

Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly (Draft)

Tuesday 22 April 2025 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Kathryn Dodington (Chair), Trevor Morley, Pat Stimson, Barbara Osborne, and Simon Lake.

Also Present: Dave Weston (clerk), Sarah-Jane O'Kane Severn Trent Water, Peter Walker CRT and 5 members of the public.

Prior to the start of the formal part of the meeting, Sarah-Jane and Peter gave a short presentation and took questions on the Grand Union Canal Water Transfer Plan.

During September/October 2024 was a series of pop-up information events. Views were sought from attendees, 475 out of over 800 replied. The key point that came out was the environmental impact. They confirmed that at the peak there will be up to 115 litres of water added to the canal, with a speed increase of less than 0.6mph.

Formal consultation will take place before the statutory consultation takes place in early 2026. Three working groups have been set up and will look at creating benefits for those along the route.

The project has been designated a Nationally Important Strategic Project. The design process is looking at how any structures can fit in with local heritage, there are a significant number of environmental surveys taking place, lock bypasses will be underground pipes. There was concern expressed from the floor over the winter water levels with the additional water being pumped into the canal.

The expected end date for the project is 2032 which requires building work to start no later than 2029.

- 1. Apologies:** David Locke, Terry Richardson
- 2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly 2024.** The minutes were signed as correct.
- 3. Chairs Report:** Cllr Dodington recorded her thanks to Cllrs Morley and Lake who are stepping down from the council at the election in May. She also thanked all those on the council and within the village that have given their time and helped with matters within the council and around the village. The council are now members of the SEGRO Community Group.
- 4. WNC Councillor Report:** Cllr Fowler wasn't present, and no report was presented.
- 5. Northamptonshire Police Report:** The police report is available on the website for viewing. Attached at Appendix A

6. Reports from clubs and organisations: Cllr Dodington then invited comment and questions on the following reports received from local organisations:

6.1: The Parish Council Accounts. No comment made. Attached at Appendix A

6.2: Stoke Bruerne Cricket Club. No comment made. Attached at Appendix A

6.3: Book Club. No comment made. Attached at Appendix A

6.4: Stoke Bruerne Canal Partnership. The partnership has gone into abeyance for a period of 6 months. Thanks were expressed to Roger Cooper for his work in clearing the dog bins. Attached at Appendix A

6.5 Stoke Bruerne Village Hall. No comment made. Attached at Appendix A

6.6 Friends of the Canal Museum. No comments made. Attached at Appendix A

7. Any other items of parish concern.

Nothing was raised.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Appendix A: Meeting Reports

STOKE BRUERNE PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 2024-2025

Payments	Budget 2024-25	Expenditure 2024-25	Internal Transfers	Plus/Minus to 31 March 2025
Clerks salary	3,300.00	3,350.77		-50.77
Clerks Expenses	312.00	312.00		0.00
Mowing	6,500.00	6,424.70		75.30
Utilities	1,400.00	1,427.94		-27.94
HMRC	900.00	837.80		62.20
Asset Repairs & renewals	3,000.00	4,858.67		-1,858.67
Insurance	1,200.00	599.00		601.00
Subscriptions	575.00	673.07		-98.07
Audit Fees	0.00	0.00		0.00
Traffic Survey	650.00	0.00		650.00
Open Space maintenance	500.00	335.79		164.21
Clock	350.00	340.80	340.80	350.00
Equipment Inspection	110.00	103.20		6.80
Village Hall Hire	100.00	180.00		-80.00
Misc	100.00	80.32		19.68
Section 137 Grants	800.00	600.00		200.00
Training	200.00	172.40		27.60
Website / Anit-virus	500.00	59.99		440.01
Contigency	1,000.00	369.00		631.00
Tree Inspection / Maintenance	400.00	900.00		-500.00
Totals 2024-2025	21,897.00	21,625.45	340.80	612.35
Receipts				
Precept	18,000.00			
Pitch hire	0.00			
Bank interest	196.33			
Grants/Donations	200.00			
VAT	1,255.09			
WNC Finance	510.09			
Lloyds Banking Group	4.18			
WARM Fund	4,585.00			
Internal Transfers	0.00			
Total Receipts	24,750.69	21,625.45		3,125.24

Note: WARM Fund is the fundraising to restore the war memorial in the church yard. The parish council are holding these monies raised, awaiting completion of the project

Bank Balances on 31 March

	2024	2025	
Current Account	£9,827.72	£12,360.65	
Deposit Account	£10,266.73 ³	£10,463.06	
Total	£19,698.45	£22,823.71	Difference £3,125.26

Spencer Bruerne Cricket Club Annual Parish Meeting 2025 Report

2024 was another excellent year for the cricket club. Almost 100 children had a cricket experience through the club with our Allstars and Dynamos programme attracting record numbers. The Dynamos (children aged 8-10) attended 3 local tournaments in the summer, winning one of them for the first time. A number of children moved from the programme into junior cricket later on. At junior level we ran under 11s, under 13s and under 15 teams in local leagues. This is a remarkable feat for a village club competing against the larger 'town' clubs.

On the 'senior' field, we again fielded 3 senior teams playing in the Northants League on Saturdays. The first team maintained a respectable mid-table position in their division, the second team avoided relegation, struggling as a result of needing to supplement the first team on several occasions and the third team improved on the 2023 season, winning far more game sand finishing mid table. Pleasingly, the third team fielded around half its players from juniors that have progressed through our system.

Off the field the club continues to thrive, several events were held in addition to our regular opening and financially we are in a decent position.

Looking ahead to the 2025 season. On the field we will again have 3 teams playing on a Saturday in the league, additionally , we are playing a few friendlies on Sundays this year to allow more juniors to experience open age cricket. We have recruited well over the winter and several good players have joined to bolster the first team especially. We are also excited to be welcoming our first 'overseas' player from New Zealand who will join this year. The juniors will continue to play at under 11, 13 and 15 levels and the Allstars and Dynamos programmes start on 9 May 2025.

Excitingly. Following some hard work for fundraising, we are waiting for our replacement practice net facility to be installed. This is state of the art and will easily be the best in the area. These facilities have helped us recruit new players. A huge thanks to everyone who gave money towards this facility.

The club were lucky enough to win a competition which means we have use of a specialist cricket roller for the next two years, the same equipment used

at Lords. Already the benefits can be seen if only the fact that every time you turn the key it starts, something our 40-year-old previous roller didn't always do!

We have refurbished a patio area to the side of the clubhouse, funded 50/50 by the club and an ECB grant. Again, huge thanks to everyone who has helped out in its construction.

Going forward we have several projects we would love to complete. Our equipment shed has got to be moved to facilitate the new nets, the age of it isn't known but it is now in need of replacement. Also, we lost our marquee over the winter and are looking at buying a replacement as soon as we can as it was a great addition to the social space in the club. We've also been given the news that the clubhouse roof is needing more and more repairs, a full replacement may be needed in the next few years.

The social scene at the club continues to thrive. Friday nights are busy and we would like to see as many of you as possible coming along, your support for all our home games would be greatly appreciated. Anyone wanting to join as a player or supporter is greatly welcomed.

Here's to a fantastic 2025 season.

Ian Stimson Chair SBCC.

Stoke Bruerne Book Club Annual Parish Report 2025

We have a drop-in centre/book club held this on the last Tuesday in the month.

If anyone would like to join us, we are open at two o'clock. The next one is Tuesday 29th April.

This is run by the Village Hall Management Committee. We provide tea and biscuits and have books for loan.

Judy

STOKE BRUERNE CANAL PARTNERSHIP: report to Annual Parish Assembly 2025.

Although it had various antecedents, Stoke Bruerne Canal Partnership came into being in its present form in 2007. It is a slightly strange animal, being made up of representatives of a variety of organisations who have the common aim of a desire to enhance the Canal Corridor at Stoke Bruerne. These organisations include:

1. Canal and River Trust
2. Stoke Bruerne residents
3. Stoke Bruerne Parish Council
4. Canal Museum Management
5. West Northants Council
6. Inland Waterways Association
8. Stoke Bruerne business community
9. BCN Wildlife Trust
10. Friends of Canal Museum

The Partnership has for many years met once a month and concerned itself with a variety of matters. However, during the past year meetings have become more infrequent and representation and involvement of some of the member organisations has been missing. Consequently, the Partnership agreed to give itself a sabbatical 6 months until September 2025. During this time the local elections will take place and new members of West Northants Council will have the time to settle in. Also, the Chief Executive of the Canal River Trust, Richard Parry, is retiring after 13 years in the post and the appointment of his successor could have repercussions all down the line as to CRT's policies and priorities. In the autumn, therefore, the Partnership will reconvene and decide if it has a future at all and if so, what that might look like. There may well be fewer meetings on specific topics and less involvement in the every day running of the canal and its businesses in our area.

Having said that, all is not entirely mothballed on my desk! There are ongoing projects which require the Partnership's input. Probably chief amongst these is the Grand Union Canal Water Transfer project which is a joint effort on the part of CRT and Affinity Water, the water company which serves the Luton / Beds / Herts area. Very simply, this area is very short of water and the idea is to move surplus water from further north in the Birmingham area via the Grand Union Canal to a pumping station in the Dunstable area. The project is very much in its exploratory fact-finding stages. Because of its size, the scheme will eventually be determined by the Planning Inspectorate, not the local planning authority. An

Environmental Scoping Report has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, detailing the areas to be investigated and the methodology for doing so. There are various updates being issued but so far, no real details have been released. The impact for Stoke Bruerne, if this goes ahead, is likely to be very significant because water levels will rise by several inches and a method of moving the water down the lock flight will have to be introduced. The Partnership has registered itself as a consultee and is keeping abreast of and feeding into discussions whenever possible.

Another project which is likely to commence this summer involves a quantity of iron rails which originate from various mining quarries in the Blisworth area when stone and iron ore were brought down to the canal for transshipment. We would like to display the rails, perhaps with an original waggon, and interpret this part of our area's history properly, using modern techniques as well as traditional displays.

Although the Partnership is somewhat in limbo, its offshoot, the Stoke Bruerne Adoption Group, continues to meet monthly to carry out practical projects to improve the environment in the Canal Corridor, supporting CRT in their work where appropriate and carrying out additional tasks which would not otherwise happen. I hope you will agree that the Woodland Walk has been kept in excellent order, for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. The group has responded a number of times to issues arising as the result of extreme weather conditions. We have a new shed at the back of the museum which helps enormously with storing equipment at the point of need. There is always something to be done and more volunteers would be very warmly welcomed! I should like to make particular mention of one local volunteer, Roger Cooper, who every week empties all the dog bins along the canal side from the tunnel down to the bottom of the lock flight. I hope you will agree that this is volunteering beyond the call of duty and is very much appreciated by the significant number of regular dog walkers in our area, which include many villagers as well as visitors and boaters. Without this, the bins would have been removed by CRT as they have done elsewhere. Finally, in addition to our monthly task days, a few volunteers have been helping CRT staff restore the small allotment site down by Lock 20, where a polytunnel, raising planting beds and a composting loo are all planned. The idea is to create a plant and tree nursery, providing plants with which to backfill towpath hedgerows after hedge laying.

Stoke Bruerne Village Hall.

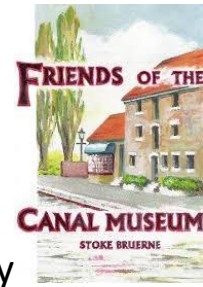
This year the hall continues with some existing bookings and some new ones. We have tai chi and yoga lessons and 4 people book it for some dance lessons, not on a regular basis. We have a problem with the parking, when the church field is closed. We do lose custom through this.

We have two ladies who clean the hall fortnightly and keep it looking spotless. Thank you to Lizzi and Becky.

The committee put on a free coffee morning with cakes and bacon butties which was enjoyed. We are always looking for helpers, thank you to the two ladies who have said they will help if they can.

We will advertise any fund-raising events we have in the Grass or on Stoke Bruerne notice board Facebook site. I think the next job we get done will be painting the kitchen.

Judy Cave



Report for Stoke Bruerne Parish Council Annual Assembly

22 April 2025

The last year has been a quiet one, since the Friends of the Canal Museum are now primarily a grant making organisation. The Canal & River Trust having directly managed volunteers for some years now.

However, the 'Friends' do support volunteering at the Museum. Many of our members are volunteers, and we are pleased to report that at our AGM in November, our Volunteer of the Year Award was presented jointly to Peter and Sarah Pamphilon of Towcester. Peter and Sarah joined the team last winter and have made a significant contribution to developing volunteering at Stoke Bruerne, through recruitment, the setting up of regular quarterly meetings, initiating the production of a quarterly newsletter, and the creation of an events team which has been busy staging training workshops and events all through the year.

We would like to make special mention of Kathryn Dodington, one of our Trustees, who was nominated for a national Lifetime Heritage Hero Award 2024, and was awarded a much deserved Runner-Up for more than 14 years of volunteering with the Canal & River Trust.

There are now over seven separate volunteer teams carrying out a myriad of tasks from lock-keeping; maintaining and operating the museum boat Sculptor; carrying out maintenance work; organising events; seeing wide-beam boats through the tunnel; guiding visitors and assisting staff in the museum, and helping with social media/website. In all, there are probably well over thirty active volunteers supporting the Museum.

The Museum and the 'Friends' also work very closely with the Stoke Bruerne Canal Partnership, and their Adoption Group, whose volunteers are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the canalside between the tunnel and bottom lock.

During the last twelve months the 'Friends' have not been called upon to make many awards of funding, however we have responded to requests for a few projects, and have, or are in the process of, making donations totalling around £700 towards the following:

A Music Licence (formerly PRS) for the Café and site

Resources to run events such as the Easter Egg Trail and training workshops such as Signwriting, Whittling, Jewellery Making, Crochet, etc.

Materials to create 'seaside' style canal family photo-silhouettes

We look forward to continuing to support the Museum, and to celebrate Sculptor's 90th Birthday this year!

Lynda Payton, Chairman, Friends of The Canal Museum



Towcester AGM Report

INTRODUCING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM



We have had a busy year with a great team that have had been very proactive in tackling the concerns of our community. The team have been involved in various operations that revolve around ASB, Vehicle Safety, Driving Offences and Drugs and associated drugs related criminality.

Above are the officers that currently represent Towcester, Roade, Stoke Bruerne,

Tiffield, Shutlanger, Heathencote and Hulcote. However, we have an additional 3x PC's and 2x PCSO's on the team that represent surrounding villages and often cross over to support our Towcester team. We also have 4x Special Constables within our team and another 2x Special Constables that float between South Northants and Daventry.

Below are some examples of what we have been up to in Towcester recently.

ASB

We received multiple reports of ASB in the St Lawrences Churchyard in October including; broken bottles, drug use, minors consuming alcohol, verbal abuse towards users, rubbish and bins being set alight.

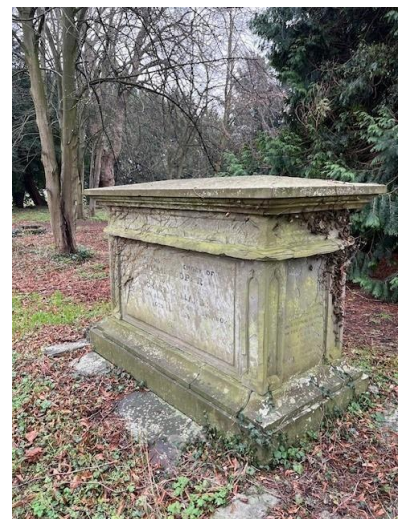
To tackle this, we arranged evening operations to carry out targeted patrols and stop searches in this location and others where there had been reports of ASB and drug use/dealing. We had great results from this with a total of 12x stop searches, 2x of which were positive for cannabis. These resulted in Immediate Justice referrals where they completed a total of 8hrs unpaid work between them, and used this time to clean up the memorial area of the church yard. We have had no further reports for this location and



others that were included. We will continue to hold these operations in future as they proved to be very successful.

Immediate Justice Introduction

The Immediate Justice scheme was launched in 2023 for Northamptonshire through OPFCC funding. The scheme means those found committing anti-social behaviour or low-level crimes, can be made to repair the damage they inflicted on victims and communities. This could see them being made to pick up litter, remove graffiti or carry out other work to make environmental improvements in the community.



This year the scheme lowered the age group down to 12 and extended the funding. This allows officers to tackle young people who are committing low-level offences with outcomes that are impactful but will not harm their future with a criminal record.



In the Towcester beat area, we have made 11 x Immediate Justice Referrals which have totalled 44 hours unpaid work in the community. This time has been used to clean up the memorial garden in the churchyard, restore old, abandoned graves, clean graffiti and clear up litter. The response from offender's has been very positive as we have seen a clear change in their behaviour for the majority.

Patrols and Operations

Throughout the year, the team have been involved in various targeted operations in Towcester.

- Op Lapland – (December – January) Patrol to prevent shoplifting during a prolific time of the year, covering Supermarkets, Towcester Town Centre, Bell Plantations and shops within.
- Op Sceptre – (All year round) Intel led sweeps to search for potential hidden or discarded knives, searches of bushes surrounding secondary schools, amnesty bins and knife crime inputs at schools from our Early Intervention Team.
- Op Intern – We spent the day visiting shops, barbers/hairdressers, cafes and eateries in Towcester where our young people might visit to raise aware to owner around Child Criminal Exploitation and how to spot the signs.
- GP Visits – (December) We spent the day visiting GP's and other medical facilities with a member of the Alcoholics Anonymous team in South Northants, including Towcester. This was to raise awareness of what support GP's can offer their patients, particularly around the time of year where drink driving spikes.
- Op Watten – (March) This operation was to help support local businesses which were seeing a rise in Shoplifting and abusive behaviour. We used this week of action to patrol all our local supermarkets, shops, businesses and Town Centre and offer a visible presence.
- Op Limit – This is a targeted annual campaign that runs every November – January to target drink/drug driving. This year, we visited all of our local pubs/bars and delivered free beer mats, bar mats and posters to raise awareness of the consequences of drink driving. The team completed intel led patrols for drink drivers and carried out various stops and breath tests in South Northants.

Education Based Policing

We carried out our annual Blue Butterfly and Road Safety talks at all our Primary schools in Towcester and surrounding villages, between September and December. This captures new students that have joined the school or started in reception and allows us to revisit existing students and build relationships. Many of the children remember the team's face when they are next seen in the community.

In December, we completed a vehicle safety day at Sponne Secondary school with the year 12 students. Many of them will be starting to drive within this year group and statistics show that young drivers account for one of the largest proportions of traffic collisions compared to other age groups. Young male drivers, aged 17 to 24 are 4 times as likely to be killed or seriously injured.

We want to reduce this statistic and help keep our young people safe, so we have devised an interactive day involving; vehicle safety checks, demonstrations on how to behave when near emergency vehicles, interactive games that show how drink/drug driving impairs a person's ability to think, see and react and advice around vehicle modifications and driving licence points. This was received very well by students and the school therefore we plan to host this at all of our secondary schools in South Northants on an annual basis.



PC Mel Carter has been visiting all the care homes in Towcester with our Fraud Prevention Team, to deliver inputs on Fraud and Cyber related crime.

Road Safety Events

In February and December 2024, we completed road safety days at Jacks Hill Café on the A5. To deliver this, South Northants Neighbourhood Teams teamed up with the Safer Roads Team, Roads Policing Team, Rural Crime and DVSA. The idea was to target vehicles that do not look road worthy, are lacking legal requirements such as insurance or carrying unsafe loads.

In February, we checked 70 vehicles through the site and had the following results:

- 2x no MOT
- 1x no insurance
- Multiple number plates cleaned
- Approximately 35 completed breath tests and all passed
- 1x advice given for an unsafe load



In December, we had just over 30 vehicles through the site with 23x immediate prohibitions and 13x delayed prohibitions from DVSA.

- 3x tyre offences
- 1x offence of no tachograph (HGV)
- 3x overweight vehicles
- 11x vehicles with insecure loads
- 1x no insurance
- 15x words of advice (varying from defective lights, vehicle modifications etc).
- 2x drivers reported for driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence,
- 1 arrest of an outstanding male for theft (section 32 search then completed on his van).



Street Watch & Volunteering

Towcester's Street Watch Scheme have been very busy over the last year, completing a total of 156 of patrols with and without officers. They have formed great relationships with our young people in the community, regularly visiting parks and the rec. The scheme is made up of 2x volunteers, Karen & Ian Birdsey.

Karen & Ian have also been very busy with other police/community initiatives as they joined the local Emergency Services Cadets at Sponne School in February 2024, and became leaders in August. They have around 28 regular cadets between age 13 – 18 and run sessions that will help prepare them for their future career in Police, Fire or Ambulance. They also support with events such as Bonfire Night, Remembrance Sunday, Test Purchasing of licences premises and charitable events.

Additionally, Karen & Ian are both Police Support



Volunteers within our office, supporting with administrative work, investigative queries and cyber related support.

The Street Watch Scheme is currently seeking additional members. If you know of anyone that would be interesting in supporting us, please contact

rhiannan.turner@northants.police.uk

You can see the Street Watch Recruitment video which features Towcester and

Sergeant, Lorna Clarke via this link:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/C_sPJx5IBg/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

Events

The team have supported with various events in Towcester over the last year, including Remembrance Sunday and Carols in the Square.

