



**STAPLEHURST** 2416

**PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

**17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**2025**

**PUBLIC FORUM - NA**

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

Cllr Black raised a number of points:

- Cranbrook Rd, 5 years and still waiting – latest update chasing BT and landowner permission?
- Youth Club – now being picked up by YMCA.
- Bathurst Rd leak – fixed but now leaking again.
- Kerbs at Thatcher Rd / Marden Rd damaged – still chasing.
- Hedge at Bell Lane – not KCC
- Tree at Butcher Close – not KCC
- Hawkenbury Bridge – still chasing the option of a Bailey Bridge
- Currently investigating the flooding on the high street – some disruption

**Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):**

Apologies from Cllr Riordan and Perry

**Cllr Surgery Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 10am – 12noon at Staplehurst Library**

– Cllr Ash

**Present:** Cllrs Sharp, Alesi, Arger, Ash, Castro, Farragher, Martin, McLaughlin, Melville, Hotson, Wakeford, Pett, Rhodes and the Clerk

1. **Apologies:** Cllrs Riordan and Perry
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 2410 –2415 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council](#)

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

- [Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.gov.uk\)](http://staplehurst-pc.gov.uk)

Note, Bailey Bridge page 2415 Cllr Alesi proposed, and Cllr Pett seconded to approve the minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025, agreed majority 12 for, 0 against and 1 abstained.

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

##### **4.1 Payment list, previously authorised by Council or under delegated authority and paid, Summation and Balance sheet for noting.**

<b><u>Approved Payments 23rd October - 11th November 2025</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
All Saints Staplehurst PCC - Churchyard Maintenance 3/3rds	5,585.67
Homeleigh Timber - Caretaker Gloves	3.31
Staff Reimbursement - Sundry items Parish Office	26.00
Mel Alesi - SEHT Insurance Premium Reimbursement	382.20
Choice Support - Village Planter Maintenance October	519.00
KALC - Mastering Planning Training RG Feb '25	60.00
Paul Graves - Lock Repair Bell Lane Toilet Doors	77.99
Iden Business Services Ltd - Interim Internal Audit Fee	200.00
Bumbles Plant Centre - Plants & Tubs GSG	64.69
Kingswood Christmas Trees - 1x10ft Nordman Plus Delivery	171.99
Veterans Operating Base CIC - Grant Award	1,000.00
Hi Kent - Grant Award	440.00
Alex Harvey - JF Pavilion Cleaning October	100.00
Alex Harvey - Youth Club Cleaning October	100.00
Amazon UK - Laminating Pouches	8.57
Payroll November	38.12
Simply Print Ltd - Village Update Autumn Printing & Artwork	858.00
Surrey Hills Solicitors - Legal Advice	540.00
Amazon (UK) Ltd - Christmas Tree Fairy Lights	107.96
Bradley Hawkins - Wimpey Field Mowing/Strimming	225.00
David George - Reimburse Strimmer Line GSG	20.00
Business Stream - Youth Club Waste Water Aug-Oct	30.41
Adobe Systems - Monthly Subscription Oct-Nov	19.97
Spar - Milk Parish Office	2.30
Sainsbury's - Parish Office Batteries	25.50
Amazon UK - Battery Charger Xmas Tree Lights	33.21
Sainsbury's - Milk Parish Office	2.90
Telecoms World - Virtual Phone No. SEHT October	14.39
Telecoms World - Broad Band Youth Club October	29.40
Npower - Street Light Energy September	43.00
British Gas Lite - Electricity JF Pavilion Aug-Oct	578.49
British Gas Lite - Electricity SF Pavilion Aug-Oct	29.20
British Gas Lite - Parish Office Electricity Aug-Oct	27.69
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Recycling September	76.85
British Gas Lite - Bell Lane Toilets Electricity Sept-Oct	31.89
MBC - Parish Office Council Tax Room 1 November	62.00
MBC - Parish Office Council Tax Room 2-3 November	72.00
MBC - Bell Lane Toilets Council Tax November	100.00
MBC - Youth Club Council Tax November	121.00

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

Sage Payroll - November	24.00
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>11,852.70</b>

**TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE** 0.00

Noted, along with Summation and Balance sheet.

#### **4.2 Contracts**

Following a debate which highlighted that this is an annual rolling contract, Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Martin seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously.

**Resolution:** To approve N-Power half-hourly metered street light contract, estimated £40 per month.

**Budget code:** Street lights / energy

#### **4.3 Chestnut Avenue hedge report**

Following a debate which highlighted, the good work being done Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority 12 for, 1 against and 0 abstained.

**Resolution:** To approve an increase of £175.00 in cost.

**Budget code:** Chestnut Avenue Hedge

### **5 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS – attached (5 minutes)**

Item 2382/10.1 – Railway station – circulated latest comment and Cllr Wakeford volunteered to respond to recent Southeastern Railway survey. Also reviewing Customer and Community Improvement Fund – £50,000 to help improve railways – report back to Council.

Item 2338/6.2 Girl Guides as of 4pm still no contact from the Girl Guides solicitors

Item 2396/3.1 JF pavilion deep clean note SMFC CIC (Youth Section) have still not cleared the changing room of their general football equipment and have requested to put it in a temporary container (in the corner of the main pitch to store their general football equipment that is currently in the changing room) The parish Council could use permitted development rights for the container.

The discuss was against this as the general football equipment should not be stored in the changing room, they have a "lean to use" or could store elsewhere.

Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Pett seconded the resolution below – agreed unanimously. That there should not be an extra container, that the SMFC CIC (Youth Section) should clear the changing room by 5pm on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025 to allow the deep cleaning to take place and if they do not, advise SMFC CIC (Youth section) that any extra deep cleaning cost would be charged to SMFC CIC Youth Section.

Item 2400/4.1 Cllr Riordan statement Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025, was posted on social media and sent to the Parish Councillors and Staff.

The Council resolution on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025 requested that Cllr Riordan should, within 14 days,

- publicly apologise for his statements as they are damaging to Staplehurst Parish Council,
- as well as in writing to the Chairman of SMFC CIC apologising for his unsupportive statement,

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

- to remove the comments,
- and cease and desist from making publicly any future untrue statements about SMFC CIC and the finances of Staplehurst Parish Council

SMFC CIC have confirmed they received a similar statement from Cllr Riordan on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

The general tone of the debate was that it was not really an apology, that it was in response to the SMFC CIC complaint, that Cllr Riordan could remove his post, but has not yet, and that he was still getting supporting comments, which he has liked.

To clarify some points

1. SPC own and manage the Jubilee Field
2. SPC is responsible for paying all the bills – utilities, ground maintenance etc.
3. It is used by the general public and hired out to various teams for football.
4. Cllr Riordan is fully aware of this.

Cllr Riordan chaired meetings and was heavily involved in the setting of Staplehurst Parish Council budget for 2024/25, note minutes of Employment, Finance and Strategy Group meetings on 30/11/23 (item 4), 14/12/23 (item 4) and 11/1/24 (item 5)

At the Council meeting 22/1/2024 Councillor Riordan seconded the resolution for the Jubilee Field expenditure budget 2024/25. (item 3.1)

At the Council meeting 22/1/2024 Councillor Riordan proposed the resolution for the Fees and Charges, including the Jubilee Field fees and charges for 2024/25. (item 3.2)

At the Council meeting, 22/1/2024 Councillor Riordan voted in favour of amendments to Council budget for 2024/25. (item 3.3)

At the Council meeting and 29/1/2024 Councillor Riordan voted in favour of the Council budget for 2024/25 (item 4.4)

Two auditors have checked and confirmed Staplehurst Parish Council's accounts for 2024/25.

Transparency

- All the information is available on the Parish Council website.
- Social Media post included Council payments of bills – actually confirms SPC paying all the bills.
- The Social Media post included the Pie Chart in annual report. The RFO sent the end of year accounts / balance sheet to Communications Group.
- For the record, The Jubilee Field expenditure budget for 2024/25 was £46,479, the actual cost was £28,996.19. The 3G pitch consultant fees came to £19,944.02. Therefore, the overall spend at the Jubilee Field in 2024/25 was £48,940.21.
- The income at the Jubilee Field in 2024/25 was £14,296.52.
- The parish precept is used to support all parish services – Surrenden Field, Youth club etc as well as Jubilee Field.
- For a number of years, the Communications Group felt that using Infographics, Pie Chart, rather than the actual end of year accounts / balance sheet was a more user-friendly way of presenting financial information in the Annual Report.

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

Maybe Council should go back to the RFO presenting the figures and text in the Annual Report.

In summary there is no evidence that Cllr Riordan's statement, "*Your Council tax!!!!.....it is very clear that over £24,000 of your council tax was purely spent on running the football club....*" is correct. It is false.

The Legal letter has been drafted was about to be sent, it will need checking.

As Council had approved the resolution to send the letter at the last Council meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025 (2415/6.7) at least five Cllrs are required to propose to review a Council decision. No Cllrs proposed to review the decision. Therefore, the legal letter will be sent.

Item 2385/4.2 - update on Christmas Tree 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025 am – Cllrs Melville and Cllrs Wakeford volunteered.

### **Note**

Premises Licence at JF – the Designated Premises Supervisor is changed to Mel Alesi.  
Road salt – large bag is being delivered – need some volunteers to bag it up!

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

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

MBC presentation circulated to all Cllrs, general concern about the cost of restructuring, and that it feels like it is "being done to us."

MBC voting this week on preferred option – likely to be a "West Kent" - Maidstone with Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling.  
KCC prefer a whole Kent Unitary Authority.

Timescales

- Submission to Government by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- Government consultation spring 2026
- Government decision summer 2026
- Initial formation of shadow authority – spring 2027 – to prepare for Unitary Authority
- Unitary Authority – May 2028

**Planning** - The MBC Local Plan will roll over.

A "County infrastructure Plan" will be developed by the "Mayoral Strategic Authority" and then a new Unitary Authority Local Plan – likely to be several years.

**Asset transfer opportunities** – potential to transfer Assets to a Parish before Unitary Authorities formed, otherwise to Unitary Authority.

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

Defer to confidential section, contractual issues.

### **6.3 Model Publication Information Scheme**

Following a debate which highlighted the only real change was the allotments Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously.

**Resolution:** To adopt the Model Publication Information Scheme in **Appendix A** of this report

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

#### 6.4 **Vexatious Complaints Policy**

Following a debate which highlighted the need for consistency around the wording “consult” and that it should be the Chairman of the Council and Vice Chairman of Employment, Finance and Strategy group.

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to approve, with the comments above, the resolution below, agreed unanimously.

**Resolution** To adopt the Vexatious Complaints policy in **Appendix A** of this report

#### 6.5 **Sexual and General Harassment Policy**

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

**Resolution:** To adopt the Sexual and General Harassment policy in **Appendix A** of this report

#### 6.6 **Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan 2024 - 2038**

Following a debate which highlighted the hard work of the NDP Review group and no further amendments, Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Rhodes seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously.

**Resolution:** To approve the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan 2024 – 2038 to Maidstone Borough Council to lead the next stage – Regulation 16.

#### 6.7 **Allotment update report**

Following a debate which highlighted that there are no issues, but the letters need to be approved in case they are required in the future.

Cllr Pett proposed, and Cllr Wakeford seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority unanimously.

**Resolution:** To note update report and approve;

- i. Enforcement notice 1 - formal warning – **Appendix B**
- ii. Enforcement notice 2 – formal warning – **Appendix C**
- iii. Enforcement notice 3 - Council decision to issue notice to quit – **Appendix D**

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

#### 8 **Chairman’s Report**

Noted a request from “Heart of Kent Hospice” regarding a future hospice in Linton near Coxheath to support their bid for “MBC Strategic CIL funding” Clerk to circulate, general feeling was Cllrs should support individually.

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

8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025

8.1.2 Road Safety Group, next meeting 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025

8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group minutes 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025

8.1.4 SCEnic meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

8.1.5 NDP Review Group meeting 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025, to follow.

8.1.6 Communications Group meeting 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025, to follow.

8.1.7 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting - to be arranged.

8.1.8 3G Multi-Sport working group meeting - to be arranged.

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

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

Churchyard Liaison Group meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025

### **Public Forum**

A resident raised the issue of the Scouts Post Boxes – as it helps raise some funds.

### **10 Confidential**

3G Pitch update – the Council have received a revised capital cost, this is being double checked by the Football Foundation and agreed a Cllr Workshop Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 7:30pm to discuss next steps.

- 10.1** Employment, Finance and Strategy Group meeting minutes 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025, noted.

### **10.2 HR Report**

Following a debate which highlighted information researched by the HR Group, relating to staff pay for 2025/6 and taking account of all advice received, the following resolutions were voted on:

1. To approve a one-off discretionary payment to be paid to the Clerk, the RFO and the PSO. (Subject to tax and NI)  
Proposed by Cllr Arger, seconded by Cllr McLoughlin – agreed 10, against 0, abstained 3.
2. To approve the amount to be paid and the reason for the payment as a one-off discretionary payment:  
- Clerk £1000 in recognition of the work he has undertaken in respect of the 3G pitch project and for obtaining his FiLCA qualification.  
Proposed by Cllr Sharp, seconded by Cllr Arger – Agreed 10, against 0. Abstained 3.
3. To approve the amount to be paid and the reasons for the payments as one-off discretionary payments:  
RFO and PSO £750 each in recognition of them both attaining their FiLCA and iLCA qualifications respectively.  
Proposed by Cllr McLoughlin, seconded by Cllr Alesi – agreed 10, against 0, abstained 3.
4. To agree that SPC would continue to follow the contractual agreement relating to TOIL, which states:

"The council may require you to occasionally perform some additional hours of work in excess of your normal working week, depending on the needs of the council. You are entitled to receive time off in lieu for these additional hours.

In exceptional circumstances, provided the Employment Group has approved them in advance, it may reimburse you at your normal rate of pay."

Proposed by Cllr Hotson, seconded by Cllr Castro – agreed unanimously.

It was also noted that the HR Group will await the forthcoming government advice relating to parish councils' staffing structures and be guided by it.

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

The Caretaker was also considered regarding this decision, but no increase was considered necessary, as he is not yet at the top of his pay band, he will continue to progress to the next pay level as per his contract.

Meeting closed.....9.30pm.....

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