



**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council
held Monday 8th December 2025 at the Town Hall**

Present:

Councillors: Councillors: John Callinan, Keren Capeling (Vice Chair of Council), Keith Crieghton, Debbie Curtis, Marcus Dixon, Stephen Hunter, Carol Kambites, Simon MacGregor, John Parker (Chair of Council), Val Randell, Keith Terry and Carol Trim

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth - Town Clerk; County Councillor Dean Botterill; a representative of 'All Pulling Together' (in support of Little Acorns Nursery Group), numerous members of the public.

Attendees were reminded that the Proceedings of the meeting could be filmed photographed or recorded.

The Chair opened the meeting by offering members of the public the opportunity to raise questions or make comment.

A member of the public questioned the use and cost of the planned thermal imaging device to be discussed later in the meeting and also the accuracy of the minutes of the previous council meeting in that they did not align with an issue in the Matters arising. The Clerk was able to confirm the relevant details in relation to the thermal imaging device. He also stated that the minutes detailed the discussion accurately and that in fact the parameters of a Freedom of Information request (which was being referred to) had changed as a result of a discussion with Cllr Den Botterill.

A second member of the public raised concern in relation to the town council's recent decision to install two further flagpoles within the town. The individual had read out a statement detailing his concerns. The following questions were raised; Why did the council change its opinion regarding adding two new flags poles in Stonehouse; Who were on the working group to make this recommendation and were they all elected Stonehouse Town Councillors; Why does Stonehouse need a Union flag and what purpose does it achieve; What other National flags are proposed for flagpole 2. The Chair responded by stating that the working group consisted of town councillors only but that had it been necessary to, may have included other individuals who could add value to the group. He also stated that the town council had to consider the broad range of concerns and wishes in its deliberations. The Chair accepted that the member of the public was dissatisfied with the council's decision but consideration of the broader view had to be made. The individual left the meeting immediately.

An issue was raised in relation to the potential use of a thermal camera by the council in that the member of the public felt it could be used for nefarious means. It was made clear that the camera is in the first instance a thermal imaging device that allowed members of the public to see for themselves where their homes were losing heat and that it was to be used to encourage householders to seek further advice on insulating their homes.

The member of the public who had raised concerns with the council's decision to install further flagpoles in the town, returned to the meeting to complain that he had been shoved by another member of the public that he recognised from the meeting; he also stated that he would report the matter to the Police. The Clerk went outside to establish who was being referred to as the perpetrator but the person could not be seen. The Clerk returned to the meeting.

The Chair thanked all attending members of the public and brought the public session to a close.

TC3526 To receive apologies
Apologies were received from Cllr Theresa Watt

TC3527 To receive declarations of interest
There were no declarations of interest

TC3528 To approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 17th November '25
Council **APPROVED** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting

With approval from council, the Chair brought forward Agenda item TC3535.

TC3535 To approve a grant application for 'Little Acorns Baby and Toddler Group'
The representative from Little Acorns Baby and Toddler Group could not attend the meeting due to illness. This group was being supported by the representative of 'All Pulling Together'(APT), who was able to attend the meeting on the group's behalf.
A query was raised about the accuracy in how the grant application form was completed and the amount requested; The form should have identified the application was for a 'Large' grant and it was confirmed that the application was for a total of £1,500 for one year only - APT were working closely with the group to try and ensure that they would be self financing in twelve months time through the development of a business plan. Asked whether the group was a charity, the representative stated 'No' but it was likely that it would be set up as a CIC in the near future.
Cllrs felt the group was needed and voted in favour of awarding the grant in full.
Council **APPROVED** the grant of £1,500

- TC3529 To note Matters Arising**
The Clerk highlighted the specific issue mentioned by a member of the public during the public speaking session at the start of the meeting in relation to the Freedom of Information (FOI) enquiry raised by County Councillor Dean Botterill. Whilst an answer was provided to the enquirer at the time, it was worthy of note that Cllr Botterill was contacted following the council receiving the FOI, to establish exactly what was required - Cllr Botterill was grateful for the council's query as it aided the FOI process and allowed full and detailed information to be provided much sooner than would otherwise have been the case.
Council **NOTED** the updates
- TC3530 To note the call for election to fill the Councillor vacancy in the North ward**
The Clerk stated that the only information received by the town council from the district council's elections department on the proposed elections, was included in the supporting papers. It was acknowledged that the Clerk had not been able to open all of his emails since returning to work and that any further correspondence from the elections team would be immediately forwarded to town councillors.
- TC3531 To receive reports from Chair of Town Council and town councillors**
The Chair opened the item by thanking all those involved in providing a very well attended and fun Goodwill event. He also mentioned a recent meeting with local businesses including Wycliffe College to discuss the issue of parking - the meeting drew out a number of issues but also a range of options to at least improve parking within the town - High street businesses will continue to be engaged on this matter. Cllr Parker drew the council's attention to St Cyrs' traditional service on 21st and also the town's annual Carol Service (20th) - he will be attending both services.
Cllr Marcus Dixon confirmed that the sale of planks (with name plaques) for the planned boardwalk at the Ship Inn site is currently exceeding expectations.
- TC3532 To receive reports from County and District Councillors**
Ward Cllr Carol Kambites had provided a written report included in the support papers.
County Councillor Dean Botterill also provided a written report but was received by the Clerk too late to be included in support papers. The county councillor was again asked to provide his written reports to the Clerk by the end of Monday preceding a scheduled town council meeting or at the very latest on the Tuesday morning.
Council **NOTED** the reports
- TC3533 To receive RFO's budget report and bank reconciliations for November '25**
Council **NOTED** the latest budget report with 'Actual Net' Expenditure totalling £355,022.89; Total 'Actual Net' Income of £432,790.98 and Reserve Movements totalling £40,584.90.

Council also **NOTED** the Bank Reconciliation with a closing balance of £73,369.48 dated 30th November 2025

- TC3534 To approve the latest payment lists**
Council **APPROVED** BACS payment totalling £5,937.93.
Council also **NOTED** total payments through Standing orders of £10,983.67 and Direct Debits of £4,078.56
- TC3535 To approve a grant application for 'Little Acorns Baby and Toddler Group'**
Agenda item brought forward - see above for details of the discussion
- TC3536 To approve the purchase of a thermal camera for use within the community**
It was felt by Cllrs that the purchase and use of thermal imaging equipment was not as straight forward as would appear; further consideration needed to be given in terms of how the public will be able to access the equipment along with other issues.
Council **DEFERRED** the matter to Environment Committee
- TC3537 To note the introduction, from the 1st December 2025 of the new Government levy, 'Nuclear Asset Based (RAB) levy'**
Council **NOTED** the levy and its impact on the town council's budgets
- TC3538 To receive an update on the budget setting process for 2026/27 financial year**
The Clerk stated that Business Committee had recently met to review the budget details. The meeting resulted in a recommended increase of approximately £6,000 to the budget requirements which were detailed at the meeting; they included a £2,600 increase to the Grants budget; an increase £3,000 for local Elections plus other minor changes
The Clerk explained the impact the increase will have on the precept per household - the tax base has increased by 13.2 properties bringing in further £2,400 income. Further work is required to refine budgets - Cllrs were advised that a final decision was required by the end of January 2026.
The Clerk asked for Councillors to forward their comments/questions to the clerk as soon as possible so they can be discussed.
- TC3539 To approve the internal auditor to undertake the annual audit for financial year 2025/26**
The Clerk was hoping to provide information at the meeting on an alternative auditor to provide a competitive quote for future auditing work but the information was not supplied in time.
Council **DEFERRED** the matter to a future council meeting
- TC3540 To receive Stroud District Council decision on the naming of the 'Newdawn Homes' development adjacent to the old Bristol road station**

Council received confirmation from Stroud District Council's Strategic Director of Place that he had overruled the town council's choice of name under Section 18 of the Public Health Act 1925, as the town council's original choice, whilst initially accepted, was considered '*Aesthetically unsuitable or capable of deliberate misinterpretation*'. It was suggested by Councillors that whilst the district council's final decision was unwarranted, the revised name represented a useful compromise. However, Ward Councillor John Callinan felt that the Town Council had followed due process, unlike housing developers 'Newdawn Homes', and that the district council's Strategic Director of place should not have revised the name of the new development to 'Vick Close' for such a spurious reason. Ward Councillor Callinan confirmed that he would be complaining to Stroud District Council on this issue.

TC3541 **To receive draft minutes of Business Committee meeting of 1st December '25 and approve its recommendations:**
Council **NOTED** the draft minutes

- **B/940 - To approve the following policies**
 - **Financial Regulations**
Council **APPROVED** the revised Financial Regulations
 - **Risk Management**
Council **APPROVED** the latest Risk Management Policy
 - **Investment Strategy**
Council **APPROVED** the updated Investment Strategy
 - **Reserves Policy**
Council **APPROVED** the latest Reserves Policy
 - **Code of Conduct**
Clarification was provided that the Code of Conduct was the same document used by all three tiers of the local Government in Gloucestershire
Council **APPROVED** the latest Code of Conduct
 - **Scheme of Delegations**
Council **APPROVED** the latest Scheme of Delegations
 - **Scale of Charges**
Council **APPROVED** the latest Scale of charges
- **B/943 - To approve the revised Terms of Reference for the council's HR Sub Committee**
Council **APPROVED** the revised Terms of Reference for the council's HR Sub Committee subject to amendment to clause 3; the clause refers to the 'Annual Town Meeting' and should read 'Annual Town Council Meeting'

TC3542 **To receive draft minutes of Environment Committee meeting of 2nd December '25 and approve the committee's recommendations:**
Council **NOTED** the draft Environment minutes

- **E/993 - To approve payment of Stroud District Council's £10,000 contribution towards the installation of a cycle shelter at Burdett Road Railway Station, following confirmation from GWR that installation works are due to commence and payment is required, on the proviso that clarification is given that additional funds are not required from Stonehouse Town Council.**

Council **APPROVED** the recommendation as detailed above

The Chair proposed to exclude members of the public from the meeting due to sensitivities around agenda item TC3543. Council voted in favour of excluding the public from agenda item TC3543.

The two members of the public in attendance left the meeting

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

The Council will by resolution exclude the public from the following items as due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted publicity of the item would be prejudicial to the public interest.

TC3543 To receive an update on the Town Green registration and to approve a legal request

Cllr John Callinan provided an update on the progress being made. Cllr Callinan has been asked to provide a statement confirming certain matters highlighted at the meeting with the solicitor.

Council **APPROVED** the statement of truth to be forwarded to the council's solicitor

TC3544 To note the date of the next town council meeting Monday 19th January '26

Council **NOTED** the date of the next meeting