

**STOKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
HELD ON 19TH MARCH 2026 IN THE  
STOKENHAM PARISH HALL**

**PRESENT:****COUNCILLORS:****GAIL ADDISON****OLLY BROOKING****ADRIAN GOODMAN****CHRIS HART****RICHARD PAIN****PIERS SPENCE (Chair)****JULIAN BRAZIL (District and County Councillor)****JONATHAN ANSELL****PAULA DOUST****KIM GREENING****TIM LYNN****CHARLES ROGERS****STEVE TAYLOR****Also in attendance:****Clerk – Mrs G. Claydon****APOLOGIES:****COUNCILLORS:****LIZ ROBINSON****1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors were invited to declare any disclosable interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they had in any items to be considered at this meeting. They were also reminded to consider whether in the light of recent activities any items within their Register of Interests should be updated. Cllr Doust declared a personal interest in consideration of the bus shelter maintenance works.

**2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of full council meeting dated 19th February 2026 were approved by all present and duly signed as a true and correct record.

**3. OPEN FORUM**

Thirteen members of the public were present. Simon Garner for the Torcross Action Group had emailed regarding emergency funding available through Devon Communities. A response had been sent (which he had not received so it would be resent) advising the group needed to formulate a plan with a wish list in order to apply for funding. Robin Rose-Price enquired whether funding could be used to acquire vibration monitors for properties at Torcross. It was not felt to be a suitable use for the funding, first because the sort of equipment required to produce meaningful outcomes was expensive and needed specialist knowledge to operate and interpret the resulting data, and second because the Environment Agency had already arranged to install equipment, including pins along the sea wall, for large scale monitoring over the next months.

Richard Ellis advised he and his wife had an application in for Garden Cottage and would happily answer questions. Cllr Pain queried the location of car parking for this proposal and was advised this was in Harold's Field and had been for upwards of 30 years. It was noted that the site plan did not allow any turn-around space so vehicles would have to back out. Either this or reversing in had occurred when historically it was rented to Harold Stevens, following which it was let to one or two local people who had ideas for the land which had not succeeded. Hence the owners had taken back possession of the land and put in this application.

### **Torcross**

Oliver Pawley for the Torcross Action Group attended to give and receive an update on the situation in the village. Productive meetings had been had with local Environment Agency representatives, who were working hard and at speed to put together a case for funding of repairs to and reinforcement of the sea wall, all of which had resulted from the site visit organized by the Slapton Line Partnership. The Chair agreed there was much going on behind the scenes, with everyone fully engaged and dealing with many different strands. He repeated that for parish council the most important issue was the continued viability of Torcross as a community, which was contingent on the sea defences being reinstated to the level of effectiveness they were originally designed to provide. He revisited the topic of loss of beach and shingle migrating northwards to Strete Gate and Blackpool Sands and noted that the proposed EA solution involved the introduction of very large tonnage of rock armour to run the entire length of the seawall to the slipway and beyond. There was discussion around recent comments on funding allocation, the availability of £10 billion over 10 years for the whole of England, and Caroline Voaden MP's prospective meeting with the Environment Agency Chair. The EA team had determined that works required at Torcross were economically justified, based on estimated costs and benefits identified to date, which gets them over the first hurdle towards a funding decision. The final hurdle – securing the availability of funds – was what all efforts were now focused on achieving.

On the matter of the A379 road, a Department of Transport decision on funding was expected within 4 to 6 weeks. The question of whether and when the road would be rebuilt had a material impact on the various agencies' work to secure the breach to the north of the car park and carry out reinforcement works there to ensure the sea does not outflank the ley. A question was raised with regard to repair of the sea-front opposite the car park with piling and armour further on to stop outflanking there and it was noted this was an ongoing discussion between District, County and the EA. Meetings of the SLP's Minor Roads working group and Amenities working group were scheduled for the following week, at which further updates would be given.

Simon Garner reported that a second hole had appeared in the ridge, which he felt could expose the ley to the risk of breach in the event of another Easterly storm. He wondered why the rock washed down on the beach had not been dragged back to the verge while further decisions were made. The Chair dismissed the rumour that it was because of objections from Natural England: they had been extremely supportive throughout, and the level of co-operation and goodwill from the various agencies was the best he had seen in his eight years on the Partnership.

Oliver Pawley advised that attention had now turned to access to the sea and beach through the proposed rock armour. The Chair thanked the Torcross Action Group for the work they had done on mocked-up visuals showing potential layouts, which he would be happy to take to the Amenities working group to see what could be included in any agreed plan. All felt it was critical to ensure Torcross remained a safe and attractive place for holidaymakers to visit and that access to the sea was not blocked by a wall of stone.

### **Beesands**

Dan Field, District Engineer, Lou Hoskin, Adaptation Manager and Cllr Doust met with a small group of residents representing each section of the village. They were advised the District-funded approval for works to shore up along the Green had used 1000 tons of larger rocks on top of retaining the membrane. Works were also targeted at a known weak spot, where the main road into the village runs down to the old slipway. Once this work is complete the budget will have been exhausted. From discussion with locals a list of contact numbers was obtained for all residents, and District and Parish Council were working on escape routes, which might require funding to design, plan and construct. One suggestion was a set of steps up the cliff face behind the Cricket Inn serving the pub and properties at the south end of the village, where over-topping

would block escape via the road. Unfortunately the number of houses at Beesands fell short of the level that would trigger emergency funding. It was noted that updated Evacuation Plans were being worked up for all three coastal villages in conjunction with the SLP.

### **Hallsands**

Cllr Lynn advised that Hallsands had received a quantity of rock armour from District so he along with Graham Tolchard had carried out repair works. They had also received some machine time from Landmarc to enable recovery of boulders on the beach and assist rebuilding the public car park area. He wanted to express his thanks on behalf of the whole village to all those who had helped bring this about. He urged the Torcross community to think positively as Hallsands had done over the years following storm erosion. With the Torcross group's drive and commitment this would hopefully work towards a solution.

Cllr Rogers asked whether the funding sought from the EA for rock armour was to protect houses and businesses or the road. The Chair confirmed that this was exclusively about protecting the village. Funding for repairs to the road was a completely different stream sought from Department of Transport. Cllr Greening asked why the SLP website did not appear to have been updated. Others advised that the site did contain agendas and minutes from recent meetings but agreed that the continued appearance of outdated material gave the unfortunate impression that it was no longer being tended. The Chair had reported this to the webmaster and received the response that officers were too busy dealing with the current crisis to refresh the site as required. All agreed that this was disappointing and hoped that the site would be brought up to date without further delay.

Attendees were advised that the Annual Parish Meeting would take place on 31 March at 6.30pm in the Parish Hall. The guest speaker was Gerd Masselink of Plymouth University, a world authority on the geomorphology of Start Bay. The event would be ticketed to ensure we did not fall foul of capacity constraints. Tickets were free and could be booked on the parish website.

Oliver Pawley questioned the timing of funding decisions for the road and the EA business case for village protection as the works were co-dependent. He was advised that this was simply the way it was, and we would have to work with the situation as we found it.

*All residents apart from Mr and Mrs Ellis, Bill Ireland and Pat Hunter left the meeting.*

### **DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr Brazil was advised that in his absence he had been thanked by Torcross attendees for his efforts since the storms.

Cllr Addison asked whether the Beesands coastal footpath section that was lost in the storm had been progressed. Cllr Brazil advised that walkers could use the beach and the Clerk advised that the adjacent land tenant had met with Paul McFadden and Debbie Ebsary, Definitive Footpath Officers, and agreed an interim solution. Cllr Rogers noted that gateways had been created but were currently barred whilst works were being undertaken.

The delayed County Budget meeting had agreed a 4.99% increase in council tax. The central government financial settlement was very poor and local services were being provided directly from council tax. Extra revenue was going into children's services as County had been failing but they were turning this around. Another £4.5million was being directed into revenue, but County was also borrowing, for example to resurface roads, where it was felt that timely intervention would save on future expense and would therefore be a good investment. Works could not be done overnight but hopefully residents would see improvements, with A-roads being better treated,

resurfaced and sealed. County was also setting aside a pot of money for parish councils to decide their own highway priorities.

Cllr Brazil was asked about the timetable for District reinforcing the damaged piling opposite the car park. He responded that this was tied up with the other work: the Environment Agency are seeking funding from Defra so District/County are trying to persuade them to go further, to protect car park and prevent a breach which would outflank the village. He reaffirmed that there would be no further funding for Beesands. The stretch of road from Strete Gate to Slapton Turn is largely defenceless, covered by the Natural England designation prohibiting foreign materials, but there is sufficient shingle at present. He had nothing to report about funding for the road but said submission of the business case was imminent.

Cllr Rogers asked whether it was true that some property insurance would not pay out until the EA had made a decision on work to the sea wall. Cllr Brazil could not confirm this. He had heard that some owners were no longer able to obtain insurance. Cllr Pain raised the issue of Highways signage in Kingsbridge and Cllr Brazil agreed it was chaotic and pretty poor. He has told County to deal with the signs or we will take them down.

#### 4. PLANNING & PLANNING MATTERS

The applications to be considered at this meeting with observations submitted to District:

- 3370/25/HHO Application for infill extension within courtyard 3 Brooklea Lane, Chillington – Response 2<sup>nd</sup> April – No comment.
- 0006/26/HHO **READVERTISEMENT** (amended site address) Householder application for proposed window configuration to front elevation, introduction of new side window, replacement front door, external rendering, internal alterations. 13 Beesands, Kingsbridge – Response 26<sup>th</sup> March – **OBJECTION** This was a pebbledash house next to a listed building, formerly the Kings Arms pub and the intention was to render and paint thus creating a visual imbalance. No flood risk assessment was provided and yet the Environment Agency website states it will flood. Given recent events this is a major red flag. A bedroom is proposed on the ground floor, creating a risk that if someone was asleep having taken a sleeping pill they could drown. A window was shown on the boundary wall which impeded the right to light of Number 14. Windows are proposed with fire-rated glass but a UPVC frame – this could melt! Scant regard had been paid to the climate action form. Local knowledge advised that the proposed designated parking space was not capable of accommodating any car, no matter how small.

- 0150/26/HHO Householder application for the erection of a replacement garage with ancillary accommodation over Burnside, Torcross – Response 20<sup>th</sup> March.

*WITHDRAWN before response uploaded.*

Objection due to overdevelopment in a back garden with concerns raised regarding severe drainage and sewage problems in this area. Relying on a combined sewer during a downpour a flat valve that releases into the ley remains closed when the water is high which overloads the area meaning four residents use pumps and South West Water send tankers to pump by the Chapel and clear back gardens. A stream goes down Dockey's Lane and along the back of the chapel, historic CCTV camera footage showed this blocked and a District solution was never progressed. It is noted that South West Water have not objected to extra properties but this area is already overloaded affecting neighbours. Surface water fills the current garage and this proposal with accommodation over is 23% larger. Placement and size will remove light from adjacent properties and intrude on privacy and it was noted the ridge height was not shown and should be compared against surrounding ridges. A 25ft hedge buffer at the bottom of the garden has already been removed. Local knowledge advises that the property's kitchen regularly floods, as do adjacent properties. It is felt this proposal should have triggered a wildlife report as it

removes a building and the new build replacement is not on the same footprint. Notably an annexe is usually adjoined to a main dwelling whereas this was moving further away and raised concerns for future plans. As a proposed garage in the curtilage of an existing dwelling would, due to increased size, remove most of the garden and introduce cars. The application states ownership of a watercourse but the site plan stops before getting to this property and neighbours' drains pass through the rear. It is stated that the Torcross beach sluice gate is maintained by the Environment Agency but this is disputed.

***Pat Hunter and Bill Ireland left the meeting.***

- 0349/26/HHO Householder application for conversion of part of an outbuilding into habitable accommodation, ancillary to the main dwelling. Well Farm, Chillington – Response 2<sup>nd</sup> April – No comment.
- 0474/26/FUL Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling Garden Cottage, Torcross – Response 2<sup>nd</sup> April

Parish Council wished clarification as to whether approval of this application changed the designation of the area delineated for parking from agricultural to residential. Concern was raised regarding light spill due to rooflights in this dark area and the large bedroom window to the front does not help in this respect. In addition the associated landscaping, including steps up to a terrace at first floor (above the bedroom), will all make the building more conspicuous along with property access as this site is elevated from the lane. There is no parking within the site, only a small garden gateway off a narrow lane and should not be holiday use. If drainage proposals were not passed what would happen? The plans lacked clarity on placement of air source heat pump and MVHR plant. It was noted this area of Torcross had lost a lot of habitat and given that this parcel of land contributes to the setting of Torcross as well as having potential to support biodiversity, then this part of the proposal is also of concern in terms of impact on the character of the area.

***Mr and Mrs Ellis left the meeting.***

- 0513/26/COM (Permitted Development) Notice of intent to install electronic communication apparatus comprising one light wooden pole at 11 metres high Land of Orchard House (top of garden) Kellaton – For information but noted the height of pole.

**PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE – Nothing further.**

**5. STORM DAMAGE**

Various UPDATES including from the Slapton Line Partnership meeting and various parish group meetings were provided in Open Forum.

**6. CHILLINGTON PLAY AREA BRIDGE**

Feedback on recent works carried out by Remus was sent and they are to visit the site and respond. It was AGREED to await response before completing work.

**7. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

It was AGREED to invite Gerd Masselink to speak and set up arrangements together with online booking of tickets discussed.

**8. NATIONAL EMERGENCY BRIEFING**

Parish council had been APPROVED for hosting a screening of the above, due for launch on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 and requirements to screen this were discussed. Dates and venue will be researched.

**9. BUS SHELTER MAINTENANCE**

Quotes received for general maintenance to all five bus shelters were tabled. It was AGREED to request Greenspace to carry out work as soon as possible at a cost of £1708.98.

## 10. POLICY

It was AGREED:

To ADOPT the Risk Assessment as drawn, since no further suggestions, additions or deletions had been received further to the circulation of a draft to all councillors.

To DEFER finalization of the Emergency Plan pending a discussion on emergency evacuation routes for the coastal settlements with colleagues from the Slapton Line Partnership. Householder phone contacts had been obtained for residents of Hallsands, Beesands and Torcross. Only the method of initiating the plan remains to be decided – WhatsApp message vs phone call. The Chair will discuss with Cllr Greening.

## 11. INTERNAL AUDIT

Due to the incoming Assertion 10 requirements it was AGREED to reappoint Chris Jebb for internal audit due to his familiarity with the accounts. Residing in Shropshire he has no connection or interest within this parish or council. All councillors are provided with bespoke parish council email so alongside the account audit he will be instructed to carry out checks to review GDPR compliance.

## 12. REPORTS

- Cllr Ansell – Reported on a well attended history fair last week. Yesterday had street sweeper and not much to be seen. This morning a gulley sucker arrived.
- *Cllr Brazil arrived at the meeting and gave his report as above.*
- Cllr Dust – Mentioned a letter from Ruth Brooking proposing to pass the Chillington burial ground to parish. She was in contact with District, County, Land Registry and Charities Commission to ascertain legality. She was asked if Stokenham could consider what two road wardens in Modbury had done fixing over 1000 potholes since 2017. Cllrs Pain and Dust took part in a Teams presentation by District on NPPF Paragraph 14. Overall many parishes with Neighbourhood Plans were concerned regarding the ongoing validity of these plans. Stokenham had relied on the special designation policies within the Joint Local Plan and now new legislation had superseded the work other parishes had done on neighbourhood plans. Some were currently updating plans but they carried much less weight than previously. Plymouth had been removed from a future JLP as they were moving to unitary status. District advised they had recently sent out a new call for land (SHLAA) to inform their next JLP.
- Cllr Rogers – Had cleared the drainage ditch at Beeson Pool. Previously it required doing once every 3 years but with the mud and silt coming from the Christmas tree field it now had to be done at least once a year.
- Cllr Addison – Enquired whether Beesands footpath route had been agreed – see District Councillor report.
- Cllr Lynn – Thanked parish council for help with providing defence material at Hallsands and this was working well.

## CLERK'S REPORT

- Noting calls from Ruth Brooking regarding the Chillington cemetery and her wish to have it closed after she is buried there. She has nominated a local Stokenham business for a Kingsbridge Town Council Community Champion award.
- Sewage escaping from a broken pipe/sewer in the bank between the public toilets and Torcross tank had been reported. District was notified by the Environment Agency and were awaiting South West Water to make a repair.

- District had forwarded a Community Asset Transfer Policy as they prepared to transfer land of which they are currently custodians to parish and towns. It is believed the only relevant land in Stokenham Parish is Beesands Village Green which was undergoing works due to coastal erosion. No other land falls within this Asset Transfer.
- Bank statements from January to March 26, Minutes from Beeson Orchard AGM October 2025, and Treasurer's Report to the group had been sent. The £598.40 agreed for materials with parish council ordering to reclaim VAT would now be completed.
- Steve Mullineaux District Council advised that the government have allocated money to Devon County Council and South Hams allocation will be distributed through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF). The government criteria is that this funding is for low-income households and District are working through information held to identify these. It will not identify everyone and there is a simplified application system online but most would be paid directly.
- Elise Callaghan DALC had offered the first week of April, aware it is the start of the Easter Holidays from the Friday, but could do a session any evening that week and also the following week, after the Bank Holiday. Any evening the following week too. Councillors would advise of their availability to inform booking.
- Greenspace has cleared undergrowth from hall to pedestrian gate at Chillington Open Space so it is ready for hedge laying. Bottom gate fixed but not returning on spring so would be looked at. The fence along the car park border had a two-plank fence rotted out. Could be removed but had couple of openings awaiting holly bushes.
- Bike rack for Torcross collected but not fitted due to storm damage.

### 13. FINANCE

***Balances were provided and the below transactions were approved:***

Current £965.47

Savings £49,309.41

Investment 6 months £90,000 was reinvested Unity for further 6 at 4% - Matures April 2026.

***Received:***

Instant Access 3 monthly interest next due end March.

***Payments:***

Unity Bank – Monthly charge £7.00

HMRC Mar – Tax & NI £344.52

Wages Mar - £1421.37

DCC Mar – Pension £463.82

Claydon - McAfee Reim of subs £159.99, Hosting sundries £13.50 and Elec £80 = £253.49

M.J. Hallett – Hedgetrimming (Torcross and Chillington open space roadside) £270.00

R. Rogers – Emergency drain and ditch clearing Stokenham Parish £580.00

Hawthorns Acc. Sers – Payroll Oct 25 – Mar 26 £192.00

NALC – Paula Doust The Housing Puzzle training £42.00

NALC – Reim Richard Pain The Housing Puzzle training £42.00

### 14. NEXT MEETING

The next full parish council meeting would be held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026 commencing at 7.30p.m in the Wesley Smith Room, Stokenham Parish Hall.

Meeting finished: 21.30p.m.

Signed ..... Chairman      Dated: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026.