



STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

4TH AUGUST 2025

MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM

Cllr Riordan asked to Film and Record the meeting. Cllrs Arger and Hotson requested not to be filmed. Cllr Riordan queried this. The Clerk explained that anyone is entitled to record the meeting but equally individuals have the right not to give their consent to be filmed. This is under UK GDPR Data Protection Act 2018, it is in a Parish Council Privacy Policy, and the Clerk has taken advice from the Councils GDPR officer.

A resident raised concerns about the expenditure on the Youth Club building – Is it good money after bad as a Youth Service is more important than the building?

A resident asked if the Council could thank the MBC Fly tipping team for their good work in the rural areas around Staplehurst.

A resident asked how is the Council going to manage the 3G Multi-Sport pitch if built?

Kent County Councillor report –(Standing item) NA

Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):

Cllr Perry raised a few points –

- Glad that his enquiry with MBC planning regarding the delay in the 3G Multi-Sport pitch planning application seems to have been productive.
- The Borough's five-year housing supply has slipped under the threshold, this adds pressure to MBC Local Plan Policies regarding proposed housing development
- River Medway – MBC is proposing legal status for the River Medway, unclear of implications
- Concern about a spate of ASB – Wimpey Field, catapults etc.

Cllr Riordan raised several points;

- Meeting Cllr Black, new KCC Councillor, regarding KCC issues in Staplehurst.
- Regarding devolution – no one knows how it will be funded

Cllr Surgery Saturday 30th August 2025, 10am – 12noon at Staplehurst Library –

Cllr Arger agreed to attend with MBC Cllr Perry

Present: Cllrs Ash, Wakeford, Arger, Sharp, Hotson, Martin, Perry, Pett, Rhodes, Alesi, Melville, and Riordan plus Clerk

1. APOLOGIES: Cllrs Castro, Farragher and McLaughlin.

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

- 2.1.** Declarations of Lobbying - NA
- 2.2.** Changes to the Register of Interests - NA
- 2.3.** Interests in Items on the Agenda - NA
- 2.4.** Requests for Dispensation - NA

3. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Pages 2367 – 2374 14th July 2025 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://staplehurst-pc.uk) to be signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Alesi proposed and Cllr Martin seconded the minutes of the 14th July 2025, agreed majority; For 8, Against 0 and abstained 4.

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

4.1 Payment list, Summation and Balance sheet

Payment list

Following a debate Cllr Riordan questioned the British Gas Lite Jubilee Field Pavilion electricity and the Castle Water Jubilee Field portable water bills and that the football club should be paying as they use the Pavilion. The Clerk explained that rather than quote figures that other Cllrs do not have in front of them, a budget monitoring report on the Jubilee Field end of year 2024/25 will be going to the JFWG and then onto Council. Plus, a Jubilee Field Quarter 1 2025/26 budget monitoring report will be going to JFWG and then on to Council. Cllr Riordan stated he was quoting figures provided by the RFO, the Clerk believed that figures Cllr Riordan was quoting included 3G Multi-Sport pitch costs and the budget monitoring reports would be available for everyone.

Cllr Sharp emphasised that the payment list was from 9th July to 30th July 2025 and had already been paid. Cllr Sharp suggested Cllr Riordan could do a Council report on pavilion payments.

Cllr Pett confirmed that all Parish Councils do a payment list in this way but was interested in the points Cllr Riordan had raised.

Cllr Riordan requested a recorded vote. Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Perry seconded an amendment to the resolution to "approve the payment list but question the British Gas Lite Jubilee Field Pavilion electricity and the Castle Water Jubilee Field portable water bills but note that they have already been paid."

For 3 - Cllrs Riordan, Perry and Pett

Against 9 – Cllrs Ash, Wakeford, Arger, Sharp, Hotson, Martin, Rhodes, Alesi and Melville.

Abstained – 0

Then Cllr Arger proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the payment list below, agreed majority;

For 9 – Cllrs Ash, Wakeford, Arger, Sharp, Hotson, Martin, Rhodes, Alesi and Melville

Against 3 - Cllrs Riordan, Perry and Pett

Abstained 0.

Approved Payments 9th July - 30th July 2025

	Amount
Mr Alex Harvey - Youth Club Cleaning/Sundries June	85.00

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

Mr Alex Harvey - JF Pavilion Cleaning/Sundries June	110.00
Bradley Hawkins - Wimpey Field mowing/strimming May & June	300.00
Simply Print Partners Ltd - Annual Report	1,318.00
County Fire Protection Ltd - JF Pavilion Lighting Repairs	342.00
HMRC - Tax & NI June	2,571.15
Staplehurst PCC - Annual Donation Parish Magazine	250.00
Community Centre for Debt Advice - Annual Donation	250.00
Heart of Kent Hospice - Annual Donation	250.00
Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance - Annual Donation	250.00
Kenward Trust - Annual Donation	150.00
KCC - Procurement Services - Photocopier Charges Apr-June	64.96
Pride Roofing Kent Ltd - JF Pavilion Roof Report	180.00
KD Drainage & Asbestos - Jubilee Field Pipework	4,680.00
Homeleigh Timber - Cable Ties	6.98
SLCC - Annual Subscription	300.00
Cam-tech Security - Download CCTV Footage Market Street	180.00
P&F Cleaning - Bell Lane Toilets Clean/Open/Sund July	1,010.00
PB Packaging Ltd - Black Sacks Caretaker	113.96
Staff Payroll & Pension Costs – July	7,087.45
Amazon UK Ltd - Parish Office Stationery	29.30
Playsafety Ltd - Surrenden Field Play & Gym Equip Inspection	230.40
Playsafety Ltd - Jubilee Field Skatepark Annual Inspection	100.80
Staff Reimbursement - Office Mousepad	5.06
KALC - Website Accessibility Workshop	12.00
Adobe Systems - Monthly Subscription July-Aug	19.97
Sainsbury's - Milk & Coffee Parish Office	14.75
Pozitive Energy - Youth Club Electricity June	50.38
Castle Water - Jubilee Field Pavilion Potable Water June	81.44
Business Stream - Bell Lane Toilets Water May-Jun	70.13
Castle Water - Youth Club Potable Water June	11.11
British Gas Lite - JF Pumping Station Electricity Jun-Jly	15.44
Telecoms World - Virtual Phone No. SEHT July	14.39
Telecoms World - Broadband Youth Club July	29.40
British Gas Lite - Surrenden Field Pavilion Jun-Jly	35.75
British Gas Lite - Parish Office Electricity Jun-Jly	43.96
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection June	76.85
British Gas Lite - JF Pavilion Electricity Jun-July	279.54
Lloyds - Bank Charges July	8.50
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	20,628.67
TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE	0.00

Summation

Cllr Perry noted the projected savings in 2024/25 and Cllr Sharp noted the need to monitor the budget and consider carefully the 2025/26 budget setting process.

The summation was noted.

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

4.2 **Contracts**

Cllr Ash proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously

Resolution: To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to approve the contracts as set out in the report.

Activity	Company	Annual Value 2024-25	Cost per annum 2025-26	Contract End Date	Notes
Remembrance Day Road Closure Licence	MBC	£75.00	£100.00	Paid Annually in July	Finance & Strategy Group. For SPC Approval
Data Protection Licence	ICO Data Protection Registration	£35.00	£35.00	31/07/2025	Auto-renew - no choice!
Licence to erect Christmas motifs on lampposts	KCC - Kent Highways	£134.00	Est. £150.00	Paid Annually in Autumn	Finance & Strategy Group. For SPC Approval
Sage Accounts Software	Sage	£351.60	Est. £385.00	30/08/2025	Review every 5 years or on major upgrade

Budget Code – Various

4.3 **Investment Strategy**

Following a debate Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to adopt the Annual Investment Strategy as attached in Appendix A of the report

4.4 **Review of Finance, Assets and Activities Risk Assessment**

Following a debate Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to adopt the Finance, Assets and Activities Risk Assessment as attached in Appendix A of the report

4.5 **S137 Grant Application**

Following a debate Cllr Ash proposed and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously

Resolution: To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to

- i. Agree a S137 Grant of £440 to Hi Kent
- ii. Agree in principle to cover the cost of the SEHT insurance in full.

Budget Code - Grants and Donations

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

4.6 **Basic Parish Allowances**

Following a debate Cllr Arger proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; For 11, Against 0 and abstained 1.

Resolution: To:

- i. Note the Basic Parish Allowance 2025/26 Report
- ii. approve adding five additional persons to the Council Sage Payroll: cost £2 p.m. for 6-11 employees Total Cost £96.00 p.a.
- iii. Basic Parish Allowance per Councillor £622.86, BPA Chairman £934.28. Total Cost for 5 Councillors incl. the Chairman £3,425.72 p.a.

Total cost £3,521.72

Budget Code - Basic Parish Allowance

4.7 **Air Cooling units**

Following a debate Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; For 10, Against 0 and abstained 2.

Resolution: To approve the purchase of two small air-cooling units for the Parish Office – up to £300 plus VAT

Budget Code -Administration

4.8 **Youth Club Roof**

Following a debate, which included that the roof needed repairing and we are endeavouring to get a Youth Service provider back into Staplehurst, Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; For 11, Against 1 and abstained 0.

Resolution: to approve SCENic recommendation to appoint Pride Roofing to patch repair the Youth Club roof - £5,860 plus VAT

Budget Code - Youth Club buildings

4.9 **Jubilee Field 3G Multi-Sport pitch**

Following a debate, which included the Clerk updating Council that the Planning Solicitor quote was up to £2,000 plus VAT, that the Monitoring fee to MBC was verbally £2,500 and that the check on the Football Foundation grant had already been approved by Council (2320), Cllr Arger proposed and Cllr Rhodes seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; For 8, Against 3 and abstained 1.

Resolution: to approve

- i. MBC request to extend to 19th August 2024
- ii. Appoint Kinglsey Smith as Planning Solicitor to check the Bio-Diversity Net Gain s106 agreement up to £2,000 plus VAT
- iii. Activate check of Football Foundation Grant conditions – Kingsfords £2,040 if planning permission is obtained.(previously agreed minute 2320)

Budget Code - Jubilee Field

4.10 **Surrenden Field maintenance**

Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Rhodes seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously

Resolution – Approve the appointment of Landscape Services for fence line gang mowing 16 cuts £1,194.98 plus VAT

Budget Code - Surrenden Playing Field

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

5 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS

The Clerk raised several points

MBC are organising CIL training for Cllrs in the Autumn – will forward as soon as I know details

(2199/5) The Girl Guides lease has been ongoing for some time

The outstanding issue is the rent for allowing external hires and the fee for the annual licence for the additional land.

The Girl Guides are proposing 5% of external income to the Council.

Therefore, as an example

2023/24

Regular External income = £2,300

One-off External income = £ 877.50

Total £3,177.50

5% to SPC = £158.88

2024/25

Regular External income = £3,950

One-off External income = £ 838

Total £4,788

5% to SPC = £239.40

The Ground Rent would continue at £5 per year and £50 for the share of water / sewage charges.

Following a debate, it was felt that legally it would be better if a small ground rent was charged for the additional land rather than be included in the "external income", that some Councillors felt it would be better to defer the item and bring back all the previous elements into one report. Clerk agreed to bring back a comprehensive report.
(Note Cllr Hotson temporarily left the meeting)

6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION -

6.1 Devolution – standing item verbal update

Following a debate the following key points were made;

Chairman and Clerk attended the KALC Maidstone committee meeting and the focus was more on the Community Governance Review of the "Un-Parished areas" namely Maidstone urban area and surround areas. This may impact existing parishes.

With regards Unitary Authority, a meeting of the 4 Chief Executives of the "Weald" are meeting with KALC representatives and the points below were discussed

- Can you clarify the role and function of the County Wide Mayor
- How will the KCC debt be allocated across the County
- "The Weald Authorities" reserves and long-term debt - how will these be managed
- "The Weald Authority" assets - Can the existing asset registers be shared with Parish Councils so that each Parish Council knows the assets in their patch

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

- "The Weald Authorities" Council Tax - each authority has their own Council Tax and at different rates. How will these be "merged / phased into " a standard Council Tax for the new Unitary Authority.

(Note Cllr Hotson returned to the meeting during this item)

6.2 Revised Village Update schedule

Following a debate Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously

Resolutions: To agree revised dates for Village Updates' publication		
AUTUMN	WINTER	SPRING
8 th September – ask for reports	2 nd January – ask for reports	27 th April – ask for reports
29 th September – copy deadline	23 rd January – copy deadline	11 th May – copy deadline
30 th Sept – 19 th Oct plan set-up	24 th January to 12 th February plan set-up	12 th May to 31 st May plan set-up
20 th October to printer	13 th February to printer	1 st June to printer
27 th October - distribution	20 th February - distribution	8 th June - distribution

6.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Following a debate Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Rhodes seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to adopt the Roles and Responsibility as attached in Appendix A
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6.4 Delegated Authority

Following a debate, which highlighted that the amendments in the proposed Delegated Authority have previously been agreed in the Financial Regulations so the aim is just to mirror the adopted Financial Regulations.

Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; For 10, Against 2 and abstained 0.

Resolution: To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to adopt the Delegated Authority as Appendix A

6.5 Village Fete – verbal update

The debate highlighted that SCEG had not run a Village Fete / Fair in 2024 or 2025.

Several people reached out to the Parish Council, so the Parish Council are supporting with local residents / community groups towards a Village Fair 30th August 2025

The fund raising is challenging but on track and need to clarify Insurance

A question was raised regarding the Boot Fair – This is being organised by SEHT – covered by SEHT insurance and being held on Parish Council land. It is now fully booked up so SEHT are hopeful it will be a good event.

7. CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for noting:

Note Thank you letter from KSS Air Ambulance and thank you emails already circulated from All Saints PCC, Kenwood Trust and Community Centre for Debt Advice

8. Chairman's Report

Youth Service provision YMCA doing market research this summer aiming for autumn outreach work and Youth Club, awaiting confirmation

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

Chasing "Cranbrook Rd" project with KCC Highways

- 8.1 Committee and working group minutes for noting
 - 8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes of 21st July 2025
 - 8.1.2 Road Safety Group minutes 3rd July 2025
 - 8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group next meeting 18th August 2025
 - 8.1.4 SCEnic meeting minutes 24th July 2025
 - 8.1.5 3G Multi-Sports pitch working group meeting – to be arranged
 - 8.1.6 Employment, Finance and Strategy Group meeting minutes 17th July 2025
 - 8.1.7 NDP Review Group meeting to be arranged
 - 8.1.8 Communications Group meeting minutes of 16th July 2025
 - 8.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting - to be arranged

9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS - NA

Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Martin seconded to suspend Council Standing Orders and extend the meeting for 30minutes – agreed unanimously but Cllr Riordan stated he would need to leave.

Cllr Sharp closed the meeting to allow members of the public to speak.

A resident noted the Wimpey Field ASB issues and would like some clarity on what can and can't be done – Clerk agreed to discuss outside the meeting

Two residents raised concerns that the Council were not working with SCEG and it is a great shame as SCEG have great experience in organising events such as the Village Fair.

10 Confidential

- 10.1 Railway Station update was discussed and Council will feedback to Network Rail and emphasise the need for public engagement.
Cllr Wakeford reported on the Network Rail their proposals, as they have funding, to improve the entrance to the station and carpark. The council agreed that generally they were in support of improvements to the area but would like the community to be able to view the proposals. At present Network Rail have asked that this be confidential. There was some discussion about ensuring that landscaping of plants be maintained by Network Rail and not fall to the council.
- 10.2 HR verbal update took place and agreed.
Following the in-depth advice and conclusion from Worknest regarding staff pay, and a meeting with the staff's union representative, a letter to staff had been drafted to send out. This was to be agreed by all councillors and then sent.

Meeting closed...10.00.....

These minutes are not verbatim, the decisions are accurate.

Signed Chairman.....Date.....