



ANSTY AND STAPLEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at Staplefield Village Hall on Monday 9th February 2026.

Members present: Bob Birthwright (BB), Chris East (CE), Maria Fielding (MF) Jon Gilley (JG), Mandi Graves (MG), Nuala Hampshire (NH), Candida Lewis (CL), Amanda Saunders (AS), Simon Stokes (SS) (Chair) and Brad Williams (BW).

Also present: Sarah Abellan (SA) (Clerk), MSDC Cllr Richard Bates (RB), Trevor Leggo (TL) CEO SALC.

Meeting Started at 7.30pm.

1. To receive apologies for absence. Crispin Salimbeni (CS), Heinrich Schmidt (HS).

2. Public Session.

20 members of the public attended. 1 MoP spoke on the Rocky Lane Mast, thanking ASPC for their support with opposing the Mast planning application DM/25/1495, item 7 on the agenda. The application was approved and they feel 2 key areas were not addressed, health and existing infrastructure. They are wanting to proceed with a judicial review which will likely cost £35000-£45000. The initial stage is to get a solicitor to send a letter of action with a cost of £4000 plus VAT. This has to come from one person and this MoP has elected to do so which means initially paying the bill and fundraising to cover the costs. They are requesting the support of ASPC. A second MoP spoke regarding agenda item 6, planning number DM/25/3129. They are campaigning to get it removed from the DP but have not yet had a response. They state the roundabout is too big, there are concerns over flooding, trees being removed and pedestrian safety. They are seeking councils support in objecting to the development. A 3rd MoP spoke from the Ansty Ward on agenda item 9.3, sharing their concerns about the amount of precept money being proposed to be spent on the Pavilion refurbishment at Staplefield and questioning it's use, profitability and what the regular hirers have invested themselves towards the refurbishment costs. A 4th MoP spoke on item 9.1 regarding the park upgrade and the drainage and also about an offer a filing cabinet, post box and offer of the committee room on a non-exclusive base until October 2026. This item was not on the agenda. A 5th MoP spoke about the pavilion refurb plans but was restricted by time due to the 10-minute public session ending.

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 12th January 2026. Cllr Fielding advised she had spoken with MSDC and said that she wanted the minutes changing to reflect the changes in the draft budget. The clerk advised that it wasn't necessary as the draft budget would have been amended with any changes discussed and the final budget provided, however agreed to amend the wording at Cllr Fielding's insistence. Minutes were signed.

To receive updates from District and County Councillors. Cllr Bates advised there has been very little on the MSDC front with the Budget meeting on 25th February staying within limits set by the Government. The District Plan is now being examined and it is anticipated an early determination will be arrived at. The debacle of Sussex Mayor and Unitary Authorities has been put on hold - and it seems the full extent of this arrangement has not been fully realised and of course Elections have been suspended. He also noted the alarming number of potholes.

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

DM/25/3129	Land At Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 125 dwellings, together with the provision of landscaping, open space, and associated development works, with access from Balcombe Road. All matters reserved except for access.	ASPC to object on major development within the countryside, out of keeping with the rural character, eroding the rural nature of the site which is further harmed by the proposed loss of trees. Contrary to various policies, list to be sent to planning. Roundabout - Unnecessary repeat of previous application which was refused and reduced. Impact on area of HWNL.
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6. Rocky Lane mast update and request for funding. AS advised that a fundraising page had been set up for the Rocky Mast Appeal campaign. This was currently sitting at over £3300. It was agreed to help publicise by sharing the fundraising page on our website and social media. It was agreed to contribute to the costs to remain consistent with appealing other planning applications such as the Ansty Farm development. JG proposed a payment of £1000 which was seconded by CL with full council backing. The clerk confirmed there was allocation left over in this year’s budget from grants to cover this. It was **ratified** to donate £1000 and this would be sent to the Beeches Residents Association who would then transfer the money to the fundraising account. Clerk to action.

7. Ansty Farm – SS and BW updated council on the latest meetings with the planning application being rejected and now almost certainly going to appeal. The £5000 previously set aside in this year’s budget has been committed to the appeal and as agreed at the last meeting, is being carried over into next year’s budget. No further funds from the parish are anticipated beyond this. Most of the funding is coming from the fundraising appeal, Cuckfield Society and Cuckfield Parish Council with around £75000 altogether in the pot.

8. Staplefield

8.1. Park Update and drainage. As sent out to councillors last week, although it was agreed when the park was put in that the drainage previously placed was adequate, as although it still collected the water at the bottom of the hill, it drained away quickly, the extortionate amount of rain over the last few months (nearly double the normal amount) has meant it never gets the opportunity to drain and this is affecting the new park installation. In addition, with global warming it is expected that this could be the new normal. The park contractor suggested

putting in drainage in certain areas to encourage the run off of water and allow the installation to complete. This was **agreed** prior to the meeting and council **approved** the order variation to spend £5586 plus VAT on the additional drainage. The contractor also requested a part payment as they had been on site for so long and it was **agreed** to pay for the equipment at a cost of £11748.42 plus VAT. Clerk to action.

- 8.2. Public consultation.** The clerk updated that the results were still being collated and would update at a later date.
- 8.3. Pavilion Update** – A risk assessment was carried out a couple of weeks ago at the pavilion by an independent company at a cost of £140 plus VAT, **agreed** by the chair. The purpose was to check what is required to enable the pavilion to open for the summer at minimum cost. The clerk recommending pausing the refurbishment to allow time to apply for further grants now we have been awarded a national lottery grant, review the consultation documents and re-visit the plans accordingly. A quote is not currently ready to provide council with the cost of this work, however, would include all minimum requirements to cover health and safety. Council **agreed** that this was the best plan moving forward. Clerk to action.
- 8.4. Request for hedging/privacy screening around park.** A resident has requested council consider this. The clerk advised the risk aspect of screening a park and council fully **agreed** that this would not be a safe or a compliant thing to do and so was rejected.
- 8.5. Tree Work.** The clerk updated council on the outstanding tree work with 2 trees on the upper common suffering from ash die back being felled on 12th February and 1 being felled on 13th March. The latter needs a transformer to be shut down and this is the date UK Power Networks have agreed to turn off the supply. It will be off from 9am-3pm and UKPN would notify all properties affected. This is the last of the urgent tree work flagged in the survey.

- 9. Land** – CE advised that he would provide updates on the Brook street and Ansty acquisition at the next meeting.
- 10. Brook Street** – The layby was previously discussed at a meeting a couple of years ago and it was fully supported by council to request the provision of parking bays to be placed in the layby. This ties in with item 10 and CE will provide an update at the March meeting.
- 11. ACV** – SS and CE are still both to complete these applications and will update council at the March meeting.

12. Finance

- 12.1. Monthly finances** - financial statement including the schedule of payments, the receipts, bank statements and bank reconciliation were **agreed**. MF queried the clerk's mileage of 68 miles to Rocky Lane/Hurstpierpoint and back again on 29th January. The clerk advised it was to attend a Bus Stop meeting with MG and showed proof of the journey.
- 12.2. Payments approved since last meeting** - Park drainage as in item 9.1.
- 12.3. SLCC renewal** – The clerk's membership is due for renewal. It was **agreed** by full council to pay the amount of £253 for the membership. Clerk to action on the next pay run in March.

- 13. CILCA** – The clerk updated council that she had been due to start her CILCA but has had to knock it on to the next intake in September due to the demands of her current workload. This means that council will unlikely retain their GPOC in 2027. There is an agreement between the trainer, council and the clerk and the clerk advised what this would mean for the council. It was **agreed** to sign this and the clerks' hours could be discussed nearer the time when it was clearer how heavy/light the general workload is. The course is 240 hours, equivalent to an A level and generally takes

about 4 hours a week. BW updated council on what GPOC meant for those who may not already be aware, and the benefit it has for a council.

14. Clerks Hours. The clerk advised that she is now back down to her contracted 21 hours.

15. Local Publications. BW updated council that the postponed entry into the last publication of Cuckfield Life would now go into the next edition. This is the speed watch session NH did with the Chief Constable on new years eve and they would also add in a report on the Rocky Lane Mast fundraising.

16. Meetings attended. SA and MG attended a bus shelter meeting held at Hurstpierpoint PC, though it didn't really affect ASPC's parish. MG shared that she found it informative and that since then, 2 new electronic notices have been placed in the ASPC bus shelters on Rocky Lane.

SS attended an MSALC meeting. They discussed the cancellation of elections and the unknown moving forward. The cost of an election, as confirmed by TL, was now £3.20 per elector. A recent by-election at Storrington had a 15% turnout at a cost of £10000. The meeting also included the police report. Inspector Derrick has now stepped down and Steve Turner is the new District Commander. Overall Crime remains low but various Parishes and Towns have raised concerns over antisocial behaviour.

17. Minor matters for consideration and items for the next agenda. MF noted that the land in front of the Staplefield noticeboard had a lot of potholes and asked the clerk to look into it. MF also noted a manhole cover open by the bus shelter at the playpark. BB noted the mess of the verges being caused mainly by taxis and staff parking at Brantridge School. SA and SS to try and get a meeting with the head teacher to discuss to see what solution can be found. MF asked to review the website and social media for the council to take some workload off of the clerk. The clerk advised this was a very quick job and wasn't an issue.

18. Confirm date and place of next meeting. Next meeting to be held 9th March at Ashenground Community Centre.

Meeting Finished at 8.55pm

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