

Meeting:	Stevington Parish Council Meeting 29 th January 2026 at 7.30pm
Council Members in attendance:	Cllr. Janet Day (JD), Chair Cllr. James Surtees (JSu) Cllr. Nick Jones (NJ) Cllr. Gareth King (GK)
Apologies received:	Cllr. John Strutt (JS) Cllr. Dylan Simmons Cllr. Jim Sinfield (JSi) Cllr. Hannah Coleman-King (HCK) Cllr. Robert Rigby
Non-attendance:	
Borough Council Member:	Cllr. Robert Rigby (RR) - not in attendance Cllr. Dylan Simmons (DS) - not in attendance
Clerk to the Council:	R Plum
Public Attendance	

MINUTES OF MEETING

Welcome

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from:

- Cllr. John Strutt (JS)
- Cllr. Jim Sinfield (JSi)
- Cllr. Hannah Coleman-King (HCK)
- Cllr. Robert Rigby
- Cllr. Dylan Simmons

2. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr. Janet Day – Barringer Trust
- Cllr. James Surtees – Village Hall

3. Open Forum

Nothing to report.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

PROPOSED: Cllr. James Surtees

SECONDED: Nick Jones

5. Matters Arising from the minutes – information only

Any items are covered on Agenda for this meeting.

6. Clerk's Report – information only

a) Dragons Teeth & Gates – update

- I. RR and RP asked Borough Head of Highways, Fleet & Traffic Operations for an update on 24th Jan.
- II. Highways Traffic manager has advised not to believe the Red Report regarding pothole repairs across the country. There's an administrative error with people making assumptions in relation to the information released.

b) Update on The Cross permissions

- I. Process moving forward as expected. Insurance claim re-opened and RP still awaiting traffic management quote from Borough.
- II. RP to order Do not climb sign to be place on The Cross.

RP

c) Other matters

- I. Dog bins – Borough arranging survey to assess agreement to provide additional bins free of charge. If Parish has to purchase, negotiation with the Borough will be required to arrange emptying of the bins.
- II. RP has asked Borough Property to provide an update on latest plans in advance of this meeting. No response received.

RP

RP

7. Borough Council Matters

See attached report.

8. Setting of Precept 2025/26

PROPOSAL: Annual Precept for 2026-27 to be set at 10%

RP

PROPOSED: Cllr. Gareth King

SECONDED: Cllr. James Surtees

PROPOSAL: AJ Contracting to continue grass cutting for the 2026-27

RP

season. Thanks to the contractor are formally recorded for the standard of work delivered in the current financial year.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Nick Jones

SECONDED: Cllr. James Surtees

9. Planning Matters

a) Update – Cllr Janet Day

- I. Response on Warwick Cottage – minor adjustments agreed and works looking very nice.

b) NDP – update

- I. JSt concerned about flooding and environmental issues.
- II. RP to invite Andrew Lockwood to attend next meeting to discuss further.

RP

10. Highways & Traffic Management Update

a) Speeding issues – update Cllr. Jim Sinfield

JSi not in attendance at this meeting.

b) Speedwatch Group – update

- I. Work in progress as members feel it's necessary to set up a new group starting from scratch.
- II. JD attending Police & Crime Commissioner meeting tomorrow evening and will bring up at meeting.

11. Environment & Footpaths

a) Update – Cllr. Strutt

JSt not in attendance at this meeting.

b) Other matters

- I. Suggestion to put village warning system in place for emergency or unpredicted life-threatening events.
- II. RP to ask Borough about provision of grant funding.
- III. Pavenham Parish Council has requested closure of SSSI due to weather.
- IV. FP14 off Silver Street needs maintenance.

12. Police Matters

a) Update – Cllr. King

- I. JD attending Police & Crime Commissioner meeting tomorrow evening and will report back at next meeting.
- II. A stalking crime was recorded in December 2025 and an attempted theft in Park Road early January 2026.

13. Community Matters

a) Update – Cllr. Day

- I. See attached report.
- II. HCK will pick up on production of Parish Welcome Pack.
- III. Barringer Trust considering projects for their next major improvement works.
- IV. Good Neighbours Scheme is struggling. Chair has resigned and they only have 6 volunteers with no secretary. Phone rota is still

HCK

going and responding to requests. Group is meeting next week to discuss way forward.

- V. Red Lion for sale. Add to future Agenda as potential for purchase as a community asset.

14. Village Hall

a) Update – Cllr. Surtees

- I. See attached report circulated prior to meeting.
- II. Transfer of title deeds not yet resolved. There is a clear challenge due to difference of opinion on who should hold title of the building. RP to send copy of title deeds to JSu. **RP**
- III. Request for dog waste bags to be attached to dog bins. Agreed Village Hall can arrange purchase and send RP receipt for refund.
- IV. Village Hall committee have request copy of Parish insurance policy to check the building and contents are covered. RP to send to Village Hall, JSu and JD. **RP**

15. Playing Field

a) Play equipment repairs – update

- I. RP to follow up on expected delivery date of posts to repair equipment. **RP**

16. Financial Matters

a) Financial Report

Accounts to be ratified were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Gareth King

SECONDED: Cllr. Nick Jones

b) Succession Planning

- I. JD advised she will be standing down from post at Parish Councillor at the 2027 local elections.
- II. Need to ensure appointment of Vice Chair to Parish Council at the AGM in May 2026.
- III. RP put forward proposal for job share of the Clerk's role with the current Assistant Clerk of Clapham Parish Council.
- IV. PROPOSAL: Clerk's role to be 50% job share between current Clerk, Rosemary Plum and Lindsey Walton, Assistant Clerk at Clapham Parish Council from 1st April 2026.
PROPOSED: Cllr. Janet Day
SECONDED: Cllr. James Surtees
VOTE: Unanimous

17. EWR

a) Update

Clapham Parish Council has proposed a tunnel should be created in place of the planned raised tracks for the section through Clapham Parish. Comments from EWR promised by end of February.

18. Correspondence

Nothing to report.

19. Any other Business (*for information only*)

- I. Purchase of outdoor table tennis table already ratified by Parish Council up to a cost of £1,500. Jsui will advise RP when purchase to be made.
- II. Bluebell Wood owned by local resident. Concern about roads being created by the landowner and whether there would be effect on the woods.

20. Date of Next Meeting

- 26th March 2026 at 7.30pm in Stevington Village Hall

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 21.15 hrs.

Signed as a true reflection of the meeting:

Signed		
Dated	26 th March 2026	Chair

Monthly Report February

Council passes 2026/27 Budget

- Bedford Borough Council has approved the Mayor's 2026/27 budget, delivered against a backdrop of surging costs in adult social care, children's services and temporary accommodation and a £1.1m cut in Government funding.
- That includes additional funding for Children's Services and Adult Services, continues investment in roads and resurfacing, ASB Officers, and confirms the Council will continue to maintain speed cameras in parishad areas.
- Council Tax will rise by 4.99% (2.99% core + 2% Adult Social Care precept) to help meet unavoidable cost pressures, alongside ongoing efficiency work.

Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)

- The Government has published its latest list of councils receiving Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) for 2026/27. Bedford Borough Council has been given in-principle support of £58.0 million for 2026/27, with £22.0m (support agreed in-principle for 2025-26).
- EFS is a type of Government support that helps a council manage short-term financial pressures while it delivers longer-term savings and improvement plans.
- It gives the Council permission to effectively "go overdrawn" for a limited period of time, with the Council only paying back what it actually uses. In practice, if £22m is available but only £15m is used, then only £15m would need to be paid back.

New Finance and Improvement Executive Committee

- The Executive has set up a new Finance and Improvement Executive Committee to strengthen financial oversight and accountability, and to support delivery of the Council's improvement work.
- Meetings will be live-streamed, so residents can follow progress on the Council's improvement work and will include cross-party representation.

Best Value Inspection

- Bedford Borough Council will be undergoing a Best Value Inspection over the next three months. The Mayor and Executive have said they welcome the inspection and see it as a constructive form of scrutiny to help ensure residents get the best value services possible.
- The Council will cooperate fully with inspectors and treat this as an opportunity to strengthen performance, raise standards and improve reliability of services.

Garden waste collections restarting

- Garden waste collections (green-lidded bins) will restart from Monday 2nd March.
- As a reminder, items that can go in the green bin include grass cuttings, leaves, plants, weeds, flowers, hedge clippings and bark. Please do not put food waste, soil, rubble or large branches.
- More information on bin guidance and collection dates:
www.bedford.gov.uk/BinsAndRecycling

Anti-Social Behaviour Officers

- The 2026/27 Budget includes £96,000 to fund two additional Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers in addition to the two ASB officers funded by Bedfordshire Police.
- Unlike the police-funded officers, who are focused on the town centre, the Council-funded officers can be deployed flexibly - to the town centre, Queens Park, Shortstown, or anywhere the need is greatest for patrols and early intervention.
- This builds on work since December, when ASB activity helped contribute to a reduction in violent and public order offences, making the town centre feel safer for residents, visitors and local businesses.
- The Council will also continue joint work through the Town Centre Task Force, bringing together Council services and Bedfordshire Police to coordinate intelligence-led action and prevention.

Open Space Management (OSM) charge will not be coming back

- As a result of the 2026/27 budget residents in these Kempston West and Great Denham will not be doubled taxed as the open Space Management charge will not be reintroduced in these areas.

International sport is back at Bedford International Athletics Stadium

- Bedford International Athletics Stadium (BIAS) has recently undergone a £700,000 refurbishment to improve the quality of the facility.
- The completed works include replacement of the running track and athletics surfaces, plus the purchase of maintenance and competition equipment, including repairs to the throwing cage.
- Following the improvements, on the 7th February the stadium had successfully hosted international level sporting event, showing that Bedford Borough is more than capable of attracting major competitions.

Universal development - growing local presence

- The Universal development is gathering momentum, with the organisation now taking space on the top floor of the Council building.
- This creates a stronger day-to-day presence in the Borough and should help speed up engagement with local partners and stakeholders.

Potholes and road maintenance (January 2026)

- The Council has delivered around 38,976 m² of carriageway resurfacing/patching and 5,113 m² of footway resurfacing, alongside other repairs and renewals.
- Teams attended 714 streets for carriageway pothole repairs (plus 13 streets for footway potholes) and carried out wider maintenance works on many additional streets.
- Routine gully cleansing continued with around 1,800 gullies cleansed, with extra drainage cleaning also completed as part of resurfacing schemes.

East Park Energy

- Bedford Borough Council is involved as the Host Authority, supporting the national Development Consent Order (DCO) process locally. Officers have advised they are

currently preparing a draft Local Impact Report (this is still in preparation and not yet a formal submission).

- A Preliminary Meeting and public hearings are scheduled for 17 - 18 March 2026.

Fostering for Bedford Borough Council

- Bedford Borough Council is looking for more local families to foster, helping some of our most vulnerable children grow up in a safe, supportive home environment.
- The Council provides support for carers through Mockingbird, a group that gives foster families a stronger network, including respite, advice and practical support.
- Bedford has now launched its third Mockingbird Constellation, building on the success of the first two, which currently support 19 families who also support one another.
- The programme was developed by The Fostering Network and has been introduced locally with Department for Education funding.
- Foster carers may also be eligible for help such as Council Tax support and subsidised access to leisure facilities, alongside the usual fostering support.
- If you are considering taking on this important role, you can find out more information at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/fostering/who-can-foster> or contact us fostering@bedford.gov.uk

Cllr. Janet Day

Summary : Stevington Parish Council – January 2026

Firstly I was so pleased with the enthusiastic and positive response we got to our “Twelve Days of Christmas” performance at the Christmas Concert. Sometimes it can seem as if all the things we have not managed to resolve are highlighted but the response at the concert showed that people are well aware of the challenges we face. Thanks to everyone for your input.

There have been no major issues I have had to respond to since the last meeting although I have been aware of the usual ongoing issues related to traffic management especially on Silver St. I am going to the meeting with the police on Friday 30th and will raise the issues of speeding affecting horse riders and pedestrians including those pushing buggies on Silver St.

The state of the roads and the potholes is now a difficult issue which I am sure we will be discussing.

I have liaised with James and Ade Churchill to arrange for the repairs to the posts in the enclosed play area. Once the posts are in stock Ade will go ahead with the repair.

Review of neighbourhood plan

Rosemary and I have distributed the work Andy Lockwood has done. This will need to be an agenda item at the next meeting when more of us are available and John can bring to the discussion the current environmental issues.

Welcome packs

Hannah is now in a position to pick this up. I have spoken to Sarah Bush who has organised them for several years. She is happy to hand on the job.

Outstanding issues

Rosemary has continued to chase the borough re the poo bins and dragons teeth.

I need to ask Jackie Gooding (WI) if she has made any progress on arranging defibrillator training.

There has been no progress on improving footpath 14 and the path through the SSI

The Red Lion is being advertised again. It would be helpful for us to consider what if any action we could take to see it opened again in some way without affecting the Royal George.

Janet Day 26th January 2026

STEVINGTON VILLAGE HALL (SVH)

MINUTES



Present:

WS – Will Stanbridge, Chair
FHI – Fiona Hart-Ives, Treasurer
EF – Emma Freeman, Secretary
SC – Steve Cole, Trustee, Cinema Club
GT – Gary Thomas, Trustee

DC – Debbie Collins, Hall Manager
JS – James Surtees, Trustee, Parish Council
BC – Barbara Collins, Trustee, Carpet Bowls
Paul O'Flynn
Tegan Surtees

Thursday 11th December, 2025. 7.30pm

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1. Introductions and Apologies
Apologies: Linda Penny – Trustee (LP), Jacky Gooding – Women's Institute

 2. Minutes from previous meeting to be agreed.
Agreed, no amendments.

 3. Actions outstanding:
 - 3.1. WS to complete email set up. **COMPLETE**
 - 3.2. JS to discuss with the Parish Council if they wish to meet regarding transfer of property. **To be reviewed again when SC and JS are present.**
See note from JS, summarised that the view of the Parish Council is that they do not see any logical benefit to SVH but does see down sides in terms of cost, time and expertise in achieving it. GT views that the question is irrelevant, the PC do not own the building – it is owned by a trust for the people of the village. SC has a copy of the trust deed which says it is to be held in trust by the Parish Council but administered by the Village Hall Committee. All agreed to leave the situation as the status quo for the time being, the only issue would be if the Village Hall wanted to take out a bank loan. The definition of the property in trust is the land, as there was no hall originally when it was set up. JS stated that land registry states that the property is owned by the Parish Council. Action: EF to gather the documents in one place (Sharepoint). All relevant documents to be sent to EF.
 - 3.3. Financial policy – to be reviewed and amended if needed – FHI. **ONGOING, to be discussed next meeting.**
 - 3.4. SC/WS to write memorandum of understanding for Cinema Club and Bowls Club in regards to equipment stored at SVH. WS to complete the MOU for the Bowls Club. Further discussions with Cinema Club needed. **ONGOING – separate meeting to be arranged with SC. Sunday 4th January, 10am at the Village Hall. After this Carpet Bowls MOU will be dealt with, and Table Tennis if necessary. DC updated that there has been no response to her last communications with the Table Tennis club so we are not sure if they are continuing.**
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- 3.5. EF to investigate the WiFi issue with the bar which occurred during the barn dance. SC has made a work around, EF will look into this in the summer.
ONGOING – EF asked if this is still an issue. SC stated it has been an issue previously at the 12K as well. EF agreed to look into this before the next big event to get some protected bandwidth for the bar.
- 3.6. EF to arrange removal of Admin email and ensure any reference is removed from the website/documents. **ONGOING – references removed, but we will leave the Admin email live until we are confident there are no emails being received. This will be reviewed in the New Year. EF updated that the Admin email is linked to the Yale app and the ipads, this needs to be resolved before it can be removed.**
- 3.7. Lock to be installed on the cleaning cupboard in the entrance hall. **ONGOING – changes being made to the storage of cleaning equipment after the installation of the solar battery and inverter in the same cupboard. It was agreed we still need a lock to protect the inverter control panel.**
- 3.8. SC Staging and speaker stands to be moved to the container. **It was agreed that the staging can now remain in the cupboard.**

4. Constitution Review

ALL



Stevington Village
Hall Constitution.docx

WS stated following the previous meeting where an item of process was raised, this document has been reviewed by the Exec Committee.

SC gave a history, in 1978 the first constitution was written for Stevington Social Club (SSC). Peter Hart reviewed this in 2016 and wrote a new one, it took 18 months for the Charity Commission to agree to it – this was never approved because they said the original one couldn't be replaced but that the document could run alongside it and be used. The old constitution was more defined, for instance it defines the Executive Committee and members. SC proposed that this be used to update the constitution for SVH which was written in 2023. **Action: SC to circulate the 2016 SSC constitution, Exec and Trustees to review and decide on course of action prior to next meeting.**

5. Hall Manager Update

DC



Hall Manager
Report.pdf

JS stated Ade has been spoken to about fixing the playground, this is being dealt with by the Parish Council.

DC updated that she's spoken to Ade about the outdoor light, the bulb is fine, he'll come back and look at why it isn't working.

EF thanked Debbie for tidying all the kitchen cupboards and the crockery cupboard.

Laundry – DC still awaiting the prices from the laundry company A1. The prices indicated on the manager report are the prices he charges, he was going to send our laundry costs but hasn't done yet. DC will follow up.

14-21yr old parties – all agreed to remove the age restriction but increase the deposit to £300 for Friday and Saturday evenings regardless of age. Age restriction of 21yrs to hire the hall to be reduced to 18yrs in line with this policy.

SC/DC updated that the plan is now to leave the stage in the main cupboard, there should be enough room to create a cleaning storage cupboard as well.

Quotes for the container racking – SC has already purchased this, just needs to be moved up to the hall.

WS discussed rechargeable battery lighting in the container as the quote for the fixed wire was expensive – **Action: DC to get quotes**. Also see if someone local qualified could do something at a more reasonable price.

Goal posts – SC said he would look at this.

Trailer – SC said before Christmas he would move it.

Yale fob – agreed to put a fob in the key safe but move the key safe somewhere round the back of the building **Code: 1560**

Sign for the car park – to say the gates will be locked at dusk. Wording to be agreed.

DC has moved the bin to the container side – agreed.

Dog mess on the field – PO suggested a stock of bags to be made accessible to the public by the play park. All agreed it was a good idea. **Action: JS to take this to the Parish Council.**

Cinema club – SC updated that ticket sales are going well, films continue to make a loss. WS asked if there was competition from other villages, SC made the point that other places may not pay for a licence to show films which is not legal.

Carpet Bowls Club – BC updated that they have had the same numbers for the last year, not very good attendances recently but things are going ok – costs are kept down by having a regular raffle. If there were new members things would be easier to manage the finances. **Action: EF to advertise on Facebook for new members.**

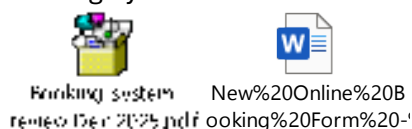
Guitar concert – continue to be a success. FHI confirmed the agreement with the guitar concerts will be reviewed after the February concert.

Football pitch – now playable, no current bookings.

SC suggested we buy a projector to use for private bookings to avoid over using the expensive lamps. **Action: to be discussed in the cinema meeting.**

6. Booking System Review

EF



No issues raised with moving to the online booking system.

Agreed to set cancellation if within 10 days 50%

Review admin fee for event calendar later, leave it as no fee for now.

7. Accounts Update

FHI

£23500 total balance across all accounts.
We have received all of the funding for the solar panels.
Profit from recent events (approximate):
Fireworks £1680
Cheese £140
Concorde £300
Dine with Mo £200
FHI stated it was really positive that since fireworks, total profit is around £2500 and the accounts are looking healthy.
SC asked why there was £6000 in the Natwest account, FHI stated she is aware she needs to move some to another account.

8. Tariffs review

8.1. Linen

Action outstanding:

FHI

- FHI to discuss linen costs with DC and agree prices, advise EF to change the costings on inventory. **ONGOING**

8.2. Deposit Structure

Actions outstanding:

FHI/WS

- Sliding scale for deposits up to £500 – words to be agreed between FHI and WS.

This was discussed, EF has suggested deposit scale is as follows:

- Football bookings = £50 (no change)
- Default deposit for hall hire = £100 (no change)
- Bookings involving a bouncy castle = £200
- Friday/Saturday evenings = £300

All agreed this seems fair, and will cover parties for evenings where the risk of damage is likely to be higher. Agreed to take this forward with the new booking form.

9. Bar Pricing and Stock Review

FHI/DC



Bar%20review%20December%202025.docx

FHI explained the reasons for the review again and the proposed changes as explained in the document. The suggested changes to the stock have been based on what sells the most, requests from customers at events and private hire bookings. BC suggested that we should have invited Jean Blaney to the meeting, specifically in connection with this item. EF confirmed that Jean was invited to the meeting and has had all meeting agendas and minutes including the bar review document circulated by email in the normal way ahead of this meeting. SC suggested the increase in price is too much and was concerned that cinema club users would purchase less due to the increased cost. GT suggested it could be done in 2 stages to soften the increase. After discussion, all agreed to try the new pricing and structure and see how things go.

10.	Maintenance	ALL
	Please refer to new maintenance schedule attached:	



Maintenance
Schedule

See schedule for updates from this discussion point.

11.	Policies for review	
	11.1. GDPR	
	Action outstanding:	WS
	WS agreed to look into where the current policy is.	

A new policy has been drafted and will be circulated. **Action: EF to circulate new policy.**

12.	Regular events and bookings	
	12.1. Cinema	SC
	Discussed above in point 5.	
	12.2. Yoga	
	No update	
	12.3. Table Tennis	
	Discussed in point 3.4	
	12.4. Any others to be raised if needed	
	None	
13.	Debrief from recent special events	
	13.1. Wine and Cheese night	
	Profit reported in point 7. No further discussion.	
	13.2. Come Dine with Mo	
	Profit reported in point 7. No further discussion.	
	13.3. An Evening with Les Evans	
	Profit reported in point 7. No further discussion.	
14.	Forthcoming Special Events	
	14.1. Children's Christmas Party – Saturday 13 th December	EF
	Barbara advised she is volunteering at the party to welcome the children. EF advised she is meeting with Vikki tomorrow to set up and decorate the hall. Paul O'Flynn advised that there has been a change of personnel this year and Lawrence has kindly agreed to ensure that Santa makes an appearance.	
	14.2. Barn Dance – Saturday 14 th March	
	No discussion.	
	14.3. 12K Run – Sunday 10 th May	WS
	No discussion.	
	14.4. Stevington Open Gardens - Date now set for Sunday 7 th June 2026.	

Times to be confirmed. We have been requested to allow use of the car park and toilet facilities at SVH.

All agreed to this – SC suggested we double lock the doors to the hall then we don't need volunteers. **Action: EF to communicate this to John Strutt.**

15. Any other events/ideas to be raised:

15.1. Bingo – date to be set early 2026. No date set, review again next meeting.
No further discussion.

15.2. Live music night.

BC previously suggested Fynnius Fogg who play for free – play 60s up to modern music. EF has found them on Facebook, contact details provided – confirmed they are still playing for free for good causes.

No further discussion.

15.3. Quiz – Ali Taylor has offered again to run a quiz and is happy to be quiz master.

16. Date of next meeting: AGM Wednesday 25th February, 2026. 7.30pm

FHI advised that she may be away.

17. AOB

SC stated we have been making approx. 30% saving on electricity since having the solar panels but we have been exporting and we need to follow up with the electricity supplier to get paid. This will be followed up in the New Year.
