

STOCKTON-ON-THE-FOREST PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE
HALL ON WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2026 AT 7.30PM**

Councillors Present: Bryan Cockerill David Crossley
Russell Dowson Rosie Dunn
Stephen Flint

In Attendance: City of York Councillor Tony Fisher
Parish Clerk Fiona Hill

Public: 0

24/471 a) To receive apologies for absence given in advance of the meeting:

Parish Councillor Chris Small

b) To consider the approval of reasons given for absence:

Resolved / Approved (Unanimous)

24/472 To discuss the casual vacancy: Nothing to report

24/473 To record declarations of interest in items on the agenda: None

24/474 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 February 2026:
Resolved / Approved (Unanimous)

24/475 To discuss matters arising from previous minutes:

Parish Council Website – See Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3 at the end of these minutes.

The Parish Clerk was asked to:

- Obtain quotes for a new website
- Save copies of all Parish Council documents on the current website media library
- Research old minutes for website set up/governance information

24/476 To discuss long-standing matters:

- Issues within the parish – grass cutting, litter, speeding:
 - Gulleys cleaned
 - Various visits by speed van
 - Grass cutting not done

24/477 To receive any matters raised by members of the public: None

24/478 To receive matters raised by City of York Ward Councillors:

- Roads are now classed as in “managed decline”
- Community caretakers would visit the area in June 2026
- Strensall tip congestion had been reported

24/479 To report and make relevant recommendations on new planning applications:

- 26/00264/FUL – Single storey pitched roof adjoining garage @ The Chalet, Sandy Lane
Resolved / Neutral, No objection subject to it complying with planning/building regulations (Unanimous)

24/480 To discuss the Stockton-on-the-Forest Play Area:

Cllr Cockerill had conducted the inspections this month.

Cllr Dowson would conduct the inspections next month.

A video of the roundabout had been emailed to Inclusive Play and a response was awaited.

24/481 To discuss matters raised with/by representatives of following outside bodies:

- Rights of Way – Nothing to report
- Foss Internal Drainage Board – Nothing to report
- North Yorkshire Police – Report received/noted
- Stockton Hall Hospital – Meeting tomorrow

Approved

Date

24/482 To report any new correspondence received by the council:
Emailed noted from Support the Campaign regarding Average and Fixed Speed Cameras

24/483 To receive matters raised by members: None

24/484 To discuss matters raised with/by Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer:

- Bookkeeping current year to date – Cllrs had received a bank reconciliation totalling £37327.09, along with an income & expenditure report.

- Financial Management – Internal Controls – Conducted, everything found in order

- Financial Management – Unity Trust Bank – Additional Signatories - NTR

- Payment approval:

Parish Clerk/HMRC	Salary/PAYE	£*
Bentleys of York	Website Hosting/Domain Name 2018-2027	£930.51 ⁽¹⁾
Aspects Horticultural	Play Area Work	£252.00*

*Resolved / Approved (Unanimous) ⁽¹⁾Deferred until next meeting

24/485 To confirm the dates of the future meetings as:

2026 - 29th April (Note 1), 27th May (Note 2), 24th June, 29th July, 26th August, 30th September, 28th October, 25th November, 16th December

Note 1 – Annual Parish Meeting followed by Parish Council Meeting

Note 2 – Annual Parish Council Meeting followed by Parish Council Meeting

Approved

Date

Appendix One

Summary of emails to/from website developer (read from bottom to top of report)

Email dated 13 March 2026 from Website Provider to Parish Clerk / (Redacted “KN”)

The hosting is paid in advance, so 26th Feb 26 is for year 2026-2027

Again, the domain name is “rented” a year in advance, so the payment 19/9/25 is for year 25-26, so we won’t have to pay that again until 19/9/26 for the next year.

Hope that makes sense?

As requested, I’ve included an invoice for the year 26-27 hosting & domain name.

Just a note as well, I realise that I won’t be available for the next PC meeting – apologies for this, but I should (!) be around for the April one if needed/wanted.

Email dated 12 March 2026 from Parish Clerk to Website Provider / (Redacted “KN”)

First of all, thank you both for all the hard work you have done to help us understand the task in hand.

I will need to speak to the Parish Council at their next meeting, but I think it will require a new website, to ensure its compliance going forward.

I think it would be helpful to keep the current website “live” for a little while to allow everyone time to move information across, especially from the media library.

You have recently invoiced the Parish Council for:

Hosting of stocktonontheforest.org.uk website	2018-2025	£768.00
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Renewal of stocktonontheforest.org.uk domain name	19/9/2018 19/9/2025	£59.12
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In your email of 26 February 2026 you said –“Going forward (& somewhat ironically....!) the hosting is due for renewal today”, so does that mean that the hosting charge above went to 26 February 2025 or 2026?

Either way, I think you should invoice the Parish Council until February 2027, which will give time for everyone to make their plans, then the current website can stop.

In addition, the domain name renewal for 19Sep25-19Sep26 needs to be renewed, so again please can you arrange this.

A decision can be made in nearer the time about 2026-2027

Please let me have the additional costs as soon as you are able, so I can discuss them with the Parish Council at their next meeting.

Email dated 10 March 2026 from Website Provider to (Redacted “KN”) / Parish Clerk

I agree with you that the website has possibly outlived its utility & a “holding” page of links might be the best way forward.

As to costs, I can’t (don’t want to...!) give a price for a new site – it ranges from zero for a diy job using the inbuilt site builder that comes with the hosting to “skys the limit” for a professional design.

When I first did the website, it was as a community project rather than a commercial venture for me & I have found over the years that I don’t have the demand to do them anymore, especially as the likes of wix etc. offer a “free” built in website builder. So I have dropped this from my portfolio of services & just kept on the legacy customers who still have a website with me.

The hosting will be £120 per year plus around £10 for the domain name “rental” each year. If you have someone willing to do the website build using the built in tool & replace the existing one, I can hand over the admin login for CPanel (the bit that controls the web hosting) so that someone with design flair can put some pages on there.

I did amend the Wikipedia entry for the village to point to the website, so it would be a shame to lose the website/domain as I suspect quite a few visitors will come in from Wikipedia links.

There may be other cheaper hosting packages around – godaddy etc – that we could move the domain to for possibly cheaper hosting, but again a website would have to be built from scratch. The current one is built on a very old system that isn’t in support any more & doesn’t have a direct upgrade path to the latest version, which rules out a “simple” migration to something new.

Not sure if that answers the question fully, but hopefully gives something useful!?! As ever, I suspect that a “willing” volunteer would be required to move it forward to something new.

Email dated 06 March 2026 from (Redacted “KN”) to Website Provider/Parish Clerk

Thank you for your analysis, sorry for the delay in replying I’ve tried twice this week but the battery is dying on my iPad and it kept losing the message...

Yes, I think my last login and tidy up was end of January so that would tie in. I always log in as Manager regardless of which pages I’m updating.

All the 1970s entries I set up for the groups, though there are no Guides in the village so this page was never used. I think I did the training and/or refreshers for church, nursery, toddlers, WI, Greenfingers and Brownies and I’ve also updated those pages for the groups. A lot of the momentum fizzled out with Covid and stopping doing the printed village newsletter which was when I reminded everyone to update the website. This was when the village Facebook group launched too.

Approved

Date

I think that in its current, full format form the website has probably reached a natural end but I do feel that it is of value as a directory for signposting. If its still getting 60 Google search clicks a week then someone is looking for the village. As I said before Facebook and other social media is so transient I find it very difficult to search for anything useful like contact details.

If the PC need to move to something new then maybe I can persuade the village hall to take over the current website or fund a new one, as a replacement for the printed newsletter. Most of the village groups run out of the hall anyway.

(Redacted) please could you look into costs of existing and new so I can discuss options with the committee.

(Redacted) it would be good to know what timescale we are running to, when does the PC have to be compliant with the new rules?

As an aside, its National Village Halls week 16-22nd March so we are having an open evening on Monday 16th, I need to get the posters up but we are hoping village hall users might pop along to advertise their groups so this could be an opportunity to chat about the future of the website. Please let me know your thoughts.

Email dated 27 February 2026 from (Redacted "KN") to Website Provider/Parish Clerk
OK, I've done some digging (it's an old website & not that easy to get the data from!) and there are potentially a few users still active:

admin	02/03/2026
history	05/02/2026
parish	05/02/2026
manager	29/01/2026
petanque	03/07/2025
foresters	01/05/2025
scouts	16/01/2024
church	19/07/2018
nursery	29/02/2016
toddlers	09/02/2016
sotfwi	17/12/2014
greenfingers	29/06/2014
brownies	09/06/2014
hall	01/01/1970
sofey	01/01/1970
senior	01/01/1970
school	01/01/1970
guides	01/01/1970
lunch	01/01/1970

If you can confirm the last time you logged on was 29th January this year as manager, then the date calculation seems to be working OK (my login concurs with the formula result!)

I'm admittedly curious to who in the history group logged in, in February & on the same day as Fiona(?) The Foresters login is spurious, as I login as admin to do any updates for Drama & I suspect that the same is true for you to do various updates that people ask for.

As you can see, there are some users that have never logged on (the "1970" entries) & a few that haven't logged on since the first year of the site.

The google stats is possibly more enlightening, as it shows how successful search results are in driving visitors to the website, however there are a lot of "bots" out there just scraping websites looking for email addresses & ways to access websites, so our average weekly impressions are probably quite high compared to actual people visiting.

The top 10 search queries are "stockton on the forest" & "stockton on forest" as 1 & 2, with the fox dominating with 5 entries starting at no.3. The school is no4 & the village hall at no.5. Bizarrely (and hopefully a history section interest..) no 10 is "who did grace darling marry"!

It looks like we are averaging about 60-70 clicks per week from google searches.

I have an exported file available if you want to see the full stats (let me know & I can send it on) – it's excel format, but you can "slice & dice" to see what/when/how people search for us.

There are some raw stats from the underlying host about page requests, but these are definitely skewed by online bots accessing the site eg 4,027 successful requests per day, for the past week! I don't think we are that popular!

Hope that answers some questions?

Approved

Date

Email dated 27 February 2026 from Parish Clerk to Website Provider/(Redacted "KN")
The current website allows the Parish Council to upload the required documents to fulfil The Transparency Code.
The only problem is that it is not compliant with this new "Assertion 10"
Is it possible for the DNS work to be done, so the website can continue, which would help with the work that Karen does on behalf of the other village organisations?
Apologies, for the numerous emails/questions, but I thought it was a question worth asking, before the Parish Council decides whether to purchase a new website.

Email dated 27 February 2026 from (Redacted "KN") to Parish Clerk/Website Provider
Thank you for keeping me in the loop.
I still receive emails through the website contact forms every week and I try to update the news/events page when I get notified about things.
Admittedly most of the contact emails are enquiries for the village hall. I know the hall has a listing on the Hallshire website but that is just a directory with a list of facilities it's not something news and events can be added to.
I know a lot of people now use the village Facebook group but I feel the website is still a very useful directory of what's on the village. Facebook is very transient and not at all useful as a signpost. I appreciate that the Parish council might need a new website but I would hate to scrap the current website without considering the benefits to the whole village and what would replace it.
(Redacted), please could you do a quick audit of the current website to see if anyone, other than you, me and (Redacted), are updating it. Could you also see how much traffic it's still getting and which pages are most visited; for example are the school, scouts or church pages being used to redirect to their own websites. This will give us an idea of how it is being used. Thank you.

Email dated 27 February 2026 from Website Provider to Parish Clerk
That invoice is the total cost, I vaguely remember at the initiation of the project that there was a possibility of the Parish Council asking the various member groups for a contribution, but not sure if that was followed up. I think (Redacted "KN") also floated the idea of paid adverts from local businesses to help with running costs - the page is still in place offering to "advertise here..." but I suspect there was little take up!!

Email dated 27 February 2026 from Parish Clerk to Website Provider
Again, thank you for this email and the helpful information therein.
I will present the invoice to the next Parish Council meeting.
Can I just ask, is this the total cost or do other village groups pay a percentage?

Email dated 26 February 2026 from Website Provider to Parish Clerk
Further to the previous email, with all the digging around I have been doing & the talk of costs etc. It has come to my attention that I've neglected to send out the annual hosting invoices since 2017!
I'm not quite sure how this has come about, but I think it is because of the unusual delay in the initial stages of the project where I secured the domain name well before the web site went live (19th September domain name created, 26th February web site goes live).
The domain name renewal spits out an invoice which is then married to the actual hosting of the web site (2 separate companies!) but with around 5 months separation there was some disconnect in me tying the two together and sending the combined invoice out to you.
It was muddied further by the initial price including 3 years of hosting & domain name renewal.
It seems this has been overlooked on both sides as it must have slipped off your "items for renewal" list as well.
I can only apologise for this, but sadly have to attach an invoice to bring this up to date. I have capped the hosting at the original price of £96 rather than adding in the annual increase. The domain name renewal has also been capped at the original price.
Going forward (& somewhat ironically....!) the hosting is due for renewal today, but as we have something of a "situation to be resolved" as noted in the previous email, I will defer invoicing for this years hosting until we have a clear plan going forward.
Apologies for allowing this to happen and build up,

Email dated 26 February 2026 from Parish Clerk to Website Provider
Thank you very much for your prompt and honest response.
I think the time has come for the Parish Council to have its own website, which is what I will recommend at the next meeting.
I will need to research this and in line with our financial regulations, obtain several quotes.
Whilst this work is ongoing, please can the current website be kept live, so I can download/transfer documents from the media section?
This would also give time for the other groups to be contacted so they have chance to do what they need to do.

Approved Date

Regarding funding, I haven't received a separate email yet, but how was the domain and hosting funded?

Thank you for your offer to attend a future meeting.

Let me do some more research and I will be most grateful of your guidance in future.

I will speak to the Parish Council at the next meeting, get approval for a route forward, then go from there.

Once again, thank you

Email dated 26 February 2026 from Website Provider to Parish Clerk:

I've just spoken to Parish Online (Chris) and after a bit of fact finding, it would seem that the DNS items you are asking for are almost superfluous in this context.

It is potentially better to abandon the old website (or maybe keep a very much reduced site going as a place marker) and move all parish council "stuff" to the new .gov.uk domain with parish online – he quoted circa £350 per year to have a maintained and "standards compliant" website with them, including .gov.uk email.

Personally, I don't care (not in a bad way!) whether the current website lives or dies, and I don't know if any of the existing groups still actively use it. I know the drama group do, but we have our own dedicated website now.

The village hall also have a "fairly well used" web page, but they also have hallshire as their "advert" website elsewhere.

If the parish council move to their own dedicated website with Parish Online then it brings up the thorny issue of funding the old one (more of that in a separate email) & maintaining it. It could be kept going with reciprocal links between the Parish Council & the Village websites, but the underlying framework that it is written in, is well out of date and obsolete now.

Some decisions to be made I feel & I would be willing to come along to the next meeting if more technical input is needed.

Appendix Two

Summary of emails to/from Flaxton Parish Council Chairman (read from top to bottom of report)

24Feb26 Email from Parish Clerk to Flaxton Parish Council Chairman

I would like to take you up on your kind offer regarding advice on Parish Council websites.

This Parish Council is currently working through the requirements to comply with Assertion 10.

It will probably require the P.C. moving from the parish website (www.stocktonontheforest.org.uk) and having its own website.

Please can you provide me with details of your website provider?

I have looked at numerous websites and as I said to you, I think the Flaxton Parish Council website, is very good.

As always, thank you for your help.

24Feb26 Email from Flaxton Parish Council Chairman to Parish Clerk

Our website provider is <https://www.parishcouncilwebsites.co.uk/> - the main contact is James Lungley who is a great and v helpful guy.

He provides a website with a lot of pre built council elements with the flexibility to do lots of things yourself - you need a little technical knowledge but not much - avoids you having to go back to the supplier for even the simplest of changes. The basics for running a council are already there out of the box if that makes sense.

He hosts the website and provides unlimited email addresses for yourself and all councillors plus the hosting of them. Our charge is £17.50 per month for everything including hosting. There was an upfront cost which we'd have to dig out. And and he will load up archive stuff for you but we chose to keep me busy and out of trouble.

As far as Assertion 10 is concerned the website is very accessible - we've just updated our statement.

Measuring Accessibility is not an exact science.

You can have your councillor emails and a gov.uk domain.

We started the process with a simple tender which I'd need to dig out and that helps to clarify requirements with your councillors.

There are other providers out there who sell much harder than our supplier. One is on the inside with YLCA but they'll be expensive. I'm happy with our choice but am not up to date with the other suppliers.

25Feb26 Email from Flaxton Parish Council Chairman to Parish Clerk

This was the original requirement listing done in 2020.

There is no mention of accessibility at that time but it covers most other areas and we use most if not all of the functions that are listed. I don't think I was aware of accessibility code at that time but I later worked with the supplier to improve the level of accessibility for our and other parish websites.

Approved

Date

The items with no background list the functions the website had to meet.
The items with the yellow background relate to the non-functional requirements such as hosting, supplier credentials, costs, implementation services including training etc.
Looking at the 2021 year-end finances (on our website) we spent around £600 in the first year which included the first year of operation – so approx. a £400 up front cost and £200 annual operating cost. There is also the cost of a gov.uk domain name to include which would be approx. £10 per annum, but best to buy the first few years in advance.
I had a quick look at the SONF website and can see that it could be improved, but probably much cheaper to get your own.
We set out to create a community site but you could leave the existing one to fulfil that purpose and use a new one for the PC Only. In that case the Parish Council Websites solution would be a good option for you. If all your historic agendas and minutes and finances, processes and procedures etc are well organised on the Parish Clerk and RFO PC it is relatively straight forward load up the archive material.

Appendix Three

Emails between SOTFPC and Parish Online

Hi, you need to reply explaining that:

the DNS records required are in the original article you shared. We need A (and sometimes CNAME) records that are the IP address of the website server that your site is on.

what you're trying to achieve is for your website to use the new stocktonontheforestparishcouncil.gov.uk domain name instead of the org.uk one.

So you need to ask them if they're capable of supplying the DNS information and subsequently configuring the web server to use the gov.uk domain instead of the org.uk one.

If that's not clear for them and/or they're not willing/able to do it then that presents a problem.

I've taken a look at your current org.uk site, and it wouldn't meet the latest accessibility requirements set out in Assertion 10.

As this appears to be a village website rather than just a parish one, I would seriously consider moving your parish council information away from that site and having your own one. We can do this for £250 in year 1, then £350 each subsequent year. I don't want to push/upsell to you as we're happy for you to use the free mail service, but just to present an option as I can't see this working out well with the tone of the email chain you attached.

Approved

Date