Parish Office,

Staplehurst Community Centre,

High Street,

Staplehurst,

TN12 0BJ

Parish Clerk Richard Griffiths

01580 891761

clerk@staplehurst-pc.gov.uk

To the members of Staplehurst Parish Council, you are summoned to attend a meeting of Staplehurst Parish Council to be held.

Monday 26th October 2026, 7:30pm,

South Hall, Staplehurst Community Centre.

PUBLIC FORUM – Before and after the meeting the Chairman will invite members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each, relating to issues on the agenda or about planning issues of local concern. Please state name and address prior to speaking. Attendees are requested to notify the Chairman of any intention to film, photograph or record during the meeting / part of the meeting.

Comments about items on the agenda may be sent to clerk@staplehurst-pc.gov.uk by **4.00pm on the day of the meeting.**

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.

Kent County Councillor report – (Standing item)

Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):

Cllr Surgery Saturday 10am– 12noon at Staplehurst Library
Cllr Surgery 31st October 2026 Councillor Pett

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES:

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

2.1. Declarations of Lobbying
2.2. Changes to the Register of Interests
2.3. Interests in Items on the Agenda
2.4. Requests for Dispensation

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

Pages 2520 – 2525 5th October 2026 available at Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge (staplehurst-pc.gov.uk) to be signed by the Chairman.

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

4.1 Payment list, previously authorised by Council or under delegated authority and paid for – note payment list from 29th September 2026 – 19th October 2026

4.2 Website provider report (5 minutes)

Resolution: To consider the recommendation of the Communication Group to appoint Netwise as the Council website provider

4.3 Photocopier Report (5 minutes)

Resolution: To consider quotes for a new 5 year photocopier lease contract as shown in the report.

4.4 Christmas Motifs report (5minutes)

Resolution: To note update on Christmas Motifs – putting up, additional timers on new streetlights and taking down

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

6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION

6.1 Local Government Review Verbal update (1 minute)

6.2 Review External Audit report 2025/26 (5 minutes)

Resolution: to consider the External Audit report

6.3 Surrenden Field playground report (5 minutes)

Resolution: For Council to sign off final design and cost for the Surrenden Field Playground.

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

8 Chairman's Report (5 minutes)

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

8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes 12th October 2026

8.1.2 Road Safety Group, next meeting 29th October 2026

8.1.3 Jubilee Field Management Group 8th October 2026

8.1.4 Employment, Finance and Strategy group meeting 22nd October 2026 minutes to follow

8.1.5 SCEnic minutes 24th September 2026

8.1.6 NDP Review Group minutes 28th September and 19th October 2026

8.1.7 Communications Group minutes 7th October 2026

8.1.8 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting to be arranged

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

10 Confidential

10.1 HR Staff report

Pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 the Parish Council will be asked to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.'

Councillors are respectfully reminded that should they be unable to attend any Parish Council Meeting, of which this Agenda is a formal summons, they should notify the Parish Clerk with their apology and reason for non-attendance. Failure to do so for a continuous period of six months will result in automatic disqualification from the Council.

Deadline for such notification to the Parish Clerk is by 4.00pm on the meeting day.

RJ Griffiths

Richard Griffiths Parish Clerk, 21/10/2026

Parish Council Saturday Surgeries with Borough Councillor Perry (Staplehurst Library 10.00am – 12.00pm)	
Date	**Councillor**
31st October 2026	**Borough Councillor John Perry / TBC**
28th November 2026	**Borough Councillor John Perry / TBC**
19th December 2026	**Borough Councillor John Perry / TBC**
Future Parish Council meeting dates	
16th November 2026	**7:30pm South Hall Staplehurst Community Centre**
7th December 2026	**7:30pm South Hall Staplehurst Community Centre**
11th January 2027	**7:30pm South Hall Staplehurst Community Centre**

Minutes & Agenda Circulation List:

Chairman	Adele Sharp	**Vice Chairman**	Ani Martin
Mel Alesi	Margaret Arger	Richard Ash	Jose Castro
Catherine Farragher	Eric Hotson	Josh Melville	Bill Mclaughlin
John Perry	Alan Pett	Chris Rhodes	Paddy Riordan
Mike Wakeford		**County Councillor**	Brian Black

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL, COUNCIL MEETING 5TH OCTOBER 2026 MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM –

Guy Overton spoke about working with the Council and residents regarding the Henhurst Fram development. The developers – are seeking positive engagement and are aware of the concerns regarding community infrastructure.

Kent County Councillor report – (Cllr Black)

- Hawkenbury Bridge – series of meetings resulted on some limited improvements – will continue to push for improvements and monitor
- Cranbrook Rd crossing – seeking another meeting to agree a way forward include Cllr Riordan, (MBC) and Parish Council. MBC Cllr suggesting use funding for bus routes. Clerk clarified that this has been going on years, and we have received no new designs as the design team at KCC Highways keeps changing. Time is running out on the S106 funding.
- Cameras on Crossroads – Again pushing forward and raised with KCC cabinet member.
- Replacement of Village Entrance Sign – KCC want to agree in meeting on Cranbrook Rd – but should be a separate fund not S106.
- Local Government Review - now on hold KCC have spent £1m on the process,.

Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):

- EV charging in village – seeking local electricians
- School drop off / pick up parking – chasing the school

Cllr Perry raised several points – Wimpey Field more ASB – can we check Council insurance. At MBC planning presentation and housing land supply now down to 3.6 years
Green Lane – can we chase up KCC on reopening.

Cllr Surgery Saturday 10am– 12noon at Staplehurst Library

Report back Cllr Surgery 26th September 2026, Councillor Pett two issues raised cameras at crossroads and condition of bus shelters.

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

Present: Cllrs Sharp, Martin, Arger, Farragher, Alesi, Melville, Pett, Hoston, Ash, Riordan, Wakeford, Perry, Castro and the Clerk.

1. APOLOGIES: Cllrs Mclaughlin and Rhodes

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 2514 – 2519 14th September 2026 available at Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge (staplehurst-pc.gov.uk) to be signed by the Chairman. (Note page 2518 should be leasehold not freehold)

Cllr Pett proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the minutes of the 14th September 2026; Agreed by majority 8 for, 0 against, 5 abstained.

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

4.1 Payment list, previously authorised by Council or under delegated authority and paid for – Council noted payment list below

Staplehurst Parish Council Payment List — 1st - 28th September 2026

Date	Details	Amount
01/09/2026	Green Box Recycling	£390.00
01/09/2026	British Gas (Bell Lane Toilets)	£30.84
01/09/2026	British Gas (Surrenden Pavilion)	£34.66
01/09/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£61.00
01/09/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£71.00
01/09/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£105.00
01/09/2026	CF Corporate Finance (Laptop Hire)	£113.44
01/09/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£120.00
01/09/2026	British Gas (Parish Office)	£157.55
01/09/2026	British Gas (Jubilee Field)	£452.47
01/09/2026	Nest Pensions	£793.74
02/09/2026	Sainsbury's Supermarkets	£2.75
03/09/2026	Sainsbury's Supermarkets	£6.00
04/09/2026	Barbara Thompson	£144.00
04/09/2026	Forestry First Ltd	£672.00
09/09/2026	Pozitive Energy	£68.32
09/09/2026	Peninsula Business	£302.94
09/09/2026	Tarkett Sports (Plus International Payment Fees)	£95,027.00
11/09/2026	Sage UK Ltd	£506.40
11/09/2026	Tarkett Sports (Plus International Payment Fees)	£95,027.00
14/09/2026	British Gas	£1.28

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

14/09/2026	Scottish Water Business	£28.11
14/09/2026	Tarkett Sports (Plus International Payment Fees)	£36,494.97
15/09/2026	SmartestEnergy Business	£7.34
15/09/2026	SmartestEnergy Business	£13.92
15/09/2026	SmartestEnergy Business	£62.26
15/09/2026	Harper James Ltd	£4,464.72
15/09/2026	Poyntell	£833.52
15/09/2026	Starboard Systems (Scribe)	£100.80
15/09/2026	Mr BJ Hawkins (Wimpey Field Maintenance)	£50.00
15/09/2026	Kent County Council (Colour & Mono Printing)	£105.98
15/09/2026	Heliocentrix Limited	£186.62
15/09/2026	J Birkby Plumbing	£102.00
16/09/2026	Scottish Water Business	£72.38
16/09/2026	Castle Water Ltd	£182.54
16/09/2026	Post Office Counter	£239.33
17/09/2026	Business Stream	£70.74
18/09/2026	Castle Water Ltd	£8.76
18/09/2026	Sainsbury's Supermarkets	£14.79
21/09/2026	Cleaning (A Harvey)	£250.00
21/09/2026	County Fire Protection	£63.24
21/09/2026	D Fuller (JF Maintenance)	£410.00
21/09/2026	Forestry First Ltd	£540.00
21/09/2026	KCC Commercial (Youth Club Lease)	£212.50
21/09/2026	Locum Locks	£939.67
21/09/2026	Watts Electrical	£345.00
21/09/2026	P&F Cleaning Services	£1,070.00
21/09/2026	Lloyds Service Charges	£10.00
22/09/2026	British Gas	£19.50
22/09/2026	BT Group PLC	£113.57
23/09/2026	Telecoms World	£52.78
24/09/2026	HMRC	£2,479.55
24/09/2026	Adobe Pro	£19.97
25/09/2026	Staff Net Pay	£7,054.06
28/09/2026	British Gas	£0.46
28/09/2026	British Gas	£3.97
28/09/2026	Countrystyle Recycling	£84.29
28/09/2026	Heliocentrix Limited	£184.80
28/09/2026	Cam-Tech Security	£156.00
28/09/2026	Choice Support	£432.50
28/09/2026	Countrystyle Recycling	£84.29
28/09/2026	Fen Pest Control Ltd	£96.00
28/09/2026	Forestry First Ltd	£4,056.00
28/09/2026	Staff Reimbursement	£14.63
28/09/2026	Arthur J Gallagher	£3,555.92
28/09/2026	Playsafety Limited	£342.00
28/09/2026	CSG Global Education	£57.56
28/09/2026	Cranbrook Fencing	£1,550.00
Total		**£261,324.43**

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

4.2 Unity Trust Bank report

Following a discussion, which included that this is a major decision as changing bank is not to be taken lightly, Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below agreed by majority 11 for, 0 against and 2 abstained.

Resolution: To open a Business Account with Unity Trust Bank

5 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS

2312/6.6 Surrenden Field clerk highlighted that work has progressed well, that Cllr Melville has worked hard to get the site ready and liaise with contractors, that Cllr Wakeford raised a number of concerns.

It was clarified that no asbestos assessment has been done but all indications are that there is no asbestos.

Cllr Wakeford and Clerk to review pre start documents for construction of new pavilion and Surrenden Field playground plus work up infrastructure Document for future works

Clerk noted KCC Highways requested that street light in parade (with our CCTV cameras) needs to come down due to structural weakness – therefore we need to remove CCTV in a parade – Cam-Tech quote £1,150.00 plus VAT to remove the CCTV.

Cllr Riordan proposed, and Cllr Ash seconded to approve that Cam-Tech to remove Parade CCTV £1,150 plus VAT – agreed unanimously. (Budget Code CCTV)

As the Council has approved the Civility and Respect Code of conduct – sign the national pledge

6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION

6.1 Local Government Review update

Following a discussion, noted that KCC Parade Toilet should be included but would need to obtain land from other landowner as well, also that Bell Lane Car Park should include the public toilets. Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below agreed unanimously.

Recommendation: To approve the Employment, Finance and Strategy Group recommendation of asset transfers as set out below

KCC Assets

- to seek a settlement figure from KCC for Youth Club lease purchase land from the 1st April 2027 – once known, we can consider in budget setting process for 2027/28.
- Staplehurst Library potential as key community facility also a Community Assets – ensure we retain an interest.
- Parade Toilet
- The other sites watching brief

MBC Assets

- We are progressing the purchase of Surrenden Field.
- Bell Lane Car park and public Toilet – ensure we retain an interest
- General discussion on other small parcels of open space – just keep watching brief

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

6.2 Strategic Action Plan monitoring report

Following a discussion, noted work on greener group and the flower boxes need some attention

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the resolution below agreed by majority 11 for, 0 against and 2 abstained.

Resolution: To consider the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy Group to approve the Strategic Action Plan monitoring report as attached in **Appendix A.**

6.3 Churchyard maintenance report

Following a discussion Cllr Perry proposed, and Cllr Farragher seconded to approve the resolution below agreed by majority 11 for, 0 against and 2 abstained.

Resolution: To approve;

i. Serve the six months' notice period on the Churchyard Agreement, maintenance

ii. Welcome an application for a donation from the PCC for 2027/28 financial year.

6.4 Community Clean Up report

Following a discussion Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded to approve the resolution below agreed by majority 12 for, 0 against and 1 abstained.

Resolution: To approve the Community Clean Up dates in 2027 as

- Saturday - 10th April 2027 – 10am – 12noon Youth Club
- Saturday 18th September 2027 – 10am – 12 noon Youth Club

6.5 Christmas report

Following a discussion where it was noted to increase in Christmas Motifs down Station Rd and help is required to replace broken bulbs

Cllr Alesi proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below agreed unanimously

Resolution: To approve Purchase of Christmas Tree from Hole Park for £295.00 plus VAT (Note KCC Cllr Black has offered to purchase tree from his KCC budget)

Cllr Alesi proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve draft letter to shops regarding "Shop Window" competition

6.6 Community Engagement

Following a discussion which highlighted the need for Communications Group to come back with more detail costs etc Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve in principle a programme of community "meet and greet" sessions and Community Group report back

6.7 MBC Planning Complaint

Following a discussion which noted the limit of the response from MBC and general agreement that the Parish Council should pursue it with the Ombudsman. Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Melville seconded to approve the resolution below agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To escalate planning complaint against MBC to Ombudsman

(NOTE Cllr Perry and Cllr Riordan did not take part in the discussion or vote)

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

6.8 NDP Review Group report

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

Resolution: to approve the NDP Review Group recommendation to approve the response to the Planning Inspectors comments as set out in **Appendix B** of this report

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

8 Chairman's Report

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

8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes 21st September 2026

8.1.2 Road Safety Group, meeting to be arranged

8.1.3 Jubilee Field Management Group – first meeting 8th October 2026

8.1.4 Employment, Finance and Strategy group meeting 17th September 2026 minutes

8.1.5 SCEnic minutes 24th September 2026

8.1.6 NDP Review Group minutes 28th September 2026 to follow

8.1.7 Communications Group meeting to be arranged

8.1.8 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting to be arranged

9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS NA

10 Confidential

10.1 HR Staff Report

Council await the HR staff report but under Delegated Authority the RFO hours are to include up to 7 hours per week overtime – until the HR report is presented to next Council meeting.

Meeting closed.....9.15pm.....

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

Staplehurst Parish Council Payment List — 29th September - 19th October 2026

Date	Details	Amount
29/09/2026	Npower	£37.31
29/09/2026	KCC Commercial (Youth Club Lease)	£212.50
30/09/2026	British Gas	£504.18
01/10/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£61.00
01/10/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£71.00
01/10/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£105.00
01/10/2026	CF Corporate Finance (Laptop Hire)	£113.44
01/10/2026	Maidstone Borough Council Tax	£120.00
05/10/2026	Locum Locks	£270.00
05/10/2026	PB Packing Group (Caretaker Supplies)	£56.71
08/10/2026	Defibstore Ltd (Defibrillator Supplies)	£73.20
09/10/2026	Peninsula Business	£302.94
09/10/2026	Choice Support	£432.50
09/10/2026	Evolution Skate Park	£10,794.00
09/10/2026	Heliocentrix Limited	£186.62
09/10/2026	Starboard Systems (Scribe)	£100.80
09/10/2026	Bumbles Plant Centre	£125.81
09/10/2026	Cleaning (A Harvey)	£125.00
12/10/2026	Nest Pensions	£1,073.28
16/10/2026	Pozitive Energy	£46.74
16/10/2026	Pozitive Energy	£47.29
16/10/2026	Mazars LLP	£1,008.00
16/10/2026	Homeleigh Timber	£225.45
16/10/2026	J Birkby Plumbing	£90.00
16/10/2026	KCPFA (Subscription)	£20.00
16/10/2026	JW Rubbish & Recycling	£400.00
19/10/2026	Castle Water Ltd	£8.47
19/10/2026	SmartestEnergy Business	£25.13
19/10/2026	SmartestEnergy Business	£43.19
19/10/2026	Scottish Water Business	£79.11
19/10/2026	SmartestEnergy Business	£133.50
19/10/2026	Lloyds Service Charges	£10.00
Total		**£16,902.17**

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Item / Title 4.2	**Website provider report**
Council, Committee, Working Group	Council
Meeting Date, Time & Venue	26th October 2026, South Hall
Report Author	Cllr Melville
Purpose	To consider a provider for the Council website
Resolution	To consider the recommendation of the Communications Group to appoint Netwise as the Council's website provider, subject to satisfactory references.
Link to Strategic Action Plan	Administration

Background

The Councils website is an important means of communication with the public. It has been in place for a number of years and needs an uplift.

The Communications Group have undertaken a process of agreeing a specification, tender process, assess potential providers and shortlist for interview.

Detail

The Communications Group shortlisted 4 potential providers for interview, see below

- Parish Online
- Augergine
- Netwise
- Hugo Fox

All are respected website providers for Parish Councils, following interviews the Communications Group assessment is set out in **Appendix A** of this report.

The Communications Group asked the RFO undertook a financial check risk assessment which is shown in **Appendix B**.

The communications group are seeking references – not available at the time of writing this report.

The Communications Group recommendation, subject to satisfactory references is to appoint Netwise.

- The one off set up cost are £699
- Ongoing annual cost is £440

The aim will be to implement this for the new year 2027.

Financial impact: One off cost in 2026/27 £699 ongoing annual cost £440

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Budget Code: Village Update & Website
Additional information

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Item / Title 4.3	**Photocopier contract report**
Council, Committee, Working Group	Council
Meeting Date, Time & Venue	26th October 2026, South Hall
Report Author	Clerk
Purpose	New photocopier contract
Resolution	To consider quotes for a new 5 year photocopier lease contract as shown in the report.
Link to Strategic Action Plan	Administration

Background

The current contract with Sharps expires in end of October 2026, the fees are

- Rental £88.32 per quarter
- £0.0022 b/w per copy
- £0.0223 colour per copy.

On top of rental, we current spend about £90 per quarter on printing.

Detail

The office obtained three quotes for a 5 year photocopier lease contract, please see quotes below

	Quarterly rental	Black and white copy	Colour copy
1	£100.49	£0.0022	0.0195
2	£135.00	£0.0026	0.026
3	£240.00	0.00	0.00

Financial impact: Within budget

Budget Code: Administration

Additional information

Clerks Report October 2026				
Green on track	**Amber needs chasing**	**Red urgent work required**	**Completed**	
Page no	**Action**	**Responsible**	**Update**	**Status**
2081/7.1 2374/10.1 2382/10.1	S106 funding for Railway Station	Cllr Wakeford	Council amendments and feedback sent to NR / SER – developing scheme for 2026. Email update circulated last week	Needs chasing
2108/6.3	Progress Cranbrook Road survey for pelican pedestrian crossing, footpath / bus stop improvements and 30mph signage / area	Cllr Sharp	Chased again 28.1.2026 and 27.2.26 New KCC officer appointed – Cllr Black chasing up. Awaiting follow up meeting. Chased up again on 2.07.26, further meeting being arranged 16.9.26	Needs chasing
2175/7	RSG consider crossing signage near Church	RSG	Chased children's crossing sign 28.01.2026. and 27.2.26 KCC, not enough evidence of older elderly people crossing sign. Cllr Black chasing up	Needs chasing
2199/5 2265/6.5 2330/6 2388/6.2	Need to clarify Girl Guides lease at Jubilee Field Agreed variations to lease and fees plus Annual Licence and fee	JFWG	Council agreed lease details sent to Girl Guides awaiting legal completion. Annual licence agreed Awaiting sign off of Deed of Variation	Needs chasing
2283/10.1 2305/6.2 2466/6.2	Sport and Recreation Management contract for Jubilee Field, if 3G Multi-Sport pitch built	Council	Site visits held, meetings with references and tender submissions received 5th December 2025. Council appointed Swale Community Leisure – meeting on lease and contract taken place Draft Licence sent to solicitors	Needs chasing

2487/4.5			Working with solicitors to finalise Sport and Recreation Management Contract MOA agreed 24.8.26	
2279/4.6b	Parade Disabled Toilet	SCEnic	KCC own the building – contacted new legal contact – now have code. Cllr Black chasing	Needs chasing
2312/6.6 2497/6.5	New Surrenden Field Pavilion project	RFO / Cllr Sharp	Positive pre-application meeting with MBC Public consultation in early 2026 positive. Agree to appoint Hanson – CCTV removed, skip cleared out, Demolition completed	On track
2333/7.7 2359/PF 2421/6.6 2525/6.8	Draft Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Review	All	Council approved "final version," sent to MBC. MBC to lead on Regulation 16 consultation –Closed 23rd August 2026. Inspector's queries, Response sent	On track
2427/4.4 2488/5a	a) Annual Donation £17,500 b) Addition cost £1,767	RFO	See report	On track
2454/6.3	ASB Wimpey Field	Clerk	Liaise with MVCP, residents and Police	Needs Chasing Up
2455/6.5	Summer Playscheme the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership – 27th May 2026 (half term) and Bio Blitz 12th August 2026 MVCP Volunteer days at Wimpey Field – 15th August, 15th September 17th November 10th December 2026 and	Clerk	Playscheme dates as 27th July – 14th August 2026 To retain the Playscheme fees at £7 for prebooked and £10 booked on the day. Very successful and awaiting final 2026 report.	Completed awaiting report and invoice.

	a fifth day in January 2027 to be confirmed.			
2458	Police cameras at Traffic lights	RSG / Cllr Black	Cllr Black to lead project using s106 funding	Needs chasing up
2458	Replacement of Village Entrance sign on A229 from Cranbrook	RSG / Cllr Black	Cllr Black to lead project – seeking insurance funding to cover costs	Needs chasing up
2465/5	Allotment plot 3	Cllr Pett	Site visit - feel the best bet is to drain on into neighbouring pond – Approval from local Residents Association drafting drainage design and report back to Council.	On track
2465/5 2507/5	Bell Lane hedge	Clerk	Submitted TPO request and seeking Hedge Protection Notice. Council approved on 3rd August 2026	On track
2468/6.4	Purchase extra Christmas lights	Clerk	Ordered lights and loading – fee for putting up additional motifs £3,140 for traffic management only.	On track
2468/6.6a 2472/6.2	Main pitch drainage specification Only 1 quote – defer obtain quotes in early 20207 for works in May 2027	Clerk	Approved	Defer until Jan 2027, work May 2027
2476/17.2 24500/Pf	ATC survey specification	Clerk	Approved, taking place September 2026. Additional site added – invoice HPC. Report to RSG and then onto Council	On track September 2026
2476/17.1	Council street light assessment	Clerk	Approved, seeking quotes report next meeting.	On track
2484/Cllr Perry	Review GTSP sites	NDP review Group	Clerk contacted MBC planning for up to date list. Circulated MBC list 27.7.26 Planning	On track

			Committee considering	
2487/4.5	3G pitch Sports and Recreation Management contract - solicitor	Clerk / Chairman	Harper James - £7,895 plus VAT	On track
2490/10.1 2518/6.2	Hawkenbury Bridge	Cllr Wakeford	Further meeting with KCC Highways – see update report Issue response to KCC highways and press release	On track
2491/PF	ASB Longstrakes	Cllr Wakeford	New bollard to be installed by Management Company	On track
2496/5	Skate Jam / Community scheme	Cllr Sharp	Liaising with SCL and skatepark company – regarding October 2026, as rained off in summer Opening event 28th October 2026	On track
2461/5b 2505/5 2524/6.7	Complaint to MBC regarding delay in planning	Clerk	Escalate to stage 2, 14.8.2026 Escalate to Ombudsman 5.10.26	On track
2499	Clarify A5 Bus Service	Cllr Black	Report back from KCC meeting	On track
2500	Reopen Green lane	Cllr Black	Chasing up	On track
2500/JP	Changes in Planning processes	All	Chasing presentation to circulate	On track
2509/4.2	Ditch works	Clerk	Agreed UMIDB £550 plus vat work in October	On track
2512/6.3 2518/6.3	Purchase of Surrenden Field from MBC	Clerk	Agreed in principle for £1 Agree legal fees up to £7,000	On track
2512/6.4	Adoption of Wimpey Field as LNR	Clerk	Agreed in principle await MBC report	On track

2517/5	Escalate Financial Complaint against Lloyds Bank to the Financial Ombudsman	RFO / Cllr Ash	Await response	On track
2518/6.4	Surrenden Playground	Cllr Melville	Proludic preferred contractor – report back with final report	On track
2523/4.2	Open Utility Bank account	RFO	Once VAT issue is resolved.	On track
2525/5	Remove CCTV from parade as requested by KCC	Clerk	Completed 19.10.26	Completed
2524/6.3	Terminate Churchyard Agreement - maintenance	Clerk	Sim months Termination issued – termination from April 2027	Ontrack
2524/6.2	Community Clean dates agreed	Clerk	10th April and 18th September 2027	Ontrack
2524/6.5	Christmas Tree and shop window competition	Clerk	Tree ordered and letters distributed	On track
2525/6.8	NDP Review response	Clerk	Forward response to planning inspector	Completed

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Item / Title 6.2	**External Auditor report**
Council, Committee, Working Group	Council
Meeting Date, Time & Venue	26th October 2026, South Hall
Report Author	Clerk RFO
Purpose	To consider the External Auditors Report
Resolution	To consider the External Auditors Report
Link to Strategic Action Plan	Administration

Background

The Councils Internal Audit for the financial year 2025.26 was signed off by Council at the AGM on the 11th May 2026 and submitted to Forvis Mazar – the nationally appointed External Auditor for Parish Councils – for external scrutiny.

Detail

The External Audit report for 2025.26 is attached in **Appendix A** of this report.

Note no issues in "scope for improvement".

This speaks very highly of Lissi Smith, Responsible Financial Officer – who started at the end of the March 2026 and had to pick up the previous year's finances.

Financial impact: NA

Budget Code: NA

Additional information

A

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Kent
TN12 0BJ

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348
Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk

Date: 30 September 2026

Dear Mrs Smith

Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2026

We have completed our review for the year ended 31 March 2026 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the review, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council should consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, such as the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioners' Guide (England) 2026/27. This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge at the following website: **https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/practitioners-guide-2025.html**.

Please also note that a copy of the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide has now been released and is available, alongside a summary of the summary of changes from the 2025 version, at the following website: **https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/practitioners-guide-2026-27.html**. We would encourage all authorities to become familiar with this document ahead of preparing their 2026/27 Annual Governance and Accountability Returns.

Action you are required to take:

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In summary, you are required to:

Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement **on or before 30 September to confirm:**

- that the review has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.

- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.

Forvis Mazars LLP
Forvis Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Forvis Mazars Global, a leading global professional services network. Forvis Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website, but this period must be reasonable.

Minor scope for improvement in 2026/27

No minor issues identified.

Amendment to the Practitioners' Guide 2026/27 in respect of Section 2 Box 11 Trust Fund Transactions

As part of the Accounting Statements (Section 2), the authority is asked to confirm whether there are any trust fund transactions included in the figures. Box 11 has been amended to state the authority should answer based on whether trust fund transactions have been excluded from the AGAR.

We wish to draw attention to a change within the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (point 2.32) which confirms the authority will need to respond 'Yes' where the figures include trust fund transactions. We would encourage all authorities to familiarise themselves with the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (available on the NALC website) ahead of completing their 2026/27 AGAR.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

Audit fee

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at **Audit Fees | Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (saaa.co.uk)** will follow.

If your invoice is not as expected, please check the audit fee scales via the link above as your fee band may have changed.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Commitment to achieving net zero

We've made an important change to how we handle post - and sustainability is driving it.

In line with our net zero targets, we encourage digital communication wherever possible. However, should it be necessary for you to communicate with us by post, our correspondence address is **30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU.**

Yours sincerely

Nicola Hallas

Nicola Hallas
Director
For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Item / Title 6.3	**Surrenden Playground report**
Council, Committee, Working Group	Council
Meeting Date, Time & Venue	26th October 2026, South Hall
Report Author	Cllr Melville
Purpose	To consider final report on final design and costs for Surrenden Field playground.
Resolution	For Council to sign off final design and cost for the Surrenden Field Playground.
Link to Strategic Action Plan	Community Infrastructure

Background

At the Council meeting on 14th September 2026 Council approved the SCENic recommendation to appoint Proludic as preferred contractor and report back to Council with a final report.

This is the final report.

Detail

Following a series of meetings the final details and costs are shown in **Appendix A** and the layout in **Appendix B** of this report. The final cost is £49,999.99.

The aim is for the work to commence in early January 2027, the costs include preliminaries, welfare and making good if there is damage to Surrenden Field.

Once appointed we will liaise with the Contractor on CDM regulations, Health and Safety, Method Statements so all is agreed prior to Christmas 2026 in good time for the New Year.

Financial impact: Within Budget

Budget Code: Use of £45,000 Earmarked Reserves and £5,000 MBC Grant

Additional information: Playground Data sheets

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

12TH OCTOBER 2026

PUBLIC FORUM – 26/503590 – resident spoke against having concerns regarding application. They live in a historical setting with a listed barn as a neighbour and original building they live in was also listed. Risk of flooding as they have a pond and are concerned the water level would be affected, there is no ecological assessment, no information regarding foul water impact, concerned about loss of dark skies due to light pollution and loss of quiet.

Resident spoke in support as the site has been tidied and looks much better.

Owner of the land spoke as seeking comments and concerns from residents, has gone for porous tarmac, area is Flood zone 1and historically this area does not flood, and looking at low lighting. No plan for selling land.

Present Cllrs. Arger, Ash, Hotson, Pett and Sharp.
(Cllr Arger took the minutes as the Clerk was unavailable)

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Farragher, Mclaughlin and Wakefield.

APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES: Minute Pages 1874P - 1876P of 21st September 2026 available at: http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/planning-committee/

Cllr. Pett proposed and Cllr. Sharp seconded to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st September 2026 – agreed by majority 0f 4, 1 abstained. Duly signed by the chairman of the meeting.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda: -

1. Declarations of Lobbying – all 26/503590.
2. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests- NA
3. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda - NA
4. Requests for Dispensation - NA

CLERK'S PLANNING REPORT:

- 23/502352 – won at appeal. Not clear who is responsible for costs.
- 26/500660 Land south of Marden Road is at MBC Planning Committee on 15th October 2026.
- 26/503738 Merchant House Station Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0QH - missed the deadline for this meeting but determination date 30th November 2026

Signed by Chairman.....Dated.....

FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

26/503590/FULL – Land at Cross At Hand Chart Hill Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0RW Change of use from Agricultural to Traveller's site including siting of 4 x day rooms, 4 x touring caravans, 4 x static units and parking.

Following a debate Cllr. Sharp proposed and Cllr. Arger seconded to recommend refusal. This is not an allocated site for Gypsy, Traveller and Show People and is at present agricultural land. Kent Highways has made no comment, but concern is expressed regarding the visual display from the site. The site is not sustainable with limited bus service and road safety issues for cyclists. There is no pavement to the busy road A229 junction. Concerns regarding the flood assessment on the whole site. Drainage and surface water issues not clarified in documents and should the septic tank go beside a pond. This is a rural heritage setting and a Heritage statement is required. An ecology report should also be provided. This site is not in the present MBC LP. MBC – Dark Skies policy ON7. Against LPRSP15, LPRHOU8, LPRSP9, LPRQD4 and LPRSP14(A). Against NPPF – due to flood risk and effect on local properties.

26/503506/FULL - 3 Sergison Crescent Staplehurst Kent TN12 0FP Partial conversion of existing detached garage to a study, with part of the building retained as storage space. Insertion of window and french doors.
Following a debate Cllr. Sharp proposed and Cllr. Pett seconded to approve - agreed unanimously

26/503516/FULL – Hen and Duckhurst Farm The Barn Marden Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0PD Erection of a single storey double detached garage with carport. Existing outbuildings to be removed.
Following a debate Cllr. Sharp proposed and Cllr. Pett seconded to approve - agreed unanimously.

26/503603/FULL – Oak View Marden Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0JG Siting of 1no. additional mobile home, 1no. touring caravan, and erection of a day room.
Following a debate Cllr. Pett proposed and Cllr. Hotson seconded to recommend refusal. Assumption this is an allocated site though not in LP. Concern expressed the this is another subdivision of the site and is now over intensification and is not sustainable.

LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATES – N/A.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS – N/A.

DECISIONS: (for noting)
26/504992/FULL Land adjacent to Dane Mead Villas George Street Staplehurst Kent TN12 0RB Demolition of 4no. sheds. Erection of 6no. dwelling house (Use class C3), comprising 4 x 3 bed and 2 x 4 bed with access provided from George Street including

the repositioning of the kerb, provision of 16 car parking places, 20 cycle spaces and associated landscaping and hard standing. MBC granted with 22 conditions – SPC recommended refusal.

26/503066/SUB Copp William Farm Marden Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0PB Submission of details pursuant to condition 2 (ecological enhancement), 3 (hedgerow planting) and 4 (landscaping scheme) subject to application 25/504250/FULL. MBC discharged a condition.

Meeting closed.....8.15pm

Signed by Chairman.....Dated.....

Jubilee Field Management Group meeting

8th October 2026

Minutes

1. **Present / Introductions**

Cllrs Sharp, Melville, Alesi, Arger plus Dave Harcourt (SCL) Ben Ryder (SCL) and the Clerk.

2. **Terms of Reference – circulated**

Group discussed and acknowledged Terms of Reference.

3. **Election of Chairman**

Following a debate – Melville proposed and Arger seconded Cllr Sharp to be Chairman of the group – agreed unanimously.

4. **3G Pitch opening event update (28th October 2026, 2pm at 3G pitch)**

Add Michael Ward CHAFC to invite list – done

Event will be

- Skate Jam from 10 – 3pm
- Football coaching 2pm – 4pm – plus inflatables
- Formal opening 2pm
- Speeches MBC Mayor, SPC Chairman and SCL Chairman
- Balloon Arch @£250 plus VAT – RG chase up
- Photos – SCL
- PA system SCL
- Gazebos – one form SCL and one from SPC (in walk way around pitch)
- Reception for dignitaries – use Guide Hall? (RG)
- SPC cover cost of light refreshments
- Posters – BR to double check

5. **Outstanding items or SNAGs - discuss**

3G Pitch construction

- BNG planting November 2026
- Pump alarm – indicates service required? SCL reported to Slatters

Site issues

- Shutter keys – more being ordered but looking to replace locking systems

- Site Padlocks – replaced
- Key list to be held by SCL – SPC need to sign for keys
- CCTV – BR forward information to RG to clarify - timer emergency lights also.
- Needing to pressure wash the path – several times per week
- Scrap on site – previous scrap operator has declined to finalise the work new scrap operator on site tomorrow to remove scrap £400 – liaising with DF. Agreed under Delegated Authority in consultation with the Chairman.
- Pitch

Water on pitch – due to water tension in a 3G pitch

Good level of fill – brushed each week

- Car park

Emergency gate – still parking in front of Emergency Gate use

Polite note on cars, educate club managers and review signage / lines - SCL

Car park over flow now being used most evenings – monitor lighting in overflow car park

- SMFC CIC request for a Boardroom.

Following a debate, agreed not enough space and SMFC CIC could use small meeting room at Girl Guides.

Cllr Melville proposed, and Cllr Arger seconded not to approve SMFC CIC Boardroom request – agreed unanimously

Clerk raised the issue of the potential SMFC CIC Club house – currently have planning permission – see link below

24/502042/FULL | Erection of a club house with decking area, 1no. 50 person covered seating stand and 1no. 50 person covered standing area, including repositioning of existing 50 person covered standing area and ticket booth. | Jubilee Playing Fields Headcorn Road Staplehurst Tonbridge Kent TN12 0BU

However, SMFC CIC seeking to submit a new larger clubhouse – will circulate current Heads of Terms which could role forward into any new design.

Catering on site

Current catering on site is by SMFC CIC using pavilion kitchen – matches and evenings if 3G pitch busy – very much an opportunity for SMFC CIC.

6. **Various roles and groups**

RG explained that the oversight of the Jubilee Field is shown in Schedule 9, Liaison procedure in the draft Sport and Recreation Management Contract (summarised below)

SCHEDULE 9 REGULAR LIAISON BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND CONTRACTOR;

THE OPERATOR SHALL REGULARLY LIAISE WITH THE COUNCIL, IN LINE WITH;

a) **Parish Councillor and Council Client Officer** - Regular liaison / reporting between contractor (SCL) and the Council's nominated Parish Councillor and Client Officer.

The Group agreed to nominated Cllr Sharp , the Clerk is Client Officer

b) **Project Laison Group** – shall be organised by the Council and include the operator, Kent FA, site partners. It shall meet up to three times per year.

The Group agreed seeking meeting in December 2026

c) **Jubilee Field Management Group** - shall be organised by the Council and the operator will report to this group on a monthly basis. This is the key reporting and monitoring group.

The Group agreed 2nd Thursday of every month 2pm

d) **Financial monitoring** - The operator shall use an open book approach so the Council's Responsible Financial Officer can liaise with the operator's Financial Officer as required.

Council RFO discuss with DH of SCL

e) **Quarterly reporting to Council** - The operator shall report quarterly to Jubilee Field Management Group and on to the Council on performance and any issues that arise.

1st Contract quarter is Sept, Oct and November so report in December to this group and onto next Council meeting

2nd Contract quarter is Dec, Jan and Feb so report in March to this group and onto next Council meeting

3rd Contract quarter is March, April and May so report in June to this group and onto next Council meeting

4th Contract quarter June, July and August so report in September to this group and onto next Council meeting

f) Annual Report – The operator will provide an Annual Contract Report, **(Contract Year is September to August)** before the end of December each year cover key performance and general issues.

Report to this group and onto next Council meeting.

g) **User Group** – The operator shall organise a quarterly user group of site partners and invite a Parish Councillor

The Group agreed to nominate Cllr Alesi as Council representative – SCL seeking meeting end of October 2026

7. Example contract report – for discussion

BR led the discussion:

SCL only operating for a month, a really good start.

Focus has been on the bookings of SMFC as the Football Foundation partner club.

Fitted in other bookings around SMFC CIC

Now having to turn groups away (Monday – Thursday midweek)

Looking to grow day time usage, holiday programme and informal usage.

Clerk asked to clarify SCL staffing issues for the site

DH – Strategic oversight

BR – Initially manging bookings but then hand over to Lauren King

Lauren King – Head of Operations overseeing day to day working on site regularly

Connie – Facility Manager – day to day working of site

Dean Fuller – Service Contract as Jubilee Field Caretaker Groundsman. On site every day opening closing general work

Following a debate acknowledged that Cllr Alesi role / knowledge of site (Girl Guides, SMFC CIC catering) also been extremely helpful.

8. Date of next meeting – 12.11.2026, 2pm at Parish Office

SCENIC Meeting Minutes

Thursday 24 September 2026

Date	Thursday 24 September 2026
Time	7pm
Present	Melanie Alesi, Josh Melville, Adele Sharp
Apologies	Ani, Jose

1. Surrenden Field Pavilion

The project remains broadly on track for groundworks to commence on 5 October 2026.

The electrical supply must be disconnected and made safe before demolition. This has been identified as a UK Power Networks matter. The intention is to request an emergency disconnection on Monday, with the cost currently unknown but accepted as necessary.

A skip is booked for Monday and arrangements will be made to place it beside the pavilion. The existing building will then be emptied and stripped out as far as practicable. Items that are to be retained, including the bench and wheelbarrow, will need temporary storage or transport.

The external colour was revisited. Golden Oak has fire certification, but the certificate is not to the latest specification. Given that the building is in a public space and owned by the Parish Council, the group agreed to use the darker brown finish with current certification rather than accept the additional risk associated with the older certification.

The interior will be dry-lined after the first-fix electrical and plumbing work. It was agreed that standard plug sockets should be fitted initially; any USB sockets can be added later if required to avoid unnecessary electrician mark-up.

The position and requirements for the incoming electrical supply, meter/fuse equipment and ducting still need to be clarified with the building supplier and electricians, particularly as the utility equipment may need to be externally accessible.

> **Action:** Arrange the UK Power Networks disconnection and make-safe works, and proceed with emptying/gutting the pavilion once the skip is in place.
>
> **Action:** Clarify with the building supplier/electrician the required ducting, cable entry point and external meter/fuse fixing position before the new building is erected.

2. Surrenden Field Playground

Proludic has been appointed to take the playground project forward. A design meeting with Tim Bird was scheduled for 25 September.

The group noted that the total project cost must remain within the £50,000 procurement limit; if the price exceeds this threshold, a new tender process may be required. A concern was raised that labour may not have been included in the initial figure, and this will need to be resolved in the revised proposal.

The following elements were agreed as firm requirements:

- New swings.
- A new inclusive multi-play unit, with features allowing carer assistance.
- An accessible picnic bench.

- A sensory path or equivalent sensory provision.

The existing roundabout is in serviceable condition and the group favoured retaining it rather than replacing it. The saving could instead be used on additional inclusive or imaginative play, such as a wheelchair-accessible role-play hut and/or activity or sensory panels.

The group was content to give Proludic some design flexibility within the agreed requirements and budget. Advice will also be taken on surfacing layout and whether a larger continuous surfaced area would offer better long-term maintenance value.

Action: Use the 25 September design meeting to finalise the equipment brief and obtain a final price and CAD design within the £50,000 limit.

3. Outdoor Gym

The Clerk confirmed that the outdoor gym repairs have now been completed. No further action is required at present.

4. Skate Park

The skate park repair work has also been completed. No further action is required at present.

5. Youth Club / Pest Control

A wasp nest near the youth club has been dealt with. A possible rat problem has also been reported and investigated, with signs of damage noted near the rear of the building.

One quotation received was approximately £5,000 plus further charges for visits and a deep clean, which was considered disproportionate to the work required. The contractor who dealt with the wasp nest is looking at the rat issue as a more proportionate option, expected to be in the hundreds rather than thousands of pounds.

Action: Continue with the lower-cost pest-control investigation and obtain appropriate treatment/repair advice.

6. Pavilion Wi-Fi

The group revisited the poor Wi-Fi service. Before replacing the service, the current broadband package, cost and expected speeds should be established. It was considered possible that the existing package is adequate but that the hardware needs replacing or upgrading.

Once the existing service is understood, quotations should be obtained for suitable improvements to the service and/or hardware.

Action: Josh to chase Richard/the office next week to confirm the current package, cost and expected speeds and then obtain appropriate improvement quotations.

7. Christmas Motifs and Parade Lights

The application for additional Christmas motif locations further down Station Road has been submitted. KCC restrictions mean the proposed crossroads locations are not practical, so the additional motifs will be moved further along Station Road.

The group supported continuing to add motifs in future years, subject to the existing budget, so that the display can gradually be extended and spare motifs are available when replacements are needed.

Replacement bulbs for the Parade lights still need to be fitted. This should be done before the weather deteriorates, with suitable ladder support and assistance.

Action: Arrange a date and helpers to fit the replacement Parade light bulbs before the weather worsens.

8. Christmas Tree and Switch-On Event

The group agreed in principle to order a 20-foot Norway Spruce for the Parade, subject to confirmation that sufficient budget is available. The quoted price discussed was £295 excluding VAT.

The preferred delivery window is 23-27 November, ahead of the Christmas light switch-on planned for Saturday 28 November 2026. The event is expected to begin at approximately 4:00-4:30pm, subject to final arrangements and daylight.

The existing lights will be reused. The group discussed fitting them in vertical runs from top to bottom rather than wrapping around the tree, and noted that safe access for a 20-foot tree may require a cherry picker, access tower or other suitable method.

The group would like the switch-on to be a more substantial community event. The Guides indicated interest in providing mulled wine, hot chocolate and sweet treats. Scouts, local choirs/bands, the PTA and local businesses may also be approached for participation, carol singing and other activities. A simple nativity silhouette or similar feature was also suggested.

Action: Check the Christmas tree budget with the Clerk and place the order for a 20-foot Norway Spruce if funds allow, requesting delivery during 23-27 November.

Action: Continue contacting Guides, Scouts and other local groups/businesses to develop the 28 November switch-on event and confirm who will provide stalls, music or other activities.

Action: Identify a safe method of installing the lights on the 20-foot tree.

9. Parade Toilets

No significant progress has been made. The group agreed that no reconnection or substantive work should take place until a suitable survey/inspection has been completed.

Action: Adele to chase Brian Black again regarding the inspection/survey of the Parade toilets.

10. Remembrance Parade

SEHT is willing to support the Remembrance Parade with first aid and communications. The group noted that its radios could provide full coverage and avoid the need for messages to be relayed between positions.

The group may also be able to assist with road-closure coordination, vehicles, barriers and signs if required. The established parade organisers will remain in control of the event, with SEHT providing support where useful.

Action: Contact Ruth/the parade organisers to confirm what first-aid, radio communications and road-closure support is required.

11. Display Board

The display-board project is temporarily on hold because of other priorities. The remaining task is to source/order the backing sheet and assemble the board.

Action: Return to the display-board backing material and assembly when higher-priority work allows.

12. Hedges / Road Safety

The hedge issue at Fletcher Road was raised. As previous trimming has not resolved the encroachment, the group considered that the matter should now move to the next stage previously discussed.

Action: Raise the Fletcher Road hedge with Richard and progress the next stage of action.

13. Any Other Business

No further substantive business was raised.

14. Next Meeting

The next meeting was agreed for Thursday 22 October 2026 at 7:00pm.

Action Summary

Action	Responsibility
Arrange UK Power Networks electrical disconnection/make-safe works and pavilion clearance	Josh / office
Clarify pavilion ducting, cable entry and meter/fuse location	Josh / building supplier / electrician
Finalise playground brief, price and CAD design with Proludic	SCENIC / Josh
Continue lower-cost pest-control investigation at youth club	Office / contractor
Confirm current Wi-Fi package, costs and speeds; obtain improvement quotes	Josh / office
Arrange fitting of replacement Parade light bulbs	Josh / volunteers
Check budget and order 20-foot Norway Spruce if affordable	Office / Clerk
Develop Christmas switch-on participation with Guides, Scouts and local groups	SCENIC
Identify safe access method for fitting tree lights	SCENIC
Chase Brian Black for Parade toilet survey/inspection	Adele
Confirm Remembrance Parade support requirements	Mel / event organisers
Resume display-board backing and assembly when priorities allow	Josh
Progress Fletcher Road hedge issue with Richard	SCENIC / Richard

Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

Minutes 28th September 2026.

1. Present and Introductions

Bob Ham, Wendy Sheronden, Jean and Bill Osler, Elaine and Mike Cummins, Ian Day, Sonia Franklin-Smith, Caroline Henson, Bill Wallis, Joan and Malcolm Buller, plus Cllrs Arger, Sharp, Perry and Alison Eardley -Planning Consultant and the Clerk

Apologises – Laureen Rodwell, Lyn Heath, Tom Burnham, Katherine Farmer, Erika Lock, Colin Love, Mary Weatherly and Cllrs Ash and Mclaughlin

As there are a few new members Cllr Arger clarified GDPR issues regarding sharing email address and would circulate Terms of Reference for the Group. Attached to these minutes

2. Dispensations – NA

3. NDP Review – Planning Inspectors comments

The group discussed the comments from the Planning Inspector on the review of the Staplehurst NDP.

Generally, very favourable – only 3 queries to Staplehurst – one of which was a typo.

Two main queries

a) Protection of local significant views – at this point these are always indicative, so the group felt comfortable with our comments.

b) Off Street Car parking, Bell Lane. MBC who own Bell lane would prefer the option to develop. Group felt that we should try and protect the car park as off street car parking so limited in Staplehurst.

Bob Ham proposed, and Jean Oslow seconded to recommend the text below to Parish Council – agreed unanimously.

Question 3: Re. Policy S11 (Protection of Locally Significant Views) (Pages 56 and 58)

CBRE (on behalf of Wates Developments) has made representations concerning this Policy, stating that the designation of specific arcs (on Figure 23) is not supported by sufficient evidence to allow them to be included.

I have reviewed the draft Policy, paragraphs 8.23-8.28 of the supporting text and Appendix E, and I can find no evidence (possibly apart from the photographs at Appendix E) that can demonstrate to me how the extent of the arcs defined on Figure 23 have been assessed and calibrated. By way of one example, the arc defined for V2 (View

south from the High Street) on Figure 23 is clearly wider than the photograph of that view at Appendix E (Page 101).

Can the **Qualifying Body** please review the representation submitted by CBRE and provide me with a Note on how the arcs that are defined on Figure 23 have been defined with the level of accuracy that is shown.

Question 3 Qualifying Body response

The Qualifying Body has reviewed the representation concerning the extent of the view arcs shown on Figure 23.

The arcs were intended to identify broad areas from which the locally significant views are experienced, rather than to represent precisely surveyed or scientifically calibrated sightlines. They were drawn having regard to the locations identified in the Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal, the character and direction of the views, site observations and the supporting photographs in Appendix E.

The purpose of the arcs is therefore to provide an indicative geographical framework for considering whether development proposals may affect the identified views. They are not intended to define the precise limits of a view or imply that the significance of the view ends at the edge of an arc.

The Qualifying Body accepts that the presentation of the arcs on Figure 23 could potentially give the impression of greater accuracy than was intended. To clarify this, the Qualifying Body proposes a minor modification to the wording of Policy S11, while retaining the substance and protection provided by the policy.

We suggest amending the final paragraph of Policy S11 to read:

"As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals within or potentially affecting the broad areas indicated by the shaded arcs on Figure 23 should be designed in a way that safeguards the locally significant view or views concerned. The shaded arcs are indicative and are intended to identify the broad areas from which the identified views are experienced; they do not define precise or fixed sightlines. Proposals for major development should be supported by a landscape/visual impact assessment which clearly demonstrates the potential impacts that such a proposal would have on significant views where relevant and how these impacts will be mitigated."

Can the **Qualifying Body** also please confirm that the reference to Figure 19 in the second paragraph of Policy text should be to Figure 23?

Qualifying Body Response - Yes this is correct.

Question 4: Re. Policy S14 (Publicly Accessible Parking) (Page 69)

The Borough Council has made a representation concerning this Policy and consider that it is too restrictive and not aligned with paragraph 16 of the NPPF[1], and that it should be amended to allow for such alignment, general conformity and potential for redevelopment.

Can the **Qualifying Body** please review this representation and advise me whether it wishes to suggest any amendments to the text of the Policy, which I may consider as a potential modification to the updated Plan.

Question 4 - Qualifying Body response:

The Qualifying Body has carefully considered the Borough Council's representation and **does not propose any amendment to Policy S14.**

The purpose of the policy is to protect an important local resource, namely publicly accessible off-street parking, particularly at Bell Lane. The policy does not prevent redevelopment; rather, it seeks to avoid the loss of publicly accessible parking as a consequence of development.

Criterion B also recognises the potential for major development by encouraging the incorporation of publicly accessible parking, while Criterion C encourages improved cycle parking and EV charging provision.

The Qualifying Body therefore considers that the policy is appropriately balanced, has a clear local purpose and is not unduly restrictive. The fact that the Bell Lane site is Borough Council-owned does not, in itself, justify weakening a locally important policy.

The Borough Council appears to be saying that because the land is Borough Council-owned, the policy needs to be flexible enough to permit future redevelopment. But S14 doesn't say that redevelopment cannot happen. It says:

"Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces ... will not be supported." That is a much narrower proposition.

The policy regulates one particular consequence of development—the loss of publicly accessible parking—not development itself.

Accordingly, having reviewed the Borough Council's representation, the Qualifying Body wishes Policy S14 to remain unchanged.

4. Call for sites link to MBC call for sites -discuss

Cllr Arger explained the Call for Sites see link to MBC website Maidstone Borough Council - Map

a) Process

MBC seeks land to be put forward for houses, business etc, This is now closed.

These are assessed by MBC against national criteria and given an indicative score: Green potential, Amber maybe and Red unlikely.

Then a consultation phase take place - when this group can consider and put forward the groups view to the Parish Council to formerly reply

Action: Clerk to clarify with MBC formal Local plan process, timescale and how Call for Sites fits in.

Staplehurst is defined as a service centre –

Action: review service centre criteria

b) Current background

Currently a challenging climate due to:

- MBC – beneath the 5-year housing land supply
- New National Planning Policy Framework – more in favour of development – such as near well-connected stations
- National changes in planning process being forced on MBC and SPC planning Committees such as
- Applications in two schedules
- Schedule 1 – Planning officer
- Schedule 2 – Could be Planning officer or referred to planning Committee
- Call in removed form ward MBC Councillors and Parish Council
- Thresholds amended
- If MBC refuse an application over 150 houses – this could be referred to Secretary of State to review decision.
- Outline planning application allowed up to 499 houses

In last call for sites 32 sites put forward in Staplehurst only 3 came forward

Note several sites already in the MBC Local Plan so they will progress – Grehound Track, Lodge Rd and small segment near Bell Lane.

c) Evidence

It is important to gather any evidence we can NOW and collate information

Such as traffic / road jams - incidents; transport problems (bus, train) ;water problems; sewage issues; flooding, environmental issues such as nesting birds, rare flowers or issues with accessing medical care - surgery, dentist, school

It will be collated to be used moving forward,

Group discussed some specific sites

ID 1699 – Henhurst Farm – William, Jean Oslow

ID 1605 – Iden Park (Behind Garage) -

ID 1656 – Land South of Headcorn Rd – already had an environmental scoping report – Bob Ham, Wendy Sheronden, Caroline Henson

ID 1653 – Former Golf Course (plus several other sites associated with it) Bob Ham, Wendy Sheronden, Caroline Henson

ID 1620 – Land north of Sweetlands Lane - Sonia Franklin-Smith

ID 1661 – Land North of Staplehurst - already had an environmental scoping report

Important everybody should look out for evidence and forward to clerk@staplehurst-pc.gov.uk

Action: Review why sites failed in the past – are the reasons still valid

d) Major issues

Some major issues in Staplehurst were discussed.

Traffic – problem at Cross Roads – Council undertaking a Road Traffic Survey – plus a few bridges in the parish such as Hawkenbury Bridge.

It was noted that traffic surveys appeared to have been tampered with – although the traffic survey reports are for a full week.

Water supply – numerous low pressure reports and outages – link with SEHT for details

Foul water – some serious problems as much of the drainage in Staplehurst is "dual drainage" therefore in rain storms drains flood and bring sewage into the street, gardens and sometimes properties.

Also, several spillages at Staplehurst Water treatment plant.

Action – FOI Southern water on number and volume of spillages from Staplehurst Water Treatment

e) What do we want!

Group acknowledged that Staplehurst would receive some housing – so what do we want out of it.

Pre commencement conditions – such as ensure the water system in Staplehurst has capacity prior to the commencement of house building

Funding for community infrastructure – such as the Village Hall

Funding for services - such as improved bus services

AOB

Group noted several petitions such as "No water No Houses" and engaging the MP (Katie Lam)

Date of next meeting 19th October 2026 – 7:30pm

These minutes are not verbatim but reflect the key actions

Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

Monday 19th October 2026,

Minutes

1. **Present / Introductions**

Wendy Sheronden, Jean and Bill Osler, Elaine and Mike Cummins, Sonia Franklin-Smith, Caroline Henson, Bill Wallis, Joan and Malcolm Buller, Ericka Lock, Laureen Rodwell, Ralph and Margaret Filby, plus Cllrs Margaret Arger, Richard Ash, Adele Sharp and the Clerk.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting** – circulated – agreed by those present.

3. **Call for sites**

Note link to MBC call for sites

Maidstone Borough Council - Map

Cllr Arger noted that two applications have gone through since last meeting.

Lodge Rd (in the existing MBC Local plan) 81 homes won on appeal due to the viability argument and the lack of 5-year housing supply land holding more weight than the lack of affordable housing.

Land South of Marden Rd – new application for 62 houses approved by MBC Planning Committee – despite the removal of a protected hedge and flooding concerns in the area where foul water mix's with surface water.

In addition, the "developer" for the proposed Henhurst Farm site is doing a Presentation then Q and A at the start of the Parish Council meeting on 16th November 2026, 7:30pm at South Hall. All welcome.

4. **Site Assessment template**

Group discussed the Site Assessment template, previously circulated generally approved and add in two points

Preliminary Site Assessment – planning history

Health Communities, Housing and Accessibility – measure distance from centre of the proposed development site to the centre of the parade – (Spar)

Clerk to circulate amended Staplehurst Site Assessment Template

5. **Evidence collection**

Agreed the following to start work on completing the Staplehurst Site Assessment template for:

ID 1699 – Henhurst Farm – William, Jean Oslow

ID 1605 – Iden Park (Behind Garage) – Laureen Rodwell and Ericka Lock

ID 1656 – Land South of Headcorn Rd – already had an environmental scoping report – Bob Ham, Wendy Sheronden, Caroline Henson

(already started transfer work into template – so all assessments standard)

ID 1653 – Former Golf Course (plus several other sites associated with it) Bob Ham, Wendy Sheronden, Caroline Henson

ID 1620 – Land north of Sweetlands Lane - Sonia Franklin-Smith

ID 1661 – Land North of Staplehurst - already had an environmental scoping report – Cllr Ash

ID1725 - Merrymaids Farm – Ralph and Margeret Filby

Also, the Parish Office are bringing together

a) Spreadsheet of sites – using template from previous Call for Sites
b) Comparing current call for sites with previous Call for sites and rationale for being turned down last time.
c) Evidence of Rural Services Centre – what are the facts now.

Transport

- Main line railway
- Bus routes
- Roads
- Footpaths / cycleways

Retail

- Supermarket
- Parade

Health and education

- Medical Centre
- Dentists
- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Further Education College

Utilities

- Water
- Foul Water
- Electricity
- Gas

- Solar power
- Broadband Telephone

Housing Needs Survey – review key findings and bring to next meeting - Clerk

6. Road Traffic Survey – verbal update

Traffic survey conducted September 2026 – despite equipment being tampered with full data report to next meeting - MB

Option of commission a Junction Assessment of the Crossroads – Clerk to explore

7. Water Treatment Plant FOI request– verbal update

i. FOI Discharge request

- The number of discharges
- Dates of the discharge
- Quantity of discharge in volume per discharge

a) 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026
b) 1st April 2026 – 30th September 2026

ii. FOI capital investment into improvements into the capacity of Staplehurst Waste Water treatment plant for the following periods

1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026

Also, planned capital investment into improvements into the capacity of Staplehurst Waste Water treatment plant for the periods

1st April 2026 – 31st March 2027

1st April 2027 – 31st March 2028

1st April 2028 – 31st March 2029

1st April 2029 – 31st March 2030

Next meeting – 30th November 2026

Communications Group

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Date Wednesday 7 October 2026

Time 7:00pm

Venue Youth Club

Attendance

Present	Apologies
Cllr Melville (JM) - Chair	Catherine
Cllr Sharp (AS)	
Cllr Alesi (MA)	
Cllr Arger (MAr)	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Catherine.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Communications Group meeting held on 24 July 2026 were approved as a true record.

One member abstained as they had not been present at that meeting.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Website upgrade

The Group reviewed the demonstrations received from the shortlisted website suppliers and considered how well each proposal addressed the Council's requirements, together with functionality, support, training, migration arrangements, implementation timescales and ongoing costs.

Members considered that Netwise had provided the strongest overall proposal. Its demonstration had been prepared specifically around the Council's requirements and addressed the points in the specification. The Group also welcomed the proactive support model, included training and ongoing support, structured onboarding process, administration functions and reminders, and the comparatively short implementation period.

Migration and redirect arrangements had been confirmed during the demonstration, leaving no material points outstanding against the agreed requirements.

The other suppliers were also considered. Members noted concerns including higher costs or additional charges, less tailored demonstrations, longer implementation periods and, in some cases, proposals that did not demonstrate a sufficient improvement over the Council's existing website.

The Group agreed to recommend Netwise as the preferred supplier for the new Parish Council website. A report would be prepared for Full Council setting out the recommendation and the reasons for the Group's decision.

ACTION: Prepare the report recommending Netwise for consideration by Full Council on 26 October 2026. *Owner: JM*

5. Village Update and Annual Report

The Group noted that the most recent Village Update had been completed and distributed. Members thanked the office and those who had assisted with distribution, particularly given the shortage of available volunteer distributors.

The continuing difficulty in finding sufficient volunteers was discussed. Members agreed that the Council should continue to provide a printed Village Update to households rather than move to a digital-only publication. A future edition should include an appeal for additional volunteer distributors, making clear that volunteers could cover smaller areas if preferred.

The possibility of allowing residents to opt out of receiving a printed copy and instead receive information electronically was discussed. It was noted that a new website and mailing-list facility could make this easier to administer in future.

Before undertaking any further survey of readers, members agreed it would be useful to review the relatively recent Neighbourhood Plan survey results, which had included questions about how residents obtained local information.

Alternative delivery arrangements were considered. In particular, Royal Mail's Door to Door service could potentially be used in areas where volunteer cover was unavailable.

ACTION: Obtain further information on Royal Mail Door to Door distribution, including costs and practical requirements, and report back to the next meeting. *Owner: Communications Group*

Members agreed to work towards the next Village Update being issued around the end of January or beginning of February 2027 rather than immediately before Christmas. This would allow forthcoming events, including the Annual Parish Meeting, Merit Awards and village clean-up, to be publicised in good time.

Possible content included a further local spotlight feature, an approach to Brian Clark, an update from Staplehurst Cricket Club and an update from Swale relating to the 3G facility. Members wished to continue broadening the range of organisations featured rather than repeatedly using the same contributors.

The existing publication cycle of three Village Updates and one Annual Report each year was retained.

6. Social media and digital communications

The Group reviewed recent Parish Council social media activity and noted that activity had increased and was moving in the right direction. A range of forthcoming Council projects and facilities would provide useful material for future posts, photographs and short videos.

Automated note taking

The Group reviewed the trial use of automated transcription and AI-assisted preparation of meeting minutes. The process uses the Council's Microsoft Teams/365 facilities to create a transcript which can then be used to assist in preparing draft minutes and an action log.

Members agreed that the process could considerably reduce the administrative time required to prepare minutes, provided that all AI-assisted minutes remained subject to human checking and proofreading before publication.

The Group supported continuing the trial and considered that other working groups could decide on a case-by-case basis whether the system would be useful to them. For larger meetings, further consideration may be required regarding microphone coverage and equipment.

ACTION: Circulate details of the process used for automated transcription and AI-assisted minute preparation. *Owner: JM*

ACTION: Prepare information on the potential wider use of automated note taking within the Council. *Owner: JM*

7. Marketing and advertising strategy

The Group considered whether work should now begin on a separate formal marketing and advertising strategy. Members noted that the Council already communicates through the Village Update and Annual Report, the Parish Council website, social media, the Parish Magazine, noticeboards and publicity for individual Council events and activities.

The Group considered that these arrangements already amounted to a practical communications and advertising approach and agreed that there was no need at present to develop a more extensive standalone strategy while the new website and wider digital arrangements were still being established.

The existing approach was considered sufficient for current needs and should be reviewed during 2027 once the new website is in place and its effect on the Council's communications can be assessed. A short document summarising the Council's existing communications and advertising methods could be prepared if required.

8. Any other business

Reports from outside groups

Members discussed the need for councillors representing the Parish Council on outside organisations and groups to provide appropriate feedback following meetings. Short updates should be provided where there was relevant information to report, allowing the Council to demonstrate its involvement and keep residents informed.

Christmas activities

The Group discussed communications and arrangements associated with the Christmas event. Businesses would be invited to participate in the Christmas window display initiative. The King's Head and Jumeira were suggested as possible organisations to approach regarding a prize.

The possibility of providing a Christmas grotto was also discussed. A suitable location and any necessary event permissions would be considered once the proposal had been developed further.

ACTION: Approach SKEG to establish whether they would be interested in assisting with or providing a Christmas grotto. *Owner: Communications Group*

Meet the Councillors / community engagement

The Group discussed the proposal for councillors to meet residents at different locations around the village during 2027. It was agreed that a calendar of sessions should be developed rather than using a single location.

Potential locations included Staplehurst Cricket Club, Jubilee Field, Wimpey Field, the Parade and Frankie's Farm. The Cricket Club was suggested as a suitable location for the first trial session, subject to identifying an appropriate event or opportunity.

The sessions should be clearly identifiable as Parish Council events. Members discussed using the Council gazebo, a feather flag or similar branding, information boards, previous Village Updates and Annual Reports, contact information and material explaining the responsibilities of the Parish Council and its various groups.

The first sessions could be used to assess which locations and formats worked best before establishing a longer-term programme. For safety and practical reasons, councillors should attend these sessions in groups rather than individually.

ACTION: Develop a proposed calendar of community engagement / Meet the Councillors sessions for 2027. *Owner: Communications Group*

ACTION: Explore an initial session with Staplehurst Cricket Club and review suitable Council branding and information materials. *Owner: Communications Group*

9. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Members noted that Full Council would consider the website recommendation on 26 October 2026 and agreed that there was no need for the Communications Group to meet before that decision.

The next Communications Group meeting was arranged for Wednesday 4 November 2026 at 7:00pm at the Youth Club.

Action summary

	Owner	Action	Due
	JM	Prepare the report recommending Netwise for consideration by Full Council.	26 Oct 2026
	Communications Group	Obtain Royal Mail Door to Door costs and practical requirements.	Next Comms meeting
	JM	Circulate details of the automated transcription and AI-assisted minute process.	As soon as practical
	JM	Prepare information on potential wider use of automated note taking within the Council.	Next appropriate meeting
	Communications Group	Approach SKEG regarding a Christmas grotto.	As soon as practical
	Communications Group	Develop a calendar of community engagement / Meet the Councillors sessions for 2027.	Before Jan 2027
	Communications Group	Explore an initial Cricket Club session and review suitable branding and information materials.	Before first 2027 session

These minutes are a draft record and remain subject to approval at the next meeting.