

**STURMER PARISH COUNCIL**

Karen Simmons

Parish Clerk &amp; Responsible Financial Officer

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Minutes of meeting **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 AT 7:30PM**

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	
Cllr Gareth Morley	Apologies received
Cllr David Porth	In attendance
Cllr Terrie Jones	In attendance
Cllr Sean Mercer	In attendance
ECC Cllr Peter Schwier	Apologies received
Dist Cllr Diana Garrod	In attendance

<b>25/092</b>	<b>NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
	As above
<b>25/093</b>	<b>INVITE ANY DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING</b>
	None declared
<b>25/094</b>	<b>APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025</b>
	Proposed and seconded
<b>25/095</b>	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION</b> <i>This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions and comment on items on the agenda or of import. Time for this session is limited to 15 minutes (03 minutes per person)</i>
	RE Bridle Gate on Bridleway 19 The Bridle Gate on bridleway no. 19, a short history.  About two years ago, Jason, the footpaths officer, required Cllr Porth to remove a twelve-foot field gate across BW 19 at Mere Cottage. The gate, installed by the Essex Rivers Authority in 1971, was replaced in December 2024 with a bridle gate built to Surrey County Council's design. An Essex Bridleways Association representative later tested and approved the new gate. The official Sturmer footpath map now shows a bridle gate on BW 19 crossing my property, which I installed at his own expense. For those unable or unwilling to use the gate, he has also provided an alternative bypass route on his land.
<b>25/096</b>	<b>RECEIVE COUNTY &amp; DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS</b>
	Cllr Bob Massey is now in charge of Essex Highways. Request to provide a list of the 10 worst potholes – Cllr Mercer to go and reassess further damage to ones reported but not repaired.

25/097	<b>REVIEW &amp; COMMENT ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APPEALS</b> <a href="https://www.braintree.gov.uk/policyconsultation">https://www.braintree.gov.uk/policyconsultation</a> For Great Bardfield Neighbourhood plan.
	No comment required.
25/098	<b>Policies/Forward Plan – Cllr G Morley</b>
	To be brought forward to next month’s agenda.
25/099	<b>RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:</b> <b>a) Footpaths – Cllr S Mercer</b> Ivy removed from trees T2 and T10 as per tree report. FP14 is very wet. Action to be taken to address this. Too wet to cut back any footpaths at the moment.  <b>b) Flood Action Group –</b> The flood report on flooding near the War Memorial has been completed by the ECC Flood Team. Relevant residents should have had a letter with the results before Christmas. Highways have done all they can to help the situation.  Woody dams in the ravine (ditch) across the golf course, behind the war memorial and alongside The Baulk had their annual check at the end of 2025. There are a few problems with silting and the ECC Flood Team will contact the landowners.  We have reported a mysterious yellow cable in a gully in Hill Lane.  <b>c) Play Area – Cllr G Morley</b> Some minor remedial work required to park. Once S106 monies are cleared by BDC we will be able to address some resurfacing issues. Other items to be completed by Cllrs.  <b>d) Parish Maintenance – Cllr D Porth</b> Volunteer Alan Carter regularly blows the leaves on the amenity walk. This decreases any slip hazards.  <b>e) War Memorial – Cllr D Porth</b> Volunteer Alan Carter has swept and cleared the War Memorial. The Poppy has been removed and is in storage for next year.  <b>f) Village Hall &amp; Defib – Cllr T Jones</b> Is now following an advice group, confirming that our defib is NOT one that is likely to freeze.

	<p><b>g) Highways – Clerk has overall report</b></p> <p>A number of our reports have come back as needing no further action – this was particularly relevant to holes and damage around cats eyes. We will be monitoring this.</p> <p>PLEASE PLEASE IF YOU REPORT A POTHOLE OR ANY DAMAGE TO ESSEX HIGHWAYS CAN YOU SEND A COPY OF THE CONFIRMATION EMAIL THEY SEND YOU SO WE CAN LOG IT ON OUR SYSTEM.</p>
<b>25/100</b>	<p><b>Agree to supporting Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council with their application to have Hill Lane and The Endway moved to quiet lane status.</b></p> <p><b><a href="#">quiet lanes 1.pdf</a> Please click to find more information on quiet lines and why they are important.</b></p>
	<p>This was proposed and seconded.</p>
<b>25/101 and 102</b>	<p><b>Tree Report and outcomes.</b></p> <p><b>The Survey can be accessed from our Home page on the website. We have had 2 estimates in the region of £5000 plus VAT.</b></p> <p><b>In addition, we still need to cut back the verge opposite the nursery. Highways did part of the job but we need consider future problems with rapid growth in that area.</b></p>
	<p>It was Proposed and seconded to agree the estimate from Timberscape. One of the trees concerned has had further damage and this has also been reported to them.</p> <p>Regarding the verge, Council will document their work with photos to report incomplete tasks to the County.</p>
<b>25/103</b>	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p><b>- Review Budget for 2026/27</b></p> <p>See also 104</p> <p><b>- Drax Credit and debit for year.</b></p> <p>A new rate has been applied to the account backdated 12 months. This provides us with approximately 10% return to our bank.</p> <p><b>- RECEIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT - AGREE PAYMENTS</b></p> <p>Invoices signed by 2 councillors.</p> <p><b>– APPROVE CLERK TO MAKE PAYMENTS</b></p> <p>Agreed and seconded.</p>
<b>25/104</b>	<p><b>Budget 2026/2027 review and suggestions and/or approval.</b></p>
	<p>A provisional budget was given to councillors to review.</p>

25/105	<p><b>CLERKS REPORT</b></p> <p><b>Budget to date</b> Current budget has approximately £2,000 left. This is allocated. We will go over budget with the emergency work to the trees but this will come from our reserves.</p> <p><b>Accounts package progress</b> Our new accounts package is up and running. This provides a safe place for our package that does not rely on personal laptops. We were able to attain a half prices discount for the first 6 months.</p> <p><b>Website package progress</b> Due to some transfer issues this was held back. However, this is now on track and we are hoping for a revamped website to be available by the start of next month.</p> <p><b>Street Clean.</b> It was proposed and seconded to stay part of this scheme.</p>
25/106	<b>ITEMS OF REPORT TO BE NOTED OR ADDED TO NEXT COUNCIL AGENDA</b>
	Review of tree policy to reflect changes to the environment and Health and Safety concerns.
25/107	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026 7.30PM</b>

**KAREN SIMMONS Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer Dated 15th January 2026.**