



ANSTY AND STAPLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Staplefield Village Hall on Monday 10th March 2025 at 7:35pm.

Members present: Bob Birthwright, Maria Fielding, Jon Gilley, Mandi Graves, Crispin Salimbeni, Amanda Saunders, Heinrich Schmidt and Brad Williams (Chair).

Also present: Sarah Abellan (Clerk), MSDC Cllr Richard Bates, WSCC Cllr Pete Bradbury, and 3 MoP's.

Meeting started at 7.35pm.

1. Public Session. 1 MoP was there to support the grant application for HHRFC. The MoP outlined what had so far been achieved at the new Whiteman's Green Sports Club, what work was currently taking place and what the plans are for the future and the vision of the club. Where finance had come from to date was outlined, including grants and fundraising with a request that ASPC could support them with further funding to help with the fit out.

2 MoP's were there in support of Staplefield Village Hall to hear the decision on the grant application.

2. To receive apologies for absence. Nuala Hampshire, Simon Stokes

3. To note resignation of George Morley. Cllr Williams advised council of the resignation of George Morley and it was noted that he had been a great asset and will be sorely missed.

4. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda. Cllr Salimbeni and Cllr Fielding both have an interest in the Staplefield Village Hall grant application.

5. To agree the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th February 2025. Minutes were **agreed** and signed by the chair.

6. To receive updates from District and County Councillors. Cllr Bates advised that it was still up in the air with regards to planning with it being unclear on how it was proceeding with the District Plan. He also advised that there would be 1-2 years grace for District Councils on their abolition whilst it all amalgamates.

Cllr Bradbury advised that in his opinion, the District Plan would have to be beefed up in numbers and that the Planning Inspector is currently on radio silence mode. He also informed council that WSCC has now passed it's budget and that it was a balanced budget with no cuts. However, there will be funding challenges going forward in both adult and children's social care, particularly with home to school transport costs increasing and being very difficult to control.

Cllr Bradbury explained the difference between Devolution and Local Government Reform. Devolution being the process by how a new tier is being implemented with a new Sussex Mayor. The election for this will take place in May 2026 and the Mayor will have a committee of 6 people consisting of 2 from East Sussex, 2 from West Sussex and 2 from Brighton & Hove. They will control Strategic Planning, Economic Growth, Transport, Health and Skills, Police and Fire & Rescue. Local Government Reform is the process by which the Government abolishes the district/county councils etc. At the moment, it is unclear what this means and how this will work. Brighton and Hove want to remain unitary but they are not currently big enough so it is uncertain if this will happen. The Government are now making noises about town and parish councils and what they will look like. It's Cllr Bradbury's personal opinion that there will possibly a white paper ready for the summer with unspecified extra powers and there is likely to be an amalgamation of some Parish Councils. County Council elections have been postponed until Next May as they can only postpone for a year at a time, however it is likely that it will then be postponed again.

7. To consider the following planning applications and any others that arrive before the meeting.

- **DM/25/0251** Great Bentley Plantation Borde Hill Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex. Variation of condition 2 of planning application DM/23/3218 - to allow for design changes. **No Objections.**
- **DM/25/0489** The Old Woodyard Slaugham Road Staplefield Haywards Heath. Extension of existing residential property utilising the adjoining property to include internal and external alterations to the existing buildings. **No Objections.**
- **DM/25/0345** Great Bentley Plantation Borde Hill Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex. Variation of condition 2 of planning application DM/23/3218 - to allow for design changes. **No Objections.**
- **DM/24/2423** Great Thorndean Barn, Slough Green Lane, Warninglid, Haywards Heath. Retrospective erection of shed for the keeping of a donkey, together with proposed extensions to hardstanding areas, gates, fencing and landscaping (Amended plans received 17 February 2025 and amended description 7 March 2025). **Council object in principle as it is a retrospective planning application and in addition because they believe it goes against the neighbourhood plan.**

8. Noticeboard – The Clerk advised that the current planning permission is in place to put a noticeboard on Rocky Lane and that S106 money is available to the amount of £2,763.90 to do this. The Clerk is waiting for confirmation from highways as to where the permission is for as one email said inside the bus shelter which is not suitable. Move to the next meeting.

9. Brook Street Sign – Quotes have been obtained for the Brook Street sign to be repaired. The post quote has come in at £920 with £660 of this being for the post

itself. It was agreed to go ahead, however the Clerk would first try and get the cost of the post cheaper but if this wasn't possible to go ahead at £920. The sign also needs painting. Two quotes have been obtained. £330 and £290. In addition, the Staplefield sign is very rusty and in need of repainting so it was agreed to do this at the same time. The quotes have come in at £330 and £240. The £330 would also incur a charge of £120 to take the sign down and the £240 does not include removal. Clerk to ask Chris Nye if he can also remove the sign and if so, how much this would cost and then go with the best value quotes. Council **resolved** to do both signs.

10. Staplefield

- **Cricket Pitch** – Cllr Birthwright to update council on the meeting with ID Verde in January. He advised that they have a new person on board who specialises in bowling greens and he is very confident it will be maintained well this season. They relayed their requirements for the pitch and ID Verde agreed they were able to meet their expectations. Council **resolved** to increase the cricket pitch/pavilion hire fees by 5% with corporate hire remaining at £150. In addition, the clerk is to set a slightly reduced fixed price for pitch and pavilion hire for cricket use.
- **Benches and finger posts** – The clerk advised that a quote of £70 has been received to remove a very dilapidated bench from Staplefield. Council agreed that this was necessary for H&S reasons and **resolved** to proceed. The Clerk has yet to look into the fingerposts and will report back.
- **Playpark** – The Clerk updated Council on the 3 companies she has so far met to look at how to resolve the flooding in the playpark. Once quote has been received so far with 2 still yet to be received. The Clerk to continue to investigate solutions and report back. The playpark inspection has been circulated to councillors showing some minor issues with the matting. This is all part of the refurbishment that is currently being investigated.
- **Staplefield Working Group** – Cllrs Fielding and Salimbeni both agreed to be added to the working group now that George Morley has left.
- **Highways** – The Clerk updated council that she has contacted highways regarding the road outside Brantridge School. This was left in a terrible state by works vehicles being parked here during the drainage works last summer. Cllr Bradbury advised the Clerk to send him the details and he would follow up. The Clerk also advised that the layby next to Pavillion was in a poor state and may need to be looked at in the future to be levelled.

11. Flooding – Cllr Birthwright advised council of the issue of flooding between Staplefield Village Hall and Rose Cottage Lane. One resident gets flooded and the road becomes dangerous to road users with potential aquaplaning and issues for cyclists. It is believed the drains may be blocked. Cllr Bradbury asked Cllr Birthwright to email him all the details and he would investigate.

Cllr Bradbury left the meeting.

12. Agree council representative for Ansty Village Hall. Council have previously had 2 members on the Ansty Village Hall trust, however both councillors have now left.

George Morley has agreed to continue and it was **resolved** that one councillor would attend on a rota basis.

13. Clerks Hours – In order to complete business during February, the Clerk has had to do additional hours due to the workload involved with the budget, grants, audit and updating policies. The chair had approved 38 hours overtime, and it was **resolved** by council that the clerk could carry over her 26.4 hours to the next financial year.

14. Finance – The clerk noted that historically payments and receipts were being checked and signed during the meeting. This means that either the councillors involved are distracted from the meeting or the meeting is put on hold and either way it becomes rushed and distracting with both the clerk and councillors not being able to completely focus. It was agreed that 2 councillors would come in 15 minutes before the meeting to go through the finances without any distractions.

- Monthly finances - the financial statement including the schedule of payments and receipts were checked and signed. The Clerk requested that a councillor meet with her in the next couple of weeks to do the end of year reconciliation. Clerk to organise.
- Councillor's allowances – The Clerk advised that councillors allowances should be paid via payroll as it's a taxable amount. Currently councillors receive it as a payment directly into their account from the council bank account. This is because in the past it has caused problems for councillors with HMRC which has cost them money to resolve the issues. The Clerk advised that by continuing to receive the payment in this way they are also going against their own financial regulations. It was voted on and agreed they would continue to receive the payment in the same way as previously for the year 2024/2025 and would be reviewed next year. The clerk advised that this was against her advice and would be minuted so. Clerk to action payments.
- Budget- approve the budget for 25/26 – Council agreed the budget for 25/26.
- Bank statements and cash book check – These were checked and approved by 2 councillors.
- Budget report for end of year – This was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting for review, noted and approved.
- Approve list of Direct Debits – List of direct debits/regular payments for Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council were noted and approved.
- Approve Financial Risk Assessment – The financial risk assessment for Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council was noted and approved.
- Financial Regulations – Updated Financial Regulations were approved and adopted by Council.

15. Interim Audit – Clerk updated Council on the interim audit, noting that the insurance needs amending to reflect the amount in the bank account (Clerk to action), Financial regulations needed correcting (Clerk has actioned) and that the Councillors allowance is not being paid correctly (see above). Otherwise, everything is in order and the end of year internal audit is booked for May in preparation for the external audit.

16. Boundary Review – Whilst at Haywards Heath Town Council, the Town Clerk advised the Parish Clerk that a boundary review was coming our way for the Rocky Lane Development. The 3 councillors for that ward are gauging opinions from residents and the Clerk will advise when the review formally comes through.

17. Grant applications. Cllr Williams updated council on the 2 remaining grant applications. Cllr's Salimbeni and Fielding left the room whilst the grant application for Staplefield Village Hall was discussed. Cllr Williams outlined the lengthy discussions that had taken place with Staplefield Village Hall representatives about what they had done so far, what match funding had taken place and what the plan for the future. He also advised that they currently have income from 3 regular hirers, a long-term hirer upstairs and assets in the form of a cottage that the caretaker currently resides in. They currently break even on the income they receive. He advised that the recommendation of the working group was that they should receive 50% of the grant request, which is £9395. Cllr Birthwright opposed this believing that they should be awarded more in light of the amount we had given to Ansty Village Hall over the last couple of years, i.e. £106000. Cllr Williams advised that the working group had taken a balanced view of trying to divide money up fairly between the wards as well as looking at how many people each venue currently attracts to see what proportion of the community would benefit. It was voted on and agreed by 4 votes to 2 to go with the recommendation of the working group. Council **resolved** to grant Staplefield Village Hall the amount of £9395 with Cllr Birthwright requesting it minuted that he voted against this on the basis that he believed they should be granted more funds.

Cllr's Salimbeni and Fielding returned to the room.

Cllr Williams outlined the discussions that have taken place with himself and HHFRC to get a balanced view and give the same opportunity to them as was given to Staplefield Village Hall, to help better understand the application. Councillors discussed at length the application and were unhappy that they still felt they had little understanding of what the grant was to be used for and that they would not be happy to award a grant for decorative items etc. It was agreed in the end that they would only award a condition offer of a grant of £11500 on the receipt of an invoice to show that it was being used to pay for capital projects. Councillors voted on this proposal with 7 in favour and 1 against. Therefore, Council **resolved** to offer the conditional grant of £11500. Clerk to action.

18. Update on Meetings and Events Attended

- **Community Bus** – Cllr Stokes and the Clerk attended a meeting hosted by Slaugham PC, to enable the committee of Handcross community bus to speak to the local community as they are currently in need of volunteers. The Clerk asked that if any councillors knew of anybody who may be able to help, to please get them to contact her directly.
- **Cuppa with a copper** – Cllr Stokes was unable to attend due to illness and Cllr Graves was unable to attend due to a clash of timings.

19. Allotments – After requests from Rocky Lane residents, the Clerk has been looking into the possibility of finding allotment plots. Slaugham PC have some that they

may be able to allocate to ASPC to use. Slaugham Clerk to discuss with Slaugham Councillors and report back on what this would involve.

20. It was noted that sadly after 12 years the caretaker of Staplefield Pavillion has handed in her notice due to personal reasons. Council would like to thank her for her years of service and wish her well for the future.

21. Confirm date and place of next meeting – Due to the Clerk being away in April, the April meeting is being pulled forward (as previously agreed) to 31st March and will be held in Whiteman’s Green Sports Club.

Meeting Concluded at 9.45pm.

Minutes are in draft form until approved and signed by the Chair at the next full council meeting.

Schedule of Receipts and Payments.

Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council					
Bank account: Current Acct					
Date range: 11/02/2025 to 10/03/2025					
Date	Supplier / Customer	Description	Receipt	Payment	Balance
	Opening balance b/fwd			86,254.51	
19/02/2025	Information Commissioners Office	ICO 2025 annual fee		35.00	86,219.51
25/02/2025	Ansty Sports and Social Club	Grant Application end 2024		11,521.32	74,698.19
25/02/2025	Cuckfield Lawn Tennis Club	Grant Application 2024		1,000.00	73,698.19
28/02/2025	Unity Trust	Service Charge		8.25	73,689.94
06/03/2025	South Eastern Power Networks	Wayleave 2024	232.91		73,922.85
10/03/2025	Sarah Abellan	Mileage February		53.01	73,869.84
10/03/2025	Wessex IT	April Support		36.80	73,833.04
10/03/2025	Bolnore Village Scout Group	Grant		950.00	72,883.04
10/03/2025	WSCC	February 2025		2,922.22	69,960.82
10/03/2025	Ansty Sports and Social Club	Budget Meeting 3rd Feb		17.50	69,943.32
10/03/2025	EDF Energy	Feb Electricity		25.00	69,918.32
10/03/2025	GB Sports and Leisure	Operational Inspection March 25		135.00	69,783.32
10/03/2025	Ionos Cloud Ltd	Domain renewal saynotocuckstye.c		12.00	69,771.32
10/03/2025	Mulberry and Co	Interim Audit		276.18	69,495.14
10/03/2025	Brook Street Society	Grant application end 2024		2,000.00	67,495.14
10/03/2025	Ashenground Community Centre	Invoice 6577		29.02	67,466.12

Transactions for Approval

Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council								
Listing of transactions dated between 11/02/2025 and 10/03/2025								
Voucher	Date	Description	Type	Supplier / customer	Account name	Net	VAT	Total
535	19/02/2025	ICO 2025 annual fee	Payment	Information Commissioners Office	Subscriptions	-35.00	0.00	-35.00
536	25/02/2025	Grant Application end 2024	Payment	Ansty Sports and Social Club	Capital Grants	11,521.32	0.00	11,521.32
537	25/02/2025	Grant Application 2024	Payment	Cuckfield Lawn Tennis Club	Capital Grants	-1,000.00	0.00	-1,000.00
538	10/03/2025	Grant application end 2024	Payment	Brook Street Society	Capital Grants	-2,000.00	0.00	-2,000.00
539	10/03/2025	Interim Audit	Payment	Mulberry and Co	Audit	-230.15	46.03	-276.18
540	10/03/2025	Domain renewal saynotocuckstye.c	Payment	Ionos Cloud Ltd	District Plan/Cuckstye	-10.00	-2.00	-12.00
541	10/03/2025	Operational Inspection March 25	Payment	GB Sports and Leisure	Playpark inspections	-112.50	22.50	-135.00
542	10/03/2025	Feb Electricity	Payment	EDF Energy	Staplefield Pavilion	-23.81	-1.19	-25.00
543	10/03/2025	Budget Meeting 3rd Feb	Payment	Ansty Sports and Social Club	Room Bookings	-17.50	0.00	-17.50
544	10/03/2025	February 2025	Payment	WSCC	staff salaries and on costs	-2,922.22	0.00	-2,922.22
545	28/02/2025	Service Charge	Payment	Unity Trust	Bank Charges	-8.25	0.00	-8.25
546	10/03/2025	Grant	Payment	Bolnore Village Scout Group	Capital Grants	-950.00	0.00	-950.00
548	10/03/2025	April Support	Payment	Wessex IT	Equipment and software	-30.67	-6.13	-36.80
551	06/03/2025	Wayleave 2024	Receipt	South Eastern Power Networks	Wayleave	232.91	0.00	232.91
552	10/03/2025	Mileage February	Payment	Sarah Abellan	Clerk's Expenses	-53.01	0.00	-53.01
553	10/03/2025	Invoice 6577	Payment	Ashenground Community Centre	Room Bookings	-29.02	0.00	-29.02
549	06/03/2025	Transfer between reserves	Transfer			-2,170.00	0.00	-2,170.00
550	06/03/2025	Transfer between reserves	Transfer			2,170.00	0.00	2,170.00

Bank Reconciliation, current account 24th Feb 2025, signed by 2 councillors.

Council name		Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council		
Bank account		Current Acct		
Balance per bank statement at 24/02/2025				86,219.51
TOTAL NET BANK BALANCES AT 24/02/2025				86,219.51
Opening_balance				26,859.00
Total receipts				132,137.79
Total payments				-72,777.28
Total transfers				
Closing balance per cash book (must equal net bank balances above)				86,219.51