

Monthly Meeting of Severn Stoke & Croome D'Abitot Parish Council

A grouped parish council of the two Parish Areas of Severn Stoke and of Croome d'Abitot

Wed 28th January 2026, 7.30pm

Croome National Trust Visitor Centre, SOQ room

Date of publication of this notice: 22nd Jan 2026. Republished 23rd Jan 2026.

This page is the cover sheet to the agenda, Summons and meeting guidelines.

Parish Councillors, Notice is hereby given that a meeting of Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council will be held on Wednesday **28th January 2026, 7.30pm** at the SOQ room at Croome National Trust Visitor Centre, High Green, Croome d'Abitot, WR8 9DW.
What3 words location:///alleyway.rescuer.perfect



Mrs Lisa Stevens, CILCA, Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer. 9 The Limes, Kempsey, WR5 3LG. 07950256363. parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk



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Scan with your phone to directly access the information provided at the beginning of each parish council meeting.

- The press and public may attend to address councillors on matters concerning the parish (allotted point in the agenda), observe the meeting or inspect draft documents. Comments **MUST** be made through the Chair and not aimed at individuals. District and County Councillors are invited to participate in this meeting at the discretion of the Chair. Public comments and questions to them must be directed to the parish council Chair or should be handled at the respective higher authority meetings.
- Please ensure that correspondence to be read and considered by the Councillors is received at least one week for the meeting, so that it can be added to the agenda and scheduled for discussion as required.
- If this meeting is an extra ordinary meeting, these summons have been issued by the Chair.
- Occasional safety considerations may mean that we close and reschedule the meeting.
- The Register of Electors may be inspected by the Clerk to ascertain attendee residency.
- Names are recorded in the meeting minutes, unless individuals ask for this not to occur.
- Correspondence to be considered must be submitted in good time before a meeting and before the agenda is published.
- With some restrictions, meetings may be filmed or recorded by the public. We are happy to provide guidance on what is permitted. Advice should be sought in advance to avoid disruption. The parish council may live stream those persons sitting at the council table on social media. The parish council may record audio information at this meeting. However, there is no legal requirement for the parish council to live stream a meeting in order to allow virtual public or councillor participation.
- Please note 'Information provided at the beginning of each parish council meeting' (QR code above to the right).
- Each agenda item below includes the resolution to discuss and formulate Motions not requiring written notice. New items raised for formal vote will be included in the next agenda unless covered by St.Orders/Financ.Regis/Delegation to Clerk policies.
- If there are any adjustments required to encourage/allow public participation please bring these to the attend of the Clerk or Chair before or at the meeting. We will make all reasonable adjustments where possible.
- Please check fire exits arrangements upon arrival and check against your personal requirements. Please bring any difficulties to the immediate attention of any member of the parish council. In the event of an emergency, 'muster' is in the car park but, since attendees are only encouraged (not required) to sign in, no register will be taken.
- To our knowledge, there are no hearing/audio induction loops installed at this venue.
- The parish council does not hold or manage the wifi codes for this venue.
- Dogs may be permitted depending on the venue hire restrictions. Please enquire beforehand.
- Children are permitted but must not be allowed to disrupt proceedings please. Filming or recording of children is not permitted without written consent of parents/legal guardians - The council and public must take absolute care to meet this restriction.
- Councillors/the public are individually responsible for keeping their own language/phrasing to an acceptable level.
- The parish council has a risk assessment for public meetings. Please ask if you require a copy.
- Please take a moment read our privacy notice on our website, which explains how we use and look after your information.

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

Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council agenda Wed 28th January 2026, 7.30pm

1	<p>Welcome.</p> <p>a. Points of order and any adjustments required to facilitate public participation.</p> <p>b. Apologies. Motion to accept and approve and for Clerk to enter these on the records. Cllr Ian Daly</p> <p>c. Declarations of interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note updates received to Register of Interests/dispensations. Cllrs are reminded to update their register of interests. ii. To declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests relevant to agenda. Cllrs who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest/ other Disclosable Interest (para 12(4)(b) Code of Conduct) must leave for the relevant items only, unless a dispensation has been granted. iii. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests relevant to the agenda. iv. To declare any additions to the Register of Gifts & Hospitality. v. To consider written requests for the granting of a Dispensation (S33 Localism Act 2011). Motion to approve requests.
2	<p>To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancies (six at time of publication).</p> <p>An application has been received from Mr Simon Bott.</p> <p>As the number of candidates (1 at the time of publication) is less than the number of vacant seats, a confidential interview session is not required. Candidates will be welcomed, invited to introduce themselves and ask/receive questions in open session.</p> <p>Nomination, seconding and voting (by show of hands) and any decision to co-opt the candidate/s in open session. Successful candidates are welcomed to the table at this meeting as full councillors. Signature on documentation as appropriate.</p>
3	<p>a. To determine any items on this agenda that should be considered of a private nature and Motion to exclude members of the press and public during consideration of the said agenda items by reason of the confidential nature of the items of business to be transacted, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960.</p> <p>No (nil) recommendations at this time.</p>
4	<p>Minutes of the parish council meeting 26th November 2025 – to consider and approve.</p>
5a	<p>The meeting will be adjourned for Open Forum (Public Question Time)</p> <p>Residents may raise any matter without notice but responses may not be provided at the same meeting. Please refer to the notes on your seat for further information.</p> <p>i. Update on the Environment Agency Flood Bund Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dame Harriet Baldwin press release dated 22/01/2026 Appendix 4 - EA resident update dated 22/01/2026 Appendix 5 - Joint letter from WCC and Dame Harriet due to be received 28/01/2026
5b	<p>To receive the report of the County Councillor Martin Allen (Items raised for decision will be added to the next agenda)</p> <p>- Devolution update if any.</p>
5c	<p>To receive the report of the District Councillors John Michael and David Harrison (Items raised for decision will be added to the next agenda)</p> <p>- Update if available on the enforcement action against caravans Severn Bank.</p> <p>- To note that planning permission has been provided to the applicant for the Old Boars Head Car Park and that attention has been given in the planning conditions to matters raised by the parish council.</p>

5d	<p>Community and Committee Representatives - to receive any updates or reports available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Police <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Kempsey and Alfrick SNT have indicated possible attendance. Apologies received. - To note the response from the Police Crime Commissioner ref Severn Bank Appendix 3 ii. National Trust iii. Parish Hall Committee. Appendix 6 for parish council update provided at Hall AGM. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motion to approach existing contractor to renew mowing contract from March 2026. iv. Lengthsman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note the resignation December 2025 of Simon Bott as parish lengthsman and the appointment of Tim Hughes by contract annually renewed. Motion of thanks to both. - To note reinstallation of zebra bollard in Kinnersley. - Tim has received the new bin ready to install along the A38 in the sewage works layby. - Raised footpath Severn Bank fencing has been sorted. - Large amounts of flytipping have been reported. - WCC template for 2026/2027 lengthsman contract has been received and will be distributed to Tim for inspection shortly. v. Volunteer Footpaths Warden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note that Severn Stoke fish pools right of way broken infrastructure has been reported to and acknowledged by Savills. vi. Friends of St Denys' Committee vii. Tarmac - Clifton Liaison Meetings viii. VAS stats reports ix. Broadband – update on progress to expand provision to Severn Stoke residents. Appendix 9 																		
5e	Closure of Open Forum. Motion to reinstate Standing Orders.																		
6	<p>Planning - <i>to consider and resolve to respond to applications matters.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Standing Item: To consider (and as required, arrange an extra ordinary parish council meeting) planning applications received after date of publication of this agenda. b. Applications examined by Cllrs by email since last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. M/25/01947/LB, Broughton House, 47 Severn Stoke, Worcester, WR8 9JA, e-roof existing tiled roof slopes with new felt, battens and handmade roof tiles. Cllrs had no comments. ii. M/25/01867/LB, Pippins, 8 Kinnersley, Severn Stoke, Worcester, WR8 9JR, Retrospective structural repairs to roof, chimney maintenance of brickwork. Cllrs had no comments. 																		
7	<p>Budget and Precept 2026/2027 - <i>to consider and resolve to set the budget for the 2026/27 financial year and to submit the request for the parish council portion of council tax to the district council by 31st January 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Annual review of donations and grants. To examine current annual donations. Sig. amendments can be tabled for next agenda. <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Background. Donations each year under existing and proposed budget plans:</td></tr> <tr> <td>6th Worcester Kempsey Scouts</td><td>£50</td></tr> <tr> <td>Severn Stoke Brownies (based temporarily at Earls Croome)</td><td>£50</td></tr> <tr> <td>Annual Remembrance Wreath (British Legion)</td><td>£30</td></tr> <tr> <td>SARA search and rescue</td><td>£50</td></tr> <tr> <td>St Denys' Churchyard maintenance</td><td>£500</td></tr> <tr> <td>Upton Library</td><td>£200</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Donations that have previously been requested and declined until further quotes received:</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Belfy repairs – PCC St Denys'</td></tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Motion to accept the recommendation of this parish council to increase the precept for 2026/2027 by 7% from £14,000 to £14,980. Ref Appendix 7 Explaining the precept (displayed on the parish council website). Parish Councillors received draft budget for consideration in November 2025. c. Motion to set the precept at a different amount than above. 	Background. Donations each year under existing and proposed budget plans:		6 th Worcester Kempsey Scouts	£50	Severn Stoke Brownies (based temporarily at Earls Croome)	£50	Annual Remembrance Wreath (British Legion)	£30	SARA search and rescue	£50	St Denys' Churchyard maintenance	£500	Upton Library	£200	Donations that have previously been requested and declined until further quotes received:		Belfy repairs – PCC St Denys'	
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8	<p>Highways, Infrastructure and Parish Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Phone box High Green. Project review and quality control. b. Defibrillator Rose and Crown – update Cllr McEwan-Hill. c. VAS update Severn Bank <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clerk has asked Westcotec to attend and inspect. - Clerk has submitted application for Divisional funding: <p><i>Extract from application (for information): The original unit purchase price was £3500 plus VAT and the parish council considered that this asset should be brought back into a state of usefulness and was an asset that should not be wasted. Our county councillor has granted match funding of £300 in a £600 project of general assessment and maintenance and the original manufacturer is also assisting with this project. The parish council is now seeking match funding/partial funding towards a new solar panel costing £300 plus VAT as part of a final stage of repair. The parish council has between £150 and £200 to allocate to the project (infra3).</i></p> d. Overgrown trees Severn Stoke Bank – WCC attended to cut trees back from nearby homes and VAS. Assessment of effectiveness. e. To note that Zebra bollards have been knocked over at Croome Corner London Arch and are scheduled for replacement by Highways. Residents have asked if additional bollards can be installed in order to protect the gate visibility splay.
9	<p>General Finance, Admin & Training – the public and press may be readmitted at this point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To review payments made within the past month and to consider and motion to approve the payment of outstanding accounts. Appendix 1. b. To consider and approve payment of urgent accounts (Delegation to Clerk policy). Nil at publication. c. To receive and motion to accept latest bank reconciliation and quarterly report (if applicable). d. To receive and inspect the parish clerk's timesheet. e. Clerk's correspondence list for information. Appendix 2 f. To note that the subscription for Malwarebytes Standard will renew on 09/02/2026 for £39.99 for 1 year. g. VAT reclaim has been made for 24/25 financial year. £1,333.8 h. To note that NALC has published a 'parish and town councils recommended basic governance checklist', which has been completed by the Clerk. Appendix 8. Two outcomes were to remind Cllrs of availability of training (done via email) and to create a risk management policy (done and to be approved a next meeting). i. Reminder from WCALC of availability of councillor training. Cllrs can log on and sign themselves up for any cllr course that they like. j. To note that the parish council workplace pensions re-enrolment deadline is 8th March 2026. k. To note the updated SECTION 137 NOTICE: <p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has informed us of an increase in the Section 137 expenditure limit for parish and town councils in England for the 2026/27 financial year. The new limit is £11.60 per elector, up from £11.10 in 2025/26. The increase reflects the percentage rise in the retail price index between September 2024 and September 2025, in accordance with Schedule 12B of the Local Government Act 1972. Section 137 of the Act allows parish and town councils to incur expenditures for purposes that benefit their communities when no specific statutory power is available. NB. This does not affect the budgeted threshold that the parish council sets each year, which is £500.</p> L. To note that HMRC has written to confirm that PAYE is in credit by £30 suspected due to tax code changes. Clerk and Cllr McEwan-Hill are liaising to sort.

10	<p>Correspondence, dates for diary, items for future agenda. Cllrs may use this opportunity to report minor matters of info not included elsewhere on the agenda</p> <p>a. Item for future agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Correspondence from solicitor for 39 Severn Stoke in respect of old parish hall site. Motion to set a date for an extra ordinary meeting of the parish council in order to discuss. ii. War Memorial. ownership, maintenance, lease of land/ownership of verge, progress with valuation. iii. Audio recording for parish council meetings. iv. SharePoint for parish councils. v. General policy review, including risk management policy, complaints policy, updates to Code of Conduct, and Tick sheet process upon resignation of a parish cllr,
<p>11. Date of next scheduled meeting:</p> <p>Wed 25th March 2026, 7.30pm – Annual Parish Meeting of Residents of the Parish Areas of Severn Stoke and of Croome d'Abitot. Venue: St.Denys' Church, Severn Stoke <i>A standard Parish Council meeting will occur afterwards. 8.30pm approx.</i></p>	

Appendix 1. Items for payment or already paid in the previous month.

75	28/11/2025	Mr T. Hughes	Lengthsman invoice Nov 2025.	£375.75
76	18/12/2025	Mrs L. Stevens	Expenses & HMA (£26) Dec 2025	£28.48
77	18/12/2025	Mrs L. Stevens	Chair's allowance for volunteers	£32.90
78	23/12/2025	Thomson & Bancks LLP	Parish hall advice.	£2,860.80
79	18/12/2025	HMRC Shipley	EmployEE Income tax payment.	£5.00
80	29/12/2025	Mrs L. Stevens	Clerk wage Dec 2025	Redacted <£350
81	16/12/2025	Service charge	Bank monthly fee	£4.25
82	02/01/2026	Mr T. Hughes	Lengthsman invoice Dec 2025.	£376.20
83	07/01/2026	Mrs L. Stevens	1 x Ink High Capacity HP 953XL	£189.88
84	outstanding	Mrs L. Stevens	Expenses & HMA (£26) Jan 2026	£31.45
85	22/01/2026	HMRC Shipley	EmployEE Income tax payment.	£5.00
86	outstanding	Mrs L. Stevens	Clerk wage Jan 2026	Redacted < £350
87	19/01/2026	Service charge	Bank monthly fee	£4.25
88	outstanding	Mr T Hughes	Lengthsman invoice Jan 2026	£373.50

Appendix 2. Clerk's correspondence list for items NOT included in the agenda above

Police Crime Commissioner newsletter & PCSO quarterly contract
MHDC Overview Scrutiny Committee: Tuesday 6th Jan Council Tax 2026-27 and Police & Crime Commissioner Recording
NALC Chief Executive's bulletin & WCALC monthly bulletin
MHDC Planning monthly bulletin
WCC Funding Finder monthly bulletin
The Rural Funding Digest - funding for your local project or community group & Rural Services Network weekly bulletin
The Rural Bulletin national rural news and ensuring rural communities have a voice
HMRC – payroll update and legal requirements.
Parish Magazine monthly submission
Broadband - digital infrastructure and connectivity newsletter Jan 2026
Severn Trent Councillor Newsletter December 2025
Worcestershire Regulatory Service Councillor Newsletter December 2025.
Police priorities for Q1 2026 sent 23/12/25
SWDP Review Main Modifications - plans and link to view on website.
Procurement Thresholds from 1 January 2026
Financial Services Compensation Scheme
Home Working Tax Change
New WCALC query ticketing system
Worcestershire County Council's Community Services Directory update contact details on directory

Appendix 3 – Email from PCC in response to parish council concerns over traffic safety at Severn Bank, Severn Stoke

From: John Campion PCC for West Mercia Sent: 14 December 2025 11:00 AM (Case Ref: WE12838)

A member of the West Mercia Police Road Safety Team has now had the opportunity of examining the concerns detailed in your recent letter to our office. Working with partners from Worcestershire County Council their findings are as follows:

'I have liaised with certain colleagues from Worcestershire County Council in relation to the correspondence from Mrs Lisa Stevens, Parish Clerk for Severn Stoke & Croome D'Abitot Parish Council but primarily I have only reported on behalf of the Police.

Regarding the A38 Severn Bank bends area the 25-year injury collision history has been checked on the approaches into the bends and on the bends themselves and 7 collisions were recorded, 4 of which may well have been caused by incorrect speed. The most recent collision was in 2021 near Stoke Gardens and involved a driver being under the influence of alcohol.

In April/May 2023 concerns were raised by residents in relation to the speed of traffic and collisions in the Severn Bank section and I visited the location with colleagues from Worcestershire County Council and as a result a number of improvements were made in the bends area which amongst others included new bend chevron signs and the road eventually being re-surfaced. These recent measures have certainly enhanced the conspicuity of the bends and indeed there have not been any injury collisions reported since 2021.

Although there have not been any injury collisions reported since 2021 there have been damage only collisions in the locality, some would have been reported to the West Mercia Police Control Room while others would have been primarily where the drivers simply leave the scene with their damaged vehicles without any other person being made aware. I have carried out a damage only collision check from 1/1/23 (with the limited data available) received by the West Mercia Police Control Room, it would appear 4 collisions were reported in the vicinity of the bends, (3 in 2023 and 1 in June 2025) but of course many of the improvements would have I believe taken place after the 2023 collisions.

The Severn Bank has also recently been visited with a WCC colleague following the correspondence from Mrs Stevens and it is believed that the most recent improvements at the location are adequate, and no further changes are necessary at this time.

A question has also been raised over the reporting of collisions, and it must be emphasised that the Department for Transport dictate what collision need to be reported, these are Injury collisions (Road Death, Serious/Slight injury) for statistical purposes.

West Mercia Police have a Road Traffic Collision Reporting & Recording (RTCRR) process, and those procedures are adhered to. The Police control room record all calls relating to injury collisions (motorists, cyclists, pedestrians) and the Officers when at the scene submit documentation which ultimately is forwarded to West Mercia casualty reduction analysts and then distributed to our Local Authority partners for their records and investigation where deemed necessary. It would be fair to say that prioritising of resources will fundamentally be aimed at those areas where the injury collision cluster site history is greatest.

When a damage only collision is reported to the West Mercia Control Room, they will NOT be recorded unless certain conditions apply. I do not propose to outline those conditions, but it is fair to say that a number of damage only collisions are still reported and are assessed by the Police.

I must say that when damage only collisions occur either through police records, observations or the public concerns and it appears to be a cluster site or could well be, the Police will visit and if necessary, will invite their Local Authority partners to attend and assess to see if any Highway issues need to be addressed.

I do hope that my summary does cover certain aspects of the report but please be aware that many of the issues raised are national matters and additionally some points will be better addressed by Worcestershire County Council.'

As noted in the report above matters concerning speed and road design do fall within the remit of the County Council and West Mercia Police will be consultees, while those relating to the recording of accidents are dictated by the government department. I hope the foregoing is of assistance to you.

Steve Mackay, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, West Mercia

Appendix 4 – Press release from Dame Harriet Baldwin MP 22/01/2026

West Worcestershire MP Dame Harriett Baldwin has secured full funding for the long-awaited flood defence scheme for Severn Stoke only days after the project was threatened with a shut down.

And the MP thanked the Environment Agency and Worcestershire County Council and urged them to work together with urgency to get the contract agreed and get spades in the ground this Spring on a project which she has campaigned for since major flooding hit the community in 2012.

News was communicated prior to Christmas that the scheme could be cancelled owing to a funding shortfall, but Dame Harriett immediately wrote to Flooding Minister Emma Hardy MP asking her to review the decision and issue a Ministerial Direction.

A letter from the Minister confirming that funding has now been secured was delivered yesterday and the Environment Agency will now liaise with the Worcestershire County Council highways team to ensure that the flood defences and the road raising project can start this Spring. Dame Harriett commented:

“I am delighted that the Environment Agency can now press on with the long-awaited flood defence scheme and I am particularly grateful for the intervention of Minister Emma Hardy who has been following this matter closely and has offered me her constant support to get this scheme underway.

“This project has been a long time on the drawing board but it has planning permission, archaeological studies have been carried out and some soil is already onsite. “I plan to meet with Worcestershire County Council in the coming days to ensure that its contractors are able to work with the Environment Agency to get the work done quickly but I am pleased that common-sense has prevailed.

“This has been one of my longer campaigns but I look forward to standing on a new flood bund in Severn Stoke protecting homes, businesses, the historic church and the vital A38 link road. -end-

Appendix 5 – Environment Agency Resident Update 22/01/2026

creating a better place
for people and wildlife



Severn Stoke Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS) – 22 January 2026

This update provides the latest information on the Severn Stoke FRMS

The community of Severn Stoke has suffered frequent significant flooding from the River Severn and a flood risk management scheme has been explored for the community over the last 20 years, with significant work undertaken after the 2007 floods and further progress made in recent years. The Environment Agency's aim has always been to reduce the flood risk from the River Severn for the local pub, church, and surrounding properties.

Historically, delivering a scheme for the community has been challenging. This is due to the very marginal business case and funding constraints, given the construction costs related to the small number of affected properties. Over the last 12 months the Environment Agency has continued to work with Worcestershire County Council to explore a potential partnership delivery approach.

Latest position

We are pleased to announce that funding for this scheme has become available from our Flood Risk Management Investment Programme. With detailed costings in place we are working closely with Worcestershire County Council to finalise a programme of work to construct the Severn Stoke Flood Risk Management Scheme this year. Delivering the scheme within this timeframe will be challenging, but both the Environment Agency and Worcestershire County Council are making every effort to achieve it.

Next steps

- We are meeting with Worcestershire County Council to finalise programme of works to deliver the scheme within 2026.
- We will continue to liaise with the flood action group, local elected members, and the landowners to share the latest information.
- Once these discussions are complete, we plan to host a public meeting to provide a full update and to confirm further details. This is likely to take place in February 2026.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the proposed scheme, please contact the

Environment Agency at: Enquiries_Westmids@environment-agency.gov.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this update and for your continued support as we work towards improving flood resilience for Severn Stoke.

-end-

Appendix 6 – Extract of parish council update to the Parish Hall Committee AGM 08/01/2026

L.Stevens Parish Clerk on behalf of SS&CDA Parish Council

June/July 25 - The Parish Council locked the old hall site car park due to the threat from travellers in the adjacent parish. At this time, residents approached the Parish Council stating a right to retain access to the car park (stating acquired access rights and/or stating access rights in their title deeds). Evidence to support these claims has not been received by the Parish Council. The closure of the car park became permanent subject to legal consideration.

October 25 - Recognising the role the Hall Committee has oft played in managing access to the car park, the Parish Council sent a request for cooperative working and funding. A response offering sharing of written records was received, along with a decline for joint clientship. The Parish Council supported this decision. The Hall committee has provided extracts from Minute books 1960 to 2025.

November 25 - The Parish Council appointed a Solicitor, conducted a site visit and obtained advice in writing, which was passed in a hand delivered letter to the relevant residents.

December 25 - The Parish Council has made no decision about the lease, but feels it prudent to meet the new Savills rep. This is under the advice of the parish council auditor who recommends examination of use of public money (ie consideration of continuation of the lease against an assessment of the purposes that the site can be put to and the value for money that this represents to the public purse). The cost of the lease and maintenance is in the order of £1,500 pa. This is in the context of the 2025 parish council annual income of £14,000 from resident council tax. The new Savills rep is **W.Debenham, Associate, Rural and Projects**. A meeting has been arranged for 19th of January. No decision will be made until further update has been received regarding the flood bund.

Appendix 7 - The Precept Explained 23/01/2026

Councils across the UK are facing severe funding pressure and budget shortfalls and they no longer make regular funding contributions to parish councils. To address this your Parish Council will be debating an increase in the local Precept at the next parish council meeting (details included as the date of this meeting)

What is a Precept? The Precept is the main source of income for most parish councils as they do not receive direct funding from Central Government. It is a small part of each household's council tax payment and helps fund the parish council's operations and services. In addition, parish councils seek grant funding for some projects.

What does a Parish Council provide? Here are some of the key activities/outgoings:

- Maintenance, insurance and public liability for parish council land and assets, including the war memorial, street lighting, litter bins (which accept mixed waste and dog waste), heritage phone booths, bus shelters, community noticeboards, seats and benches. In 2025/26, insurance was £700 pa, expected to rise in the coming year.
- Membership in the Lengthsman Scheme, contributing to the hire of a contractor for roadside maintenance across the parish, maintaining and installing signage, keeping visibility splays clear, clearing drain tops and gullies etc, assisting landowners who are maintaining their roadside ditches, reporting flytipping and liaising with the parish clerk as to any issue parish wide.
- Provision and maintenance of speed VAS signs across the parish.
- Contribution to the maintenance of Public Rights of Way and related infrastructure.
- Statutory consultee on planning applications and a local voice on highways and environmental matters.
- Representing residents' views to higher-tier councils (like district or county councils) and other organisations.

How is the Precept raised? Worcestershire Council collects your Council Tax on behalf of themselves, Police, Fire, Adult Social Care, and the Parish Councils in their district.

How is it calculated? Each January, your Parish Council sets the Precept for the next financial year by considering projected income, grants, and expenses. The Precept is the amount needed to balance the budget and deliver services. This year, your Parish Council is accounting for potential additional services due to the upcoming process of Devolution (the merging of County and District Councils 2027/2028).

How much does the average household pay for the Precept? The average Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot household's Precept for 2025-26 was £46 per year, costing a Band D household £0.88 per week. Parish Councillors are considering increasing this to £0.95 per week, which would be £49.50 per year - a 7% increase. The final amount depends on the number of contributing households. Increases are never welcome but we take the following points into consideration:

- **Risk of Devolution Outcomes:** Parish Councils may need to cover costs for services previously paid for by the County and District Councils. These include a much larger contribution towards the Lengthsman Scheme, wider responsibility for gully cleaning, hedge cutting, ditch clearing and mowing roadside verges (which includes taking responsibility for roadside bio-diversity and general maintenance).
- **Loss of Grant Funding:** Parish Councils may no longer receive grants from County and District Councillor Divisional Funding which can amount to £500-£600 or more annually.
- **Inflationary pressure:** Rising cost of labour and raw materials, are impacting our capital spending and maintenance work.
- **Need for Protected Funds:** There is a need to build up protected funds for unforeseen repairs, renewals and any required legal processes.
- **Parish Clerk Availability:** The Parish Clerk is available 24/7 for emergencies and helps ensure that resident voices are heard.

Overall, the Parish Council believes a prudent increase is necessary given the current economic climate. Conscientious monitoring of income and expenditure has allowed the Parish Council to maintain a stable annual financial base of around £20,000 which is used to deliver community services and projects. This

amount is carefully managed and is just about sufficient for an organisation that hires contractors and has only one employee.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the Paish Clerk [details] -end-

Appendix 8

Outcome 1 – Remind Cllrs of the availability of training via WCALC

Outcome 2 – Create a risk management policy (to sit alongside existing risk register) – done and to be approved at next meeting.

Outcome 3 – GDPR Data Map updated – who receives data and why.



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, QVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

Parish and town councils recommended basic governance checklist

Good governance underpins a well-run town or parish council, and without it can be the cause of civility and respect, and other issues and problems which could escalate.

This first step governance checklist is recommended to councillors, clerks, county officers and monitoring officers to review when there are complaints and concerns regarding the functioning of the council.

If the council is unable to complete part of the checklist, addressing this initially could prevent the problem from escalating.

1	<p>Is the council a member of National Association of Local Councils (NALC)?</p> <p>NALC supports and promotes parish and town councils providing statutory and not statutory information. NALC also works with county associations for local support.</p>		1. Yes, membership is automatic via our parish council WCALC membership.
2	<p>Is the clerk a member of Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)?</p> <p>Parish and town councils should ensure and pay (Local Government Act 1972 S143 (1) (b)), for their clerk to have professional membership to enable to receive training and be kept fully up to date on the sector. SLCC has a mentoring scheme to support new clerks and local meetings.</p>		2. No. We have been in the past, but the cost was too high when considering value for money. Joining fee is £12. Subscription is £158 pa.
3	<p>Employment matters</p> <p>Does the clerk (and other staff) have a contract of employment? Does the clerk (and other staff) have a personal development plan reviewed at least annually?</p>		3. <u>Yes</u> and yes.
4	<p>Code of conduct</p> <p>Have all councillors signed up to the code of conduct? Have all councillors received code of conduct training?</p>		4. Yes. Training is available and we encourage cllrs to sign up. All have received their WCALC training log in details.
5	<p>Training</p> <p>Is there a plan for undertaking recommended training e.g. code of conduct for councillors? Some free training is available via county associations and principal authorities and/or can be shared with neighbouring councils.</p> <p>Does the clerk have access to recommended training? There are many forms of training for clerks from progression for new clerks one day online up to an MA. There are also many relevant topic-based training in person and online to keep clerks up to date and benefit their councils and community. Being a member of SLCC will normally ensure a reduced rate for training. Some grant funding can be available for training.</p>		5. As above. The Clerk attends training.
6	<p>Does the clerk attend professional development conferences?</p> <p>Professional conferences have sessions specifically designed for clerks' skill building, professional development and enrichment. This will enable a clerk, council and the</p>		6. <u>Yes</u> via WCALC.

	community to stay ahead of a challenging and fluctuating environment and recommending solutions to issues that have been addressed by other clerks and councils. Conferences provide ideas, best practices, contacts and tools which can not only improve the day-to-day governance of the council, can assist with financial savings, accessing funds and project management.		
7	Professional helpline, advice and support Has advice on the problem been sought from NALC? Has it been acted on? Being a member of NALC will enable free access to the professional helpline and support. Has advice on the problem been sought from SLCC? Has it been acted on? SLCC is not a union. It's helpline for clerks is provided to assist with professional matters advising of best practices and practical solutions. It also provides the facility of networking clerks who have been through similar problems. SLCC Advice Library includes over 700 documents listed under the 90 categories; within each category you'll find the documents grouped by advice notes – statement of fact or law, guidance notes – how to do something, model documents – can be adapted to suit a council's particular circumstances. SLCC members may use and adapt the documents within their own council(s) on the understanding that the copyright remains with SLCC. The document must not be shared with or transferred to non-members.		7. N/A <u>at this time</u> . The Clerk consults WCALC whenever there is an issue.
8	Is the council trying to operate without a clerk? There can be several reasons why the clerk is not currently available. The recommendation is that a locum clerk who has professional qualification is brought in to assist with the issue to prevent escalation.		8. Clerk in place
9	Does the chair and mayor have professional support? This can be from the clerk, locum clerk, county association or NALC.		9. Yes, via WCALC.
10	Are the council, councillors and clerk clear about their roles and responsibilities? Council who acts as a corporate body making policies and decisions on behalf of the Council. Councillors who form the corporate body and cannot act as individuals nor be involved in the day to day management of the council. Clerk who carries out the instructions of the council as a corporate body and manages the day to day functions and governance of the council.		10. Cllrs have been provided with the 'Parish Council Induction Guide', 'Powers and Duties of Parish Councils', Roles and Responsibilities of Parish Councils', 'How councils work – an induction guide', and 'Good councillors Guide 2016',
11	Is there evidence of bullying and harassment by a councillor? This becomes a code of conduct matter and therefore the council as the corporate body cannot investigate and take actions. The process is referred to the monitoring officer for determination.		11. N/A <u>at this time</u> .
12	Is there evidence of inappropriate behaviour by the clerk? The council if it believes the clerk has acted inappropriately should ideally address in the regular performance development plan. If there continues to be a problem it is recommended that professional advice is sought to address employment matters rather than a council trying to do their best, which can sometimes make problems more difficult and bring the council into a crisis situation.		12. N/A <u>at this time</u> .

Appendix 9 – Update from the County Council on progress with broadband provision

"As you know, we are working with commercial operators and central government to oversee full fibre deployment across the county. It appears that Openreach does have commercial plans for the area (although all plans are subject to change and can be withdrawn at any time). Areas like Clifton, Severn Stoke, Earls Croome and Kinnersley, plus premises in between are worst affected. These sit between 3 exchanges – Kempsey, Severn Stoke and Upton.

Upton build is slowly coming to a close. Kempsey build is ongoing and due to finish next year.

Also Project Gigabit (Govt funded programme) is due to start next year too. I understand that between both programmes, majority of the area will be upgraded, but I am not certain of exactly which premises and the timescales.

I have recently spoken with the OR lead for Worcestershire and he hasn't got visibility post March 26 at present.

Senior Project Manager,

Broadband & Connectivity Team