

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STERT PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2026

### At St James Church, Stert

**Present:** Chris Lawrence (CL) chairman; Alec Edwards (AE) vice chairman; Lucy Barker (LB) treasurer; David Bromhead (DB) parish clerk; Ann Harris (AH); Frances Greenburgh (FG); Lewis Cowen (LC) plus one member of the public.

1. **Apologies:** There were none.
2. **Declarations of interest:** There were none.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting:** The minutes of the meeting of the parish council and the annual meeting were approved as accurate records.
4. **Treasurer's report:** LB reported that our bank balance stands at £5,954.73, verified by the chairman. Since our last meeting there have been the following items of expenditure: £50 for use of the church for the PC meeting, £100 for the gift to the internal auditor, Hilary Hawkins (this was approved at the previous PC meeting), £4.25 per month bank service charges. The members authorised LB to pay AE the usual £500 for village maintenance, proposed by LC, seconded by LB and passed unanimously.
5. **Biodiversity policy:** FG had drafted a document which is available on the PC website. CL explained that, if approved, the PC could use the policy as a guideline when commenting on planning applications that come before it, giving our comments more weight. LC said he was 100 per cent in favour of it and thanked FG for her hard work in drafting it. It was proposed by DB and seconded by LB and passed unanimously as PC policy.
6. **Village maintenance:** DB repeated the need to sweep the road through the village down to Old Mill Cottage and a task force will be set up to do the work. It was noted that there was a leak of water from the bank at the side of the road and members were nervous as to what might be causing it. DB said he would report it. (Post meeting: DB has reported leak, ref. no 065036424001) Wessex Water giving it low priority).
7. **Village speed limit:** There will be a meeting of the Devizes Area Highways Committee next month at which the subject will be discussed and decided.
8. **Rights of way:** LB reported that motorbikes are still using the bridleway (Ster1a) up Etchilhampton Hill and that new metal steps have been installed on the footpath across the railway line from Ruddlebat Hanging.
9. **Parish steward:** There was nothing to report on this matter.

10. **Christmas party:** No one has yet come forward to host the Christmas party and it was suggested that since we had had such a successful summer party that a Christmas party was unnecessary. LC mentioned that the PCC is organising a Candles Around the Pond event close to Remembrance Day with refreshments in the church afterwards and perhaps the PC might care to contribute to the cost of it. LB said that since there was £100 in the budget that could be donated to the event. This was proposed by LC, seconded by FG and passed unanimously.

11. **Any other business:**

CL said he had been approached by the Living Church Society who want to instal information boards at churches throughout Pewsey Vale. CL declared an interest in this item as he is a friend of the project manager. The cost to the parish would be £270. FG said that she would only be in favour of it if the board included information about the village in general rather than just the church. The item was deferred until the next PC meeting for more information to be sought.

LB reported that there are two minor planning applications pending regarding Vale Cottage. There is a comment online from the council tree officer noting that 16 trees have been removed without permission from the site. There is nothing new that the PC can comment on, however.

LB reported that there is a new register of electors being prepared in advance of next year's local elections. She has a form which she will complete and then pass to DB for signature. The register will be highly confidential.

12. **Date of next meeting:** The next meeting of Stert parish council will take place in the church at 6.30pm on Monday 7 December.