

EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP MEETING
Meeting 19th March 2026

Minutes

1) Present – Cllrs Martin, Perry plus Cllr Arger by “teams” and the Clerk.

2) Apologies for Absence – Cllrs Hotson, Riordan and Sharp
Cllr Martin chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr Sharp

3) Dispensations - NA

4) Minutes of last meeting

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Perry seconded to approve minutes agreed - unanimously.

5) Action Plan

On track, Clerk will chase SCCT regarding Parish Office lease

Update on the Girl Guides lease;

a) Annual Licence - feedback from Girl Guide solicitors removed the “annual” and the termination clause in the Annual licence.

The Group felt they should be reinstated.

b) Deed of variation – correct Council address, plus new clause 2.3 - added in (b) to ..income generated under clause 2.7(b) shall not be included in calculation.

In clause 2.7 includes

(a) is external hire to be included in calculation

(b) is internal Girl Guide usage to be excluded from calculation

The Group felt it is important that the Council receives 5% of the external income – i.e. non Girl Guide income.

6) Working groups 2026/27

Following a discussion, which emphasised that not all Cllrs can make a day time meeting but appreciate the staff issue and most Cllrs can arrange to attend a day time meeting.

Cllrs support the setting of day / time to help with diary appointments, and the following should go to the Council AGM. (Clerk to double check with Group Chairman)

- Communications Group – 4th Thursday of the Month, 7:30pm
- Staplehurst Community Neighbourhood Enhancement Improvement Group (SCEnic) – 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:30pm
- Employment, Finance and Strategy Group – 3rd Thursday of the month, 10am.
- HR Group – sub group of EFS Group follow on after EFS Group
- Greener Staplehurst Group – As required
- Neighbourhood Plan Review Group – retain group but work completed, so dormant
- Road Safety Group – 1st Monday of the monthly, 10am but as KCC are struggling to deliver on HIP, as required
- Jubilee Field Working Group – 1st Thursday of the month 7:30pm. This will then become the Jubilee Field Management Group once SCL contract is in place. Report back to Council with revised the terms of reference for approval.
- 3G all-sports Working Group – close down project work of this group completed

Clerk to firm up Council and Planning Committee dates

7) Contracts

Following a discussion Cllr Perry proposed and Cllr Martin seconded to recommend the following to Council – agreed unanimously

Contracts March 2026 review						
Review date	Company	Contract	Location	Annual fee	Review date	Comment
Apr-26	Heliocentrix Ltd	IT Consultancy & Support	Parish Office	£ 115.50 p.m. 3x office workstations	Ongoing	Roll on
Apr-26	Heliocentrix Ltd	Microsoft 365 Business Basic	Parish Office	£122.48 p.m.	Ongoing	Roll on
Apr-26	Sage	Sage Payroll Software	Parish Office	£20.00 p.m.	31/03/2026	Retain then cancel with months notice May 2026
Apr-26	Hugofox Ltd	Website SSL	Parish Office	Note included in standard fee.	08/05/26	Roll on
Apr-26	Kent County Supplies	Sharp Photocopier MX2651FK Col MFD	Parish Office	£0.0022 b/w per copy £0.0223 colour per copy. Rental £88.32 qtr	30/09/2026	Roll on

Apr-26	West Kent Cleaning Services	Cleaning	Youth Club Building	Cleaning Materials £20 per hr +£5	Ongoing with 30 day termination notice period	Roll on
Apr-26	West Kent Cleaning Services	Cleaning	Jubilee Field Pavilion	Cleaning Materials £20 per hr +£5	Ongoing with 30 day termination notice period	Roll on until handover to SCL

8) Health and Safety update – following a discussion the Clerk noted that Health and Safety is constantly improving and welcomed the recently received Health and Safety audit by Peninsula, the Council appointed Health and Safety consultant.

7 immediate actions such as adopt Polices, but the main issue is the need under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 Reg 21 - Washing facilities for hot / warm running water in toilet areas.

Clerk has contacted plumber regarding supply and install 3 hot water heaters into Youth Club male, female and disabled toilets

Clerk to contact SCCT regarding male / female toilet used by staff / Cllrs / visitors to the Parish Offices

Agreed to bring H&S report to next meeting

Cllr Arger proposed, and Cllr Martin seconded to recommend to Council the following – agreed unanimously with minor amendments

- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety General policy statement
- To read out at every meeting the following
“We are not expecting a Fire Alarm, so if the Fire Alarm goes off please use the Fire exits (point) and proceed calmly to the Fire Assembly point
If anyone needs a comfort break, toilets are (point) down the corridor on the left”

9) GDPR following a discussion Cllr Perry proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to recommend to Council the following – agreed unanimously with minor amendments;

- Breach Notification Notice
- General Privacy Policy
- Internal Privacy Notice
- SAR Policy

10) Sport and Recreation Management contract

Cllr Sharp and Clerk have met SCL three times and nearly ready to bring draft documents to Council 20th April 2026 to seek approval to proceed to solicitors

The payment issue was discussed, as the Council's advice is not to risk "Non Registered Status" it was felt the following would be appropriate.

a) Payment

- 1) There will be no payment to the Council.
- 2) This contract does not have a management fee from the Council to the contractor or a monthly fee from the Contractor to the Council.
- 3) The contractor shall set up a holding account for the sole benefit of improvements to the Jubilee Field.
- 4) The contractor shall pay 4% of the turnover at the end of each financial year into a holding account for the sole benefit of improvements to the Jubilee Field.
- 5) The contractor and the Council shall work jointly and agree a programme of improvements to the Jubilee Field and work in partnership to deliver the improvements to the Jubilee Field.
- 6) The holding account authority; prior to making a payment / withdraw funding an approved Staplehurst Parish Council minute is required.
- 7) At the end of the contract;
 - I. The contractor shall donate to the Council, for the sole benefit of improvements to the Jubilee Field, the total sum of the holding account 6 months before the end of the contract.
 - II. On the final day of the final contract year, the accounts are completed, and the contractor shall donate 4% of the turnover for that final year of the contract to the Council for the sole benefit of improvements to the Jubilee Field.

11) Volunteer Awards and Annual Parish Meeting

Cllr Martin updated the group;

Hush Heath donating wine, Radford's offered £50 donation and Homeleighs £150 donation, Cllr Riordan arranging the vases and Cllr Arger and Martin the refreshments

JT to push again for stalls – include SCL

JT promoting nominations for Awards – closing date 31st March 2026

12) Next Meeting agreed as 9th April 2026

Focus on Health and Safety Audit, plus AGM agenda.

Introduce new RFO.

HR Subgroup appraisals arranged for last week of March 2026.