ANSTY AND STAPLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at

Staplefield Village Hall on Monday 8th December 2025.

Members present: Bob Birthwright (BB), Chris East (CE), Jon Gilley (JG), Mandi Graves (MG), Nuala Hampshire (NH), Candida Lewis (CL), Amanda Saunders (AS), Heinrich Schmidt (HS), Simon Stokes (SS) (Chair) and Brad Williams (BW).
Also present: Sarah Abellan (SA) (Clerk), MSDC Cllr Richard Bates (RB), MSDC Cllr Malcolm Avery (MA), WSCC Cllr Pete Bradbury (PB), WSCC Cllr Sujan Wickremaratchi (SW).

Meeting Started at 7.30pm.

1. **To receive apologies for absence.** Maria Fielding (MF), Crispin Salimbeni (CS).

2. **Public Session.**
   3 MoP's attended. One spoke to address council on Staplefield and ask what was being done there as they hadn't seen any plans and there were rumours that there was going to be an office, wifi, phone lines etc. SS advised that this was on the agenda for discussion in item 7.

3. **To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.** None noted**.**

4. **To agree the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 10th November 2025.** The minutes were agreed by full council and signed by the Chair.

Items 7.2 and 7.5 were brought forward to be discussed whilst members of the public were present.

7.2 Pavilion – Discuss investigations into request by Staplefield Village Hall CIO and Fete Committee to take over the pavilion. Decide on response. – investigations and discussions by the clerk and council over the last few weeks have culminated in the following findings: Advice received is that it would not be lawful to allow the 2 groups to take over the running of the pavilion, that the land costs cannot be separated from the pavilion costs as the outgoings of one rely on the income of the other. The pavilion currently runs at a loss and there are concerns over continuation of funding which is currently covered by precept and some income from the pavilion. It was proposed by SS, seconded by BW that ASPC retain ownership of the pavilion. The vote was 9 in favour, 1 abstained. It was therefore **resolved** that ASPC would remain in control of the pavilion and the request was refused. Clerk to action.

7.5 Pavilion – Update on quotes. The clerk updated council that over the course of the last numerous weeks she has engaged with 9 companies to quote for the refurbishment. 4 have not quoted. 2 companies have provided 2 different quotes and each time the clerk has met with builders the spec has had to be amended slightly to deal with issues/changes needed. The

clerk advised that the starting point was based on a plan by BB and feedback from meeting with 2 members of the Jolly Tanners CC and 1 member of the fete committee back in May. Requests for an outside toilet to remain have been taken into account, as has the need for an indoor one. The changing rooms remain largely where they were with better use of the space being utilised. The biggest costs lay with compliance items such as re-wiring, plumbing, flooring and the external repairs that need to be completed. The quotes have now been whittled down to 2. The plans shared before the last meeting have now been amended slightly to re-instate a shower at the request of Nick Sage from the Jolly Tanners CC. He has also quoted for the job being in the construction trade. The 2 final versions differ slightly in relation to the placing of a small office. It was agreed by council at a previous meeting that an office for the council was vital and the clerk advised,that to clear up rumours circulating, this is to be a small space to have an address, there will be no wifi or phone but secure storage for council files and a small place to meet if needed and for post to be delivered to. Recent events have endorsed the need for this with notifications for the ownership challenge of the common being sent by post to a previous clerk. SS advised council that in addition to this, the same has happened with the electricity supply to the phone box housing the defibrillator. Fortunately, the clerk picked it up and is in the process of rectifying this as this could have been potentially catastrophic if the power had been cut off and the defibrillator was required. The clerk had received the final quote just before tonight's meeting and needs more time to review it. BW suggested that the next step should be that the 2 final quotes be assessed by the finance working group and this was **agreed** by full council. The Clerk suggested that we hold an EGM to get this approved once the FWG have met to get the approval before the Christmas break. Council **agreed** and dates to be set for both meetings. Clerk to liaise with final 2 contractors and send out the plans for both to the councillors.

5. **To receive updates from District and County Councillors.**
   PB advised that salt bins should now all be full and advised council to check any near them to ensure none had been missed. He also informed council that £35000 was spent last year on potholes and this had increased to £45000 this year under the new highways contract. The mayoral elections have now been postponed until 2028. The combined authority has already started and this will continue but with a reduced funding of £13 million per year, significantly less than planned. LGR, this throws up 2 questions, are County Council elections going ahead next year. This is not yet know. Is the shadow unitary election likely to be cancelled? This is a possibility. The budget has a £16.5 million funding gap to bridge but this is not as big as it appears when compared to a £2 billion budget. PB also advised that WSCC is part of a fair funding review. PB also noted the success of the New England Wood purchased.
   RB left the room during PB's session.
   MA updated on the 1,2,3 bin rollout noting that there are 3 separate teams involved and there had been some teething problems which included some vehicles breaking down, however these have now been resolved and the incoming calls regarding the rollout had reduced. The District plan is now coming back at the end of January with all previous issues causing it to be cancelled, having been dropped. He advised that Louise Nurser had been replaced. MA also noted the planning application for a mast on Rocky Lane was back in circulation.

   All councillors and MoP's left.

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

DM/25/2934	Lime Grove Barn, Cuckfield Road, Ansty, Haywards Heath	Internal alterations, new wood burning stove with flue fed to external south elevation, installation of 2no. conservation roof lights to rear roof slope and conversion of detached outbuilding to provide self-contained ancillary accommodation **Comment: No objection subject to stipulation of retention of the curtilage.**
DM/25/2932	Lime Grove Barn, Cuckfield Road, Ansty, Haywards Heath	Internal alterations, new wood burning stove with flue fed to external south elevation, installation of 2no. conservation roof lights to rear roof slope and conversion of detached outbuilding to provide self-contained ancillary accommodation. **Comment: No objection subject to stipulation of retention of the curtilage.**
DM/25/1495	Land Adj. To Rocky Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex	The installation of a 22.5 metre lattice mast, mounted with 9No. antennas, 12No. cabinets, 1No. Electrical meter cabinet located within a compound comprised of 2.4 metre high chain-link fence topped with 3 strands of barbed wire and the creation of a new access from Rocky Lane and ancillary development thereto. (Additional Highways information received 08.07.2025 and additional ecology information received 10.11.2025) **Committee Hearing Update.** **Comment: To object again, AS to forward clerk information to submit with the objection. AS to attend committee meeting hearing in January.**
DM/25/3004	Great Bentley Plantation, Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex	Provision of a freestanding solar array comprising 10 panels with an associated GRP enclosure for inverter and battery storage to serve the holiday lodge accommodation. **Comment: No Objection**
DM/25/2991	North Hall, Staplefield Lane, Staplefield, Haywards Heath	Conversion of the first floor of the Granary to facilitate ancillary accommodation to the main house together with associated minor external alterations. **Comment: No Objection**
DM/25/2992	North Hall, Staplefield Lane, Staplefield, Haywards Heath	Conversion of the first floor of the Granary to facilitate ancillary accommodation to the main house together with associated minor external alterations. **Comment: No Objection**

Planning application DM/25/2720 – This application is not in our parish but overlooks properties in our parish. JG noted that we used to be informed of any applications on our boundary and it was agreed that we should request this to happen again.

7. Staplefield

7.1. Community Orchard – The clerk has spent the last few months completing investigations into the suitability of the land requested for a community orchard. This initially began with checks on the decision-making aspect of the land as a document stored on file put this into question. Having been satisfied that this indeed lies with ASPC, the clerk conducted the relevant checks on suitability, feasibility, legal and governance aspects and also drafted in a clerk from another area to complete an independent report. This confirmed the clerks findings that the site either side of the Cuckfield Road, is not a suitable site for such a project. However, before this could be discussed and decided at a full council meeting, the request was withdrawn. The investigations have taken around 40-50 hours of work to complete and the findings will be shared on our website. NH has also been looking into the possibility of either sharing or purchasing an apple press and is in conversation with Balcombe. NH to report back at the next meeting.

7.2. Pavilion – Discuss investigations into request by Staplefield Village Hall CEO and Fete Committee to take over the pavilion. Decide on response. – **See above between items 4 and 5.**

7.3. Land - Claim of Ownership – Several areas in the Mid Sussex area have had signs posted on some of their land requesting a change of ownership to Lord Pitt who claims to have purchased the rights to the land. Councillors raised concerns that this was not fully investigated by WSCC before taking this on as they feel the claims are bogus and that the title was purchased on a bogus site that appears to have now closed down. Council were also not notified of this by WSCC and only found out when notified by another parish council. The clerk requested an extension to respond which has been granted. This is an enormous pull on council resources, both in terms of time and funding. The Councils affected are all pulling together and will be holding a meeting to discuss next steps.
RB re-entered the meeting.

7.4. Playpark – The playpark work started but has since had to stop due to the unusual amount of rain since they removed the equipment. The next steps involve laying foundations so it now needs to dry out once it has stopped raining. The project manager is keeping the clerk updated and it is possible this may now move into the next year before work resumes. It was agreed at the last council meeting to add an additional bench into the park area to have 2 in total. However, the current bench is rotten and Caloo have agreed to remove from site free of charge. The clerk obtained 3 quotes for 2 new benches, both made from recycled material. Council **agreed** to proceed with TDP for 2 new benches and fixing tools at a cost of £959.18 and £80 for Chris Nye to fix them on site. Clerk to action.

7.5. Pavilion – Update on quotes - **See above between items 4 and 5**.

7.6. Community Highways Scheme – Update on request for bus stops and responses for a new footpath from residents – The Bus stop has been approved and is likely to be put in opposite the current bus stop in front of the park, on the Cuckfield Road, Haywards Heath bound. They should also be replacing the bus stop sign on the existing stop going towards Crawley as it was removed and never replaced. We are still awaiting comments from the public consultation regarding a request to put in a footpath from Rose Cottage Lane towards the Village Hall. The clerk has also liaised with highways about the lack of lines painted on the junctions around the common and these are scheduled to be done around February. The clerk has also asked WSCC about the issues raised by a resident with regards to dangerous parking etc and the SIDS is showing regular excessive speeding through Staplefield and this was witnesses at the Remembrance service when cars were speeding past, even overtaking whilst the school

children were stood around the memorial. The public consultation will be in the common interest's magazine this month and it was agreed to move to the January meeting and consider whether we want to request additional calming measures at the same time. Highways are also speaking with the relevant departments about the possibility of lighting at the Rocky Lane bus stops.

7.7. Victory Inn – The current landlady's are leaving the pub on 2nd January 2026 with no other tenants currently lined up to take over. CE is in dialogue with Enterprise Inns and BB has also spoke to the brewery. It was **agreed** that the landlady's at the pub could keep their solar lights in situ but must be completely removed before the leave on 2nd January. CE has agreed to take over the Asset of Community value applications for the Victory Inn and The Jolly Tanners and SS will do the one for the Ansty Village Centre.

7.8. Highways – repainting of lines at junctions – as above, these should be completed in Feb 2026.

7.9. Tree work – The clerk has obtained 3 quotes to complete the last 3 remaining trees that flagged on the survey as needing to be felled. It was **agreed** to go with Edwoods at a cost of £3050 plus VAT. Clerk to action.

8. 273 Bus Route – We were contacted to ask if we wanted to be part of a consultation regarding putting up new bus shelters along this route that would then become the PC's asset. The clerk has asked to be included and will update council as more information comes in.

9. SIDS.

9.1. Quote for 2 new SIDS- Council discussed at length the benefit of having the SIDS cameras. It was **agreed** that a plan should be put in place for the foreseeable future to enable us to properly analyse the data before making a decision on whether additional cameras would be of benefit. HS to look into and move to February agenda to allow time to put together.

9.2. ASWC Camera – this is currently not support by the police in our area.

10. Civility and Respect Pledge

10.1. Discuss and agree council signing up – Council **resolved** to sign up. Clerk to action and look further into the training required.

10.2. Dignity at work Policy – Council **resolved** to adopt this policy and the version circulated **approved.**

10.3. Grievance Policy – Council **resolved** to adopt this policy and the version circulated **approved**.

10.4. Equality and Diversity Policy - Council **resolved** to adopt this policy and the version circulated **approved.**

11. LGR – This was addressed in the County/District Councillor section Item 5.

12. Assets of Community Value – As in item 7.7, CE to complete for the Staplefield pubs and SS to complete for the Ansty Centre.

13. Land Registration – CE to look into responses by NH and SS to confirm the areas mapped are correct and look at next steps.

14. Finance

14.1. Councillor's allowances – It was **agreed** that we should be following policy and taking these payments as PAYE. It was agreed to vote on this, proposed by SS, seconded by BW and it was

unanimously agreed that councillors allowances would be paid as a PAYE payment and those that wanted to opt out could do so. It was also **agreed** to pay councillors expenses for items used for council business such as ink or paper and the budget needs to be adjusted to reflect this. Receipts will need to be provided in the same month they are bought.

14.2. Monthly finances - Councillors agreed the financial statement including the schedule of payments, the receipts, bank statements and bank reconciliations. Signed off by HS and NH.

14.3. Clerks Overtime – the clerk presented overtime as requested and this covers October, November and the first week of December. It was **agreed** by full council to pay 44 hours in overtime. SS to put in an email for the clerk to forward to payroll.

14.4. Payments approved since last meeting - None

14.5. Budget review – BW reported back that the finance working group had looked at the budget and initial recommendations were to increase precept for next year. However, this needs to be reviewed further in order to allow BW to look into funding ideas for the Rocky Lane development. The next meeting in January will involve final approval of the budget and precept.

14.6. New Bank Account – Clerk is still looking into options, will report back at the January meeting.

15. Local Publications – BW has submitted an article about the new play park which has been published in the Cuckfield Life magazine. The clerk submitted an article to Staplefield Common interests with a brief statement on the Common ownership issue, update on the play park and the public consultation for the footpath.

16. Meetings Attended.

16.1. MO – SS, BW, NH, SA Attended and provided information as requested by the MO into additional information supplied by Cuckfield Golf Club. The next stage is that the MO will respond to the Cuckfield Golf Club with their findings and this will be shared with ASPC.

16.2. Any others not listed - none

17. Minor matters for consideration and items for the next agenda. Grant for the Ansty Film Club.

18. Confirm date and place of next meeting. Whiteman's Green Sports Club, 12th January 2026.

Meeting dates for the remainder of the year are yet to be agreed as we are waiting to hear if we can have some meetings in Ansty.

Meeting closed at 9.34pm.

Minutes are in draft form until agreed and signed at the next full council meeting.

Column1	Column2	Column3	Column4	Column5	Column6	Column7	Column8	Column9
Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council								
Listing of transactions dated between 11/11/2025 and 08/12/2025								
Voucher	**Date**	**Description**	**Type**	**Supplier / customer**	**Account name**	**Net**	**VAT**	**Total**
751	01/12/2025	December Support	Payment	Wessex IT	Equipment and software	-30.67	-6.13	-36.80
752	30/11/2025	Service Charge	Payment	Unity Trust	Bank Charges	-8.10	0.00	-8.10
753	18/11/2025	November Bill	Payment	Plan.com	Equipment and software	-22.00	-4.40	-26.40
754	19/11/2025	October Water	Payment	Castle Water	Staplefield Pavilion	-10.06	0.00	-10.06
755	13/11/2025	Emails	Payment	Hugofox Ltd	Equipment and software	-24.99	-5.00	-29.99
756	17/11/2025	Bronze	Payment	Hugofox Ltd	Equipment and software	-9.99	-2.00	-11.99
757	08/12/2025	Printer Ink	Payment	Sarah Abellan	Equipment and software	-3.95	-0.79	-4.74
758	08/12/2025	Tree removal x 6 Staplefield C	Payment	Symes Tree Surgery	Trees	-1,425.00	0.00	-1,425.00
759	08/12/2025	Clerks Manual	Payment	Sarah Abellan	Clerk's Expenses	-52.00	-0.90	-52.90
760	08/12/2025	November Salaries	Payment	Sarah Abellan	staff salaries and on costs	[redacted]		
761	08/12/2025	2025 Works	Payment	IdVerde	Grass cutting	-10,607.21	-2,121.44	-12,728.65
762	08/12/2025	Annual	Payment	GB Sports and Leisure	Playpark inspections	-150.00	-30.00	-180.00
763	08/12/2025	November FC Meeting	Payment	Staplefield Village Hall	Room Bookings	-22.00	0.00	-22.00
764	08/12/2025	December FC Meeting	Payment	Ashenground Communit	Room Bookings	-29.02	0.00	-29.02
765	08/12/2025	November Mileage	Payment	Sarah Abellan	Clerk's Expenses	-65.39	0.00	-65.39