



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Residents  
of the parish areas of  
Severn Stoke and of Croome d'Abitot**

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**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026,  
At St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke**

*The meeting commenced at 7.35pm*

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

Cllr Richard Hill (Chair) #	(rep for Severn Stoke parish ward)
Cllr Ian Daly	(rep for Severn Stoke 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)
Cllr Simon Bott	(rep for Croome parish ward)

6 Vacancies for immediate co-option. The quorum is 4 parish cllrs.

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

National Trust October Bishop, Senior Volunteering and Community Officer

Worcestershire County Councillor Martin Allen #

Malvern Hills District Councillor John Michael

Malvern Hills District Councillor David Harrison

Volunteer Footpath Officer Richard Humphries

Parish Lengthsman Tim Hughes #

PC Jon Hand/Safer Neighbourhood Off. Dee Stanley/Police Comm. Support Officer Ashley Smith #

Friends of St. Denys' Committee John Henderson #

Parish Hall Committee Rep Roger Morrows

Tarmac Colin Stratford (Clifton Liaison Committee Chair Martin Allen) #

Peter Meredith, Rural and Business Officer for West Mercian Police Rural Crime Team

Other residents in attendance: 2

**01/26r Welcome, introductions and points of order**

- i. No members of the two parish areas requested for a vote for Chair of this meeting. Accordingly, Parish Cllr Pat Preston took the Chair as a courtesy.
- ii. Declarations of interest. Parish Cllr Ian Daly noted that he is no longer a member of the Friends of St Denys' Committee.
- iii. Points of order. Nil.
- iv. Apologies. In addition to above, SW. Duly accepted.
- v. Adjustments required to facilitate participation. Microphone and hearing loop.
- vi. **Vacancies.** Cllr Bott noted that the parish council has six vacancies. Devolution will inevitably require the parish council to take on more responsibilities and make increasingly far reaching decisions. More volunteers are required to step forward and serve the parish please.
- vii. Thanks were given for the use of the Church for this meeting and thanks also to those volunteers that had worked so hard to get the church ready in advance of this meeting and for Easter.

**02/26r Open Forum**

- i. Parking at Croome Court. Police Rep B. Haynes has visited the area but no recommendations had reached the ear of National Trust reps or the Parish Council. Enforcement tickets have been issued by MHDC. Planning permission for the car park improvements is proceeding and it is hoped that the works will start in May 2026. DH asked a question in ref to archaeology.

### **03/26r Flood Bund.**

- i. This has been a positive month moving forward. Public funding has been obtained and monies are being transferred. The collaboration agreement between WCC and EA has been signed. Planning conditions have all been signed off and the new licence has been approved and received. Sniffer dogs will be on site around the 9<sup>th</sup> April to fulfil license conditions. Mobilisation of project is being finalised between WCC and Griffiths and a Go Live date will be published over the next few weeks. Material on site will be sifted and used on site, with additional clay being brought in to form the core. It is planned for ten weeks of haulage, 25 loads a day. Working hours will be Mon-Fri 8 til 5.30. Archaeology will be undertaken in the background and as a watching brief whilst construction occurs.

### **04/26r Police.**

- i. Residents were joined by Peter Meredith, Rural and Business Officer for West Mercian Police Rural Crime Team. Peter works with trading standards regarding livestock theft, conducts surveys on rural crime, visits residents who are vulnerable or feel vulnerable to crime or who have concerns, visits farmers re agricultural crime and, investigates heritage crime.  
Q) Discussion on PIDs and when used by the police  
Q) Discussion on Smart Water. As a deterrent Smart Water works and those households without it experience more crime. Peter will obtain stats and illustrations in ref to this.

### **05/26r Reports from the County Cllr and District Cllrs.**

- i. The report from CCllr Martin Allen had been received and distributed, with no questions for the record.
- ii. DCllr John Michael: The SWDP has been ratified by MHDC and will also be ratified by other authorities shortly. Once adopted it will become the Statutory Planning Document. It is valid for five years, but since conceptualisation the law has been amended and a review is therefore required every three years. Thanks were given to DCllr David Harrison as Portfolio holder for flooding and Planning for 11 years dedication to this matter. JM remains the rep for Platform Housing and welcomes requests for liaison in that direction. Devolution - The unitary option comes into effect in 2028. The 2027 elections will be for the Unitary Authority and those elected members will shadow the existing County and District Members for 1 year.
- iii. DCllr David Harrison: Members allowance has been increased to £5000 per councillor per annum for the next 2 years and is permitted to be allocated to local community projects. £1 million has been spent in this way so far. With regard to Enforcement Matters, please refer any questions to him and he will pass on to the correct Officer.

### **06/26r Devolution**

- i. A reminder of the public consultation into the two proposals, running up to 26 March 2026. Devolution is the process of transferring certain powers, funding, and decision-making from central government to local authorities. The aim is to give local leaders more control over issues like transport, housing, skills, and economic development, so decisions can be made closer to the communities they affect.

### **07/26r Reports from third parties (*in no particular order*):**

- i. National Trust – already covered above.
- ii. Friends of St Denys'
  - The AGM 18th March reviewed financial status, church maintenance, community initiatives, future events, and leadership roles, emphasizing ongoing fundraising, repairs, and planning for community use. Church repairs have included replacing the lead roof over the side aisle with ventilation, installing tell-tales to monitor movement, and replacing fractured stone mullion nosings. Outstanding work involves the Chancel roof, ridge tiles, and south Chancel and fixing a hole in the Chancel roof. Wifi installation is underway.
- iii. The Parish Hall Committee
  - Potential Hall Rebuild Project. In a recent meeting the Hall Committee discussed the potential to rebuild the village hall and agreed to fund initial investigations to determine whether a rebuild project is viable now that the flood bund is being built. This includes ground investigation and a simplified architect's design to establish overall build costs.

**Continued. 07/26r Reports from third parties (in no particular order):**

- iv. Lengthsman and Volunteer Footpaths Officer
  - Our new Lengthsman has settled in very well and is getting to know many of the residents around the parish. Requests for jobs for Tim to do should be sent to the parish clerk in the first instance. Permission has been received for installation of the new bin in the A38 layby and the Lengthsman is just waiting for dry weather in order to do this work. Richard the Volunteer Footpaths Officer reported that all rights of way across the parish have been walked and inspected and all issues logged. Parish Councillors gave thanks to both for their hard work.

There being no other matters or questions.

**Close of resident's annual meeting and opening of Parish Council meeting.**

All persons except the parish councillors departed at this point.

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**Minutes of the Parish Council of  
Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot**

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026,  
At St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke**

*The meeting commenced at 8.25pm*

**19/26 Minutes of the previous meeting.**

- i. **Resolved. Motion** to accept and approve the minutes of the meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026. Prps: ID. Scnd: SB. Duly **approved**.
- ii. Parish Cllrs had also been provided with and approved under the same Motion:
  - Minutes of the extraordinary Parish Council meeting 4th March
  - Minutes of the WCC/EA 13th March Flood Bund meeting organised by Dame Harriet Baldwin MP.

**20/26 Planning and enforcement.**

- i. To receive and consider a response to any planning matters that have an expiry date before the next scheduled parish council meeting. Nil at time of publication.
- ii. **Consultation: Worcestershire Waste Local Plan:** Early baselining and engagement consultation. Motion to respond to the Waste Needs Assessment (WNA) which identifies how much waste is produced in Worcestershire, what type of waste it is, and how it is managed. Consultation response deadline: 15th April 2026. *Residents have written to the PC to request that the parish council responds to highlight flytipping and to endorse tackling this with practical and sensible operations at recycling centres.* **Resolved. Motion** to respond to this effect. Prps: PP. Scnd: SB. Duly **approved**.

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-developments/planning-policy-and-strategy/waste-core-strategy>

- iii. **Consultation - police force mergers.** As part of the Government's police reform agenda, proposals have been put forward that could see the existing structure of 43 police forces reduce to 12. Consultation response deadline: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026. *Residents have written to the PC to point out that the West Mercia area already covers Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire and that further mergers risk moving focus away from rural towards urban crime.* **Resolved. Motion** to respond once further information is forthcoming regarding this consultation. Prps: PP. Scnd: SB. Duly **approved**.

<https://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/consultations-and-surveys/public-consultation---police-force-mergers>

**21/26 Parish Hall**

Note: The parish council leases the parish hall land from Savills on behalf of the Society of Merchant Venturers as Endowment Trustees for the St Monica Trust. The Parish Hall Committee, which is a separate charity and not part of the parish council, is responsible for all aspects of the hall.

- i. To note that Savills has received the Notice of Access\* from WCC in relation to the parish hall site and car park. *\* formal notification that council officials and their contractors require entry to exercise their legal duties ie bund construction, site compound. Duly noted.*

**21/26 continued**

- ii. Motion to inform residents that the parish hall site and car park will be closed to all public access until WCC return access to the parish council post bund construction. It was **agreed** to place a note on the gate and website only.
- iii. Motion for Parish Council support in principle of the rebuild project community facility project being explored by the Parish Hall Committee. **Resolved. Motion.** Prps: SB. Scnd: RW. Duly **approved.**
- iv. Motion to retain the parish council lease for the old parish hall land until 2033. **Resolved. Motion.** Prps: ID. Scnd: SB. Duly **approved.**
- v. Motion in principle to seek to extend the parish council lease beyond the current contractual term. **Resolved. Motion.** Prps: ID. Scnd: RW. Duly **approved.**
- vi. Motion to approve that the Parish Hall Committee seek to submit planning in the name of the Parish Council (to take advantage of the lower fees charged). **Resolved. Motion.** Prps: RW. Scnd: PP. Duly **approved.**

**22/26 Finance, admin and training**

- i. **Resolved. Motion** to consider/motion to approve payment of accounts for this month and the previous month. Prps: ID. Scnd: SB. Duly **approved.** Appendix 1.
- ii. **Resolved. Motion** to receive and approve the latest bank reconciliation/quarterly report (as applicable). Prps: SB. Scnd: ID. Duly **approved.**
- iii. **Resolved. Motion** to receive the Clerk's timesheet. Prps: SB. Scnd: PP. Duly **approved.**
- iv. Clerk's correspondence list for information. Duly **accepted.**
- v. Review of the parish emergency flood plan to include updated details for EA AND WCC now that bund is progressing. Duly **accepted.**
- vi. **Resolved. Motion** to appoint the internal auditor P.Moore for the 2025/2026 internal audit. Prps: PP. Scnd: ID. Duly **approved.**
- vii. To review and consider effectiveness of internal financial controls – quarterly reporting, bank reconciliation and all financial docs and invoices available for cllr inspection via Sharepoint. **Reviewed and noted**, with no amendments. Prps: SB. Scnd: ID.
- viii. To note that the Parish Clerk has reviewed all policies to update parish council contact details and published them on the parish website and Sharepoint. Duly **noted.**
- ix. To note that all parish council assets have been inspected and the asset register updated as required. Duly **noted.**
- x. **Resolved. Motion** to approve Assertion 10 in readiness for audit. A mandatory declaration for parish and town councils focusing on digital and data compliance, ensuring proper governance of IT, data protection, and website accessibility. Prps: ID. Scnd: SB. Duly **approved**
  - ✓ 1 - Email Management .gov.email and council owned domain.
  - ✓ 2 - Website Compliance. Website complies with Accessibility Regulations 2018 and documents are published in line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency Code for smaller authorities.
  - ✓ 3 - Data Protection. Councils must comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, acting as both Data Controllers and Data Processors.
  - ✓ 4 - IT Policy. PC must have an IT policy outlining safe and secure use of IT equipment and software.
- xi. Signature on bank instructions ref Clerk Pension. Signature from one signatory was obtained, with one outstanding to be collected in April 2026 as a delegated authority of the council. Prps: ID. Scnd: SB. Duly **approved**

**23/25 Date of the next meeting.** Wed 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026 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.  
Tel: 01905 820956 / 07950256363 [parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk)

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 (Approved under previous agenda or required payment under contract monthly) And Items for payment outstanding:**

02/02/2026	88. Mr T Hughes	Lengthsman invoice Jan 2026.	£373.50
20/02/2026	89. WJP Software Limited	WCS STANDARD ANNUAL SUPPORT website domain email. VAT £51	£306.00
20/02/2026	90. Mrs L Stevens	Malwarebytes renew subscription	£39.99
06/03/2026	91. Thomson & Bancks LLP Solicitors	Hall site correspondence. VAT £99	£594.00
20/02/2026	92. Worcestershire CALC	1 Councillor Training Cllr MEH. VAT £8	£48.00
20/02/2026	93. Mrs L Stevens	Expenses & HWA (£26) February 2026 94 – account line not used – was allocated for HMRC	£35.21
02/03/2026	95. Mrs L Stevens	Clerk wage Jan paid in Feb 2026.	redacted
17/02/2026	96. Bank account service charge	Bank monthly fee – awaiting bank statement for confirmation copy.	£4.25
06/03/2026	97. Mr T Hughes	Lengthsman invoice Feb 2026. Paper copy only.	£432.40
06/03/2026	98. Severn Stoke Brownies	Annual donation on behalf of YP of parish	£50.00
06/03/2026	99. 6th Worcester Kempsey Scouts	Annual donation on behalf of YP of parish	£50.00
06/03/2026	100. SARA - Severn Area Rescue	Annual donation on behalf of parish during bund construction. Awaiting email acknowledgement.	£50.00
06/03/2026	101. Upton Library	Annual donation on behalf of parish. Awaiting email acknowledgement.	£200.00
31/03/26	102 Mrs L Stevens	SOQ room hire reimbursement. All of 2025.	£180.00
31/03/26	103. Mrs L Stevens	Flood bund meeting room hire 13th March reimbursement of fees	invoice to be received not more than £30
24/03/2026	104. Mrs L Stevens	Expenses & HWA (£26) March 2026	£36.00
24/03/2026	105 HMRC	Employee tax	£4.80
31/03/26	106. Mrs L Stevens	Clerk wage Feb paid in March 2026.	redacted
31/03/26	107. Bank account service charge	Bank monthly fee, awaiting bank statement for confirmation copy	£4.25

## Appendix 2 – County Councillor Martin Allen report to the Parish Council March 2026

**CHANGES AT COUNTY HALL** - The county council elections held last May brought sweeping changes. Reform swept into power and now run the county council. Jo Monk is their leader, and I believe she comes from Redditch.

**COUNCIL TAX AND FINANCES** - The government has allowed WCC to increase the council tax by an additional 4%, so a maximum of 9% all together. I voted against the increase of 8.98% which was passed by a handful of votes at the February meeting. Both the LibDems and Labour were not in chamber to vote either way, thus allowing Reform a free hand. Also, in February this year, MHDC passed a zero percent increase, I voted in favour of that motion.

**ON DEMAND BUS** - During the last 12 months I have continued to push for more improvements and expansion of the Worcestershire On Demand Service. Just to remind you, the service will take you to anywhere within the designated County Council Divisions of Croome and Powick, for example it will take you to Upton, Croome Court, Callow End, Powick, Worcester Parkway, Malvern including the retail park, Tewkesbury and Ledbury.

**SECONDARY SCHOOL** - Last year I said that WCC intended to build a new High School. The new administration has said no to this project. At the WCC Cabinet meeting 05/02/26 the Cabinet noted that currently the sufficiency of secondary school places for Worcester City secondary pupils will be provided through the expansion of Bishop Perowne CE Academy and Tudor Grange Academy Worcester and then through the surplus places at other secondary schools, namely but not exclusively Dyson Perrins CofE Academy (the closest alternative school to Christopher Whitehead Language College) and Pershore High School (the closest alternative school to Nunnery Wood High School).

**SCHOOL PLACE NUMBER** - At the Cabinet meeting held in February 2026, the Assessment of Sufficiency of Education Provision in Mainstream Schools was presented and discussed. The Worcestershire County Council (WCC) education department has acknowledged that Kempsey School is currently oversubscribed and unable to accommodate all applicants. Conversely, Upton's School and Hanley High have available capacity and are projected to offer sufficient places for the foreseeable future. When inquiring about the arrangements for students who would typically attend Kempsey, WCC advised that these children will be required to attend the nearest school with available places. Additionally, I sought clarification regarding the construction timeline for the new two-form entry school near Taylors Lane. WCC indicated that the projected opening date is September 2030, with funding sourced from Section 106 contributions.

**UNITARY AUTHORITY'S AND COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS** - The government will announce in the summer whether Worcestershire will become a single or two-area Unitary Council. WCC and MHDC will be dissolved one year after the new council is established.

**SPEEDING** - I arranged for Severn Bank's Verge Masters to be replaced and provided funding to repair the "Bend in the Road" electronic warning sign. Additionally, Highways conducted another speed survey at Severn Bank, and the results were shared with the parish council. Based on these results, Highways have indicated that they cannot take further action regarding poor driving or speeding, as these are police matters and should be reported to law enforcement.

**SEVERN BANK ROAD COVERS** - My battle to get Severn Trent and Highways to each repair the two sunk road covers on Severn Bank continues, both are being very slow to act.

**SIDING OUT OF PAVEMENT** - I am pleased that finally I have persuaded Highways to Side out the footway from the top of Severn Bank to Nuyard Garden Centre.

**LENGHTSMAN SCHEME** - Fear that the Lengthsman Scheme was going to lose 50% of its funding have not this year come to pass. What happens next February is yet unknown.

**THE BUND** - Finally, I am delighted that the bund is going ahead. Can I again thank both Councillor Ian Creswell and Director Rachel Hill along with the EA for finding a way forward.

End of report.

End of minutes.