



STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

16TH FEBRUARY 2026

PUBLIC FORUM

A resident thanked the Parish Council for cleaning the paved areas of the village but raised the issue of litter picking in the "rural lanes" around the edge of the village.

It was explained that the Parish Council insurance only covered the area within the 30 mile an hour signs.

(Under Section 89(1) of the EPA 1990 litter picking in the rural roads was the responsibility of District / Borough Council. In our area this is Maidstone Borough Council.)

The Parish Council will chase MBC on the issue.

With regards the ditch at the Jubilee Field the Parish will endeavour to do litter picking from the inside / field side of the ditch.

Kent County Councillor report – (Standing item)

Cllr Black raised a number of points:

- Working hard with Cllr Wakeford and the neighbouring parishes to try again to resolve the Hawkenbury Bridge issue.
- Significant number of potholes / leaks resolved – but more to do.
- Work started on leak in the dip (High Street)
- KCC Budget 2026/27 in the region of 4% increase.

Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):

Cllr Riordan updated the Council on several issues;

- Community Meeting regarding School Parking, which was well attended, raised some interesting points and is a fresh start to a long standing problem.
- Asked for an update on the Cranbrook Rd as no feedback from KCC – Clerk to invite Cllr Black and Cllr Riordan to a follow up meeting.
- Attend a pre-app meeting with Fernham Homes, similar to presentation to Full Council.

Cllr Perry raised;

- a number of issues from the surgery
- MBC Budget 2026/27 likely to be 3% increase.
- updated Council on 5-year housing land supply issue – see below.

Clarify 5-year housing land supply principle.

Every Local Planning Authority is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 78) to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against our targets. For Maidstone Borough, our annual housing targets are set out in our adopted Local Plan Review.

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

On top of this requirement, the NPPF also requires us to include a further 5% buffer of deliverable sites as part of the supply, to ensure choice and competition in the market. See the image below that sets out our current 5-year requirement.
 Cllr Perry explained that the recent introduction of the 5% buffer has caused the issues.

What is the 5-Year Housing Land Supply?

Annual demonstration of a pipeline of homes to meet the requirement for the next five years.



On top of requirement, must include at a 'buffer'. Either 5% or 20% (HDT)

We also adjust according to previous under- or over-delivery of homes

LPR:	5,300
5%:	+ 266
Oversupply:	- 178 =
5y requirement:	5,388



If a Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of sites, then the NPPF (paragraph 11d) 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' or 'tilted balance' applies when determining planning applications. This means approving proposals without delay unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

In essence, the titled balance reduces the ability for the Council to refuse speculative development and as a result, the Council loses a degree of control over where and when development may occur in the borough. This can have subsequent implications for the strategic provision of infrastructure to support growth.

What is the current housing land supply in Maidstone?

The current land supply for Maidstone Borough is 4.5 years. This is the position as of 1 April 2025. A full report is published online each year which sets out the supply position and explains exactly what goes into the supply pipeline. It can be viewed here: [Annual Housing Delivery Report 2025 COMBINED.pdf - Google Drive](#)

What are MBC doing about it?

Local Plan Review policy LPRSP10 – Housing Delivery, specifically criteria 5, sets out what the Council will do regarding decision-taking in the event that the NPPF 'tilted balance' is engaged. From a plan-making perspective, in October of last year Cabinet agreed for officers to start work on drafting a New Local Plan. A key part of this process is to identify and allocate land to meet housing needs. This will help to bolster the supply of land and address the 5-year housing land supply position.

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

When will the 5-year housing land supply be achieved in Maidstone?

In line with the NPPF requirement to do so, we update this position on an annual basis, with borough-wide site surveys undertaken in April. Subsequent checks and analysis mean that the position is usually published in the summer of that year. It is only at this point that we will know with certainty whether we have a 5-year housing land supply. However, the afore-referenced Housing Delivery Report includes a whole plan housing trajectory (section 4), where we set out the anticipated delivery rate of housing over the plan period. This position is also updated annually.

Cllr Perry noted that a challenge is required to the 2.5 year supply of Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople sites.

Cllr Surgery Saturday 28th February 2026, 10am – 12noon at Staplehurst Library

Parish Councillor Arger to attend.

Present: Cllrs Martin, Wakeford, Melville, Hotson, Perry, Riordan, Farragher, Mclaughlin, Arger, Alesi, Ash, Pett, Rhodes, Castro and Clerk.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr Sharp

Note Cllr Martin Chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr Sharp.

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: Cllrs Melville, Alesi and Rhodes for item 4.5 and Cllr Melville for item 4.6.

2.4. Requests for Dispensation - NA

3. **APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Pages 2437 –2441 26th January 2026 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.gov.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Alesi proposed, Cllr Pett seconded to approve the minutes of the 26th January 2026, (note Homeleights not homeless on page 2238) Agreed majority: 12 for, 0 against 2 abstained. Duly signed by the Chairman.

4. **FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

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

Staplehurst Parish Council Payment list 21st January - 8th February 2026		
Date	Details	Credit
06/02/2026	BT bill Jan 2026	19.36
06/02/2026	JF pumping station Electricity Jan 2026 – JF Pumping Station	19.83
06/02/2026	BG electricity charge Jan 26 – Bell Lane Car park	34.81
06/02/2026	BG electricity charge Jan 26 – Parish Office	244.58

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

06/02/2026	BG electricity charge Jan 26 – SF pavilion	42.03
06/02/2026	BG electricity charge Jan 26 – Jubilee Field pavilion	236.98
06/02/2026	Recorra - confidential waste	86.52
05/02/2026	Heliocentrix January 20206 licence	147.46
05/02/2026	Telecoms – phone	43.79
05/02/2026	Headcorn PC - Planning training	74.10
05/02/2026	Npower	63.08
05/02/2026	Cam Tech	573.73
04/02/2026	Choice support - Jan 2026	519.00
04/02/2026	Sage payroll	19.20
04/02/2026	Refreshments	2.00
04/02/2026	CF Corporate subs	173.44
02/02/2026	West Kent Cleaning Jan 2026	100.00
02/02/2026	West Kent cleaning Jan 2026	100.00
02/02/2026	SLCC Membership Clerk	316.00
29/01/2026	KM Media Group RFO advert	192.00
29/01/2026	KCC Commercial Services	299.16
29/01/2026	Adobe systems Jan 2026	19.97
29/01/2026	Homeleigh Carpet glue	30.56
29/01/2026	Fresh air Fitness maintenance service	787.44
29/01/2026	Countrystyle recycling Dec 25	81.46
23/01/2026	JM Home and Garden - carpet in office	220.00
23/01/2026	Castle water Jan 2026	11.37
23/01/2026	Staff Salary Jan 2026	4391.01

Noted.

4.2 Payroll Contractor report

Clr Arger proposed, and Cllr Riordan seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve the HR Group recommendation to appoint Barbara Thompson Bookkeeping Ltd as Payroll Contractor at £30 plus Vat set up and then £30 plus VAT per month

Budget Code – Administration

4.3 Contracts and subscription

Clr Mclaughlin proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve the Employment, Finance and Strategy recommendations as set out in the report

Company	Contract Item	Site	Cost Annual	Cost per Unit	Comment	Review conducted by
Dean Fuller	Mowing/Strim/White Line Marking	Jubilee Field	Variable	£20.00 per hr	Suggest roll on until know what is happening at Jubilee Field	Finance & Strategy Group for SPC approval

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

Maclin Pumps	Sewage Pump Service	Jubilee Field	£530.00	£265.00	Ongoing bi-annual service contacted them - hold price and flexible if Jubilee Field contracted out	Finance & Strategy Group for SPC approval
Maclin Pumps	Sewage Pump Service	Youth Club Building	£370.00	£185.00	Ongoing bi-annual service, contacted them and hold price so roll over.	Finance & Strategy Group for SPC approval
Adobe Systems Software Ltd - Acrobat Pro	Subscription	Parish Office	£199.68	16.64 p.m.	Check with Heliocentrix needed to edit PDF's	Auto-renew
Business Stream	Bell Lane Toilets Potable/Waste Water	Bell Lane Toilets	£697.45	£58.12	Ref: 2760320 - suggest roll over good value	Auto-renew.
Business Stream	Stand Pipe Water	Wimpey Field	£371.09	every 4 mths Jan, May, Sept	Only just located - do we need it?	Auto-renew.
Business Stream	Water In & Out at Surrenden	Surrenden Playing Field - Pavilion	£100.00	Qrtly May, Aug, Nov, Feb	Ref: 2981301 - Suggest roll over good value	Auto-renew.
Hugofox Ltd	Website Silver Subscription	Parish Office	£239.88	19.99 per month	Ask comms group to agree specification and report to Council to tender?	Require current website extended until Comm's Group concluded
Subscription						
Allotment Society			£74.00	Annual	Supports the management of Allotments	
Budget code – various note need to clarify if Stand pipe at Wimpey Field works						

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

4.4 To appoint Financial Service contractor

Clr Castro proposed, and Clr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed majority 13 for, 0 against, 1 Abstained.

Resolution: To approve the HR Group recommendations to appoint Scribe as Financial Service contractor at £1,046 plus VAT for set up and then £84 plus VAT per month

Budget Code – Administration

Clrs Alesi, Rhodes and Melville left the meeting.

4.5 SEHT s137 grant application report.

Clr Farragher proposed, and Clr Martin seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed unanimously

Resolution: To approve the Employment, Finance and Strategy recommendations as approve a grant of £1,000 to SEHT to support the purchase of improved emergency communications.

Budget Code - Grants and Donations

Clrs Alesi and Rhodes returned to the meeting.

4.6 Parish Office report

Clr Arger proposed, and Clr Mclaughlin seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed unanimously

Resolution: To approve the HR Group recommendation to

- i. For JHM Ltd to replace the main office carpet up to £512 plus VAT

Budget Code - Administration

Clr Arger proposed, and Clr Mclaughlin seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed unanimously

Resolution: To approve the HR Group recommendation to

- ii. Purchase (online) 2 x pedestal cabinets at £126 plus VAT = £252 plus VAT

Budget Code - Administration

Note SCCT have replaced the broken heater in the office.

Clr Melville returned to the meeting

5 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS

The Clerk raised a number of points;

Under delegated authority, in consultation with Chairman, note the following.

- a) Youth Club roof repairs – £1,230 plus VAT – Kent Roofing Pride
- b) CCTV new recorder link to laptop - £100 plus VAT – Cam Tech security
- c) Repair of Streetlight – Junction Clapper Lane / A229 – £375 plus VAT Streetlights
- d) Village Update stamps - £278.40
- e) Coffee for meetings £8.35
- f) Repair to Bell Lane toilet – JBHB Plumbers: call out £145 plus VAT and repair at £427.50 plus VAT.
- g) Postage for legal letter - £3.45

Clr Arger proposed, and Clr Pett seconded to approve the above work, agreed unanimously.

2388/6.2 – Girl Guides lease / annual licence with GG Solicitors waiting for response

2388/6.2- Kingsford – acknowledged letter of complaint

Clr Martin updated the Council on the Annual Parish Meeting – all progressing well.

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

Cllr Riordan proposed, and Cllr Perry seconded to retain the Vase presentation – agreed 6 For, 4 against and 4 abstained.

6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION –

6.1 Devolution – standing item verbal update.

Still waiting for a decision from Government.

6.2 3G Multi Sport pitch verbal update

Discharge of planning conditions due this week

Initial meeting with Swale Community Leisure on lease / sport and recreation management contract.

Cllr Riordan asked to clarify consultation – extensive consultation has already taken place.

1. Consultation to every household in the village – 6 weeks ending 8th April 2024
2. Planning application open for public comments – 2nd July 2024 – 20th October 2025 (15 months)
3. Discharge of planning conditions open for public comments 5th January 2026 – 16th February 2026 (6 weeks)

6.3 Hazlitt Theatre request for summer show report

Cllr Riordan proposed, and Cllr Martin seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed unanimously.

Resolution To consider Hazlitt Theatre request for

- i. A Summer Show Peter Rabbit! at Surrenden Field on the 19th August at 4pm
- ii. For a hire fee of £20

6.4 Community Clean up report

Following a debate agreed Community Clean Up should link into Keep Britain Tidy campaign (13th March – 29th March 2026). Cllr Perry proposed, and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the resolution below. Agreed unanimously.

Resolution: To approve the spring 2026 Community Clean Up as Saturday 14th March 2026 – 10.00am – 12noon Youth Club.

6.5 Jubilee Field Budget monitoring report – 1st April – 31st December 2025

Note the Jubilee Field Working Group monitoring report and that the Juniors have had to cancel all their matches in January 2026 and probably February 2026, likely to seek a refund.

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

8 Chairman's Report - NA

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

- 8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes 2nd February 2026
- 8.1.2 Road Safety Group meeting to be confirmed.
- 8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group minutes 8th January 2026 and 5th February 2026
- 8.1.4 Employment, Finance and Strategy group meeting 22nd January 2026
- 8.1.5 SCEnic minutes 15th January 2026
- 8.1.6 NDP Review Group next meeting to be arranged.
- 8.1.7 Communications Group meeting minutes 29th January 2026
- 8.1.8 3G Multi-Sport Working Group meeting to be confirmed.

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

8.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting – Cllr Castro has arranged for 23rd February 2026

9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS NA

10 Confidential

10.1 HR Group minutes 4th February 2026 and verbal update on replacement of RFO

Council discussed the replacement of the RFO applications.

Closed.....20.45pm.....

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