



STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MINUTES

15TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Public Statement

Cllr Sharp read out the following statement

Staplehurst Parish Council is concerned about recent social media comments.

For the record Staplehurst Parish Council has not subsidised Staplehurst Monarchs FC CIC.

Due to bad weather, matches were cancelled, and Staplehurst Parish Council refunded the Staplehurst Monarchs FC CIC - junior section - £1,000.

Staplehurst Parish Council is liaising with local organisations and the Police.

Staplehurst Parish Council is taking legal advice, and no further comment will be made at this time.

PUBLIC FORUM –

A resident appreciated the public statement but noted clarifying the finances of the Jubilee Field would be helpful.

A resident queried why two items were in confidential – This is due to each item dealing with HR matters.

Cllr Riordan and a member of the public requested if they could record the meeting, Cllr Wakeford requested to withdraw his permission to be recorded.

Cllr Sharp asked for recordings to be paused if Cllr Wakeford spoke – all agreed.

Presentation by Veteran Operating Base – support for veterans

A presentation was handed out to all Councillors.

The group was formed by Veterans for Veterans who experience difficulties after leaving active service. It is estimated nationally 5 veterans per week committed suicide.

The aim is to develop a centre for Veterans to offer support, a safe space and arrange activities. Not only engaging in camaraderie but with helping to move back into "Civvy street"

Cllr Castro asked where the funding is coming from? A range of grants, donations plus in-kind support.

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

Cllr Sharpe thanked VOB for the excellent work they are doing to support those in need and asked the Clerk to forward the Parish Council grant application forms.

Kent County Councillor report –(Standing item)

Cllr Black is continuing to chase the range of issues including the challenge of the Hawkenbury Bridge.

Devolution comments see item 6.1.

Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):

Cllr Perry raised a number of points:

- The Solar Farm planning application is still deferred – will keep Parish Council updated
- Lobbying to stop the investment into Maidstone House
- Further MBC By Elections due at Harrietsham and Lenham

Cllr Riordan raised a number of points:

- Some work on Fisher Rd / Bovi's access – for one day
- Exploring two Strategic CIL bids
- Raised speeding data on Cranbrook Rd – will forward data to Cllr Black

Cllr Surgery Saturday 27th Sept 2025, 10am – 12noon at Staplehurst Library

MBC Cllr Martin attending

Present: Cllrs Sharp, Martin, Alesi, McLaughlin, Melville, Rhodes, Farragher, Perry, Pett, Riordan, Wakeford, Castro and Hotson

1. APOLOGIES: Cllrs Ash and Arger

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 2383 –2389 26th August 2025 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#) to be signed by the Chairman.

Clerk noted an administrative error of £14.93 in Budget Monitoring report Jubilee Field year end 2024/25, amendment "Overall expenditure was £17,482.81 under budgeted expenditure."

Cllr Melville proposed and Cllr Rhodes seconded to approve the minutes of 26th August 2025, with the above amendment Approved by majority: 11 For, 0 against 2 abstained.

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

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

4.1 Payment list, already authorised by Council or under delegated authority and paid, Summation and Balance sheet for noting

The payment list, summation and balance sheet were noted

Cllr Riordan asked for "Cllr" to be removed from the payment for FOI costs £167.13.

4.2 Council Insurance Policy

Following a debate Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to approve the resolution below: Approved by majority: 12 For, 0 against 1 abstained.

Resolution: To appoint Gallagher Insurance Brokers (insurer Hiscox) 3 year at £3,450.58 per year plus index linked.

Budget Code Administration / Insurance

4.3 Purchase of IT equipment

Following a debate Cllr Melville proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below: Approved by majority: 12 For, 0 against 1 abstained.

Resolution – To consider the recommendation of the Communications Group to

- i. Lease six HP ProBook 255 G10, plus bag, on a three-year lease agreement at £94.53 plus VAT per month for 36 months

in addition

- ii. Purchase two HP ProBook 455 G10 at a cost of £1,190 plus VAT for the office
- iii. Training session at £200 plus VAT

Budget code: Administration / Computer support

4.4 Notice of increase in cost of Countryside Waste Collection

Following a debate Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Martin seconded to approve the resolution below: Approved unanimously

Resolution: To approve the 6% increase in cost Countryside Waste Collection

Budget Code: Administration / Sundry costs

4.5 Outdoor Gym equipment annual service

Following a debate Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr McLaughlin seconded to approve the resolution below: Approved unanimously

Resolution: To approve Freshair Fitness annual service charge of £656.20 to service the outdoor gym equipment at Surrenden Field

Budget Code: Surrenden Playing Field / Equipment repairs

5 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS – attached

The Clerk following consultation with the Chairman

- the purchase of public access signs at Jubilee Field or £140.40 plus VAT – wording "Open to the public – Unless a match is taking place -Tickets available"
- The purchase of 6 poppies for £30 plus VAT

In addition, seeking a quote for the replacement of extractor fan in JF pavilion

Cllr Riordan asked for item EV charging to be removed as this was work as MBC Cllr

Cllr Farragher suggested removing 2360/3 and 2365/6.4 and 2385/4.1 as Cllr Riordan declines to do reports

Cllr Hotson suggested the 2332/6.1 footpath, is passed over to Cllr Black – KCC Cllr – as it is a KCC matter (Cllr Black agreed)

Girl Guides lease update - Clerk verbally told that the Girl Guides will be considering the lease / annual licence at their next meeting

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

6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION -

6.1 Devolution – standing item verbal update

Devolution

KCC Cllr Black, The cost of devolution has varied between £50m - £100m- the only way of paying for this is the Council Tax – that is you the residents.

KCC consider this unacceptable and will be putting forward an alternative proposal in the near future and seeking Public Consultation.

Cllr Perry noted the complexity of “un parish areas” – i.e. Maidstone and the surrounding urban areas.

6.2 3G Multi-Sport pitch verbal update

The Clerk noted that an email today hoped to get sign off this week.

Cllr Hotson noted that the sooner we progress this less inflation costs and less impact on the Juniors section as they will not be able to use their pitches while construction is taking place.

6.3 Staplehurst Neighbourhood Review group update - Noted

Following a debate noted progress and await the final report

6.4 Flags on streetlamp posts – Noted advice below

Following a debate Cllr Sharp emphasised that it is important no one injures themselves either putting up or taking down flags.

Cllr Perry stated “My father fought in two World Wars, he followed the flag. We should not be ashamed of being proud of our flag, just because of a few extremist”

Cllr Black asked that if we are aware of any damage to lampposts / signs etc please contact him directly.

The Council noted the statement below.

Community Statement on Flag Displays

Recent flag displays have prompted a range of views within our community. In a democracy, people will hold differing opinions, and respectful dialogue is key to maintaining cohesion.

While many individuals engage in public displays lawfully and peacefully, it is important to remain mindful of the broader context. National safeguarding guidance highlights that, in some cases, such displays may be used to provoke or signal affiliation with divisive ideologies. This does not reflect the intentions of the majority, but it is a risk that public bodies are asked to monitor.

It is important that residents to seek reliable information, avoid misinformation on social media, and continue to support one another in creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful community.

Any flags, graffiti, or public messaging that contain racial, hateful, or extremist content should be reported to the relevant authorities, such as the Maidstone Borough Council or Kent Police.

For further information, please refer to [national guidance on flag flying](#) provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

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

6.5 Appointment of Councillors to Working Groups

Following a debate Cllr Alesi proposed and Cllr Pett seconded to approve the resolution below: Approved by majority: 12 For, 0 against 1 abstained.

Resolution: To appoint Cllrs to the following working Groups.

1. Cllr Rhodes – 3G Multi-Sport Pitch Working Group
2. Cllr Rhodes – Jubilee Field Working Group
3. In addition, seek a Girl Guide representative on the 3G Multi-Sport Pitch Working Group and the Jubilee Field Working Group

The Clerk was asked to clarify voting rights for non-Parish Councillors.

7 Update report CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES - noted:

NA

8 Chairman's Report

Items already raised

8.1 Committee and working group minutes for noting

- 8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes 11th August and 1st September 2025
- 8.1.2 Road Safety Group minutes 7th August 2025
- 8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group minutes 18th August 2025
- 8.1.4 SCEnic meeting minutes 21st August 2025
- 8.1.5 3G Multi-Sports pitch working group meeting 13th August 2025
- 8.1.6 Employment, Finance and Strategy Group meeting minutes 21st August 2025
- 8.1.7 NDP Review Group next meeting minutes 28th August 2025, see report
- 8.1.8 Communications Group meeting minutes 20th August 2025.
- 8.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting - to be arranged

9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

Feedback from Village Fete was noted.

Public Forum

A resident asked, "have you got planning permission for the 3G pitch?"

Cllr Sharp explained that with have been sent draft planning conditions, which indicates that we will obtain planning permission, but not yet.

10 Confidential

10.1 HR Report Bower Walk

Following a debate, Cllr Farragher proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve the resolution below: Approved by majority: 9 For, 1 against 3 abstained.

Resolution: That the correct procedure was followed and that no further action is required and the matter is closed

10.2 HR Report Youth Club Insurance

Following a debate, Cllr Farragher proposed and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below: Approved by majority: 9 For, 4 against 0 abstained.

Resolution: that the staff acted responsibly throughout and are actively improving health and safety to reassure Cllrs and acknowledge the implementation of more thorough

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

Health and Safety checks implemented over the past 3 years, that is now a regular office task – ongoing and regularly checked

These minutes are not verbatim, the decisions are accurate

Meeting closed.....9.20pm.....

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