STANTON ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on Monday 19 October 2026 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

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Present: Cllr Justin Worrall (Chair), Cllr Dina Cooper (Vice-Chair), Cllr David Elliott, Cllr David Polgreen and Cllr Andrew Clark.

In attendance: Anita James (Clerk) and seven members of the public.

153/26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Greta Shepherd and from County and District Councillor Tim Bearder.

154/26 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Cllr Dina Cooper declared an interest in planning application **P26/S4334/HH** (see minute 167/26).

Cllr Justin Worrall declared an interest, as a trustee of the Holford Trust, in planning application **P26/S3413/FUL** (see minute 167/26).

155/26 Public Forum (7.35 pm – 8.10 pm)

A resident, who is a member of a local environmental group, spoke in support of any development to recover unused land off Bayswater Road for use as a nature reserve, and noted that grants specifically for this type of project were available from South Oxfordshire District Council. The Clerk had previously circulated details to Councillors. Discussed under minute 170/26.

A resident asked about the new dog signs for the playground. The same resident stated that there were inconsistencies in the speed signs on Shepherd's Pit Road and asked whether the 30-mph limit would extend onto the B4027. Cllr Andrew Clark explained that Highways were treating the Quiet Lanes project and the B4027 separately, and that he was in communication with Highways about reducing the speed limit on the B4027.

Another resident asked about signage for ramp access to the church. The Chair explained that both sets of signs, the dog signs and the ramp access sign, would be ordered once the exact requirements had been established.

A resident from a local environmental group spoke about the deteriorating verge by the church and the potholes in Cox Lane and said that the organisation she represented would be prepared to make a grant to help resolve these ongoing issues. Cllr Andrew Clark replied that the Council was aware of these issues and had been in communication with Highways, who would need to be involved in any project. However, Highways had indicated that they would not currently make any financial contribution towards the restoration and maintenance of verges.

The same resident asked whether the Parish Council would be supporting the Holford Centre sauna application and stated that it was likely that the development would increase noise.

The resident also raised the low level of lighting around the church steps and the landscaping around Beech Farm.

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Another resident expressed her dissatisfaction with the Quiet Lanes project in relation to Shepherd's Pit Road.

The Parish Transport Representative reported that a recent transport grant application which he had submitted, with the support of the Parish Council, had not been successful.

156/26 To discuss a cycle rack in Pound Lane (JW)

The Chair brought forward agenda item 15, as residents with a young child who had an interest in the item were present.

Cllr Justin Worrall explained that families with young children live in Pound Cottages, with little or no public amenity space and nowhere to store their cycles. A resident informed the Council that they cycle into Oxford on a regular basis and had particularly enjoyed using Shepherd's Pit Road, which was now largely free of traffic and a great deal safer for walking and cycling.

Cllr Justin Worrall advocated that the Parish Council support non-fixed cycle storage on a piece of land adjacent to Pound Cottages. The Clerk explained that the Council would first need to establish who owned the land and seek the owner's consent, and then obtain costings, before it could consider offering financial support.

Action: Cllr Justin Worrall to establish initial costings, and Cllr Andrew Clark to write to the Land Registry to establish ownership of the land.

157/26: County and District Councillors report: Not present and no report received.

158/26 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2026 and authorise the Chair to sign them

Resolved: That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 28 September 2026 be approved and the Chair authorised to sign them. Proposed by Cllr Justin Worrall, seconded by Cllr Andrew Clark. Carried.

159/26 Clerk's report and update on actions

Item	Person to action / update
a. Defibrillator grant – where to allocate surplus monies	Clerk. Carried forward.
b. Communications and Social Media Policy	Clerk. Carried forward.
c. Clerk to trial administering SSJ News	Cllr Justin Worrall had handed over the administration to the Clerk.
d. Grants Policy	Carried forward. See minute 167/26.
e. Village Hall – document historical knowledge	Cllrs Clark, Polgreen and Worrall. Carried forward.
f. Signage indicating ramp access	Cllr Andrew Clark to communicate with the Clerk. Carried forward.
g. Bike rack feasibility study	Initial costs produced. The Clerk had emailed Cllr Tim Bearder for support from the Priority Fund.
h. Car park lights	Cllr Andrew Clark to communicate with the Clerk. Carried forward.

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Item	Person to action / update
i. Traffic and parking on Cox Lane	See minute 171/26.

160/26 Dates of meetings for 2027

To agree the following meeting dates for 2027: 18 January, 15 February, 15 March, 12 April, 17 May, 21 June, 19 July, 13 September, 18 October, 15 November and 13 December.

Resolved: To approve the dates, proposed by Cllr Justin Worrall, seconded by Cllr David Polgreen. Carried.

Action: Clerk to update the website.

161/26 Financial matters

a. To approve payments

- Clerk's salary, pension and HMRC
- TFM – dog-bin waste, October: £55.85
- Flotek – IT hosting: £125.23
- OALC – planning course for Cllr A Clark on 9 November 2026: £84.00

Resolved: That the payments be approved. Proposed by Cllr Justin Worrall, seconded by Cllr David Polgreen. Carried.

b. Council funds as at 30 September 2026

- Unity Current Account: £24,702.19
- Unity Savings Account: £30,957.48
- Total: £55,659.67

c. To note the quarterly reconciliation as 30 September 2026

The Council noted the quarterly reconciliation, which was signed by the Chair.

162/26 To agree which councillors will approve payments through Unity

Resolved: That Cllr Justin Worrall and Cllr David Polgreen approve the payments on the Unity portal following the meeting.

163/26 To approve the accounts software package

The Clerk explained that the accounts were currently kept on spreadsheets, which were more prone to error than a small accounting package. The benefits to the Council would include more informed management reports (including more regular budget updates), detailed analysis of spending, the ability to keep invoices attached within the package, and a record of assets, including photographs. It would also save the Clerk's time.

The proposed package was Scribe, at an initial cost of £299 and a monthly fee of £37.00. The Clerk had received quotations from Xero and Rialtas but considered Scribe the most suitable for a small parish council.

Resolved: That the Scribe accounts package be accepted. Proposed by Cllr Justin Worrall, seconded by Cllr Dina Cooper. Carried.

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164/26 To discuss and approve the budget monitoring report to 30 September 2026, including earmarked reserves (carried forward from 28 September 2026)

The Clerk presented the budget monitoring report on a large screen and explained the actual expenditure to 30 September 2026 against the 2026/27 budget, highlighting any notable large variances.

Resolved: That the budget monitoring report be accepted. Proposed by Cllr Justin Worrall, seconded by Cllr David Polgreen. Carried.

165/26 To review grant applications received for the 2027/28 financial year

The Clerk went through the grants awarded in the last financial year and those likely to be requested for the next. Stanton St John Church had submitted three grant application forms, totalling £4,500. The Clerk explained that the total amount the Parish Council is legally permitted to grant under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 is £4,512 for the 2027/28 financial year. The Church had been awarded £1,000 in the last financial year for grass cutting.

Resolved: That a grant of £1,500 be awarded for grass cutting and maintenance of the church grounds, and that the other two applications, totalling £3,000, not be granted. Proposed by Cllr Justin Worrall, seconded by Cllr David Elliott. Carried.

Action: Clerk to inform the Church and arrange for £1,500 to be paid in the first week of April 2027.

166/26 To discuss and approve the draft budget for 2027/28

The Clerk went through the draft 2027/28 budget and the estimated 8% increase in expenditure, which would require a corresponding increase in the precept.

Cllr Justin Worrall asked about using some of the Council's earmarked reserves for general expenditure items, to reduce the precept increase. The Clerk advised that the earmarked reserves had been built up carefully and prudently over many years and were intended for specific projects rather than general expenditure. The Clerk added that there are also regulations governing the level of general reserves that a parish council may hold.

The Council asked the Clerk to produce a further draft budget, showing a 5% increase in the precept, for the November meeting.

Action: Clerk to produce a second draft budget illustrating a 5% increase in the precept, for the meeting on 16 November 2026.

167/26 To approve the grant application form and policy (carried forward from 28 September 2026)

Resolved: That the grant application form and policy, for grants above £250, be approved. Proposed by Cllr Dina Cooper, seconded by Cllr David Elliott. Carried.

168/26 Planning matters

168.1 New applications, including any received by 12 noon on 19 October 2026

For each application, the Council considered whether to object, support or make no comment.

P26/S3413/FUL – Proposed installation of two outdoor saunas and two ice baths in the rear courtyard within the curtilage of an adjacent listed building. Location: The Holford Centre, The Old School Nursery, Wheatley Road, Stanton St John, Oxford, OX33 1ET. Cllr Justin Worrall did not vote as he has an interest as declared at the start of the meeting.

Resolved: That the Council make no comment on the application. Proposed by Cllr Andrew Clark, seconded by Cllr David Elliott. Carried.

Action: Clerk to update the planning portal accordingly.

P26/S4334/HH – Proposed two-storey link-detached extension. Location: 1 New College, Quarry Cottage, Wheatley Road, Stanton St John, Oxford, OX33 1EU.

Cllr Dina Cooper left the room for this item.

Resolved: that the Council support the application, subject to the following two conditions being applied to any approval:

(i) that the proposed extension is, and remains, part of Quarry Cottage and does not become a separate dwelling, which would by default extend the footprint of the developed area of the village; and

(ii) that the existing tree landscaping be reinforced, to enhance the setting and reduce the potential impact of the proposal from the southern aspect.

Proposed by Cllr Andrew Clark, seconded by Cllr David Polgreen. Carried.

Cllr Dina Cooper returned to the meeting after the vote.

169/26 To discuss the eroded verge opposite the churchyard entrance gate (AC)

Action: Cllr Andrew Clark to obtain costings for the project.

170/26 To discuss the unused land in Bayswater Road as a potential nature reserve (DP)

Resolved: That the Council support the proposal in principle.

171/26 To discuss traffic and parking issues on Cox Lane

a. Proposal from AC to introduce one-way traffic and restore the verge

b. Proposal from JW to canvass residents

Action: Cllr Justin Worrall to produce a questionnaire for residents to complete.

172/26 Woodperry Hill / B4027 speed limits (AC)

The Council received and noted an update following a response from Highways.

173/26 To discuss and approve a course of action to help address the high number of power cuts (DP)

Resolved: That the Parish Council write a letter to the appropriate organisation. Proposed by Cllr Justin Worrall, seconded by Cllr David Elliott. Carried.

174/26 Strategy: councillors' updates on their areas of responsibility

- Cllr Andrew Clark – Village Hall Hub and planning
- Cllr Justin Worrall – IT and communications

- Cllr David Polgreen – Environment
- Cllr Greta Shepherd – Footpaths and bridleways

Carried forward.

175/26 Any urgent matters (no decisions to be made)

None.

176/26 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 16 November 2026.

177/26 Agenda items for the next meeting

Items for the agenda of the next meeting are to be submitted to the Clerk by 6 November 2026.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm.

Signed: …… Chair Date: ……

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