SOUTH STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of South Stoke Parish held at 7:30 p.m. on 14th April 2026 in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Mark Knowlton - Chair, Cllr. Anne Ward, Cllr. Ned Garnett, Cllr Jonathan Wooding, Cllr Andy Peters, Cllr. Amanda Page, Ward Cllr. Fiona Gourley, Ward Cllr. Matt McCabe,

Cotswold Voluntary Wardens - Pauline Vincent, Wilf Dando, Patrick Self, Rebecca Durston, Brian Durston, Judy Parfitt, Elizabeth Heggart,

1. **Apologies for absence**: Cllr. Gary Passmore, Jenny John

2. **Opening of Meeting and Chair's Report.** The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Each Councillor then introduced themselves to the meeting and outlined their areas of responsibility. The Ward councillor thanked the Parish Council and the clerks. The chair gave a huge note of thanks to the clerk - Mr Geoff Davis- for all of his service, guidance and support, he will finally retire next year. The Parish Sweeper – Mr Grant Davis was thanked for all his service and the difference that he makes to the appearance of the Parish was noted and appreciated. The Chair thanked the Ward Councillors for their support through the year including contributions from the Ward Councillor Empowerment Fund. Cllr Andy Peters is the Parish Council (PC) representative on the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC). The Parish Council provided significant Community Infrastructure funds to the VHMC to carry out repairs/maintenance/refurbishments. The only outstanding requirement is for the refurbishment of the upstairs office as the PC office which will be funded by the PC, who will then rent the office from the VHMC. The Chairman delivered an outline of the Annual Report of the council and provided a review of the more notable features. A total of 6 Parish Council meetings have been held throughout the year. A notice board has been installed at Sulis Down.
   The Councils finances were reported to be in healthy state. This year's Precept is - £24,680. There is an inflationary increase of 3% in the average household contribution to £63.19. Parish Council Elections are due to be held next year, and eligible people are encouraged to consider becoming Councillors.

3. **Cotswold Volunteer Footpath Wardens –** Cllr Anne Ward gave a vote of thanks to the Cotswold Volunteer Wardens, Pauline Vincent and Wilf Dando. The "Cotswold Lion" magazine was highlighted. Public footpaths are regularly walked and issues attended to when they arise. There have been other repairs/refurbishments to the parish including repairs to the village railings, organised by Cllr Ward, and repairs to the Millenium Viewpoint. The telephone phone box has been repainted and the Churchyard has been maintained with funding from B&NES. 13 of the 16 allotments are under cultivation.

4. **Police Liaison** – Sue Dawson maintains liaison with the Police through the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Brian Durston has established and maintains the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme at Sulis Down. Unfortunately, there is no dedicated Police Community Support Office (PCSO) in the parish, due to budgetary constraints.

5. **Midford Village and Highway Report** – The 20mph speed limit on the B3110 in Midford has been implemented together with other signage improvements. RADAR speed signage has been installed with the support of a grant from Avon & Somerset Police. The Midford Speed Watch group are thanked for their efforts in this. Village Gates will be installed in 2026-27. Liaison with B&NES over highway safety will continue. The Midford Telephone Box has been restored and refurbished in the Hope and Anchor car park. A defibrillator has been installed in the Hope and Anchor car park. funded by generous donations from Midford residents.

6. **South Stoke Plateau Development** - Cllr Ned Garnett provided a very extensive report on the development and ongoing issues. Following the dismissal of the appeal against refusal of 22/02169/EOUT the developer is proceeding with an Outline application for Phase 3 and 4 for up to 200 dwellings. The PC will continue to monitor developments.

Approved and signed Tuesday 12th May 2026 ..... Chairman

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7. **Local Plan -** B&NES Planning Policy are developing a new Local Plan. B&NES Council are currently considering the Response to the Options for including in the Plan. There are no Options being considered which are of concern to South Stoke. However, the PC will comment in order to maintain their right to makes comments/representation to the Local Plan and continue to monitor the situation.

8. **Bus Plan Engagement**–The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) are in the process of developing a new Bus Plan. They are seeking responses. People are therefore encouraged to respond.

9. **Matters arising** – This election and appointment of Councillors next year was noted earlier in the meeting. Consideration for this is encouraged by residents of the parish.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Approved and signed Tuesday 12th May 2026 ..... Chairman