



Staplehurst Parish Council

Council Minutes

**7th October
2024**

Public Forum

No questions or issues raised

Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):

Cllr Perry updated Council on his Mayoral duties at Maidstone and a resident issue raised at the Surgery last Saturday.

Present Cllrs Perry, Hotson, Alesi, Rhodes, Pett, Martin, Sharp, Castro, Ash and Wakeford plus Proper Officer

- 1. APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Arger, Farragher, Mclaughlin and Riordan

Cllr Perry chaired the meeting in Cllr Riordan's absence.

- 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:**

Pages 2274 – 2283 16th September 2024 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk)

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the minutes with the amendment Grimwood on page 2278, of the meeting held on 16th September 2024, agreed majority 7 for, 0 against and 3 Abstained. Duly signed by the Chairman of this meeting.

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

4. **FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

4.1 **Payment list**

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the payments list below, agreed unanimously

<u>Approved Payments 12th September - 26th September 2024</u>	Amount
KCC Procurement Services - Photocopier Rental Oct-Dec	105.98
Amazon UK - Wireless Router Youth Club	72.89
The Living Forest Ltd - Tree Work Jubilee Field	708.00
AJ Gallagher - Annual Insurance Premium	3,283.56
Poyntell Ltd - Jubilee Field Padlocks x2, Keys x5 SMYFC	253.82
Amy & Hannah - Jubilee Pavilion Deep Clean	1,780.00
Poyntell Ltd - JF Master Kets x5 SMYFC	120.00
Cllr Reimbursement Alarm Glass Jubilee Pavilion	9.99
Amazon UK - Floor Cleaner & Light Bulbs JF Pavilion	37.46
Amazon UK - Rubber Gloves JF Pavilion	12.98
Forvis Mazars - External Audit Charge	1,008.00
Rubicon Industries Ltd - Skatepark Event	960.00
Paul Waring - Grass Cutting Jubilee Field August	588.00
Polybags UK - Black Sacks Caretaker	112.28
Staff Reimbursement Coffee Parish Office	8.50
HMRC - Tax & NI August	1,929.62
Staff Travel Reimbursement	25.20
Staff Payroll & Pension Costs - September	7,177.17
Maidstone Borough Council - Road Closure Licence Remembrance	75.00
Positive Energy - Electricity Youth Club August	53.69
Castle Water - Youth Club August	7.51
Business Stream - Water Surrenden Field Pavilion May-Aug	22.93
Business Stream - Water Charges Bell Lane Toilets July-Aug	43.33
Business Stream - Water Charges Wimpey Field May-Aug	77.69
Castle Water - Jubilee Pavilion August	56.07
British Gas - Electricity JF Sewage Pump Aug-Sept	15.24
Npower - Street Light Energy August	7.07
Telecoms World - Virtual Phone No. SEHT August	14.39
Telecoms World - Broadband Youth Club August	38.88
Lloyds Bank - Charges September	7.00
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	18,612.25

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE

1.29

4.2 Summation and balance sheet - Noted Cllr Castro asked if have a version of the budget could be set out in the working groups responsibilities – generally agreed – RFO to action.

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

4.3 **Contracts report**

Following a debate Cllr Castro proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously

Resolution: To consider the Employment, Finance and Strategy Group recommendation to approve the contracts

- a. Npower – unmetered street light contract, only supplier £410.49 annual contract roll over
- b. TV licence for Youth Club - £169.50 annual renewal
- c. Escsan – sani-bin at Bell Lane toilets - £106.23 annual contract

Budget code various

4.4 **HR Training report**

Following a debate which highlighted the need for Cllrs training in HR issues and that the Cllrs on the Employment, Finance and Strategy Group should attend and then other Cllrs could attend in any future training, Cllr Perry proposed and Cllr Castro seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority unanimously

Resolution: To consider the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to offer HR training to 6 Parish Councillors – up to £525 plus VAT

Budget code Courses and Training

5 **CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS – attached**

- Cllr Basic Allowances, note due to the increase in Maidstone Borough Council allowances and that a Parish Basic Allowance is 10% of MBC allowances, the Parish Basic Allowance has increased from approved £564 to £575.92 per Cllr
- Girl Guides Centre legal fees up to £2,000, from professional fees budget

Following a debate where Clerk updated Council that legal fees for the amendments to the Girl Guides Centre lease / licence are up to £2,000, Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded to approve the motion below, agreed unanimously

Motion: Council legal fees for the Girl Guides lease / annual licence up to £2,000 plus VAT

Budget Code professional fees.

- The Clerk updated Council verbally that he is still chasing on Land Agent fees relating to the Girl Guides lease, will update Council as soon as he knows.
- Volunteers Day – note changed to Tuesday 10th December 2024. Please contact Jean with any other volunteers that should be invited by Monday 14th October 2024 so she can send out invites.
- Reminder to all Chairs of working groups to bring forward proposals for 2025/26 budget by 31st October 2024.
- Once agreed by Council, these feed into working groups bringing forward a work programme which forms the basis of their work / meetings / reports – in 2025/26. This then avoids using “General Reserves” for every day work.
- Note SMFC CIC formed from SMFC and SMYFC. In addition SMFC CIC request to lease the main pitch – to be discussed at JFWG and then onto Council.
- Christmas lights motifs - £3,510 balance available for purchase of 6 replacement motifs – Cllr Sharp to liaise with office by Friday 11th October 2024

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

- Disabled Toilets – Wisprole ok, no information from KCC so keep chasing and contact Cllr Parfitt-Reid
- Christmas Tree – Wisprole ok, SCEnic to do risk assessment, need to agree date and who puts the tree / lights up agreed Cllr Hotson suggestion to write to local businesses seeking a donation.
- 2067/PF Electric Vehicle Charging points – this was first raised 27th February 2023 can MBC Cllrs Riordan and Perry ask the MBC Chief Executive to push forward on this. Cllr Perry agreed to.
- 2067/FF Redrow Cllr Ash still chasing, liaising with Katie Lam’s (MP) office, still waiting for a substantive response from Redrow

6 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION

6.1 3G Multi-Sport Working Group – standing report

The Invitation to Tender documents were discussed and Cllr Hotson queried 3.12b – why only one Parish Cllr at user group – this was what the 3G working Group felt was right – Contractor would report directly to Council.

Cllr Hotson then raised the issue that in his view the whole site should not be contracted out. We are handing over land and responsibility to a third party.

It was noted that the Council would still own the land, the contract is for management of the site only and that a third Party had managed the site between 1989 and 2024.

Cllr Hotson suggested that the management should be for the 3G pitch only and the Council should manage the rest of the site.

Cllr Sharp felt that we had started a Tendering process for the whole site and should not change mid-course. (Council Meeting 2.4.2024 (2213/6.1))

The Proper Officer raised the same point that the tendering process started with the Expressions of Interest for the whole site – minus boundaries which the Council would manage. This is a significant change and the Proper Officers understands it would break procurement legislation.

Cllr Perry felt, as Chairman, that a motion had been put forward and the debate had become repetitive, therefore two Cllrs were unable to put further points forward.

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Alesi seconded a motion to amended resolution 6.1 point one

Motion: from the 3G Multi- Sport working group recommendation to adopt the Invitation to Tender document” to “the 3G Multi- Sport working group recommendation to adopt the Invitation to Tender document for the 3G pitch only.”

Carried by majority 5 for, 1 against and 4 abstained.

The Proper Officer emphasised that this was against his advice and that legal advice is required.

Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority 8 for, 1 against and 1

Resolution – To approve set aside £5,000 plus VAT for Council legal fees for the lease / contract

Budget Code - Professional fees

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

6.2 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE & GROUP MEMBERS

Following a debate that no group can have more than 7 Cllrs and that Cllr Farragher has requested Planning Committee, Cllr Rhodes has requested Road Safety Group and Cllr Wakeford has requested the Employment, Finance & Strategy Group, Road Safety Group and Planning Committee.

The Clerk raised the point that Cllr Arger was non-voting (due to numbers previously on Committees) and should be voting member.

Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the Committee and Group Membership below.

Resolution: To consider the appointment of the new Councillors to Committees and Groups as set out below	
SPC Groups - October 2024	
Planning Committee	Communications Group
Cllr. Margaret Arger (Vice Chair)	Cllr. Mel Alesi
Cllr. Richard Ash	Cllr. Margaret Arger
Cllr. Bill McLaughlin	Cllr. Jose Castro (Chair)
Cllr. Alan Pett	Cllr. Ani Martin
Cllr. Adele Sharp (Chair)	Cllr. Patrick Riordan
Cllr Farragher	Cllr. Adele Sharp
Mike Wakeford	
Cllr. Eric Hotson (Substitute)	
Employment, Finance & Strategy Group	Greener Staplehurst Group
Cllr. Margaret Arger	Cllr. Richard Ash
Cllr. Eric Hotson	Cllr. Jose Castro
Cllr. Ani Martin	Cllr. Bill McLaughlin
Cllr. John Perry	Cllr. Alan Pett
Cllr. Patrick Riordan (Chair)	Cllr. Patrick Riordan
Cllr. Adele Sharp	David George
Mike Wakeford	Natasha Wyett (Chair)
Neighbourhood Plan Review Group	Road Safety Group
Cllr. Margaret Arger	Cllr. Mel Alesi
Cllr. Richard Ash	Cllr. Bill McLaughlin
Cllr. Bill McLaughlin	Cllr. Adele Sharp
Cllr. John Perry	Mr Malcolm Buller (Res)
Cllr. Adele Sharp	Mike Wakeford
Mrs Joan Buller (Res)	Chris Rhodes
Mr Tom Burnham (Res.)	
Mr Colin Love (Res.)	
Mr Robin Oakley (Res.)	
SCENIC	Jubilee Field Working Group

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

Cllr. Mel Alesi	Cllr. Mel Alesi
Cllr. Jose Castro	Cllr. Margaret Arger
Cllr. Ani Martin	Cllr. Eric Hotson
Cllr. Alan Pett	Cllr. Bill McLaughlin
Cllr. Paddy Riordan	Cllr. Paddy Riordan
Cllr. Adele Sharp (Chair)	Cllr. Adele Sharp (Chair)
3g Working Group	Jubilee Field Working Group non-council
Cllr. Mel Alesi	Lee Seal SMYFC
Cllr. Margaret Arger	Nicola Stonebridge SMFC
Cllr. Bill McLaughlin	Chris Rhodes GG
Cllr. Paddy Riordan (Chair)	
Cllr. Adele Sharp	
3g non-council	
Jeff Davis Kent Football Association	
Mike Evans MBC	
Lee Seal SMYFC	
Nicola Stonebridge SMFC	
Chris Rhodes GG	
Nick Winter (HUFC)	
Other Groups & Organisations	
Churchyard Liaison	
Cllr. Richard Ash	
Cllr. Ani Martin	
Cllr. John Perry	
Staplehurst Community Centre CIO	Staplehurst Patients' Participation
Cllr. Bill McLaughlin	Cllr. Mel Alesi
Cllr. Eric Hotson (Resident Trustee)	Cllr. Ani Martin
Cllr. Adele Sharp (individual trustee)	Cllr. Adele Sharp
Staplehurst Community Events	Police/Parish Liaison
Cllr. Adele Sharp	Cllr. Patrick Riordan
Staplehurst Emergency Help Team	Staplehurst Remembrance Day Group
Cllr. Mel Alesi	Cllr. Mel Alesi
Cllr. Jose Castro	Cllr. Ani Martin
Cllr Sharp	Cllr. Adele Sharp

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee	River Beult Catchment Improvement
Cllr. Mel Alesi	Cllr. Mel Alesi
Cllr. Alan Pett	Cllr. Richard Ash
	Cllr. Bill McLaughlin
	Cllr. John Perry
KALC Area Committee	Sobell Cheshire Home
Cllr. Patrick Riordan	Cllr. Eric Hotson
[Councillor Perry sits as MBC Parishes Representative].	
Staplehurst Library Users' Group	Speed Watch
Cllr. Adele Sharp	Cllr. Mel Alesi
McCabe Day Centre	Village Sports & Social Club
Cllr. Eric Hotson	Cllr. Richard Ash
	Cllr. Patrick Riordan (Trustee)

6.3 Meetings with Developers Policy

Following a debate Cllr Ash proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously

Resolution: To consider the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to adopt the Meeting with Developers policy attached in **appendix A**

6.4 Model Publication Information report

Following a debate Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Pett seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed unanimously

Resolution: To consider the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategy group to adopt the Model Publication Information report attached in **appendix A**

7 CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

8 PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS (from Committee/Groups/Office on specific issues or as regular update)

8. Chairman's Report

8.1 Committee and working group minutes for noting

Chairman absent

8.1.1 Planning Committee minutes of 24th September 2024

8.1.2 Road Safety Group meeting minutes 2nd September 2024 – noted that the group and all Cllrs support the view that the crossroads are a problem and have requested a range of options and KCC Highways have turned down everything suggested i.e. roundabouts, Compulsory Purchase Orders of land and even Bollards

(Suggested Cllr Sharp does an article in Village Update)

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

- 8.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group meeting minutes 11th September 2024 - Cllr Pett asked about the legal documents / Terms and Conditions – Clerk explained the terms and Conditions are in item 6.1, appendix Bb 11. That initial proposal was that the Council would oversee the construction / payments but the ongoing obligations passed onto the Contractors. Cllr Pett queried the business plan – the Clerk explained that the contractors bids would include their business plan which would be reflected in the Tender and the contract fee.
- 8.1.4 SCENic next meeting minutes to follow
- 8.1.5 3G multi-sports pitch working group 26th September 2024
- 8.1.6 Employment, Finance and Strategy Group next meeting 19th September 2024

Clerk noted that in simple terms, a Parish Council sets it's the budget by considering the estimated expenditure, deducting the estimated income and then seeking the difference as Precept from MBC.

With the Precept the Council has a balanced, Zero budget and the Precept supports all Parish Council services proportionately.

At the end of the year if the Council has exceeded its budget – it then uses funding from the General Reserves to balance the budget back to Zero.

At the end of the year if the Council comes under its budget – it can “top up” the General Reserves to balance the budget to Zero.

It is important to maintain a good level in the General Reserves, guidance is 3 months expenditure at least.

As a Council we need to manage our assets / facilities and services. If you consider any of our facilities as “a business or budget head” you would see less income than expenditure – but this is supported proportionately by the Precept to bring it back to a balanced, zero budget.

For example in 2024/25 budget figures are:

1. Surrenden Field

Budgeted Expenditure	£6,100
Budgeted Income	£ 0
Difference	-£6,100
Portion of Precept	£6,100
Balanced, Zero Budget	£ 0

The precept supports the Surrenden Field 100% as we do not generate income.

2. Jubilee Field – including skatepark

Budgeted Expenditure	£	46,479
Budgeted Income	£	13,053
Difference	- £	33,426
Portion of Precept	£	33,426
Balanced Zero Budget	£	0

The precept supports Jubilee Field @ 72% as we do generate some income.

Signed by chairman.....Date.....

Cllr Sharp noted that in previous years Surrenden Field were used for football – so the costs / income would be at Surrenden Field.

Cllr Perry agreed the precept supports all Council services and that it re-emphasised the importance of projects coming forward for the budget setting process and not using General Reserves.

8.1.7 NDP Review Group meeting minutes to follow

8.1.8 Communications Group meeting minutes 24th September 2024 – Cllr Castro highlighted the tight timescale for the Village Update – articles on time please

8.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group minutes to follow

9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS - NA

10 Confidential

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’.

10.1 Caretaker Risk Assessment

Following a debate Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to approve the Caretaker Risk Assessment and up to £600 plus VAT for Worknest fee, agreed unanimously.

10.2 Correspondence from Penton Electrical.

Following a debate Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to approve that the accusations in the letter were not the Councils position.

Agreed majority 8 for, 1 against and 1 Abstained

There was brief verbal update on the proposed “Pilot Rural Youth Worker Scheme” and a report would come to the next Parish Council meeting.

Meeting closed ...9.30pm.....

These minutes are Not verbatim, the decisions are accurate.

Signed by chairman.....Date.....