CLERK'S REPORT – 31st March 2026

7. General Parish Matters

- **Village Hall** – Future utilisation for Parish Council office. – This has been agreed in principle. Quotes are awaited for the refurbishment work. Liaison with the Village Hall Chairman Ceri Idris-Evans and the Future Chairman (Nick Ericson) are on-going.

- **Allotments –** The Clerk has issued Tenancy renewal notices and awaits payments. There are two vacant plots available. As plot 5B – Richard Carter remains untended after repeated reminders and threats of Notice, the plot will not be offered for renewal. The Clerk will write to Richard Carter to inform him of this and the ask him to remove all his items and rubbish from the plot to leave it in a usable condition.

- **Noticeboard for Sulis Down** – The Noticeboard has at long last been installed and is being used by the Parish Council, the Sulis Down Neighbourhood Watch, and Residents.

- **Churchyard fund and Replacement England Flag.** At a request from Robert Hellard the Clerk has purchased a new ENGLAND (St. Georges) Flag for the Church at a cost of £136.80. The Clerk has taken this from the Churchyard Ring-Fenced Budget. Please can the Council agree they are happy to do this, or if they wish the PCC to reimburse the Parish Council the cost excl. VAT of £114.00.

- **HSE Complaint against VISTRY** - The 2nd children's playground at Sulis Down has been opened without a safety certificate as far as we can tell. The perimeter fencing is incomplete & residents have been picking up barbed wire & pallet boards with nails in around the playground. The builders compound on Admiral Way isn't secure, fencing is open & children have been seen in there amongst pallets of blocks.

Footpaths and Open Spaces

- **Millenium Viewpoint –** The viewpoint and seat have been repaired and refurbished very well indeed by Clarendon Fencing (Charles Hignetts contractor), at a cost of £2919.05 (inc. VAT), so well within the budget given.

- **Signage (Boundary Stone) for the Cotswold National Landscape** – The Boundary Stone is being made by Pack Masonry, and the Plaque has been manufactured by Middlepeak Enfgineering Ltd, and delivered to Pack Masonry. All of this has been paid for and the corresponding grant of £1,600 has been received from CNL. The balance of these costs £1,090.85 has been paid from CIL. The Parish Council met the cost of the Advertising Consent Application of £85, and the application has been approved.
  The Clerk is awaiting confirmation from Pack Masonry that the installation dates of 13th April to 17th April, and other details on the Section 171 application are correct before submitting the application. The cost of the Section 171 application of £244.65 will also be met by the Parish Council from general reserves.

9. Highway Matters

Midford Road/Village

RADAR Speed Signs progress report - The grant from the Ward Councillors Empowerment Fund (WCEF) of £350 has been received. The Avon and Somerset Police Community Trust grant was for £5,0000. So a total of £5,350. The RADAR signs cost £4,242, and additional mounting brackets are £100. A total cost of £4,342, leaving a balance of £1,008.
The signs have yet to be installed and this will be done in the next financial year, April/May 2026, when B&NES Highways have the resource and budget so to do. It is not expected that there will be any cost to the Parish Council for this installation.
So the balance might therefore be spent on Village Gates. 3 at £415 each has been proposed. A total of £1,245, plus the cost of a Advertising Consent applications (3 x £85), plus any installation costs, plus Section 171 applications, potentially 3 at £244.65 each.
So, there are some significant further costs for the Parish Council to meet in order to complete this project.

CLERK'S REPORT – 31st March 2026

11. **Other Matters to Report**

Somerset Coal Canal Society (SCCS) – You have been asked to join an 'Alliance' in opposition to the Objective of the SCCS to re-open the Canal as a Waterway along its entire length. This has always been one of there styated Charitable Objectives. However B&NES Council have proposed including an Option in the New Local Plan that will protect areas alongside the original Canal Route where development on the route itself would prevent this ambition of re-opening the Canal.
You have stated in your Options Consultation response that you would support any objection to this proposed Option by the affected Parishes and Landowners. The Parish of Sout Stoke is unaffected.
You otherwise have been very supportive of SCCS, indeed giving them a grant of £1,190 (of CIL) to support their maintenance work in the Parish.
The 'Alliance' of opposition is being led by Paul Wontner, Chair Combe Hay Parish Council. It appears the area of land affected by this Option, is being considered for a Churchyard extension. Hence the strength of feeling.
The Options process next goes before the B&NES Scrutiny Committee onn26th March, at which one might hope the SCCS Option is removed. If it is the relationship between Parishes and Landowners with the SCCS might then get back to its former normal cooperative nature.
Should the Option go forward as part of the New Local Plan, it would next go before the Planning Inspector at the Examination in Public. At this point an 'Alliance' of the affected Parishes (Tunley, Camerton and Combe Hay, I believe) would make sense as single representation to the Inspector. The Inspector would favour such an Alliance (one representation instead of three), but I suggest would not look kindly upon participation by others who are unaffected getting involved.
For these reasons I advise that it is inappropriate for South Stoke Parish Council to join this 'alliance' quite apart from any request from the Alliance for you to assist with their costs.

12 Correspondence Received

SAVE BRADFORD ON AVON FIRE STATION – Your support for this campaign has been requested. However, it is the Wiltshire and Dorset Fire & Rescue Area, not yours of Avon & Somerset. It is therefore not really appropriate for the Parish Council to involve itself in the Wiltshire and Dorset Consultation process.

Bus plan engagement – request for support in advertisement (30 March–10 May)
The West of England Combined Authority will shortly be launching a six-week public engagement exercise on the Bus Plan, running from 30 March to 10 May. The purpose of this engagement is to hear directly from both bus users and non-bus users across the region about their experiences, expectations, and needs. The engagement will run under the heading "Next stop, better buses".
We are seeking feedback on all aspects of the network, including:

- Accessibility of services
- Safety at bus stops and on buses
- Service frequency and reliability
- Ticketing – from ease of purchase to ease of use

General perceptions of the current bus service provision
Your lead and influence is an important part of the local community, so helping residents find out about this engagement would make a real difference - once formal announcement of the engagement has taken place on the 30 March.
The Clerk has requested posters for the Noticeboards.

13. Dates for Future Meetings – To confirm dates for future meetings 2025-26:-

Tuesday 14th April 2026 – 7:30 p.m. – Annual Parish Meeting
<u>The Clerk has prepared the Agenda and the Annual report for your approval / amendment.</u>
This is a Statutory Meeting which must be held at 7:30 p.m. or later.
It only requires the Chair to attend, but as much of the report is shared across Councillors, ideally everyone should be there to talk to your Electors.

Tuesday 12th May 2026 – 7:00 p.m. – Annual Parish Council Meeting
Can all Councillors confirm they are available for this important Statutory meeting. It should be FULLY attended and cannot be inquorate.