



ANSTY AND STAPLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at

Whiteman's Green Sports Club on Monday 12th January 2026.

Members present: Bob Birthwright (BB), Maria Fielding (MF) Jon Gilley (JG), Mandi Graves (MG), 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)

Meeting Started at 7.30pm.

1. To receive apologies for absence. Chris East (CE), Nuala Hampshire (NH), Crispin Salimbeni (CS).

2. Public Session.

14 MoP's attended. MoP 1 stated they were concerned about the lack of consultation on the pavilion. They stated they were unhappy with the plans as explained to them by some councillors and outlined their concerns. This included the location of toilets, amongst other things. They also stated they could offer a secure filing cabinet at £10 per month at the village hall. A MoP 2 read out a statement by Cllr Gary Marsh sent to them on 12th December 2025. MoP 3 attended to ask if the application to transfer the land to Mr Pitt was on the agenda. SS advised it was and would be discussed.

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

4. To agree the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th December 2025. The minutes were agreed by full council and signed by the Chair.

5. Chairman's Report. SS advised that this was a new item to the agenda and was to give an update on various matters that had been happening.

5.1. Crispin Salimbeni – SS updated council on the absence of Cllr Salimbeni and that he had been diagnosed with a serious illness that would see him out of action for some time whilst he received the treatment he needed. ASPC would like to wish him well and look forward to seeing him return when he is fully recovered.

5.2. SS advised that he had had a meeting with 3 residents on 29th December 2025 regarding the pavilion and that it had been made clear he was not meeting them in any formal capacity and could not enter into detailed discussion about Council policy. This included 2 members of the fete committee, Sam Butler and Susie Robertson and Geoff Crosta of the Jolly Tanners Cricket Club. SS said he was pleasantly surprised to see that they agreed on more than disagreed, for example, they were supportive of the proposed Parish Office and do understand that the

Council does need to demonstrate Parish wide benefits. They were very keen to feel that they are being listened to and wanted SS to understand the value of the building to them as a community. Sam Butler wanted to make clear (contrary to what one of our Councillors has been told) that everyone is welcome at the fete and that a stall could be made available to the Parish to advertise our function and our work. All in all it was a very satisfactory meeting.

- 5.3. SS advised that a lot of work has been going on to deal with the claims by Mr Pitt over the land in Staplefield. This is not something just affecting Staplefield but the wider area and is taking up a huge amount of time and resources of the local Parish and Town Clerks. SS has been in talks with Viscount Brookeborough who, through inheritance, is the real Lord of the Manor of Cuckfield. SS is hoping this matter will be brought to a close soon.
- 5.4. SS updated on the latest with Ansty Farm development since it's rejected planning application in October. Meetings have continued in preparation for an anticipated appeal but SS wanted to make it clear that ASPC are NOT committing at this stage any further monies other than the £5K already allocated for this purpose and budgeted for. The great bulk of the legal costs will be borne by the Cuckfield Society whose Chairman - Giles King - has written to SS confirming this position. In addition, Cuckfield Parish Council have set aside £25000. In the meantime, the District Plan examination is due to resume with hearings starting in February. Once we have a timetable listing the issues the new Inspector, Mr Bore, wishes to discuss then we will have a better idea what response is required from us. It could well be that this is what Fairfax are waiting on too.
- 5.5. SS noted that he cannot finish this report without raising the unfortunate circumstances that led to the cancellation of the EGM due to have taken place here on the 18th December. The purpose of this meeting, as advertised, was to approve the recommendations of the Finance Working group that had met on the 12th as agreed at our full council meeting in December. With this in mind, SS and SA met with Trevor Leggo - The most senior officer in the joint Sussex Association of Local Councils - who was able to offer good advice and we will update council on this in due course. In the meantime, SS said he would like to remind Councillors of the code of conduct they must adhere to, inside and outside of council duties, and the Respect and Civility Pledge that we have more recently taken.

1 MoP left the room at 7.45pm.

6. **(8) Whiteman's Green (moved up the agenda)** – 2 MoP's attended to discuss the proposal for the running track and look for support from the council. They gave a very detailed outline of what they were proposing, what it would involve, costings and next steps. Council gave their support and said they would look forward to seeing them when they were at the next stage.
7. **(9) Youth Worker Grant (moved up the agenda)** – Toby Dawson gave an update on the youth worker role that has completed it's first of 2 years of being part funded by a grant from ASPC. It is progressing well with increasing numbers and has expanded into a wider area and year groups. They have 20 volunteers, around 30 children all from year 6 up and although raising money from grants, have so far been fully funded by donations. It was asked if they knew how many children came from which parishes and Toby advised he could find out. They would like to advertise further and ASPC agreed to place posters in our noticeboards on his behalf. Toby left the meeting.
8. **(6) To receive updates from District and County Councillors. (moved down the agenda)** RB advised that MSDC had spent a huge amount of time trying to deal with the impending unitary reforms, however, this has now been put back. Everything else fairly quiet, cabinet meeting 2nd February 26 and budget will be discussed at the council meeting 25th February 2026.

9. (7) To consider the following planning applications and any others that arrive before the meeting. (moved down the agenda).

DM/25/3104	Borde Hill Garden, Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex	Variation of planning conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 18 relating to planning application DM/24/0433	Comment: No Comment
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.	AS attending the committee meeting on Thursday 15 th January, 26. Site visit today along with District Councillors. Cllr Avery will be able to speak and Cllr Bates has also been given permission to speak for 2 minutes.
DM/25/3274	Borde Hill Garden, Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex	NON MATERIAL AMENDMENT TO PLANNING APPLICATION DM/24/0433 - TO REMOVE THE WORDING RELATING TO THE AMENDED PLANS FROM THE ORIGINAL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION.	Comment: No Comment
DM/25/3257	32 Pullman Avenue Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 4XB	Proposed loft conversion with side dormer and rooflights This is an application to establish whether the development is lawful. This will be a legal decision where the planning merits of the proposed use cannot be taken into account.	Comment: Noted
DM/25/3242	Skyline 90 Valebridge Road Burgess Hill West Sussex	Alteration, extension and re-modeling of existing dwelling house including a new roof structure with new first floor and a single storey rear corner infill extension.	Comment: unable to comment as it's not showing on the MSDC website. Clerk to contact planning.
DM/25/3212	Red Oaks Weald Chase Staplefield Road Cuckfield	Proposed conversion and extension of the existing garage into additional living accommodation; construction of new glass link extension; and demolition of existing porch extension with proposed replacement extension.	Comment: No Objection
DM/25/2744	Thickets Deaks Lane Ansty Haywards Heath	First floor side extension (Amended Plans rcvd 15.12.2025)	Comment: No Objection

DM/25/3224	Land West Of Valebridge Road Burgess Hill West Sussex	Trim the trees surrounding two street lighting columns along Valebridge Road at a	Comment: No Objection
DM/25/1050	Land Adj. To Barn Cottage Cuckfield Road Ansty Haywards Heath	Proposal to erect a single four-bedroom house in land adjoining Barn Cottage (Additional BNG and Ground Level Tree Assessment Received 18.12.2025).	Comment: Objection, Previously object and objection still stands. Comment: Objection. This is not in the neighbourhood plan, no consideration of biodiversity, significant impact on trees, cramped and is overdevelopment.
DM/25/2011	Chideok Valebridge Road Burgess Hill West Sussex	Remodelling of bungalow into a two-storey dwelling, including first-floor and two-storey rear extensions, fenestration alterations with associated landscaping and demolition of existing rear garage, erection of two storey detached garage to the front with first floor office, along with new access driveway.	Comment: No Objection as long as restricted use and tied to the house, ie not businesses or separate accommodation.

10. Staplefield

10.1. Pavilion Update. SA updated council on the latest news which is having applied for a lottery grant of £20000 to put towards the refurbishment of the pavilion, we have been awarded the full amount. SS also advised that Cllr Marsh is hoping to get us an additional grant towards it which he hopes will be at least £5000, this is yet, to be confirmed. SA advised that the Finance Working Groups recommendation was to go with CPE due to their experience and ability to complete the project within time and budget and they provide best value. Previous projects have included the Ansty Village Centre and they are highly recommended by John Thorpe. MF and BB both voiced their objections to the proposed plan. It was proposed by HS and seconded by SS that at this initial stage Council go with version 1 of the quote which includes a shower, outdoor and indoor disabled toilets and a small office for the parish council. This was voted on with 7 in favour and 2 against and was therefore **approved**. It was **agreed** that this would now go out to public consultation and a document has been prepared to be circulated to the public along with the plan and a description. This is intended to go live on 13th January and is a parish wide consultation which will end on 25th January to enable council to review the results before the next full council meeting. Hard copies will be left at various locations for those not able to access the online form and this can also be requested by contacting the clerk. AS showed concern that members of the public have plans of the proposed refurbishment which have only so far been circulated within council and not made public. MF advised they were Bob's plans. AS felt that it was a shame that there has been the level of animosity there has been surrounding this project as this has been talked about for many years and now it's finally happening.

8.50pm RB left the meeting.

10.2. Footpath request – There have been seven responses in the public consultation showing

support for ASPC to request a footpath running from Rose Cottage Lane to the village hall. ASPC **agreed** that they would support the request by submitting to WSCC under the Community Highways Scheme. SA to action.

10.3. Bus Stop. A new bus stop request was approved by WSCC and will be placed on the common, opposite the current bus stop outside the playpark, heading south bound towards Haywards Heath. Date yet to be confirmed.

10.4. Playpark refurb update. The park refurbishment is slow due to the excessive rain we had in December. As they were unable to work, they were allocated to another job and are now back on site however bad weather continues to hinder the installation.

10.5. Playpark sign designs. The designs were shared with councillors and a winner chosen. Clerk to notify the winner and action a new sign being made.

7 people left the meeting 8.56pm.

11. Planning (duplicate agenda item, see item 9)

12. ACV - Chris East is dealing with the Asset of Community Value applications and as is not in attendance, this item will be moved to the February agenda.

13. Land – Brook Street and Ansty land Acquisition. Again, moved to next agenda when CE is in attendance.

14. Finance

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

14.2. Payments approved since last meeting. TDP Ltd – new park benches as approved at the December meeting.

14.3. Budget and Precept – The budget was discussed at length and **approved**. (MF wanted it noting that adjustments were made before the final budget was approved). This excluded the lottery grant as this has yet to be received. However, this could help allocate funding elsewhere towards things such as the cricket nets. It was **agreed** to ask the contractor to also look at the nets whilst refurbishing the pavilion and provide a quote. BW supported this request. It was proposed by HS and seconded by MG to set the precept at 7.5% and this was voted on with 8 for and 1 against. No further votes were taken and 7.5% was **agreed** by full council. This is purely to cover increasing council costs as any lower would not cover council's outgoings. It was also noted the very little our tax base has risen. This question was raised last year with little success at an answer. SA to try again.

15. Meeting Dates – Dates have been confirmed up until April 2027 with a block booking of 3 months in a row at Ansty to be able to incorporate them in our meeting venues. One needs amending to May so am just awaiting confirmation from Staplefield village hall that they can swap May to August. Council **approved** these dates and times, subject to SVH being able to accommodate us.

16. Local Publications – The piece that was lined up for the Cuckfield Life magazine has been shelved due to the accident that recently took place being in line with the topic. BW to look at alternatives. It was agreed to write a piece about the bus stop, footpath consultation and pavilion refurb to submit to Common Interests magazine for Staplefield.

17. Meetings Attended. None noted however MG and SA are attending a meeting on 29th January

regarding new bus stops on the 273 route and SS is attending a zoom MSALC meeting on 22nd January.

18. Minor matters for consideration and items for the next agenda. MF requested a risk register. SA pointed out with have one every year and one was ratified in the spring. MF requested a rolling live risk register brought to each monthly meeting. HS asked if she could bring that to the meeting each month and MF **agreed**. MF also asked if we had a business community plan. SA advised that we didn't that she was aware of. MF met with the new PCSO & that the Clerk agreed to find out and add her/relevant police contact details & meeting details/frequency to the PC website. SA advised that she had received an update that the highways defect she reported had been repaired. SA assumes this is the Staplefield sign that had rusted and collapse but will need to confirm. MF advised that the poles the SIDS is attached too is also rusty. SA advised that the road markings around the green are due to be renewed. SA also advised that she is trying to finish her ILCA but is also now starting her CILCA. An agreement needs to be signed between her and the council, but it was too late for this meeting so will be added to the next. HS noted the SID plan he was tasked with completing for the next meeting.

HS asked if he could read a brief statement to address how the council functions after a decision has been made stating that continued opposition has created an avoidable increase in workload for the clerk and diverted attention away from other areas of the parish, especially Rocky Lane with regards to the current mast planning issues. SA has spent so much time having to revisit decisions that have already been made instead of focussing her work elsewhere. It's causing increased stress for officers and its members and is affecting the council's ability to function and needs addressing to move forward. SS agreed and asked how we can move forward. It was suggested putting in bold items that have been decided, SA advised she already does this however, has requested that Councillors assist by checking the minutes. Clearly items have been missed and although the fault absolutely lies with the clerk, things do get missed as the meetings are generally long and busy and this is why they are sent out to councillors to check. SA advised she always tries to send them out the next day whilst it's fresh in everybody's minds so to please just take 5 minutes to read through and check for anything missing or errors and report back.

19. Confirm date and place of next meeting. Staplefield Village Hall, 9th February.

Meeting Finished at 9.28pm

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

Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council											
Listing of transactions dated between 09/12/2025 and 31/03/2026											
Voucher	Date	Description	Type	Supplier / customer	Account name	Reserve	Bank Account	Reconciled?	Net	VAT	Total
766	10/12/2025	Benches	Payment	TDP Ltd	Staplefield Play Park refurb	Play Park refurb	Current Acct	Yes	-770.26	-154.05	-924.31
767	24/12/2025	Donation towards Park Refurb	Receipt	Priority Engineering	Grants	Play Park refurb	Current Acct	Yes	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
768	31/12/2025	December	Receipt	Unity Trust	Bank Interest	General	Deposit Acct	Yes	717.40	0.00	717.40
769	31/12/2025	Jan 26 Support	Payment	Wessex IT	Equipment and software	General	Current Acct	Yes	-30.67	-6.13	-36.80
770	12/01/2026	annual check	Payment	Chubb Fire and Security	Staplefield Pavilion	General	Current Acct	Yes	-282.22	-56.45	-338.67
771	17/12/2025	Website	Payment	Hugofox Ltd	Equipment and software	General	Current Acct	Yes	-9.99	-2.00	-11.99
772	12/01/2026	Emails	Payment	Hugofox Ltd	Equipment and software	General	Current Acct	Yes	-24.99	-5.00	-29.99
773	12/01/2026	December salaries	Payment	WSCC	staff salaries and on costs	General	Current Acct	Yes	-5,750.21	0.00	-5,750.21
774	15/12/2025	Electricity Aug-Nov 25	Payment	Smartest Energy	Staplefield Pavilion	General	Current Acct	Yes	-49.48	-2.47	-51.95
775	06/01/2026	Printer Paper	Payment	Sarah Abellan	Clerk's Expenses	General	Current Acct	Yes	-16.66	-3.33	-19.99
776	06/01/2026	Councillor ink	Payment	Mandi Graves	Miscellaneous Payments	General	Current Acct	Yes	-23.99	0.00	-23.99
777	31/12/2025	Service Charge	Payment	Unity Trust	Bank Charges	General	Current Acct	Yes	-7.80	0.00	-7.80
778	22/12/2025	Water November 25	Payment	Castle Water	Staplefield Pavilion	General	Current Acct	Yes	-3.48	0.00	-3.48
779	16/12/2025	Mobile December	Payment	Plan.com	Equipment and software	General	Current Acct	Yes	-22.00	-4.40	-26.40
780	12/01/2026	December Mileage	Payment	Sarah Abellan	Clerk's Expenses	General	Current Acct	Yes	-22.95	0.00	-22.95