

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 11TH MAY 2026

MINUTES



PUBLIC FORUM

No resident questions.

Present: Cllrs Sharp, Arger, Ash, Farragher, Melville, Alesi, Mclaughlin, Castro, Riordan, Perry, Hotson, Wakeford, Martin and Clerk.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:

Following a debate, Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve Cllr Sharp as Chairman of the Council, no other nominations were received, approved by majority 11 for , 1 against , 1 abstained

Cllr Sharp duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN:

Following a debate, Cllr Perry proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve Cllr Martin as Vice Chairman of the Council, no other nominations were received, approved unanimously.

Cllr Martin duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice Chairman.

3. APOLOGIES Cllr Rhodes and Pett

4. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

4.1. Declaration of Lobbying - NA

4.2. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests - NA

4.3. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda - NA

4.4. Requests for Dispensation - NA

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Pages 2350– 2357 of 12th May 2025 available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>, Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the minutes of the 12th May 2025 agreed by majority; 11 for , 0 against and 2 abstained. Duly signed by Chairman.

6. Financial Reports

6.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/2026 – for approval.

6.1.a The RFO read out the Annual Governance Statement (Form section 1) as set out in appendix A, the Council approved each of the items and acknowledged that item 9 “trust” was not applicable. The Annual Governance Statement was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

6.1.b The Statement of Accounts (Form section 2) Appendix B of the report Cllr Alesi proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the Statement of Accounts approved by majority 12 for , 0 against , 1 abstained. The Statement of Accounts was signed by the Chairman

6.1.c The Internal Control statement 2025/26, Appendix C Cllr Alesi proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the Statement of Accounts approved by majority 12 for , 0 against , 1 abstained

6.1.d Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March 2026 Appendix D Cllr Perry raised a query and the item was deferred to next Council meeting.

The Council thanked the new RFO for all her hard work in completing End of Year 2025.26.

6.2 Jubilee Field works verbal update

The service of Hot Water tank requires a specialist engineer, and this has been completed – quote of £90 plus VAT - Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the Holman quote of £90 plus Vat approved unanimously.

Th repair identified in the service of the Hot Water tank is to replace pressure vessel, quote of £601.02 plus VAT - Cllr Arger proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the Holman quote of £601.02 plus Vat approved by majority 12 for , 0 against , 1 abstained

Main pitch drainage – We have only been able to obtain one quote of £4,972 plus VAT. Council felt that as the SMFC have played all year and wish to start friendlies in July 2026 we will not have time to get the other two quotes. Therefore, Cllr Wakeford proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to defer until 2027 Seek three quotes in early 2027 to do the work in May 2027 approved by majority 12 for, 0 against , 1 abstained

7. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, groups, staff and other local authorities:

Following a debate that highlighted only a slight amendment, increase from £2,000 to £3,000 due to inflation over the years, in levels of emergency delegation. Cllr Mclaughlin proposed, and Cllr Martin seconded to approve the Delegated Authority approved unanimously

8. COMMITTEE AND GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Planning Committee and various groups Terms of Reference remain unchanged Cllr Hotson proposed, and Cllr Farragher seconded approve the Terms of Reference for the following – agreed unanimously:

- 8.1 Planning Committee
- 8.2 Communications Group
- 8.3 Neighbourhood Plan Review Group
- 8.4 Employment, Finance and Strategy Group plus HR Sub group
- 8.5 Greener Staplehurst Group
- 8.6 Staplehurst Community Neighbourhood Enhancement Improvement Group (SCEnic)
- 8.7 Road Safety Group
- 8.8 Jubilee Field Working Group

Note the 3G Multi-Sport Group has folded.

9. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE & GROUP MEMBERS (DATES)

Following a debate the following memberships were agreed.

- 9.1 Planning Committee – Council elects Chairman and Vice Chairman of Planning Committee
– Mondays on three week cycle

Cllrs Sharp, Arger, Ash, Farragher, Mclaughlin Pett and Wakeford plus Cllr Hotson as sub

Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve Cllr Ash as Chairman of the Planning Committee No other nominations were received approved unanimously.

Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Mclaughlin seconded to approve Cllr Arger as Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee No other nominations were received approved unanimously

At Groups first meeting they elect Chairman and Vice Chairman of that group

- 9.2 Communications Group – proposed 3rd Wednesday of each month

Cllrs Sharp, Alesi, Arger, Farragher and Melville

- 9.3 Staplehurst Community Neighbourhood Enhancement Improvement Group – proposed 3rd Thursday of each month

Cllrs Sharp, Martin, Alesi, Castro, Melville and Pett.

- 9.4 Employment, Finance & Strategy Group – proposed 3rd Thursday of each month, 10:00am

Cllrs Sharp, Martin, Arger, Ash, Hotson, Perry and Riordan with Cllr Alesi as sub

- 9.5 Greener Staplehurst Group – as required

Cllrs Castro and Wakeford

- 9.6 Neighbourhood Plan Review Group – as required

Cllrs Arger and Mclaughlin

- 9.7 Road Safety Group – proposed 3rd Thursday of each month 7:30pm

Cllrs Sharp, Farragher and Mclaughlin and Cllr Wakeford to report on Hawkenbury Bridge

- 9.8 Jubilee Field Working Group – 1st Thursday of each month 7:30pm

Cllrs Sharp, Alesi, Arger, Melville and Rhodes

Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the above appoints to Committees and Groups – agreed unanimously.

10. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with Standing Order 4 and/or groups in accordance with Standing Order 27; NA

11. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations; report attached –

- 11.1 Financial Regulations

Following a debate which highlighted only a slight amendment, increase from £2,000 to £3,000 due to inflation over the years, in levels of emergency delegation, Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the Financial Regulations approved unanimously

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the unchanged documents set out below, approved unanimously.

- 11.2 Standing Orders
11.3 Council Code of Conduct
11.4 Civility and Respect
11.5 Vision and Strategic Action Plan 2025-2028

12. Review of arrangements (including legal arrangements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses;

- 12.1 Lease for Surrenden Field
- 12.2 Lease for Youth Club land
- 12.3 Lease for Guides Centre
- 12.4 Lease for Parish Offices
- 12.5 Lease for Bell Lane toilets

Noted all above unchanged – that Bell Lane Toilet lease expires in 2028 the EFSG will discuss and report back to Council.

13. APPOINTMENTS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Following a debate the following were appointed as Council representatives on community groups and organisations and arrangements for reporting back;

- 13.1 Churchyard Liaison Committee – Cllr Ash and Perry
- 13.3 Staplehurst Community Centre Trust – Cllr Wakeford
- 13.4 Staplehurst Patients Participation Group – Cllr Sharp
- 13.5 Staplehurst Community Events Group – Cllr Arger / Martin
- 13.6 Parish Police Liaison Committee – Cllr Sharp
- 13.7 Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – Cllr Alesi
- 13.8 Staplehurst Remembrance Day Group – Cllr Sharp / Martin
- 13.9 River Beult Catchment Improvement Group – Cllr Alesi and Mclaughlin
- 13.10 Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee – Cllr Alesi
- 13.11 Sobell Cheshire Homes – Cllr Hotson
- 13.12 Staplehurst Community Speed Watch – Cllr Arger and Martin
- 13.13 KALC Area Committee – Cllr Sharp
- 13.14 Staplehurst Library Users Group – Cllr Arger
- 13.15 McCabe Day Centre – Cllr Hotson
- 13.16 Village Sports & Golf Group – Cllr Ash

Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the above Council representatives on local community groups and organisations approved unanimously.

Note Cllr Riordan is a Trustee of the Village Sports and Gold Club.

14. Determining the dates, time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council

Cllr Mclaughlin proposed, and Cllr Martin seconded to approve meeting dates, times and venues set out below approved unanimously.

Day: Monday – unless stated

Time – 7:30pm - unless stated

Venue – South Hall, Staplehurst Community Centre – unless stated

Meeting	Date
Council AGM	11 th May 2026
Planning Committee	18 th May 2026
Council	1 st June 2026
Planning Committee	8 th June 2026
Council	22 nd June 2026
Planning Committee	29 th June 2026
Council	13 th July 2026
Planning Committee	20 th July 2026
Council	3 rd August 2026
Planning Committee	10 th August 2026

Council	24 th August 2026
Planning Committee	1 st September 2026 (Tuesday due to BH)
Council	14 th September 2026
Planning Committee	21 st September 2026
Council	5 th October 2026
Planning Committee	12 th October 2026
Council	26 th October 2026
Planning Committee	2 nd November 2026
Council	16 th November 2026
Planning Committee	23 rd November 2026
Council	7 th December 2026
Planning Committee	14 th December 2026
Council	11 th January 2027 – 8.00pm start
Planning Committee	11 th January 2027 – 7.10pm start
Council	25 th January 2027
Planning Committee	1 st February 2027
Council	15 th February 2027
Planning Committee	22 nd February 2027
Council	8 th March 2027
Planning Committee	30 th March 2027 (Tuesday due to BH)
Council	29 th March 2027
Planning Committee	5 th April 2027
Council	19 th April 2027
Planning Committee	26 April 2027
Council – AGM	10 th May 2027

15.Approval of the Council’s subscriptions, donation and S137 grants expenditure in 2026/27

15.1 Donations 2026/27

Cllr Hotson proposed, and Cllr Wakeford seconded to approve the donations as set out below approved unanimously

	2026/27
All Saints PCC Parish Magazine	250.00
SEHT	550.00
Community Centre for Debt Advice	250.00
Heart of Kent Hospice	250.00
Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance Trust	250.00
Kenward Trust	150.00
Royal British Legion - Poppy Wreath	150.00
Staplehurst WI – Village Clean-up Refreshments	50.00
Staplehurst Men's Shed - Village Clean-up Refreshments	50.00
TOTAL	<u>£1,950.00</u>

Note report to follow on Churchyard maintenance budget.

15.2 Subscriptions 2026/27 –

Cllr Hotson proposed, and Cllr Wakeford seconded to approve the subscriptions as set out below approved unanimously

Company	Site	Cost	Start
KALC	Parish Office	£1,870.00	01/04/2025
GeoXphere Ltd Parish Online Data Mapping software	Parish Office	£135.00	01/05/2025
KCPFA Kent County Playing Fields Association	Jubilee & Surrenden Fields	£20.00	01/05/2025
Weald of Kent Protection Society		£35.00	01/05/2025
Canva Pro	Parish Office	£99.99	01/05/2025
Telecoms World	Virtual phone and Youth Club Wi Fi	£437.88	01/05/2025
Total		2,597.87	

Note £702.13 remaining in subscriptions budget

15.3 S137 Budget 2026/27 = Note £3,300 remaining.

16 CORRESPONDENCE - NA

17 Proposals for a decision

17.1 Review of Council Street lighting assets

Cllr Wakeford led a debate which highlighted the need to not only repair streetlights but inspect, maintain and repair as they are a safety critical asset. Cllr Martin thanked Cllr Wakeford for all his hard work on the subject and Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Riordan seconded to approve the resolution below approved unanimously

Resolution: To approve to go to the market and obtain three quotations from suitably qualified street lighting contractors to undertake inspection, testing, and ongoing maintenance of these assets as set out in **Appendix A** and report back to Council.

Budget Code - projects

17.2 ATC Survey specification

Following a debate, it was agreed the importance of having up to date traffic data, option C in the report. Cllr Castro proposed, and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve the resolution below approved unanimously

Resolution: To undertake an ATC Survey, option C and the specification as set out in Appendix A of the report.

Budget Code - projects

17.3 Formation of Community Rural Action Planning Group

The debate included;

- MBC as the planning authority must follow national planning policy and must base decisions on Planning Policy
- Concern of raising public expectations
- Many of the residents at the meeting, had knowledge and expertise which would be useful
- Important to engage the residents, support understanding and utilise their expertise
- Need to focus on the larger potential developments – not every planning application
- Need to scope the group and clarify role
- SPC Planning Committee is the consultee, separate from a community led group
- Large planning developments are “emotive” important we work with our residents
- Need to engage residents and help given them a voice

Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Perry seconded to defer until next meeting to scope out the role of the group motion was defeated; For 5 against 6 and 2 abstained

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to organise a public meeting on planning and potential community group, then review after the public meeting motion was approved by majority 7 for , 2 against , 3 abstained

Resolution: To approve

- i. Organise a public meeting to discuss planning issues in Staplehurst.

Budget Code - projects

18 CONFIDENTIAL - NA

Meeting closed.....9.00pm.....

These minutes are not verbatim, but an accurate reflection and the decisions are correct