that it would go ahead. This is good news, especially as the government is paying for it.

NEW SCHOOL AND MULTI-STORY CARPARK NEAR COUNTY HALL - Earlier in the year I reported that the previous administration has authorised the construction of a new high school and a multi-story carpark for the hospital. I understand that the new administration is looking at this again and may cancel the project.

UNITARY AUTHORITY'S FROM WCC PRESPECTIVE - There was a briefing today about the Unitary Authority situation. Price Cooper Waterhouse gave a very interesting presentation. WCC will be going out to public consultation, once they have drilled down into the data, so that the public can make an informed decision. MHDC have already held a survey with residents, the residents at MHDC have come down clearly in wishing for a two unitary authorities to be set up. Worcester City came back with a narrow margin for one authority and Wyre Forrest has already stated they want one authority. The other district councils want two.

FLOOD BUND MEETING - Following the very late cancellation attendance by WCC and the EA, I will be asking the new administration to agree to a fresh meeting later in the year.

VERGE/INFORMAL PARKING AREA NEAR CROOME #9026 - As you may recall, I asked that the verge/informal parking area between High Green and Croome Court is attended to. This work has now been completed.

SHARP CORNER WARNING SIGN SEVERN BANK (No number issued yet) - As I reported last time, I raised this on the WCC system on 27/05/25, I have asked for the sign to be repaired, and the foliage cut back so that the solar panel will work. I have also asked for the Verge masters to be refreshed.

#9549 20 KNIGHTS HILL PARKING ISSUES 02.07.25 - Following residents' complaints I requested that double yellow lines are considered to ensure residents can get off their drives. - 03/07/25 received an update from Highways, no to the yellow lines, possible they will consider signage.