

**STURMER PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2025**

**Karen Simmons**  
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<b>25/078</b>	<b>NOTE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>														
	All were present: - <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>COUNCILLOR</th><th>IN ATTENDANCE</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Cllr David Porth</td><td>YES</td></tr><tr><td>Cllr Terrie Jones</td><td>YES</td></tr><tr><td>Cllr Sean Mercer</td><td>YES</td></tr><tr><td>Cllr Gareth Morley - Chair</td><td>YES</td></tr><tr><td>Dist Cllr Diana Garrod</td><td>YES</td></tr><tr><td>Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier</td><td>YES</td></tr></tbody></table>	COUNCILLOR	IN ATTENDANCE	Cllr David Porth	YES	Cllr Terrie Jones	YES	Cllr Sean Mercer	YES	Cllr Gareth Morley - Chair	YES	Dist Cllr Diana Garrod	YES	Cnty Cllr Peter Schwier	YES
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<b>25/079</b>	<b>INVITE ANY DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING</b>														
	NONE DECLARED														
<b>25/080</b>	<b>APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025</b>														
	PROPOSED AND SECONDED.														
<b>25/081</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> Present but no questions.														
<b>25/082</b>	<b>RECEIVE COUNTY &amp; DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS</b> Cllr Garrod's report is on our website – <a href="#">District Council Reports - Sturmer Parish Council</a>  Cllr Schwier reported as follows: - Highways Highlights are regularly published (Visitors to Sturmer PC website can find them here <a href="#">Essex County Council Reports - Sturmer Parish Council</a> )  Please note that gritting will be done as a priority on roads, but this may delay some pothole repairs. Interestingly, we are NOT in the top 5 counties for potholes!  Trading Standards reports that Essex has one of the highest success rates for removal of illegal imports in the UK. +478,000 items at a cost of over 90 million pounds. This includes 360,000 illegal vapes.  To maintain road safety, we ask residents to help by cutting back your overgrown vegetation that may be obscuring any road signage. If there are any road signs that are obscured that cannot be reached or are too deeply covered, please contact the Parish Council ( <a href="mailto:clerk@sturmer-pc.gov.uk">clerk@sturmer-pc.gov.uk</a> ) or direct to Essex Highways Report it tool <a href="#">Tell us - Essex County Council</a> . If you can use What 3 Words that would be helpful. If you are not sure let the clerk know.  Highways have been informed that white lines missing from junctions should be reinstated ASAP.														
<b>25/083</b>	<b>REVIEW &amp; COMMENT ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS/APPEALS</b> <b>None declared at this point.</b>														
	N/A														

25/084	<b>Policies/Forward Plan – Cllr G Morley</b>  This is still a work in progress and will be brought to future meeting on an ongoing basis.  It was thought that the tree policy should be separated out of the environmental policy and this will be researched for next meeting by Cllr Porth.
25/085	<p><b>RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:</b></p> <p><b>a) Footpaths – Cllr S Mercer</b> Fp21 is blocked again – clerk to follow up. Cllr Mercer will check 2 trees to confirm if on council property</p> <p><b>b) Flood Action Group</b> Community Speedwatch has a new member. After the relevant training it is hoped to restart early 2026. SFAG – Highways were in the village on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Nov correcting flooding near the War Memorial.</p> <p><b>c) Play Area – Cllr G Morley</b> It was confirmed that of all the estimates received, Creative Play (at £9,293) was proposed and seconded to complete the resurfacing at the pocket park. All other works have now been completed and this year's play inspection has been commissioned.</p> <p><b>d) Parish Maintenance – Cllr D Porth</b> Volunteer Alan Carter has been out with the leaf blower in both the park and the Amenity Walk.</p> <p><b>e) War Memorial – Cllr D Porth</b> Cllr Porth is to return the Poppy to a safe place until next year. The Yew trees will need cutting back soon. We will be able to complete this ourselves.</p> <p><b>f) Village Hall &amp; Defib – Cllr T Jones</b> The Defib needs new pads. Although the order is delayed at the supplier, it remains acceptable for use.</p> <p><b>g) Highways – Clerk has overall report</b> Clerk has a spreadsheet of all reported items. Should you report an item yourself, please let her know so it can be monitored effectively.</p> <p>Some cut back has been done by Highways opposite the Nursery, however, this has not been cut back enough, and the small saplings will soon sprout again. Clerk to chase.</p>
25/086	<b>Devolution &amp; Local Government Reorganisation – Cllr D Porth.</b> The latest report and access to the public consultation relating to the proposals across Essex can be found on the homepage of our website.
	We do recommend that residents familiarise themselves with the proposals and should you wish to make any comments the website address is here: <a href="https://www.essex.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-on-proposals-for-local-government-reorganisation-in-essex-southend-on-sea-and-thurrock-ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government-citizen-space">Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space</a>
25/087	<b>Bridge 2173 over Railway Amenity Walk - Cllr G Morley</b> 1. Current condition, inspection report and implications

	<p><b>2. Future of the Bridge and Funding Options – report is available at <a href="http://www.sturmer-pc.gov.uk">www.sturmer-pc.gov.uk</a></b></p>
	<p>A report was received from Essex Highways on the current condition of the bridge propping. We are waiting for further information from Highways on this.</p> <p>A further report set out the background and current position in relation to Bridge 2173 over the Railway Amenity Walk. A funding application will be drafted fully in the new year for the Parish Council to agree prior to submission, with the aim of securing funding for a full survey and feasibility appraisal of Bridge 2173's condition and possible restoration.</p> <p>We have begun making contacts with more groups and individuals who may be able to support and inform this application.</p>
<b>25/088</b>	<p><b>Tree Report and outcomes.</b>  <b>The Survey can be accessed from our Home page on the website.</b></p> <p>There have been 2 estimates received so far.</p> <p>Cllr Porth and Volunteer Carter have made the following suggestions based on the report.</p> <p>Trees 2/3/10 removal of ivy can be done inhouse.</p> <p>Trees 9 and 11 need to be doublechecked regarding ownership.</p> <p>There is nothing deemed at high risk, however the estimates will be reviewed next meeting.</p>
<b>25/088</b>	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>- Approve IT/ Website and Accounting packages</b></li> <li><b>- RECEIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT - AGREE PAYMENTS</b></li> <li><b>– APPROVE CLERK TO MAKE PAYMENTS</b></li> </ul> <p>The Clerk presented a range of costs and potential suppliers for improving the Parish Council's ICT arrangements, which is much needed.</p> <p>It was agreed to use Parish Online for a new secure website and email.</p> <p>It was agreed to use Parish Accounting for our accounts to be made secure online.</p> <p>Both were proposed and seconded.</p> <p>Payments were agreed and clerk was approved to make payments to avoid any late payment charges.</p> <p>A credit note from Sovereign Play was proposed and seconded as compensation for the inconvenience experienced during the repair process.</p>
<b>25/089</b>	<p><b>CLERKS REPORT</b></p> <p><b>Budget to date</b></p> <p><b>Drax</b></p> <p>Despite some unexpected expenses, our budget is on track.</p> <p>We have managed to renegotiate our utility contract with Drax. Of the 2 possibilities received it was proposed and seconded to agree the 24 month contract backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.</p> <p>Please also note that Highways are to reassess the weight limit for the Bridge at Water Lane on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025. Further information will be communicated when received.</p>
<b>25/090</b>	<b>ITEMS OF REPORT TO BE NOTED OR ADDED TO NEXT COUNCIL AGENDA</b>

	Agree on forthcoming tree quotes for the Railway Amenity Walk. Bridge 2173 (often known as Pope Mill Bridge) update on funding and condition.
<b>25/091</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 7.30PM</b>

**KAREN SIMMONS Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer Dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025.**