

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STERT PARISH COUNCIL

At St James Church, Stert on Monday December 15 2025 at 6.30pm

Present: Chris Lawrence chairman (CL), David Bromhead acting parish clerk (DB), Lucy Barker treasurer (LB), Frances Greenburgh (FG), Ann Harris (AH), Alick Edwards (AE).

Minutes taken by Philip Normington.

- 1. Apologies:** Lewis Cowen sent his apologies.
- 2. Declaration of interests:** There were no declarations of interest.
- 3. Minutes of last meeting:** The minutes of the meeting held on September 15 were approved as an accurate record.
- 4. Treasurer's report:** LB reported that our balance stands at £4,474.04 (verified by CL)

Since our last meeting there have been the following expenses:

£50 to Stert PCC for use of the church.
£500 to Alick Edwards for village maintenance.
Both of these expenses are as budgeted.

£250 to Wiltshire Council for election expenses. This request was unexpected and unbudgeted. We have not previously had to pay local council election expenses, apparently we were warned of this in 2023 but LB has no memory/record of this.

There will be a growing trend for county councils allocating more costs to parish and town councils as, unlike county councils these are not subject to any tax increase limits from central government.

We also continue to pay £4.25 bank charges per month.

5. Village Speed Limit: CL has received estimates from Philip Whitehead for installing a 20mph speed limit in the village. Stert PC is required to pay 25% of the costs, with WC paying the other 75%. The first stage would be an assessment by independent contractors appointed by WC which costs £3,500. Stert PC would pay 25% of this i.e. £875. If the assessment shows that a 20 mph restriction is justified then there would be installation costs of between £500 & £1000 to Stert. Hence maximum cost to Stert would be £1,875. These costs would probably be spread over 2 years.

The 5 councillors present voted unanimously to go ahead with requesting a 20mph limit. It was noted that Lewis Cowen had, by email, expressed opposition to the project.

6. Church: CL reported that the Church is seeking donations for roof repairs. CL and LB had said that PC funds could not be made available, but the parish council would support any fund-raising projects.

7. Stert PC website and emails: The village is required to have a website and the current version is unsatisfactory. At present there are insufficient funds for a new website, but the main obstacle is lack of a suitable person prepared to set up and run a new website and email system. It was agreed to continue searching for a solution.

8. Precept for 2026/7: LB presented a spreadsheet showing the current year's budget and spending with a suggested itemised budget for 2026/7. It was noted that the £1,000 budgeted for a new website has not been spent and is unlikely to be in the coming year. It was therefore agreed not to budget for a new website for the year 2026/7, and to allow for max expenditure of £900 for the proposed speed limit. After some discussion it was agreed that the 2026/7 precept request would be £2,500. This may mean taking some funds from our reserve but since this has been increasing over the last few years, this was not considered reckless. Proposed by CL & LB and unanimously approved.

9. Footpaths: LB reported that right of way STER1A (on the WC public rights of way map) i.e. the bridleway from the A342 junction towards Etchilhampton Hill, which is part of the Wessex Ridgeway, was being damaged by motorcycles. "Bridleway only, no motor vehicle" signs had been erected last year at both ends of the lane, but one has already been stolen. It was agreed to approach the Council to look into restricting motorised access to the bridleway.

DB also reported that no progress had been made in repairing the footbridge at the entry to Ruddlebats Hanging.

10. Parish steward: The parish steward is supposed to spend half a day a month in the parish attending to highway problems identified by the PC. However DB was recently informed that the Parish stewards would not be attending for the foreseeable future as they were involved with pothole repairs.

11. Flooding/drainage: Residents at Mill Cottage have reported they are suffering flooding from run-off from heavy rain down the track to their property. DB has reported this matter to Wiltshire Council highways department but they have refused to take any action. *Post meeting: DB has contacted WC again and is hoping he may be able to resolve the situation.*

12. Christmas Party: as the PC has been unable to find a venue, there will be no Stert Christmas party this year. The Clock Inn will be having their own Christmas Party and the meeting agreed to contribute £50 from PC funds.

13. Any Other Business: none

14. Date of next meeting: The next PC meeting will take place in the Church on Monday 23 March 2026 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm