



# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL COUNCIL MEETING 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026 MINUTES

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

Unfortunately, the presentation by Croudace Homes regarding the proposed development of 300 homes North of Staplehurst Station Rd has been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances and will be rescheduled.

Several residents asked questions about the proposed 300 homes;  
Where is it? – either side of the A229 north of the Railway bridge – map on Council website  
Do we have a Staplehurst NDP? – Yes  
Planning Committee why did it not comment?  
Clerk explained in simple terms the developer used an Environmental Scoping Report (ESR) to request not to do an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Parish Council is not consulted on ESR, we only received the decision notice from MBC. MBC's decision was too agreed with the developer that an EIA is not required.

At the Staplehurst Parish Council planning committee they took the unusual decision not to just note the decision, but query the decision.  
"We usually note decisions however; we wish to query this decision due to the following factors;

- Inaccurate information** - the planning application title is nonsensical and inaccurate.
- Inaccurate information** – Water from the land drains into gully's that are managed by Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and drain into River Beult. The Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board should have been consulted.
- Limited consultation** – under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 consultation should be at least 21 days, with an Environmental Scoping Report the statutory consultees are:
  - Historic England
  - Natural England
  - Environmental Agency

None of the statutory consultees have commented on the Environmental Scoping Report. At best this seems a decision made in haste."

MBC have noted this query as a complaint.  
Cllr Perry has also raised questions as the Borough Council ward Cllrs were not consulted either, and it was an officer decision, so it did not go to MBC Planning Committee.

## **Kent County Councillor report – (Standing item)**

Cllr Black raised a number of issues

- Hawkenbury Bridge – Cllr Black still chasing, obtained some information and will take the lead on trying to get a meeting to clarify way forward, will work with Cllr Wakeford Parish Council contact on scoping a traffic light option.
- Cranbrook Rd – Cllr Black will take lead to obtain a meeting with KCC Highways officers to clarify where we are and how to move forward using the s106 funding set aside for this project. Cllr Sharp Parish Council contact
- Police Cameras at traffic lights – Cllr Black to take lead on project using s106 funding and Cllr Sharp Parish Council contact.
- Village entrance sign – recently destroyed will chase up and liaise with Cllr Ash as Parish Council contact (potential KCC insurance claim?)

However, the leak from the A229 Garage car wash has stopped.

### **Maidstone Borough Councillor’s Report (Standing Item):**

Cllr Perry raised several points;

- 3G pitch – worked hard to get the Planning Conditions discharged, eventually 28/3/26 at 5.15pm
- Note MBC Planning Committee went against the “tilted balance” and officer recommendation regarding 20 dwellings outside Ulcume.
- Surgery note action plan attached

### **Cllr Surgery Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 10am – 12noon at Staplehurst Library**

Cllr Arger to attend as Parish Councillor.

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

#### **1. APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Riordan and Pett

#### **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: (5 minutes)**

Pages 2451 –2456 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Alesi proposed, and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – agreed by majority; For 9 against 0 and abstained 4. Duly signed by the Chairman.

#### **4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

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

Staplehurst Parish Council		
Payment list 1st March - 23rd March 2026		
Date	Details	Amount
02/03/2026	CF Corporate Lease for laptops Mar 2026	£113.44

06/03/2026	Grant to SEHT	£1,000.00
06/03/2026	Heliocentrix Feb management	£184.80
06/03/2026	Heliocentrix Feb management	£147.46
06/03/2026	West Kent Cleaning	£100.00
06/03/2026	West Kent cleaning	£100.00
06/03/2026	Refreshments	£1.20
12/03/2026	NDP review fees	£3,876.00
12/03/2026	JBPH repairs to Bell Lane toilets	£687.00
12/03/2026	Light Bulbs	£136.74
12/03/2026	Homeleigh - greener group sleepers	£90.96
12/03/2026	Picture Frames VA	£28.48
12/03/2026	Refreshments - Litter Pick	£5.90
13/03/2026	JMH flooring carpet	£722.40
13/03/2026	Peninsula Hr HS support	£288.76
13/03/2026	Poz Energy Youth Club	£182.53
13/03/2026	Christmas light bulbs	£136.74
13/03/2026	Stationery	£28.48
13/03/2026	Peninsula insurance	£12.66
16/03/2026	P and F Cleaning	£1,010.00
16/03/2026	Sage training 4th session	£300.00
16/03/2026	Bus Stream water at JF pavilion	£178.92
16/03/2026	British Gas Elec Bell Lane	£34.30
16/03/2026	Amazon – stationery	£29.80
16/03/2026	Sage payroll	£19.20
16/03/2026	Green group paint brush	£18.16
17/03/2026	MBC BNG monitoring fee 3G pitch project	£10,043.10
17/03/2026	Photocopier copier fees	£76.99
17/03/2026	Business stream - JF water	£25.32
17/03/2026	Castle water JF Feb 2026	£23.63
17/03/2026	HS poster for Youth Club	£16.73
17/03/2026	Lloyds Bank Jan. 2026	£8.50
19/03/2026	Bell Lane sewage	£70.13
19/03/2026	Castle water - Youth Club Feb 2026	£7.14
20/03/2026	PAYE - Feb - March 2026	£1,808.60
20/03/2026	SMYFC refund for Jan Feb 2026	£1,240.52
23/03/2026	Parish Office Telephone March 2026	£107.36
23/03/2026	Telephone SEHT	£49.78
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£22,911.73</b>

Council noted the payment list.

## 4.2 **Contracts report**

Following a debate Cllr Rhodes proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the recommendation below: Agreed majority 12 for, 0 against and Cllr Castro absent

**Resolution:** To approve the Employment, Finance and Strategy Group recommendations as set out below

Company	Contract	Location	Annual fee
Heliocentrix Ltd	IT Consultancy & Support	Parish Office	£ 115.50 p.m. 3x office workstations
Heliocentrix Ltd	Microsoft 365 Business Basic	Parish Office	£122.48 p.m.
Sage	Sage Payroll Software	Parish Office	£20.00 p.m.
Kent County Supplies	Sharp Photocopier MX2651FK Col MFD	Parish Office	£0.0022 b/w per copy £0.0223 colour per copy. Rental £88.32 qtr
West Kent Cleaning Services	Cleaning	Youth Club Building	Cleaning Materials £20 per hr +£5
West Kent Cleaning Services	Cleaning	Jubilee Field Pavilion	Cleaning Materials £20 per hr +£5

**Budget code:** Various

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

The clerk raised a number of points

- Staplehurst Mowers – repairs to mower £961.41 plus VAT
- 2388/6.2 Girl Guide lease comments returned to Girl Guides Solicitors – note EFS Group mins
- 3288/6.3 Nominations for Merit Awards closes tomorrow, still time for final nominations.
- 2296/6.1 legal check complete – will not change national terms and conditions

Clerk summarised S106 agreements

S106 agreements are legal agreements between the land owner / developer and planning Authority (MBC) MBC hold the contributions and then allocate out to appropriate authority that delivers the service, such as Health to Health Trust, School to KCC etc.

If the s106 contributions are not used within a set time, usually 10 years, the developer can reclaim the contributions

With regards the highway projects discussed earlier the funding comes from several large housing developments

- Cranbrook Rd – KCC has s106 funding, less than 4 years to spend the funding or potentially the land owner / developer can reclaim the funding

- Police Cameras at traffic lights – KCC has s106 funding, less than 4 years to spend the funding or potentially the land owner / developer can reclaim the funding

Important we support Cllr Black to try and access the funding for infrastructure improvements in Staplehurst

Further comment on planning application 25/504992

We reiterate our comments of the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and emphasise the following

1. We have concerns over the surface water drainage, as have Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, and yet we still can't see a SuDS plan submitted for the application. We believe a SUDs plan is required before any approval can be given.
2. Foul water - we still cannot see a Foul Water discharge plan - as noted by Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board
3. Regarding the upgrading of footpath (KM290) through to the station can we receive a confirmation that this is owned in its entirety by KCC? If not then how would the funding and long term maintenance work if it's owned by KCC?
4. Also, from a health and safety point of view the footpath only leads to a "crossing" of the main line railway not a bridge across the main line railway.
5. In addition, access along this footpath will be challenging for those with a disability or limited mobility.

Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to submit the comments above – agreed majority 12 for, 0 Against and 0 abstained

For the record Cllr Perry did not take part in the discussion or the vote.

Village Fete – Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to approve £10 fee and a stall at the Village Fete, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Agreed unanimously.

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

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

Note additional consultation closed 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

Indicative Timescale

- Summer 2026 – Government expected to announce final Structure of the new Councils.
- Autumn 2026 – new laws introduced to put changes into action
- 6<sup>th</sup> May 2027 - Election will be held for new Unitary Council
- (The elected Councillors will form a Shadow Cabinet to prepare for the new arrangements)
- 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028 new Unity Council will officially take over and begin delivering local services

Cllr Black concerned about the cost and doubtful it will take place.

Cllr Perry noted MBC supported "West Kent option", but we wait and see.

Await Government decision in the summer 2026.

### **6.2 3G Multi Sport pitch verbal update**

Planning matters – conditions discharged 27.3.26

Construction – awaiting initial site meeting will invite all site partners

Sport Recreational Management Contract report next Council meeting with draft documents to go to Council solicitors to finalise.

### **6.3 Updated GDPR Policies**

Following a debate, note check council name and are all Cllrs "data processors" when they use data Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Mclaughlin seconded to approve the recommendation below – agreed unanimously

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

- Breach Notification Notice
- General Privacy Policy
- Internal Privacy Notice
- SAR Policy

### **6.4 Request for Boot Fair**

Following a debate, liaise with Scouts regarding refreshments, Cllr Melville proposed, and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve the recommendation below – agreed unanimously

**Resolution:** To approve a Boot Fair held on Surrenden Field on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026

### **6.5 Request for a Fun Fair at Jubilee Field**

Following a debate which noted Jubilee Field will be a buildings site most of the summer and the Surrenden Field not appropriate Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve the recommendation below

To not allow a Fun Fair on the Jubilee Field or Surrenden Field

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

### **8 Chairman's Report**

Just emphasised the last day for Merit Award nominations is tomorrow.

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

- 8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 8.1.2 Road Safety Group meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March, minutes to follow
- 8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group minutes 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 8.1.4 Employment, Finance and Strategy group meeting 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 8.1.5 SCEnic minutes 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026, minutes to follow
- 8.1.6 NDP Review Group next meeting to be arranged.
- 8.1.7 Communications Group meeting minutes 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 to follow
- 8.1.8 3G Multi-Sport Working Group meeting to be confirmed.
- 8.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting minutes 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026, to follow.

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

### **10 Confidential**

Meeting closed, 8:40pm