



# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026

## **Public Forum**

No questions from residents.

## **Kent County Council update – Cllr Black sent apologies but note report below**

Cranbrook Crossing, teams meeting was held with all Parties, and some positives to take from it. Cllr Sharp attended – new member of KCC staff looking into the project.

Cllr Black has been trying to resolve the speed camera issue, with a number of emails being sent to various parties. I am just waiting on responses, but I will keep chasing

Cllr Black has emailed relevant parties with regards to purchasing the lease for the Girl Guides again as soon as I have an update I will inform all parties. (Not sure what this is about?)

Cllr Mike Wakefield, not present, but will chase regards to Cllr Black's request with Hawkenbury Bridge

Finally, Just a quick update on LGR following developments last week, see item 6.1.

## **Maidstone Borough Councillors report**

Cllr Perry made several MBC planning points

Mathurst Solar Farm – deferred again by MBC Planning Committee.

Await the planning applications for the proposed 62 homes off Marden Rd and 300 homes north of Station Rd

**Present:** Cllrs Sharp, Martin, Arger, Melville, Perry, Farragher, Alesi, Ash, Hotson, Castro, Rhodes and Clerk

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Pett, Mclaughlin and Riordan.

Absent - Wakeford

## **1. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:**

**1.1.** Declarations of Lobbying - NA

**1.2.** Changes to the Register of Interests - NA

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

**1.3.** Interests in Items on the Agenda - NA

**1.4.** Requests for Dispensation - NA

**2. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES: (5 minutes)**

Pages 2457 –2462 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.gov.uk\)](http://Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge (staplehurst-pc.gov.uk)) Cllr Alesi proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – agreed unanimously. Duly signed by the Chairman.

**3. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

**4.1 Payment list, previously authorised by Council or under delegated authority and paid for noting**

<b>Staplehurst Parish Council Payment list 24th March - 10th April 2026</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
10/04/2026	Npower	£ 101.55
10/04/2026	Homeleigh	£ 19.51
10/04/2026	KALC - Annual Council subscription	£ 2,400.00
10/04/2026	Ecosan	£ 136.13
10/04/2026	Bumbles (Green Group)	£ 187.30
10/04/2026	Heliocentrix - Office IT	£ 346.08
10/04/2026	PAYE (march)	£ 1,824.04
10/04/2026	Peninsula	£ 302.94
8/04/2026	Sage UK	£ 21.60
01/04/2026	Refreshments	£ 13.00
01/04/2026	British Gas Electric - JF Pavilion	£ 437.76
01/04/2026	MBC Council Tax - Youth Club	£ 115.60
01/04/2026	CF Corporate - lease of laptops	£ 113.44
01/04/2026	MBC Council Tax - Bell Lane	£ 102.90
01/04/2026	MBC Council Tax - Parish Office 2-3	£ 68.20
01/04/2026	MBC Council Tax - Parish Office 1	£ 58.75
31/03/2026	British Gas Electricity - Parish Office	£ 196.43
31/03/2026	British Gas Electricity - SF pavilion	£ 45.24
27/03/2026	Staplehurst Mowers annual maintenance	£ 1,153.70
27/03/2026	Homeleigh dump bags - Greener Group	£ 125.98
27/03/2026	Homeleigh spare keys cut	£ 9.58
27/03/2026	Choice support March 26	£ 519.00
27/03/2026	KCC - Youth Club quarterly lease fee	£ 212.50
27/03/2026	General Waste Collection Feb	£ 81.46
25/03/2026	N Thomas - Greener Group	£ 208.09
25/03/2026	SDC License at Surrenden Field	£ 70.00
25/03/2026	Cartell Elecs - lighting repairs to Jubilee Field	£ 355.20
25/03/2026	Baby Umbrella Grant	£ 500.00

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

25/03/2026	West Kent Cleaning - Youth Club	£ 100.00
25/03/2026	West Kent Cleaning - JF pavilion	£ 100.00
25/03/2026	Parish Office stationery	£ 36.16
25/03/2026	Postage	£ 1.70
25/03/2026	Extension lead for Parish Office	£ 24.29
25/03/2026	Iden Business Services	£ 225.00
25/03/2026	Net Pay MARCH	£ 4,543.98
24/03/2026	Adobe acrobat pro March 26	£ 19.97
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 14,777.08</b>

Noted

#### **4.2 Contracts report**

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

**Resolution:** To approve the Employment, Finance and Strategy Group recommendation to approve GeoXphere Ltd Parish Online Data mapping software at £135 plus VAT  
**Budget Code – Administration**

#### **5 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

2388/6.2 Girl Guides deed of variation to lease and annual licence – still chasing.

2454/6.3 – ASB Wimpey Field – I need to chase up

2461/5c – Parish Council stall at village fete – anymore help for Cllr Wakeford in afternoon 3 – 5pm? Cllr Perry volunteered to help

In addition:

Note reminder for Cllrs to consider which groups they want to be on and Council representation prior to the Council AGM on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

We have received from MBC our precept for 2026/27 £301,000

We have received CIL, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026 £2,735.62.

Allotment plot 3 – half of it is still under water and unusable, suggest we offer to refund half fees?

Following a debate Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Castro seconded to approve a 50% refund (£60) and investigate the problem. Agreed unanimously.

Do we wish to apply for TPO's along the hedge at Bell Lane?

Following a debate Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Farragher seconded to approve drafting a letter of support and advice to all residents plus investigating TPO's along Bell Lane hedge row. Agreed unanimously.

Health and Safety work

To supply and fit the hot water to Youth Club toilets £785.65 + VAT.

Following debate which highlighted it was an urgent matter Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to appoint Birkby to supply and install hot water to Youth Club toilets £785.65 + VAT agreed unanimously

Electrician coming in to quote for urgent installation of Disabled Pull Cord in disabled toilet

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

Other work progressing ordering signs etc

## **6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION -**

### **6.1 Devolution / LGR– standing item verbal update**

Cllr Black's report raised

House of Lords intervention (13 April)

The Lords voted to remove a key clause from the Bill that would have reduced local council scrutiny (committee system changes).

This is significant as it shows there is growing concern at national level about governance and oversight. I will keep you informed,

Cllr Perry stated MBC raised concerns especially around removal of planning oversight also understand that the Strategic Mayors role is under review as well

We await Government decision on final Structure of the new Councils – expected Summer 2026.

### **6.2 3G Multi Sport pitch Report**

Following a debate which highlighted a number of points

DPS – relates to the Alcohol Licence

Income to the Council – the Council will lose the income from pitch hire at the Jubilee Field but also the expenditure which will result in a net reduction to the Council. In addition, 4% of income year on year will be invested into the site via discussion with, and agreement by the Council. The skatepark was used as an example as we have a grant in 2027/28.

(The projected income in year one is £80,040 project which would equate to £3,201 in year one)

VAT threshold – the latest advice from the VAT consultant in appendix B of report, Clerk will circulate to Cllrs. Further report on the Councils VAT position to come forward.

#### i. Draft Licence to Occupy

Suggested amendments to increase notice period to 6 months and emphasise that the SMFC are responsible for the maintenance of the main pitch were agreed

Cllr Arger proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve the Draft Licence to occupy, with the above agreed amendments and forward to Solicitors acting on Councils behalf – agreed 10 for, 1 against and 0 abstained.

#### ii. Draft Sport and Recreation Management Contract

Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the draft Sport and Recreational Management Contract - forward to Solicitors acting on Council's behalf agreed 10 for, 1 against and 0 abstained.

#### iii. Appointment of solicitors

Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the appointment of Warners Solicitors to act on Councils behalf – for a fee up to £3,000 agreed unanimously

#### Iv. 3G Multi-sport pitch construction update

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

The Clerk update Council with the following

1. The provisional date is the last week of May 2026
2. The contractors site manager has attended the Jubilee Field to check on access and is seeking to do some trial holes in the near future.
3. However, the cost may be increasing due to volatile costs caused by the Gulf Conflict.
4. The GMP2 cost, £982,027.62, agreed in December 2025 lasted for 90 days, due to the delays in discharging the planning conditions the 90 days has expired. Therefore, we cannot hold the contractor to the GMP2 cost.
5. The Football Foundation and the Project Manager (GMAC) is attempting to clarify, and value engineer the price increase to be as small an increase as possible.
6. This is a national problem - not just affecting our project
7. The figure I have been told is £19,276.13
8. Currently I am not aware of any other sources of funding - apart from the Parish Council.
9. I have asked the Project manager to confirm several points;

Is the total uplift £19,276.13? Yes

Is this GMP3 and will stand for 90 days? Yes

19,276.13+

982,027.62

1,001,303.75

10. Is the aim still to start on the week of the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026? - Yes

The debate included;

- General frustration
- Concern that again the project has been delayed by MBC planning which has caused increased project cost to the Parish Council
- General agreement that we need to write to MBC Chief Executive to express our outrage at the situation and seek some compensation from MBC
- Acknowledge that MBC Cllr Perry had pushed MBC Planning on our behalf as far as he could to expediate the discharge of planning conditions,
- Important that we explain this to the residents.
- Recognition that costs are generally increasing – stimulated by the Gulf Conflict

The Clerk arranged a "teams meeting" for Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 with the Football Foundation and Project Manager – all Cllrs to be invited

It was agreed that Council then meets on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026 to make a decision – 7.15 – 7.45pm and Planning start at 7:45pm

### 6.3 Updated Policies

Following debate Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Rhodes seconded to approve the recommendation below agreed unanimously.

**Resolution:** To approve the Employment, Finance and Strategy group recommendation to adopt the following;

- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy

### 6.4 Christmas Street light Motifs

Following debate Cllr Castro proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the recommendation below agreed unanimously

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

**Resolution:** To approve the SCEnic recommendation to purchase 6 new Christmas Street light motifs for £1,583.99 + vat (Delivery Included)

### **6.5 Surrenden Field DPS**

Following debate Cllr Melville proposed, and Cllr Rhodes seconded to approve the recommendation below agreed unanimously

**Resolution:** to change the DPS at Surrenden Field to Mel Alesi

### **6.6 Jubilee Field Working Group Report**

Following debate which highlighted the drainage is a Council responsibility and the wall in the pavilion is a requirement of the SCEFL league on shared sites and therefore SMFC responsibility Cllr Melville proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the recommendation below agreed unanimously

**Resolution:** To approve the Jubilee Field Working Group recommendations as set out below

- i. Main pitch drainage as set out in **Appendix A**
- ii. Fire wall as set out in **Appendix B**

## **7. Update report CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:**

### **8 Chairman's Report (5 minutes)**

#### 8.1 Committee and working group minutes for noting (5 minutes)

- 8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026
- 8.1.2 Road Safety Group meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March, minutes
- 8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group minutes 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026 to follow
- 8.1.4 Employment, Finance and Strategy group meeting 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026
- 8.1.5 SCEnic minutes 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 8.1.6 NDP Review Group next meeting to be arranged.
- 8.1.7 Communications Group meeting minutes 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 – note a specification for a new website needs to be compliant with Government requirements and needs to be approved by Council prior to tendering.
- 8.1.8 3G Multi-Sport Working Group next meeting to be arranged.
- 8.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting to be confirmed

## **9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting)**

### **10 Confidential**

#### 10.1 Merit Awards

Following debate which highlighted the excellent work of SEHT, but Cllrs felt as many Cllrs are involved in SEHT that another community group should receive the Group Award, Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Martin seconded to approve the SCEnic recommendations for the Merit Awards.

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