



# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

## PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026

#### **Public Forum**

Cllr Arger, explained that 26/501516/ENVSCR is a request for an Environmental Screening Opinion rather than an Environmental Impact Assessment and it is not a planning application.

A number of residents raised points regarding 26/501516/ ENVSCR Land at Headcorn Rd, Staplehurst.

- i. The proposal is unsustainable
- ii. Staplehurst cannot take this level of development
- iii. Staplehurst cannot cope with the current population – i.e. Medical Centre cannot accept anymore, or South East Water cannot guarantee water supply.
- iv. The document submitted are not accurate
- v. Resident's regularly see wildlife such as Newts, Birds, Bees Hedgehogs etc
- vi. Nothing has changed since the inspector turned down the last application
- vii. The profit the housing developers make mean that it will happen
- viii. The Headcorn Road and traffic lights are already congested
- ix. The Hawkenbury Bridge is a humped back bridge – not suitable for general traffic let alone construction traffic
- x. Destruction of the countryside walk / views should not happen
- xi. I enjoy walking in the countryside – not an enhanced urban footpath.

Cllr Arger thanked those that had spoken and asked is it okay to take a photo – if anyone does not want to be in the photo please say. No one did.

**Present:** Cllrs Arger, Sharp, Farragher, Wakeford, Mclaughlin and Hotson plus Clerk

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Ash and Pett

**APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES:** Minute Pages 1853P-1855P of 7th April 2026 available at: <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/planning-committee/>

Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Mclaughlin seconded to approve the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 agreed majority 3 for, 0 against and 3 abstained. Duly signed by the Chairman.

**COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS** regarding items on the Agenda: -

1. Declarations of Lobbying - NA

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

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:**

Thanked Cllr Ash for picking up the **26/501516/ENVSCR** - Land At Headcorn Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0SE as Parish Councils are not consultees for Environmental Scoping Opinion Requests.

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS:**

**26/501148/FULL Land East Of The Paddocks George Street Staplehurst Kent**

Section 73 - Application for Variation of condition 3 (no more than 11 caravans will be stationed on the site at any one time), pursuant to 18/506246/FULL allowed on appeal APP/U2235/W/19/3239317 for Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for two gypsy families, each with two caravans including no more than one static caravan. Formation of a new access, lying of hardstanding and erection of two utility building.

Following a debate which highlighted that nothing has changed since the condition was put in place – still no footpath, streetlights, prone to flooding, no water treatment detail and this will be over intensification of the site, the reason for the condition.

Cllr McLaughlin proposed, and Cllr Sharp seconded to recommend refusal based on the following grounds it is an unsustainable site and varying the condition will be over intensification of the site, request that goes to MBC Planning Committee – agreed unanimously.

**26/501273/FULL Rabbit Farmhouse Goudhurst Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0HQ**

Conversion of the existing barn to provide residential accommodation, construction of a link structure between the barn and main residential dwelling and alterations to fenestration.

Following a debate which highlighted, we have been supportive in the past and request that it is "tied to the main property"

Cllr Wakeford proposed, and Cllr McLaughlin seconded to recommend approval on the condition the converted barn is tied to the main property – agreed unanimously.

**26/501274/LBC Rabbit Farmhouse Goudhurst Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0HQ**

Listed Building Consent for conversion of the existing barn to provide residential accommodation, construction of a link structure between the barn and main residential

Following a debate which highlighted, we have previously been supportive, and Cllr Wakeford proposed, and Cllr Sharp seconded to recommend approval but defer to the Conservation Officers expertise – agreed unanimously.

**26/501351/FULL 8 Fletcher Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0LP**

Erection of a single storey side and rear extension.

Following a debate which highlighted that precedents have been set along Fletcher Rd for such extensions, as long as the extension is less than 50% of the original property

Cllr Farragher proposed, and Cllr McLaughlin seconded to recommend approval subject to MBC checking that the extension is less than 50% of the original property – agreed unanimously.

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

**26/501392/FULL 9 Chestnut Avenue Staplehurst Kent TN12 0NJ**

Removal of existing garage and porch. Erection of a two storey side extension, ground floor front extension and changes to fenestration.

Following a debate which highlighted the need for MBC to check if the overall extension – the ground floor is already approved – is less than 50% of the original property

Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Farragher seconded to recommend approval subject to MBC checking that the overall extension is less than 50% of the original property – agreed unanimously.

**EIA Screening Opinion- for comment.**

**26/501516/ENVSCR - Land At Headcorn Road, Staplehurst, Kent. TN12 0SE**

EIA Screening Opinion: for construction of a residential development for up to 300 dwellings including vehicular access from Headcorn Road; roads; footpaths; public open space; enhancements to the Public Rights of Way; sustainable drainage systems; landscaping and associated infrastructure.

Cllr Arger, explained that 26/501516/ENVSCR is a request for an Environmental Screening Opinion than an Environmental Impact Assessment and it is not a planning application. Therefore, we can only comment – not recommend approval or refusal. Following a debate which highlighted the following points;

One of the 60 or so residents present questioned the validity of the consultant's report due to the number of errors.

**Decision making**

MBC Planning Committee should make the decision to grant the request or **not** and require an Environmental Impact Assessment for the site - not a Planning Officer

MBC Planning Committee should do a site visit to understand the site prior to any decision

**Accuracy of documentation**

Have not recognised that the site is in the Low Weald National Characteristic Area

The previous applications for the area were turned down for ecological reasons – nothing has changed, and resident's regular see wildlife such as Newts, Birds, Bees, Hedgehogs etc

Page 5 – Not considered necessary to consider as a cumulative development. This is inaccurate.

A number of proposals are already allocated in adopted MBC Local Plan 2021 - 2028

LPRSA 066 and LPRSA 114 = 127

H1 49

H1 50

H1 60

Total 286 dwellings allocated yet to be built

Proposed developments

Marden Rd – 62 dwellings

Land north of Station Rd – up to 300 dwellings

This application up to 300 dwellings

Potential 632 dwellings

**Total 918 – must be considered in a cumulative manner.**

Page 6 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment – demand to see the document before MBC Planning Committee make a decision.

Page 15- limited effect on local services

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

Page 19 – Headcorn rd. – woefully inaccurate description “maybe susceptible to congestion”

### **Environmental**

Low Weald National Characteristic Area

The previous applications for the area were turned down for ecological reasons – nothing has changed, and resident’s regular see wildlife such as Newts, Birds, Bees Hedgehogs etc

Preliminary Ecological Assessment is mentioned but demand to see the document

Landscape amenity view refers to the aesthetic and functional aspects of landscapes that enhance the quality of life and environment. A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment is required for this site.

Known to be an area prone to flooding

Site is outside the village envelope and in the open countryside

Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board should be consulted regarding River Beult catchment

### **Infrastructure**

South East Water have stated that they cannot guarantee water supply to the existing properties let alone additional dwellings

Southern Water have stated the local sewage plant is at capacity let alone additional dwellings

Staplehurst Medical Centre has confirmed already (PPG meeting 22 April 2026) at capacity and would not be able to accept additional patients from proposed developments

Road network – Headcorn Rd in one direction is Hawkenbury Bridge which is an accident hot spot and in the other direction congestion at crossroads. This already leads to rat running via Hurst Close, a narrow side road which then comes onto the A229 via Fishers Rd, and Cradducks Lane an unsuitable rural road with no passing places which then comes out on to A229 via Frittenden Rd.

Construction traffic – via Hawkenbury Bridge – a humped back bridge or the crossroads. already over 100% capacity according to KCC reports

Access to site complicated by recent developments affecting visibility

Bus service – stops at 6:30pm weekdays and limited on Saturday and no service on Sunday

Education – no secondary school close, as the nearest has closed its list to students from Staplehurst

### **In summary;**

The request for an Environmental Scoping Opinion report is inaccurate and misleading

MBC Planning Committee must consider the Environmental Scoping Opinion report and not a Planning Officer decision.

MBC Planning Committee should undertake a site visit prior to their Committee meeting

The site is outside the village envelope and in the open countryside (Staplehurst NDP Policy Code E)

A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment is required for this site

If the Environmental Scoping Opinion request is approved the site is unsustainable - from the basic need of water supply, waste water to infrastructure such as Medical Centre provision, transport services and transport network and general infrastructure.

Cllr Sharp proposed, and Cllr Wakeford seconded to recommend the comments above are sent to:

MBC planning portal

Local Maidstone Borough Councillors

Local Kent County Councillors

Katie Lam (MP)

Secretary of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Agreed unanimously

Cllr Arger suggested that a report goes to Council to form a Community Action Planning Group

Cllr Hoston requested that the 60 or so residents that attended this evening meeting all need to write to MBC and attend the MBC Planning Committee.

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

**Lawful Development Certificate - NA**

**Tree Preservation Orders - NA**

**DECISIONS:** Noted

**24/502630/NMAMD** Holman House Station Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0QQ  
Non-Material Amendment to application 20/502770/FULL: Proposed alterations to window aperture and glazing of first floor side windows. MBC Granted with conditions / SPC recommended approval

**Public Forum**

Several resident’s raised points relating to **26/501516/ENVSCR**

The need to protect the area for exercise and mental health reasons  
Questioned the validity of the consultant’s report due to the number of errors.

Meeting closed.....9.pm.....

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