

Stawley Parish Council Plan

Stawley is a village and civil parish in Somerset, England, situated 10 miles (16.1 km) west of Taunton. The parish had 123 dwellings and a population of 311 at the census of 2021. The parish includes the hamlets of Appley, Appley Cross, Cothay, Greenham, Kittisford, Stawley and Tracebridge.

The Domesday Book has listings for Stawley, Appley, Kittisford and Greenham. The total population at the time of the Book was 30 souls, 6 of whom were slaves. There were about 1,200 acres under the plough, 28 acres being used as pasture and 45 acres of woods.

The Parish isn't a static place. Of interest is the idea that the population continually expands. Here in Stawley that is not the case. The population dropped by a third from about 360 to 240 between 1891 and 1960 since when it has risen to about 311. In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales described Stawley like this:

- STAWLEY, a parish in Wellington district, Somerset; 4½ miles W by N of Wellington r. station. Post town, Wellington, Somerset. Acres, 830. Real property, £1,182. Pop., 188. Houses, 40. The manor belongs to Messrs. Palmer and Sweet. The living is a rectory in the diocese of Bath and Wells. Value, £150. Patron, J. Hayne, Esq. The church is early English.

Our Vision

To improve the quality of life for residents and visitors in the Parish of Stawley and to create a welcoming, sustainable and neighbourly place to live, work and visit.

Who We Are

The Council has five Councillors. They are elected on a four yearly cycle if more than five parishioners put their name on a list to be elected. If five people put their name up for election then they are automatically "elected". The quorum required for the Council to meet is three so if three or four people volunteer to be a Councillor they form the basis of the Council and can then co-opt another one or two people on to the Council up until the time of the next election. The present Councillors can be found on the Council website at <https://stash.org.uk>.

The Council also has a Clerk and a Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). Stawley is a very small parish. The precept (part of the Council Tax) has remained relatively static at about £2,200 for many years and if we were to employ a Clerk more than 50% of that would go on their pay, tax, and pension costs. Consequently the Chairman is the unpaid Clerk. Another Councillor is the RFO.

What We Do

Stawley Parish Council is the lowest tier of local government in England, responsible for representing the interests of the local community and improving the quality of life in the parish. Here are some of the key functions and responsibilities of the council:

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- **Planning Matters:** Parish councils are statutory consultees on planning applications, meaning they provide input and feedback on local planning issues which are then decided upon by Somerset Council.
 - **Local Projects:** The Council can support local organisations and initiatives such as Appley Pavilion, community events, environmental initiatives and churches.
 - **Liaison with Authorities:** We liaise with Somerset Council on issues such as highways, traffic, and public health. This liaison is primarily through one of the two Somerset Councillors that are elected for our ward of Upper Tone.
 - **Crime Prevention:** We work with the Police on initiatives to improve community safety and reduce crime.
 - **Raising Funds:** We have the authority to raise money through local taxation (the precept) to fund these activities.
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How We Do It

A Parish Council has to hold an Annual Parish Meeting (normally in May) and have at least four other meetings in the year. These are open meetings and are normally held at 7:30pm on the first Tuesday of the month in Appley Pavilion. If there is nothing on the draft agenda that requires an open meeting then it will not be held. Agendae and minutes of the meetings are also available on the Stash website at <https://stash.org.uk/>.

Much of the routine work is carried on by use of e-mails. These and all correspondence are saved on the Parish One Drive which is available to all Councillors.

Finances and Business Plan

The absence of a paid clerk for the past 5 years has enabled us to increase the balance in the Parish account to more than £10,000. The Council has agreed to maintain this level of resource in the account so as to be available should an unforeseen occurrence require external assistance. An example is the need to employ legal assistance for a planning query.

Now that a financial “buffer” has been established a balanced budget is required for future years. This will be agreed at the November Council meeting so that the precept can be decided upon for the following financial year.