Staple Annual Parish Meeting
Staple Village Hall
Wednesday 8th April 2026
7.30pm

Minutes

1.	**Welcome and Introduction** The Chairman, Cllr Trevor Bartlett, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Members of the Parish Council introduced themselves.
2.	**Apologies for Absence** Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Evans (Kent County Council) and PC John Bowler.
3.	**Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting** The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in April 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record. **Proposed by:** Cllr Kirk **Seconded by:** Cllr Davis-Marks
4.	**Matters Arising** No matters arising were raised.
5.	**Chairman's Report** The past twelve months have flown by with another busy year for Staple Parish Council with once again us seeing a change in the Parish Clerk, after taking on the role Sophie Gaskain resigned as an opportunity came up for Clerk to Sandwich Town Council. However, we we're delighted to welcome to the role Lucy Denny never being a clerk before has made a really good start and we are all impressed with the way she has so quickly adapted to it. Another change that has happened recently is that we had to accept Cllr Lynn Ewart resignation, this did come as a surprise but stayed on until we found a replacement. On behalf of Staple Parish Council I would like to thank her for her dedication and commitment as a Councillor and especially representing Shatterling. Last month we were delighted to welcome Trisha Cornwell also from Shatterling as her replacement. Work was carried out on repairing the bus shelter at the top of Pedding Lane, Shatterling on A257 during the year this was carried out by Nate of Landscapes who made a very professional job.

	I hope that you have noticed how clean the village road signs look as we also got Nate to clean them, he is also about to paint the village gates as you approach Staple, many thanks. I would also like to thank Staple Friendly Wildlife Village for continuing to litter pick in the village and for Alan Cooke who keeps the old churchyard looking so environmentally friendly, we have had many people remark about the wonderful wild flowers that have been left to grow and for us to enjoy their natural beauty. Cllr Davis-Marks continues to keep us updated on the various planning applications each month and the council will make a recommendation to DDC on applications if the council decides to do so. Enforcement issues remain especially on the triangle land, Mill Road with planning breaches and environmental issues still ongoing. Bonfires unfortunately caused much concern last year at the site and despite Cllr Davis-Marks and myself attending a meeting with the environmental officer very little was done to prevent them. Cllr Roger Loukes continues to update us each month on the Speed Indicator Device, Speedwatch and Footpaths. We are pleased to report that speeding through the village is definitely decreasing thanks to the team of volunteers we have on the Speedwatch team, a huge thanks goes to them for their hard work and commitment towards making this happen. Footpaths are very popular in the community and generally they have all been very well maintained it has been unfortunate that in the wet weather they became so slippery and muddy however with this dry spell of late they have become much more walkable. The new owner of Church Farm has reinstated the footpath up Crixhall Lane towards Buckland Lane which has been good to finally see. Regarding the amount of rain that fell this year the village sadly experienced a lot of flooding with each entrance to the village being covered in water. The area that was badly affected was Chapel Lane, with KCC being called out many times to prevent this happening sadly the area continued to flood until a meeting was arranged with KCC and Cllr Peter Evans trying to solve the problem we have our fingers crossed as work has been carried out but we have not had the amount of rain since to see if this has been successful.

	Potholes continued to be a major issue in the village, I don't think I have ever seen so many! Even when they were filled in they soon returned. We must ask 'when are the two outside Thatch Cottage, Durlock Road ever going to get filled in' bets are on! However, the new road surface in Barnsole Road has been completed and an excellent job has been done. Many thanks to Neil McCollum for continuing to put the Ice Sign out when the weather is bad and to the residents that help with gritting the roads and clearing the blocked drains. The Parish Council has limited resources both financially and in terms of manpower however we have tried to achieve as much as possible during the year. We have supported the village hall and recreation ground committee with a grant. We continue with the Highway Improvement Plan especially on the A257 and thank you to Cllr Loukes for attending the monthly A257 action group meetings along with resident Yvonne Leach from Shatterling. However, it is extremely frustrating that improvements on the very dangerous road have not been carried out with accidents still sadly occurring. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors, the members of the public who attended the monthly meetings, our District Councillor Cllr Martin Porter for his regular attendance and to Cllr Peter Evans for his help and support.
6.	**KALC Community Awards** The Kent Association of Local Councils Community Award for 2026 was awarded to Alan Cooke in recognition of his outstanding voluntary work transforming the old churchyard; creating a pond, planting trees and wildflowers, encouraging wildlife, gratefully acknowledged by the Council and residents. The award will be presented at a later date.
7.	**Reports** • Finance Report The Clerk presented the financial report for the year ending 31 March 2026: Opening balance (1 April 2025): £9,959.00 Closing balance (31 March 2026): £11,710.80

	Funds are currently held across Barclays and Unity Trust Bank accounts, with a transition to Unity Trust Bank underway to facilitate online banking. Expenditure remained in line with budget expectations, covering staffing, administration, insurance, and maintenance of parish assets. A VAT reclaim has been submitted and is expected to be received during the 2026/27 financial year. • District Councillors' Report: Cllr Martin Porter delivered a report on behalf of Dover District Council. Key updates included: • Ongoing regeneration and infrastructure projects across the district • Community grant funding awarded to local organisations • Continued delivery of waste collection services • Updates on local government reorganisation proposals • Concerns regarding road conditions were noted, with responsibility lying with Kent County Council.
8.	**Questions from Residents relating to Councillors' Reports** A257 Road Safety a proposal was discussed to raise a community petition to: • Reduce the speed limit to 40mph • Introduce additional road safety measures Evidence of excessive speeding was highlighted, with concern expressed regarding vehicle speeds and safety along the A257. **Community Contributions** Residents raised the importance of recognising volunteers who contribute to maintaining the village environment. The Chairman acknowledged this and confirmed that the Parish Council and residents greatly appreciate the ongoing efforts and commitment of all volunteers.
9.	**Guest Speaker** Malcolm, representing Ripley's Garden Centre, gave an engaging and informative talk about the business and its development within Staple over the past year.

	He shared insights into the challenges of establishing the garden centre, particularly during a difficult trading period, as well as the progress made since taking over the site. Malcolm highlighted the range of improvements already undertaken, including enhancements to parking, signage, and customer facilities, as well as investment in the café and outdoor seating areas. It was encouraging to hear that the business now employs around 16 staff and is continuing to grow, with a clear focus on becoming a welcoming destination for both residents and visitors. Malcolm also spoke about future plans to further develop the site, including hosting community events and creating more opportunities for local engagement. Following the presentation, the Chairman thanked Malcolm for his interesting and positive talk, and attendees were encouraged to visit and support the garden centre.
10.	**Public Forum/Open Discussion** A query was raised regarding a mobile home located at a residential property within the parish. It was understood that this is temporary accommodation during building works. The Parish Council noted the matter.
11.	**Close of Meeting** The Chairman thanked all attendees for their participation and formally closed the meeting. Meeting closed: 8:13pm

Signed as a true record: _____

Date: _____

Position: _____