



STAPLEHURST

PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING

14TH JULY 2025

MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM

Two residents were in attendance. One did not wish to speak on any item and one was in attendance for the confidential item (see items 2.5 and 10.1)

Kent County Councillor report – (Standing item)

Cllr Black:

- Asked about a resident who fell over in the High Street last week. Cllr Alesi would try to obtain information on how the person was.
- Spoke to Cllr Riordan and a meeting was being arranged regarding a few issues raised by Staplehurst PC. Cllr Costa believed it was in respect of a crossing on the A229 and Cllr Black was in talks with Kent Highways regarding a pedestrian crossing and the criteria for installation.
- Cllr Black had agreed to grant money towards the Staplehurst Fete. This is in hand but the RFO would be asked for an update.

Comments from SPC:

- Cllr Perry raised a concern of parking especially on new developments and other residential roads.
- Cllr Pett spoken about contractors cutting back vegetation.
- Cllr Farragher was concerned about dealing with SEN department and no response regarding ongoing problems.
- Cllr Wakeford had sent several pieces of correspondence in reference to roads on the Meadow development for information from Kent County Council. A FoI request had been made but this had been refused and no information was forthcoming.
- Cllr Perry made a general point in regard to his position on the MBC Planning Committee and that Kent Highways were always present in the past but no longer attend.

Cllr Black promised to obtain information on the items raised at this meeting.

Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):

Borough Cllr Perry provided the following update:

- Challenging a decision on spending £7m on reharmonising Maidstone House as the actual value of Maidstone House is not worth nearly as much as MBC are intending to spend. This will be discussed at a future MBC Council meeting.
- Proposal to go to MBC Full Council to install a padel court – MBC did not wish to take this forward but this would be challenged.
- Devolution is an issue which is currently being discussed at MBC as well as KCC.

Cllr Surgery Saturday 26th July 2025, 10am – 12noon at Staplehurst Library

Cllr Farragher will join Cllr Perry at the next Council surgery.

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

Civility and Respect

All attendees are reminded that this meeting is to be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and civility. Please ensure that all comments and contributions are made respectfully and considerately.

Present: Cllrs Hotson, Ash, Martin, Perry, Farragher, Pett, McLaughlin, Alesi, Melville, Costa, Wakeford were present. Kent County Cllr Black, Marden Parish Clerk (standing in for Staplehurst PC Clerk) and two members of the public were also in attendance.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Arger, Rhodes, Riordan and Sharp gave their apologies.

In the absence of the Chairman Cllr Martin chaired the meeting.

2. **COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:**

- 2.1. Declarations of Lobbying: No Cllr had been lobbied.
- 2.2. Changes to the Register of Interests; There were no changes to Cllrs Registers of Interest.
- 2.3. Interests in Items on the Agenda: Cllr McLaughlin had a non-pecuniary interest in item 5.5 as a Trustee of the Community Centre.
- 2.4. Requests for Dispensation: No requests for dispensation.
- 2.5. Request for dispensation to attend item 10.1
Resident was in attendance who wished to speak in the confidential part of this meeting. Following a debate this was agreed.
Cllr Ash proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resident as a special witness for item 10.1. Agreed by majority; For 11 Against 0 Abstain 0.

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

Pages 2359 – 2366 23rd June 2025 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/Full-Council-Staplehurst-Parish-Council-Staplehurst-Tonbridge)

Cllr Perry proposed, and Cllr Martin seconded to approve the minutes of the 23rd June 2025, agreed by majority; For 9, Against 0 and Abstain 2. Duly signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

4. **FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

4.1 **Payment list, Summation and Balance sheet (5 minutes)**

<u>Approved Payments 18th June - 8th July 2025</u>	<u>Amount</u>
HMRC - Tax & NI April	3180.65
HMRC - Tax & NI May	2526.50
Payroll & Pension Costs June	7549.96
P&F Cleaning - Bell Lane Toilets Clean/Open/Sun June	1010.00
CSG Global Education Ltd - Office Stationery	29.62
Maclin Pumps Ltd - Jubilee Field Pump Service	318.00
Maclin Pumps Ltd - Youth Club Pump Service	222.00
Evolution Skate Parks Ltd - Skatepark Repaint	9358.80
Heliocentrix Ltd - Microsoft Email & File Migration	777.60

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

Heliocentrix Ltd - Microsoft Business Basic June	161.42
Heliocentrix Ltd - Managed Silver x3 Workstations June	138.60
Bumbles Plant Centre - Plants GSG	122.53
Mr Alex Harvey - Youth Club Cleaning/Sundries May	65.00
Mr Alex Harvey - JF Pavilion Cleaning/Sundries May	45.00
Rumwoods Ltd - Bedding & Bamboo Canes GSG	44.04
Cllr Reimbursement - Travel Expenses MBC Planning Meeting	9.15
CSG Global Education – Stationery	2.34
Hugofox Ltd - Silver Subscription July	23.99
Homeleigh Timber - Fluorescent Tube Room 3	7.96
Adobe Systems - Monthly Subscription Jun-Jly	19.97
Sainsbury's - Greeting Card	2.00
NALC - Councillor Training Course	16.00
NALC - Cllr Training Course	16.00
MBC - Road Closure Licence Remembrance Day	100.00
Castle Water - Youth Club Water May	14.84
British Gas Lite - JF Pumping Station Electricity May-June	15.64
Kent County Council - Youth Club Lease/Purchase Jun-Sept	212.50
Telecoms World - Virtual Phone No. SEHT May	14.39
Telecoms World - Broadband Youth Club May	29.40
British Gas Lite - SF Pavilion Electricity Apr-Jun	35.53
British Gas Lite - Parish Office Electricity May-Jun	55.77
British Gas Lite - JF Pavilion Electricity May-Jun	278.31
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection May	96.06
MBC - Council Tax Parish Office Room 1 July	62.00
MBC - Council Tax Parish Office Rooms 2-3 July	72.00
MBC - Council Tax Bell Lane Toilets July	100.00
MBC - Council Tax Youth Club July	121.00
British Gas Lite - Bell Lane Toilets Electricity May-Jun	30.06
Sage Payroll – July	13.20
Lloyds Bank - Charges June	8.50
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	26,906.33

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE

1.40

Cllr Martin had met with the RFO and had discussed this with her. Cllr Perry was arranging to meet with the RFO to go through financial aspects three times a year.

No questions were raised.

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to approve the payment list above – agreed majority; 11 For, 0 against and 0 abstained.

These were duly signed by Cllrs Ash and Hotson.

The summation was noted.

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

4.2 **Contracts - NA**

4.3 **Basic Parish Allowance**

The Basic Parish Allowance report was noted and will be published on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Pett had asked to be taken off the list of Cllrs receiving the Basic Parish Allowance and therefore the figure at (ii) below would need to be amended.

Cllr Hotson proposed, and Cllr Ash seconded to approve resolution (i) below.

Agreed majority; 11 For, 0 against and 0 abstained.

(ii) Item to be deferred due to amendment of Cllr Pett not wishing to receive Parish Allowance.

Resolution: To:

ii. approve adding five additional persons to the Council Sage Payroll: cost £2 p.m. for 6-11 employees Total Cost £120 p.a.

iii. Basic Parish Allowance per Councillor £622.86, BPA Chairman £934.28.

Total Cost £4,048.58 p.a.

Budget Code – Administration

4.4 **Council donations 2025/2026**

Following a debate Cllrs Martin and Hotson wished there were more groups applying for grants especially Girl Guides and/or Scouts. Cllr Hotson requested that this be taken to the next Finance meeting to discuss further.

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Castro seconded to approve the resolution below

Agreed majority; 11 For, 0 against and 0 abstained.

Resolution: To approve the Employment, Finance and Strategy Group recommendations regarding Council donations in 2025/2026 as set out below

All Saints PCC Parish Magazine	250.00
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	£1,400.00

Budget Code Donations

4.5 **Air conditioning**

Cllr Martin raised concern of working conditions in the Parish Office with the recent high temperatures. Two units were quoted details of which had been circulated.

Cllr Farragher asked that these units be looked into prior to purchase in case windows still need to be open to extract the hot air – concern was also raised in regard to the noise some machines make.

Cllr Wakeford had an air conditioning unit which can be trialled for noise, size and usage.

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

Cllrs requested that the decision be deferred until units had been trial and further information obtained.

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below

Resolution: To approve the trial of an air conditioning unit prior to purchasing. To be brought back to Full Council for agreement.

Budget Code – Office equipment

5.5 Staplehurst Community Centre Trust request for CIL funding

The Clerk had recommended deferment of this request so that further discussion could be held prior to a decision being made. This would allow Cllrs to be provided with more detail and to investigate whether there are other projects that require funding.

Cllr Perry raised concern that this project had been going on for several years with no attempts of funding being made by the Centre as well as the information received being on maintenance rather than capital. Feel that there are other worthy projects in the parish which could benefit from CIL.

Cllr Farragher reported that the project for the Community Centre was broken down in phases due to the usage of the centre.

Cllr Melville understood to be £50,000 set aside by the Community Centre.

Cllr Pett would want to see a maintenance strategy set up by the Centre.

Cllr Ash proposed that a separate meeting be held with Cllrs and the Community Centre to discuss CIL and the future planned refurbishment.

Cllr Hotson were concerned that mention of Public Works Loan was raised in the report but no discussions had taken place on this. He reported that several years ago a consultation on the future of the Centre had been held when the Council agreed to support the plans along with improvements to Jubilee Field, which was also agreed.

Cllr Perry felt this request was slightly different from Jubilee Field as (1) SPC owned Jubilee Field and (2) external funding had been obtained.

Cllr Ash proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below

10 in Favour; 0 Against; 1 Abstain.

Resolution: To defer a final decision on SCCT request for CIL funding

20.21 County Cllr Black left the meeting.

5 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS

The report had been circulated separately from the Meeting Pack.

Cllr Hotson asked if there was an update on electric vehicle charging points. It was reported that Cllr Riordan had been pushing this but Cllr Perry would chase.

Cllr Hotson reported that the Girl Guides solicitors are now in contact with SPC solicitors in regards to the new lease.

No further questions/comments were raised.

6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION -

6.1 Devolution – standing item

All Cllrs had been asked, prior to the meeting, to send responses to the Clerk. Cllr Martin had met with the Clerk to go through the survey with all responses received and Cllr Martin asked the meeting if there was any additional information/deletions.

Cllr Ash agreed with comments on adult social care but felt that it is “passing the buck” down the line. He also raised concern that if Cllrs/staff undertake training this implies that SPC would accept the proposals.

Cllr Hotson felt the responses were good and agreed with the comments made by Cllr Ash. However, more information is required along with funding. The training section should be watered down until SPC know more.

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

Cllr Martin agreed to amend the survey questionnaire prior to submitting.
Cllr Ash proposed, and Cllr Castro seconded to approve the resolution below.
11 in Favour; 0 Against; 0 Abstain.

Resolutions: To approve the Council response to the KALC Reorganisation and Devolution Survey draft survey following slight amendment to the training section – as attached in Appendix A and Delegate to the Deputy Clerk and Cllr Martin to submit the response to KALC on behalf of the Council.

6.2 Disposal of redundant IT

Following a debate

Cllr Castro asked the question of usage – Cllr Melville responded that all the equipment were redundant/old. KCC would wipe the equipment prior to disposal/recycling.

Cllr Ash proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below

11 in Favour; 0 Against; 0 Abstain.

Cllr Melville will complete the online application and will action this with the Clerk.

Resolutions: to approve of the disposal of 12 items of redundant IT equipment via the KCC Device Disposal Scheme

6.3 To consider a Boot Fair at the Jubilee Field

The date was agreed prior to the meeting of 9th August but Cllrs were asked to formally approve for the minutes.

Cllr Martin was concerned that no charge was being proposed as no decision had been agreed by the Council.

Following a debate Cllr Farragher suggested a small amount of £10 be invoiced.

Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Pett seconded the amendment to cover cost of £10.

Cllr Ash proposed and Cllr Alesi to second to approve the resolution below.

11 in Favour; 0 Against; 0 Abstain.

Resolution: To approve a Boot Fair at the Jubilee Field 9th August 2025 at an invoiced cost of £10.00

6.4 Community Clean-up

Following a debate on the date for the community Clean-up. Cllr Pett reported that the main area for a clean-up was the urban area of the parish.

The preferred date was agreed as 20th September 2025.

Cllr McLaughlin proposed, and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below.

10 in Favour; 0 Against; 1 Abstain.

Resolution: To approve the date of 20th September 2025 for a community clean up

7. CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

Residents letter - Noted

SCEG letter: This letter raised concern about the proposed summer fete being arranged by another village organisation. The Clerk had responded to acknowledge receipt and Cllr Sharp had circulated a draft response to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Cllr Pett understood that SCEG reported that last year would be the last fete due to the lack of help and Cllr Hotson agreed.

Cllr Melville agreed that this was the case and a small group of residents had picked up to run the fete this year and were willing to work together with SCEG. He proposed for a meeting to be held with representatives of SPC and SCEG to move forward.

Cllr Ash agreed with Cllr Melville and proposed that Cllr Sharp's response be sent but with the additional request for a meeting.

Resolution: To delegate to Cllr Martin to amend the response, with RFO assistance, and to offer a meeting.

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

Cllr Ash proposed, and Cllr Pett seconded to approve the resolution below.
11 in Favour; 0 Against; 0 Abstain.

8. Chairman's Report

Update on Blue Light event – 16th August 2025 – A recent email had been circulated with copies of Insurance, Risk Assessment, and traffic plan. An informal meeting had taken place on Friday at which Cllr Alesi attended where concern was raised regarding parking as it was understood that approximately 1000 people may be in attendance.
Event is coming together and will information will be forwarded as received.

Cleaning contract

EFS Group agreed in principle to amend the cleaning contract, to state that the cleaning contractor would provide the equipment, cleaning materials etc. This will lead to an increase from £20 per hour to £25 per hour which had been agreed under delegated powers in consultation with the Chairman.

Cllr Castro proposed, Cllr Ash seconded to approve the increase from £20 per hour to £25 per hour - agreed majority 11 for, 0 against and 0 abstained.

3G Multi- Sport Pitch – update

Information had been circulated following a verbal response from MBC Planning stating that this application would be determined by 8th August 2025. Therefore Cllrs were asked for an extension to 8th August 2025.

Cllr Hotson was concerned as to why it was taking so long as costs were rising. Cllr Perry is raising with the Cabinet Member of MPC Planning Policy regarding this and would inform Cllrs once an answer had been received.

It had also been suggested that there could be a S106 agreement put in place on this application. If this happened SPC would need to appoint a planning solicitor to assist.

Cllr Martin had spoken with the Clerk to suggest a workshop is held to bring Cllrs up to speed on the project as this has been dragging on for several months. This was agreed to be held on 2nd August at 10am at the Youth Club.

The Clerk would be asked to produce an agenda for this and to strive to get responses from contractor and developer in writing prior to a workshop along with as much other information as possible. The Clerk would also be asked to set up a Teams meeting for any Cllrs unable to attend the workshop in person.

Cllr Pett proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to the agreement of an extension to 8th August.

Cllr Pett proposed, Cllr Perry seconded to approve a request to extend the planning application 24/502740/FUL until 8th August 2025 - agreed majority 11 for, 0 against and 0 abstained.

Cllr Hotson proposed, Cllr Ash seconded to hold a workshop to update Cllrs on 2nd August 2025.

10 for, 0 against, 1 abstained.

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

- 8.1 Committee and working group minutes for noting
- 8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes of 9th June 2025 and 30th June 2025
- 8.1.2 Road Safety Group minutes 2nd June 2025. Cllr Ash asked if SPC would receive the results of the traffic recording in Headcorn Road He also reported that the permanent 40mph speed indicator had been twisted and also several signs were dirty.
- 8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group minutes 16th June 2025 and 7th July 2025
- 8.1.4 SCEnic meeting minutes 26th June 2025
- 8.1.5 3G Multi-Sports pitch working group meeting – to be arranged
- 8.1.6 Employment, Finance and Strategy Group meeting minutes 12th June 2025
- 8.1.7 NDP Review Group meeting to be arranged
- 8.1.8 Communications Group meeting minutes of 18th June 2025
- 8.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting - to be arranged
- All the above were noted.

9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS - NA

Public Forum

Resident raised a few points:

Although the acoustics were not great in the South Hall they are extremely better than the Infant Hall

Air conditioning unit needs to be PAT Tested

Was sitting in the audience when SCEG reported that they would be disbanded but are still going with approx. 15 members. The main reason was lack of marshalling at events.

Pleased to hear that a meeting was going to be arranged. Over the years the events arranged have raised funds for a lot of the voluntary groups in the village and have considerable expertise in running events.

Is the 3G workshop open to the public? The Clerk would be asked on his return. If closed then communication after the workshop would be appreciated.

Asked that any updates/briefing on the redevelopment of the station should not be held confidentially but asked that details be provided to residents as soon after as possible.

21.07 One Member of the public left the meeting.

Due to the time Cllr Martin requested that Cllrs consider an extension to the meeting to discuss the confidential item.

Cllr Ash proposed and Cllr McLaughin seconded that the meeting be extended to 10pm. 11 for, 0 against, 0 abstained.

10 Confidential – due to commercial sensitivities

- 10.1 Staplehurst Railway Station update discussion of proposals discussed.

Meeting closed...21.58pm.....

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