**Staple Parish Council**
**Staple Village Hall**
**Wednesday 14th January 2026**
**7.30pm**

**Minutes**

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| **1.** | **Apologies:** Cllr Ewart, Cllr Davis-Marks, DDC Cllr Martin and KCC Cllr Evans<br>**Present:** Cllr Bartlett (Chair), Cllr Martin (Vice-Chair), Cllr Loukes, Cllr Kirk, Cllr Rogers-Hudson plus 1 member of the public and Lucy Denny the Parish Clerk |
| **2.** | **Minutes**<br>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as accurate. Proposed: Cllr Kirk. Seconded: Cllr Martin. Agreed by all Cllrs present and signed by the Chair. |
| **3.** | **Matters Arising**<br>There were no matters arising from the minutes. |
| **4.** | **Declarations of Interest**<br>There were no Declarations of Interest on items on the agenda. |

**Meeting adjourned for Public Session. (Max 15 mins. Notes for Information Only)**

A member of the public queried the rules regarding the release of foul water onto roads and reported concerns about water being discharged over a period of approximately two hours, accompanied by an unpleasant smell.

Cllr Bartlett advised that the matter would be referred to Dover District Council's Environmental Health / Environmental Protection team for consideration.

A member of the public also queried how many people are permitted to stay on land in caravans for accommodation purposes and for what duration. Cllr Bartlett advised that the matter would be referred to Dover District Council's Planning Department for investigation.



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**5.**

- **Finance**
- To approve payments as presented at this meeting
  - Payments:
    Clerks Salary and Expenses £350.68: Approved
  - Nathan Mannering Invoice (Shatterling Bus Repair Works: £600.00: Approved
  - Roger Loukes Expenses (St James Church Site Plan UK Planning Maps): £15.60: Approved
  - Proposed: Cllr Kirk. Seconded: Cllr Rogers-Hudson. All agreed.
- To consider cash balances and bank reconciliation. Members noted the December bank reconciliation.

**Parish Council Accounts** **Bank Reconciliation** **Page 1 of 1**

**Staple Parish Council** **Printed: 24/12/2025**

With effective date up to 24/12/25
Showing Payments In and Payments Out
Reconciliation reference: Barc 24/12

Nominal code : 150 Nominal name : Bank current account
All entries

| Date | Type | Reference | Reference 2 | Debit | Credit | R. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10/12/2025 | Expenditure | Asgard shed | Paid to RKL | | 2,320.00 | Y |
| 19/12/2025 | Expenditure | Clerk payments | Wages, expenses | | 650.40 | Y |
| 03/04/2025 | Expenditure | PC Software | PCA Accounts | | 119.88 | N |
| | | | | 0.00 | 3,090.28 | |

| Summary : | | |
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| | Previous reconciled balance | 14,523.39 |
| | Reconciled payments in | 0.00 |
| | Reconciled payments out | -2,970.40 |
| | Unreconciled payments in | 0.00 |
| | Unreconciled payments ou | -119.88 |
| | Reconciled total | 11,552.99 |
| | Entered bank statement value | 11,552.99 |
| | Difference | 0.00 |

- Unity Trust Account Opening Update
  The Clerk reported that the online account opening form for Unity Trust Bank had been completed to facilitate the transfer the parish council's banking arrangements from Barclays.
  **RESOLVED:**
  That Staple Parish Council open a bank account with Unity Trust Bank plc.
  **RESOLVED:**
  That the following members/officers be appointed as authorised signatories and authorised to operate the account in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and the bank's terms and conditions:
  Trevor Bartlett - Chairmain



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| | John Kirk - Councillor<br>Georgina Martin - Vice Chair (to be added as a signatory once the application has been submitted and account is open)<br>Lucy Denny - Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer<br>Proposed: Cllr Rogers-Hudson and Seconded: Cllr Loukes. Agreed.<br>• Parish Precept 2026/27<br>Members considered the setting of the Parish Precept for the financial year 2026/27. It was noted that the proposed precept is £13,380.00, an increase of 1.21% on the previous year.<br>**RESOLVED:** That the Parish Precept for the financial year 2026/27 be set at £13,380.00, and that the Precept Demand Notice be submitted to Dover District Council. |
| **6.** | **To receive the Clerk's report and correspondence**<br>• Printer Purchase<br>The Clerk requires access to a printer for the production of agendas, minutes, financial papers, correspondence and statutory notices. Members are asked to consider authorising the purchase of a suitable printer. Cllr Loukes provided a quote for an Epsom Printer for Clerk to review.<br>**RESOLVED:** That the purchase of a printer for Clerk use be approved, within the agreed budget of £150.<br>Proposed: Cllr Martin. Seconded: Cllr Kirk.<br>• Update on VAT reclaim process<br>The Clerk has been unable to locate a unique HMRC VAT reference number for previous claims. It has been confirmed that earlier VAT reclaims were submitted using the paper VAT126 form and that refunds were received. The Clerk will therefore submit the current VAT reclaim using the VAT126 form and retain all supporting documentation for audit purposes.<br>• Internal Audit Report Action Plan<br>○ The Internal Audit identified Digital and Data Compliance as an area requiring further work ahead of the next audit. The Clerk will present the following policies in draft form as part of this process:<br>• Freedom of Information (Publication Scheme) Policy<br>• Privacy Policy<br>• IT Policy<br>• Website Accessibility Policy<br>• Asset Inspections and Tree Safety<br>The Clerk reminded Members of the outstanding Internal Audit recommendation that the Council establish a formal inspection |



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| | regime for Council-owned assets and any trees for which it is responsible. Members are asked to nominate a councillor to coordinate inspections and to agree that an inspection schedule be added to the annual calendar, with inspection frequency to be confirmed with the Council's insurers.<br>Cllr Loukes noted the council is responsible for the trees in the Churchyard. Cllr Kirk noted to include notice boards. Cllr Loukes to share document with list of Assets.<br>• Cash Balances and Reserves Account<br>The Clerk reminded Members of the Internal Audit recommendation that surplus cash balances be transferred into a reserves account to maximise interest earned. Members are invited to consider authorising the transfer of appropriate surplus funds, subject to banking access arrangements.<br>Cllr Bartlett confirmed this should be reviewed once the new Unity Trust Bank Account is open.<br>• Review of Council Reserves<br>The Internal Audit Action Plan identifies January as the appropriate time to review the Council's reserves. Members are asked to review the level of reserves held, taking into account future liabilities including election costs, tree works and contingencies, and to confirm whether the current level remains appropriate.<br>Cllr Bartlett confirmed this should be reviewed once the new Unity Trust Bank Account is open.<br>• KALC Dover Area Committee<br>Correspondence has been received via the KALC Dover Area Committee regarding a proposal for a lorry park in the locality of Hougham Without Parish. The correspondence was received for information only.<br>• Jigsaw Project (Choice Support)<br>Correspondence has been received from Choice Support requesting permission to display an information poster on the Parish Council noticeboard. The correspondence was received for consideration. Agreed for poster to be displayed on noticeboard. |
| **7.** | **Reports**<br>• District Councillors – Members noted that a written update had been received from the District Councillors providing general information on district council services and community matters. |



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| | • County Councillor – Apologies were received from County Councillor Peter Evans. Members noted that a written update had been received regarding highways matters and Kent County Council budget information.<br>• Village Hall and Recreation Grounds – Cllr Kirk confirmed a tranquil garden will be created in the Recreation Grounds and that the Staple Country Fayre will be held on Sunday 21st June 2026.<br>• Highways (SID, Speedwatch, footpaths) – HIP Plan Cllr Loukes noted Warning Horse Signs along Lower Road to be added to HIP.<br>  ○ Speedwatch no sessions completed due to weather. Staple Speedwatch sessions to resume in February.<br>  ○ Highways - next A257 meeting held on 17th January petition requesting enforced speeding reduction and central double white lines to dissuade dangerous overtaking will be discussed.<br>  ○ SID - Total Vehicles recorded in December was 41,000 vehicles average speed 24.7 mph.<br>• Planning<br>1. Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement at Mill Road – The Chairman advised that there had been no further update from Dover District Council regarding Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement matters at Mill Road. Members noted the update.<br>2. New planning applications:<br><br>2.1. Application reference. 26/00026 - Erection of rear extension at The Old Nursery, School Lane, Staple Status: Awaiting decision<br>Members resolved to support the application for the erection of a rear extension.<br>Proposed: Cllr Loukes. Seconded: Cllr Kirk. Agreed unanimously.<br><br>2.2. Investigations<br>The Chairman reported updates in respect of ongoing planning enforcement investigations at Crofters Lodge and Little Shatterling Farm, Roman Road. Members noted the information provided. No discussion took place. |



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| | • Kent Police – An update was received on 5th January 2026 from PC Jonathan Bowler confirming his return to duty following sickness absence. PC Bowler expects to be fully operational by the end of January. The council looks forward to working with PC Bowler again and seeing him at the council meetings. |
| **8.** | **Maintenance**<br>• Bus stop, Shatterling - Cllr Bartlett noted fantastic work from Nathan Mannering on the Bus stop at Shatterling.<br>• Signs re-paint - Cllr Bartlett shared report on inspection of the road signs to contractor directly. Wooden gateways to be reviewed a reported to KCC if necessary, road signs also require maintenance. Work agreed to be carried out to restore signs and gateways to a good condition including repairs on finger post.<br>• Overgrown hedges on Mill Road work is completed. Twitham enquiring under investigation.<br>• Street Light on Lower Road – DDC confirmed light was not found during LED scheme. Power disconnected DDC to investigate further to get light operation as road has limited visibility in dark. Cllr Bartlett to follow up with DDC.<br>• Ice Signs – Staple Parish Council would like to thank Neil McCollum for his continued support and note appreciation for Neil putting out ice signs out and sand to help reduce accidents in inclement weather. |
| **9.** | **Any other Business**<br>• Cllr Kirk noted he will need to be reimbursed for a future payment on 9/02/2026 renewal of Staple Parish Council website £296.10.<br>• Cllr Kirk asked if there was an update on a hare coursing report received earlier in the month. Cllr Loukes confirmed reports should be made to the Police on 101 either online or via phone.<br>• Staple Parish Council Annual General Meeting confirmed for Wednesday 8th April 2026. Cllr Barlett requested agenda item to finalise a guest speaker for February Agenda Members asked to consider guest speaker. Tom Ripley was suggested and Cllr Barlett to make contact. |
| **10.** | **Date of next SPC meeting**<br>The next SPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 7.30pm |

Meeting closed at 8:57pm

Signed as a true record: _____



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Date: _____

Position: _____



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