

Minutes of a Meeting of Staploe Parish Council Held at 7.45pm on Thursday 29th September 2022 in the Meeting Room at Wyboston Village Hall.

Present: Cllr. J. Ibbett (Chair), Cllr. V. Zwetsloot (Vice Chair), Cllr. G. Meola, Cllr. P. Yockney, Cllr. D. Smith, Lucy Crawford (Clerk), Borough Cllr. T. Wootton, Neil Waterson (Head of Planning at Cambridge Power*), Claire Norris (Communications Manager at Cambridge Power*) and one member of the public (Richard Squire).

*Cambridge Power are the developers of the battery energy storage scheme at Cobholden.

Apologies for absence: Cllr. J. Thomson and Cllr. E. Meola

2022/072. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr. V. Zwetsloot
 - Tally Ho barn Class Q – neighbour to the site
 - Battery energy storage at Cobholden – applicant is a relation.
- Cllr. G. Meola
 - Lives close to the village hall site and playing field
 - Is a member of the village hall committee
 - High Wood solar farm – her husband owns a field with a covenant on it specifying that he cannot comment on planning applications on neighbouring fields which include part of the proposed solar farm
- Cllr. J. Ibbett
 - Yew Tree Cottage – owns neighbouring land
 - High Wood Solar Farm – husband works for applicant
 - Cobholden Battery storage – husband works for applicant
- Cllr. D. Smith
 - Trees on Duloe Common

2022/073. Public Open Forum

Richard Squire offered to answer questions regarding the solar farm and Sharps Barn. He also advised the Clerk that there will be fireworks at the wedding venue on 5th November.

Solar Farm Comments

The Clerk read the following statement about the solar farm application from a member of the public:

“I have been reviewing the IA planning application for the extension solar farm south of High Wood. As I will not be able to attend the Parish Council meeting tonight, I am sending my comments on this application for your info/use.

In principle I support solar farms as a way of moving to green energy to deal with Climate Change.

The developers of this scheme (IA) have listened to the issues that we raised with them last year and have modified their plans to:

- *Reduce the size of the land take*
- *Avoid encircling High Wood ancient wood*
- *Planting of hedgerows and screening to maximise biodiversity.*
- *Keeping the fence lines back from the Public Rights of Way (PROW).*

However, those of us who use the PROW we will still suffer reduced amenity and enjoyment.

I remain frustrated by the fact that this is still presented as a stand-alone development due to separate legal arrangements when it is clear to the naked eye that this will be a major extension to existing solar farm at Top Farm (in fact over three times bigger!) and therefore should be treated as such in planning terms.

In terms of specific comments on the application:

- *We requested last year that IA amend the layout to remove more from the east of the proposed site and use land to the west (that is more deserted by the public who walk in the area). A little of this has been done but more could be moved to Hook Wood and the Basmead Barns area and reduce the impact on the PROW that we use. This was rejected by IA due to the route of a water pipeline, yet their current proposal shows that the existing solar farm and part of the proposed solar farm run either side of the pipeline and provide a strip for biodiversity. So this plan change could and should still be made.*
- *While High Wood is no longer encircled by Solar Panels, there is a large area of new solar panels to the east of High Wood with a small corridor for wildlife to the north to connect High Wood and Huntingdon Wood. This area of solar panels should be significantly reduced in size or preferably removed to maximise the connection for wildlife between the two woods.*
- *Two bird surveys have been done during the nesting seasons (Apr-Jul) in 2021 and 2022. Why has nothing been done for winter birds or at other times of the year? The reports are strange in that the photos in both reports are identical, which to me, casts doubt on the 2022 report. The reports show that the red-listed Skylark is present across the whole of the proposed site. A number of tracks through the proposed site have been left to allow for Skylark feeding and breeding areas, but these are very small compared to the whole land take and are clearly insufficient.*
- *The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is calculated at 86% and a document is presented of this calculation. However, as it is spread across multiple pages it is unreadable, which is unacceptable.*
- *The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) document is presented in redacted form. Why? What is being hidden that is so secret that we cannot see it?*
- *During construction it is stated that “standard hours” will be worked. No detail is given of these hours. We should require that these are limited to 5 days/week and that any noisy operations (especially piling) should be limited to 9am to 5pm – this is critical.*
- *No details are provided of the Community benefit fund – we need to get as much as possible to compensate for our loss of amenity (e.g. new village hall, average speed cameras, cheap electricity).*
- *It is stated that agriculture will continue around the proposed solar farm. What guarantee will we have on this? What is to stop Richard Squire again expanding the solar farm after this proposal is built (if approved)? This is critical.*

While I would prefer this development not to happen, I expect that it will get approved, in which case I could support it if my points above are addressed.”

Richard Squire explained that:

- there are lots of skylarks in the existing solar farm
- bird surveys do not happen in winter because the birds don't nest in the winter

- the solar farm could not go further east because there are two residential properties to the east (Bassmead Barns and Rookery Farm) which would be affected
- He explained that there is a security funded insurance scheme in place to cover the decommissioning costs if Intelligent Alternatives were to go into administration. This will be revalued every 5 years.

Cllr. G. Meola: the landscape assessment included few references to our parish and more to Hail Weston. It also chose to use a point of reference at the bottom of the hill behind Duloe Common rather than from the top of the hill from which the solar panels would be more visible.

Richard Squire: the majority of the scheme is in Hail Weston parish.

Cllr. V. Zwetsloot: the planning application treats this as if it was a separate, stand-alone scheme when it is very clear that it is an extension to the existing scheme as it surrounds the existing scheme, shares an access track and shares at least part of the substation. Therefore, it should be counted as a scheme of national significance (over 70mW) and given the higher level of scrutiny required for such projects.

Richard Squire: the schemes have different developers, are under separate planning applications and there will be a separate substation.

Cllr. G. Meola: will you be expanding the solar farm further?

Richard Squire: no

Cllr. P. Yockney: Many of the hedging trees around the High Wood solar farm have died and not been replaced.

Richard Squire: there have been two exceptionally dry springs. The dead saplings will be replaced.

Cllr. G. Meola: will the permissive path next to the existing solar farm be retained?

Richard Squire: yes.

Battery Storage Comments

Lucy Crawford asked whether Cambridge Power have a similar insurance backed scheme which will cover decommissioning if they go into administration.

Neil Waterson of Cambridge Power confirmed that they do.

Cllr. G. Meola: will the project expand beyond this application?

Neil Waterson: there is also an application for a solar farm at Cobholden but there are no plans to expand the battery storage facility beyond this application and the area available will be constrained by the need to use land to increase biodiversity, and for landscaping. It is also constrained by land ownership (i.e. UK Power own the land to the east), presence of pylons and overhead lines. There is only grid capacity for 100MW at present so they would be constrained by these factors.

Lucy Crawford: what is the progress on the solar farm application at Cobholden (which is separate from the solar farm application at High Wood which is being discussed tonight)?

Neil Waterson: Bedford Borough Council have yet to assess the environmental impact screening application.

Cllr. P. Yockney: how will you replace the amenity value lost and make it a pleasant walk for the locals and will the biodiversity and landscaping features be covered by insurance as well as decommissioning costs?

Neil: there will be a biodiversity net gain of 200% and careful landscaping. It won't be covered by the insurance but it will be required under planning conditions.

Lucy Crawford: will there be any public access to the new biodiversity areas?

Neil: there is a footpath adjacent to the battery storage unit and public access will be addressed in the solar farm application.

Lucy Crawford: Neil said they were constrained by grid capacity of only 100MW but she had understood that there would be lots of grid capacity from 2028.

Neil Waterson: they need to consider the current grid capacity for this application.

Borough Cllr. T. Wootton: do boxes need to be white – could they be green to blend in better?

Neil: he will ask the question.

Cllr. P. Yockney: does not support industrial development in open countryside but does not object to this because there are efforts being made for biodiversity net gain.

Cllr. D. Smith: proposed no comment. The negative amenity is outweighed by the increased energy security.

Cllr. V. Zwetsloot: we should remember it will take 30 years for trees to grow to shield the site. What is the lifetime of the scheme?

Neil: 40 years.

Cllr. V. Zwetsloot: kids use the track and safety will be an issue – they will try to climb on the batteries so security will be important.

Other Matters Raised in the Open Forum

Cllr. V. Zwetsloot: the hearing into Bedford Borough Council's request for an order for the sale of the land (in order to recover its costs) forming the former Upper Staploe travellers site will be heard on 7th October at Luton County Court at 11am. Could the Parish Council write to ask how the land will be sold as some local people may wish to bid? The Clerk will ask the question.

Cllr. J. Ibbett: a Honeydon resident asked her whether the speed limits in Honeydon could be reviewed so that the 40s become 30s and the 30s become 20s.

Lucy Crawford: this would require a follow up consultation but could be considered at a future meeting.

Lucy Crawford (speaking as a resident) expressed concern about closing the village hall / playing field car park. The playing field and cabins are the only community space in the parish and are to be used for the benefit of the whole parish. Many residents outside Duloe are not within easy walking distance of the playing field and need to use their car to access the field. Those with young children may find it particularly difficult to walk to the play area as the roads and footpaths between Duloe and Staploe / Honeydon are not suitable for pushchairs. She has noticed that fewer people use the play area and playing field in Colmworth since they closed their village hall car park.

2022/074. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2022

Having been previously circulated the minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. G. Meola.

2022/075. Borough Cllr. T. Wootton's report

A new conservative researcher (Gagan-Deep Nahar) has been appointed who will be sending a report in due course.

Borough Cllr. T. Wootton suggested that the Parish Council meet with other councils in the area to discuss the introduction of speed limits on Bushmead Road. The Clerk agreed to forward the minutes and asked that the hosting and minute taking be rotated between the 4 parishes as there is quite a lot of follow up after each meeting. He would like to see Bushmead Road qualify for extra funding and maintenance.

He has received quite a few positive responses to his Mayoral campaign and people are particularly concerned about speeding and traffic on the doorstep.

He urged the Council to apply for the Ward Fund as soon as possible. The Clerk explained that she was still trying to get quotes to replace the decking. Existing quotes were very high.

There have been a few meetings about the A428 / Black Cat roundabout. Highways England have planning permission and have two people who are assigned to liaise with Parish Councils (Mr Salmon and Mr Stewart). Highways England are currently doing the archaeology surveys and moving cables and are due to start work this autumn. It is expected to take 5 years to build it and they are not planning to close any existing roads so they hope to avoid rat running. Borough Cllr. T. Wootton is pressing for average speed cameras as a deterrent against rat running and speeding commuters.

Lucy Crawford: noted that the government's mini budget specifically mentioned that the EW rail project would be accelerated.

2022/076. Planning Applications

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
22/01813/FUL	Full planning application	Installation of solar farm (generating up to 50MW) comprising the provision of photovoltaic panels, 18no. inverters, 4no. switchgear housings and 3no. transformer stations together with hardstanding, landscaping, access alterations, fencing and associated works	Land East And West Of Little Staughton Solar Farm Kimbolton Road Hail Weston	05/05/2022	Solar Farm

Cllr. V. Zwetsloot proposed that the council object until the panels are removed from the area west of High Wood and that the application is made as an extension and therefore classed as the major infrastructure project that it is.

Cllr. D. Smith had been opposed to the scheme in the past but in view of the climate and energy crisis was inclined to be in favour.

Cllr. V. Zwetsloot expressed concern about food security given that it is high quality agricultural land. At least with wind power food crops can still be grown underneath the turbines.

Lucy Crawford pointed out that the land has now been assessed and found to be largely grade 3b which is not high value agricultural land. There is a small amount of grade 2. This assessment forms part of the application.

Cllr. V. Zwetsloot and Cllr. G. Meola: these panels should be put on large warehouses like those between Milton Keynes and Bedford and on all new homes and then there would be no need to build industrial schemes like this in the open countryside.

Cllr. G. Meola: Richard Squire and his developers have listened to our concerns and made significant concessions. However, she remains concerned that, with further solar farm applications in the pipeline, a huge proportion of our parish could be affected. Our area is designated as suitable for wind not solar in the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030.

Cllr. P. Yockney: our area is designated as open countryside for planning purposes. This is industrial and is not suitable for the open countryside where it will dramatically alter the landscape.

Cllr. D. Smith proposed that the Parish Council object with the following comments:

“The Parish Council are grateful to the landowner and developer for listening to many of our concerns about their initial proposal for an environmental screening opinion (Hunts District Council 21/01837/EIASCRC). In response to our concerns they have modified their plans to:

- Reduce the size of the land take*
- Avoid encircling High Wood ancient wood*
- Plant more hedgerows and screening to maximise biodiversity.*
- Keep the fence lines back from the Public Rights of Way (PROW).*

However, the Parish Council do not feel that the following issues have been sufficiently addressed.

- We believe that this should not be considered as a separate entity to the existing solar farm at High Wood. As it is currently proposed it will be directly adjacent to and partially encircling the existing solar panels, the electrical substation will be adjacent to the existing one, they share an access track and the landowner and developer are the same. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted as a solar farm of >50mW and considered as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and subjected to the commensurate level of scrutiny required for a project of this size.*
- We remain concerned about the number of solar panels around High Wood which is an ancient wood. We would like to see the panels between Huntingdon and High Wood removed.*
- We are concerned about how the biodiversity features will be maintained. It appears to have taken a long time for the hedges to be planted at the existing High Wood site and many of the whips have fallen over / died. We appreciate that it has been very dry but we would like to see the biodiversity features maintained to a high standard over the life of the project. We*

are conscious that wildflower meadows need careful maintenance over a long period of time to be successful and would like to know who will cut them and maintain them and see a protected budget for maintenance of all the biodiversity features.

- *We would like to see any noisy operations such as piling during installation restricted to Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm with none on Bank Holidays.”*

This was seconded by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot and councillors voted unanimously in favour. (Cllr. G. Meola and Cllr. J. Ibbett abstained due to declarations of interest).

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
22/02051/HPN	Prior notification for single storey rear extension(s)	Prior notification for single storey rear extension(s). Not a planning application.	Yew Tree Cottage Honeydon Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 2LP	14/10/2022	22/02051/HPN
This is not a planning application as it is permitted development. Councillors resolved not to comment.					
22/02002/CPNQ	Prior Notification for Change of Use from an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse(s)	Change of use from an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse	Tall Ho, Gypsy Lane, Upper Staploe	28/09/2022	22/02002/CPNQ
This application is to change the cladding and window layout on a Class Q development. Councillors resolved not to comment.					
22/01919/FUL	Full planning application	Operational works to enable conversion of Barn from Agricultural Use to Class E(g(i)) (use allowed under appeal reference APP/K0235/W/21/3283941 (21/01948/CPNR))	Sharps Barn Kimbolton Road Hail Weston St Neots PE19 5JX	21/09/2022	22/01919/FUL
It was resolved to support this application. Councillors consider this would be an enhancement to the area and a good use of existing buildings. Proposed by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot and seconded by Cllr. D. Smith.					
22/01828/MAF	Major Full and Change of Use Application	Installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) ¹	Land South Of Bushmead Road Staploe	27/09/2022	22/01828/MAF
It was resolved not to comment on this application. Proposed by Cllr. P. Yockney, seconded by Cllr. D. Smith. There were two votes in favour and one against. Cllr. J. Ibbett and Cllr. V. Zwetsloot abstained due to declarations of interest.					

2022/077. Village Hall, Community Cabins and Playing Field

- Land transfer from Playing Field to Hall to extend the hall. The transfer of land from the Playing Field to the Village Hall Charity has been completed by Wellers Law Group but they have registered it as two separate, disconnected pieces of land for the hall extension and the

¹ comprising; self contained battery modules on skids; transformers; Power Conversion System Modules; Control Building; electrical connection compound including substation; control and storage containers; underground cables and conduits; access track; security fence; acoustic fence; temporary construction compound and associated infrastructure; bunded drainage basin, planting scheme and other associated works.

car park extension so the Clerk has asked them to revise this to make it one, connected block of land. A quote of £700 was approved by Staploe Parish Council in January 2021 to come out of our Village Hall Rebuilding reserve.

- Quotes for replacement decking, reconnecting CCTV and burying electrical cable
 - Replacement decking:
 - S Carpentry £6,988 (wood)
 - Mark Preston £15,220 (wood)
 - Mark Preston £18,160 (composite)
 - Cllr. E. Meola unspecified quote for replacement decking £5,500
 - Removing decking, fitting kickboards, levelling the ground and making a concrete step:
 - Mark Preston £1,850
 - **It was resolved to find out how much paving would cost as an alternative. Proposed by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot, seconded by Cllr. G. Meola.** Cllr. J. Ibbett offered bricks for steps and will seek a quote for slabs.
- Reconnecting existing CCTV: Banks Electrical £150
- Upgraded CCTV: Cllr. E. Meola obtained a quote for £900 – details unknown
 - **It was resolved that the existing CCTV is not adequate for the task and therefore the Clerk will ask Cllr. E. Meola to obtain three quotes with further detail to supply and fit a new CCTV camera fit for purpose.** Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola, seconded by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot.
- Peter Banks has quoted £144 to repair the electric cable
 - **It was resolved that the cable must be repaired immediately and that Peter Banks quote was acceptable.**
- Burying electrical cable, fitting new CCTV cable for existing camera, repairing drain cover & fixing a security post to west of car park: Mark Preston £1,490
 - **It was resolved that the cable should be buried and that the Clerk should seek another quote if possible but the Council will approve up to £1,490 to bury the electric cable, fix the drain and fix the security post. She should endeavour to get CCTV quotes from Cllr. E. Meola so that the two cables can be buried together. Proposed by Cllr. D. Smith and seconded by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot.**
- Consider closing / restricting access to Village Hall car park.
 - **It was resolved not to restrict access.** Proposed by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot and seconded by Cllr. D. Smith.

2022/078. Consider Introducing Speed limits in Duloe and closure of Woodhouse Lane after the bungalow at number 61 in view of consultation results

- **Extending the speed limit in Duloe to Duloe Butts**
 - The Clerk reported that 29 out of 30 respondents supported the extension of the speed limit from College Farm in Duloe to Duloe Butts. 1 person objected to this. There was one comment saying that this would be a waste of time unless it was enforced. Two

people asked for the 20mph zone to extend all the way through Staploe (not just the western section).

- **Reducing the speed limit throughout Duloe to 20mph**

- The Clerk reported that 27 out of 30 respondents supported this reduction. Comments included several that it would be a waste of time unless it was enforced, we need average speed cameras and the owners of the wedding venue and solar / battery developers should pay for them, need 20mph in eastern Staploe too, concern that limits will be confusing as someone travelling from Bassmead will go from 40mph to 20mph in Western Staploe to 30mph in eastern Staploe to 40mph between Staploe and Duloe, 20mph in Duloe, 40mph east of Duloe, 60mph near the A1 bridge then 30mph in Eaton Socon all in the space of 2 miles so 30mph and 40mph is easier to follow. As previously reported in the Open Forum a resident of Honeydon asked for the 30 and 40 limits to be reduced to 20 and 30 as well. Cllr. G. Meola pointed out that all the speed limit changes would make average speed cameras ineffective. She requested data from the speed signs. The Clerk will request the data.
- **It was resolved to call a meeting with Bedford Borough Council Highways Department to see what they would advise in view of the consultation results.** Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. D. Smith.

- **Closure of Woodhouse Lane after the Village Hall car park**

- The Clerk reported that she had received responses from 26 households of which 21 were in favour of closing Woodhouse Lane and 5 against. However, of the 5 that were against closing the road, 2 lived closest to the proposed closure. They (and several others) expressed concern that it would push the antisocial behaviour into the hall car park nearer their houses. Other comments were that it was likely to increase car parking at the playing field which could be a problem during football matches, suggestions that the closure would be better implemented at the junction with the bridleway to Mount Pleasant, concern about emergency vehicles being cut off. One respondent suggested a drop-down bollard rather than a horse friendly gate.
- **It was resolved not to request a road closure at the moment but to see if operational CCTV can help deter antisocial behaviour and what evidence it might reveal.** Councillors also wanted to see if the incidence of antisocial behaviour changes now that the summer holidays are over. It was particularly bad just before schools broke up. Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. D. Smith. Cllr. G. Meola abstained due to her declaration of interest.

2022/079. School Transport

Consider how to improve secondary school transport in our parish. The Borough Council do not provide free school transport to our catchment secondary schools (Sandy and Sharnbrook). Only to Mark Rutherford and to schools in St Neots. Cllr. D. Smith explained that there used to be a private bus service from Colmworth to Sharnbrook but this was cancelled one week before term began because the bus company were short of drivers. Parents have not been able to find an alternative at a reasonable rate. **It was resolved to write to the school transport team, the Mayor and Richard Fuller to ask them to:**

1. **Reconsider their school transport policy. Public transport is much more sustainable than parents driving their children to school and most secondary school children in our parish attend Sharnbrook Academy which is our catchment school. There is only one child in Year 12 who attends Mark Rutherford from Honeydon and he has to pay for his bus pass. Parents would like transport to be provided to Sharnbrook.**

2. **If the above is not possible then consider using some of the extra £130K provided by central government to the Borough for public transport to subsidise bus fares for children using the private bus arrangements to get to Sharnbrook.**
3. **At the very least offer the children guaranteed privilege passes on the nearest school bus route to Sharnbrook eg. from Bolnhurst.**

Proposed by Cllr. D. Smith, seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

2022/080. Trees

- Tree Survey on Duloe Common. This was completed by Richard Arnold (Arboriculturalist) on behalf of Brightman Brothers on 9th September 2022 as a follow up survey from the original one carried out on 9th September 2019. Findings were as follows:
 - the large ash on BPHA land has been removed as he recommended
 - There is a stump of an old tree just west of the paved footpath that needs to be removed (hand tools will suffice as it is very rotten) and the hole filled. The roots have raised the paving slab beside it so it is now a trip hazard. He recommended that it be relaid. The Clerk has advised BPHA.
 - two recently planted Silver Birch trees had died due to the extreme dry weather. He recommended removal and replacement with Field Maple, Hornbeam or Whitebeam. He suggested local residents be co-opted as volunteers to water them and consider the use of slow water release bags and removal of grass for 1m² around each tree with well-rotted wood chip. The Clerk has advised BPHA
 - the small tree next to the noticeboard (owned by Staploe Parish Council) is still alive but only just. He recommends watering, removal of grass around it and applying well-rotted wood chip. If it has died by the spring then he recommends we replace with Field Maple, Hornbeam or Whitebeam. **It was resolved to see if it survives until the spring and if not then it was agreed to remove it without replacement as it has always struggled due to the proximity of the large ash trees on the boundary.** Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.
 - There is no sign of Chalara Ash dieback in the ash trees on the boundary. He advised a summer drive-by monitor of the trees by a volunteer. If any unexplained thinning or die back is noted then he can attend to confirm or otherwise the presence of Chalara.

2022/081. Finances

- Receipts and Payments are listed on p12-13 and were approved by Cllr. P. Yockney and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.
- Bank reconciliation and earmarked reserves are listed on p14-16 and were checked against the bank statements by Cllr. J. Ibbett.
- The Clerk confirmed that the remaining funds from the Residents Against Illegal Development In Upper Staploe (RAIDIUS) account of £706.41 have been found. They were transferred to Cllr. V. Zwetsloot who transferred them into the Parish Council account on 15th August 2022. **It was resolved to determine how to allocate these funds at the next meeting once the hearing about the ex-traveller site land has concluded.** Proposed by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot and seconded by Cllr. G. Meola.
- **It was resolved to retain the funds earmarked for the Jubilee to use for future social events.** Proposed by Cllr. D. Smith and seconded by Cllr. V. Zwetsloot.
- Bank signatories. Cllr. J. Thomson, Cllr. V. Zwetsloot, Cllr. J. Ibbett, Cllr. D. Smith and Lucy Crawford are all signatories to the account. Cllr. J. Thomson, Cllr. V. Zwetsloot and Lucy Crawford are all online signatories. Ideally the Clerk would not be a signatory but the bank will not communicate with her unless she is a signatory.
- Performance against budget to date is shown on p17-20. This reveals that a unbudgeted purchase of a replacement swing seat (£141) has been largely balanced out by small

underspends on the Clerk's salary and Village Hall hire. Significant sums may be needed to bury the electric cable at the cabins, replace the CCTV and replace the decking at the community cabins. These tasks were not in the budget and have not been included in the forecast as quotes have yet to be finalised.

- Mazars completed the audit for the year ended March 2022. Their opinion was that "On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met." The audited accounts were posted on the website on 11th August and a completion notice will be posted on the noticeboards shortly. Mazars did suggest minor scope for improvement in 2022/23 which was that the council should use their pro forma for bank reconciliations and ensure dates are correct (there was a typo on the bank reconciliation that we submitted).

2022/082. Clerk's Appraisal and Home Office Inspection

- Conducted by Cllr. P. Yockney and Cllr. J. Ibbett on 22nd August.

2022/083. Review Policies

- Standing Orders. These were reviewed with no amendments.
- Check minute book. This was inspected by councillors.

Next meetings: Finance meeting 20th October and next Parish Council meeting 17th November
Wyboston Village Hall meeting room

Main Account Payments						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Cheque / Ref Number	Amount
71	08/08/2022	EDF Energy	Electricity for cabins	Direct debit	0	£23.76
73	19/08/2022	SSE Energy	Electricity for street lights	Direct debit	0	£30.12
74	20/08/2022	Bradgate Fencing	Grass cutting playing field & Common 4 of 8	Standing order	0	£162.00
75	23/08/2022	Anglian Water	Water and sewage for cabins	Direct debit	0	£25.91
77	02/09/2022	Anglian Water	Water and sewage for cabins	Direct debit	0	£5.28
79	05/09/2022	Easiprint Ltd	Printing newsletter	BACS	0	£116.78
80	14/09/2022	EDF Energy	Electricity for cabins	Direct debit	0	£12.81
82	20/09/2022	Bradgate Fencing	Grass cutting playing field & Common 5 of 8	Standing order	0	£162.00
83	20/09/2022	SSE Energy	Electricity for street lights	Direct debit	0	£30.12
84	29/09/2022	Neil Hodge	Repair of leak in cabins	BACS	0	£15.00
85	24/09/2022	L. Crawford	Clerk's pay Q2	Cheque 100947	0	£1,008.71
87	29/09/2022	L. Crawford	Expenses July to September	Cheque 100948	0	£23.21
88	29/09/2022	Mazars	External audit of accounts	BACS	0	£240.00
Total						£1,855.70
Debit Card Account Payments						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Cheque / Ref Number	Amount
None						
Total						£0.00

Main Account Receipts						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Reference	Amount
69	01/08/2022	St Neots Town Youth Football Club	Quarterly payment for cabins and playing field	Credit	0	£125.00
70	01/08/2022	St Neots Town Youth Football Club	Deposit for use of cabins and playing field	Credit	0	£100.00
72	15/08/2022	Zwetsloot	RAIDIUS funds	Credit	0	£706.41
78	02/09/2022	Jane Arnold	Rental of cabins	Credit	0	£21.00
81	15/09/2022	Bedford Borough Council	Second half of precept	Credit	0	£6,668.00
Total						£7,620.41
Savings Account Receipts						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Reference	Amount
68	01/08/2022	Barclays	Interest on savings	Credit	0	£0.09
76	01/09/2022	Barclays	Interest on savings	Credit	0	£0.09
Total						£0.18
Transfers						
Ref	Date	Recipient	Details	CommAcc	Debit Card Account	Savings Account
None						
Total				0	0	0
Posted balances after the above transactions clear						
Community Account 30833940				£12,449.29		
Debit Card Acc 13099075				£34.68		
Base Rate Savings 43461580				£10,890.56		

STAPLOE PARISH COUNCIL BANK RECONCILIATION 1st APRIL 2022 TO 27/09/2022								
Date of bank statement			27/09/2022					
Prepared by Mrs. Lucy Crawford, Parish Clerk								
				BARCLAYS				
				Community Account 30833940				
DATE				Receipts		Payments	Transfers	Balance
1-Apr-21	Balance bf		£9,318.50					
27-Sep-22	Posted balance per accounts		£13,985.81	£20,745.05		£15,636.96	-£440.78	<u>£13,985.81</u>
Unpresented cheques / uncleared payments:								
	None							
27-Sep-22	Balance as per bank statement		£13,985.81					
27-Sep-22	Posted balance - cleared balan		£-					
27-Sep-22	Balance cf		£13,985.81					
				BARCLAYS				
				Base Rate Savings 43461580				
				Receipts		Payments	Transfers	Balance
1-Apr-21	Balance bf		£10,890.01					
27-Sep-22	Posted balance as per accounts		£10,890.56	£0.55		£0.00	£0.00	<u>£10,890.56</u>
27-Sep-22	Balance as per bank statement		£10,890.56					
27-Sep-22	Posted balance - cleared balance		£-					
27-Sep-22	Balance cf		£10,890.56					

				BARCLAYS				
				Payments Account 13099075				
				Receipts		Payments	Transfers	Balance
1-Apr-21	Balance bf		£-					
27-Sep-22	Posted balance as per accounts		£34.68		£0.00	£406.10	£440.78	<u>£34.68</u>
27-Sep-22	Balance as per bank statement		£34.68					
27-Sep-22	Posted balance - cleared balance		£-					
27-Sep-22	Balance cf		£34.68					
Summary for all accounts				Receipts		Payments	Transfers	Balance
1-Apr-21	Balance bf		£20,208.51					
27-Sep-22	Balance per accounts		£24,911.05		£20,745.60	£16,043.06	£-	<u>£24,911.05</u>
27-Sep-22	Balance per bank statements		£24,911.05					
27-Sep-22	Balance cf		£24,911.05					

Staploe Parish Council Reserves				29/09/2022					
Earmarked Reserve Category	Category breakdown	Funds Reserved 01/04/2022	Receipts to reserve to 29/09/2022	Payments from reserve to 29/09/2022	Balance to 29/09/2022		Balance forecast to 31/03/2023		Comment
					Breakdown	Total	Breakdown	Total	
Dennybrook Planning		£386.75				£386.75		£386.75	
Village Hall Rebuild Reserve	General Village Hall Rebuild Fund	£5,152.90	£1,400.00	£0.00	£6,552.90		£5,282.90		£108.36 used to pay for hall committee insurance
	Heater refund (from Ward Fund 2018)	£660.00			£660.00		£660.00		
	Total Village Hall Rebuild Reserves					£7,212.90		£5,942.90	Infrastructure payment for Anglian Water for connection to main due in 2022 £570 and solicitors for transfer of land £700
RAIDIUS fund		£0.00	£706.41	£0.00		£706.41		£706.41	
Election fund		£510.29				£510.29		£510.29	
Literature & info fund		£30.86	£0.00	£0.00		£30.86		£30.86	
Grass & hedge cutting field		£262.00	£45.00			£307.00		£307.00	
Hedge cutting Duloe Common		£105.00	£30.00			£135.00		£135.00	
Play area assets		£53.38				£53.38		£53.38	
Maintenance		£0.00		£0.00		£0.00		£0.00	
Defibrillator		£110.00	£50.00			£160.00		£160.00	Towards replacing batteries / pads
Asset replacement (eg. laptop, noticeboards)		£225.00	£358.15	£199.96		£383.19		£383.19	£125 from precept + £233.15 from refunded cartridges. Bought a printer for £199.96
Tree works		£603.00	£253.00	£120.00		£736.00		£736.00	Towards inspections and works on Duloe Common and Duloe Playing Field.
Neighbourhood Plan		£6,288.07	£7,914.00	£6,288.07		£0.00		£0.00	Balance from 2021-22 repaid. £7914 expected in October 2022 but due to be spent before 31/3/2022
Street light inspection		£434.00	£434.00			£868.00		£868.00	Saving £434 per year for 3 years to do a formal inspection in 2023/24
Gov domain (alternate years)		£0.00	£55.00			£55.00		£55.00	
Jubilee party		£0.00	£110.00	£26.44		£83.56		£83.56	Funds allocated in Jan 2022 from underspend in admin budget. Most costs covered by ticket sales. Only needed to use £26.44 of the reserve funds
Football Club deposit		£0.00	£100.00	£0.00		£100.00		£100.00	
						£0.00		£0.00	
Total earmarked reserves		£14,434.50	£11,455.56	£6,634.47		£11,341.59		£10,458.34	
VAT (negative figure means we are owed VAT)		-£1,582.31	£1,582.31	£1,103.56		-£1,103.56		-£1,103.56	
Available reserves ex VAT		£7,356.32				£14,673.02		£8,164.23	Balance forecast is opening balance ex VAT plus ((forecast total receipts ex VAT less forecast total payments ex VAT) less earmarked reserves). Actuals are based on ((bank balances less earmarked reserves) less VAT). VAT balance is always negative or zero because it is paid in arrears.
Total funds ex VAT		£21,790.82				£26,014.61		£18,622.57	
Total funds incl VAT (matches balance bf)		£20,208.51				£24,911.05		£17,519.01	

Earmarked reserves = funds set aside for a specific purpose. These can only be allocated to another purpose if the council passes a resolution to do so.

Available reserves = total balance in the accounts less the earmarked reserves. This should be 50-100% of our precept i.e. £6668 - £13336

Therefore £8164.23 is within the recommended range

Staploe Parish Council Performance Against Budget 2022 - 2023	Actual 2021/22	Budget to Mch 2023	Actual to 29th Sep 2022	Forecast to 31st Mch 2023	Forecast less budget	Comment
		5.0%				% increase vs 2021-22
Regular Receipts						
Precept	£12,702.00	£13,335.73	£13,336.00	£13,335.73	£-	
Interest	£0.99	£-	£0.55	£1.09	£1.09	
Grass cutting	£1,389.51	£-	£-	£-	£-	Responsibility given back to Borough
Total Regular Receipts	£14,092.50	£13,335.73	£13,336.55	£13,336.82	£1.09	
Other Receipts						
Newsletter advertising	£-	£-	£-	£10.00	£10.00	
Ward Fund		£-	£638.66	£638.66	£638.66	Paid late for 2021/22
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	£7,872.00	£-	£-	£7,914.00	£7,914.00	
Donations for Local Plan advice & campaign	£7,554.11	£-	£-	£-	£-	
Ticket sales from Jubilee			£65.89	£65.89	£65.89	
CIL income			£-	£-	£-	
Police grant for cabins	£2,000.00		£-	£-	£-	
Police road safety grant			£3,890.00	£3,890.00		
Income from cabin hire			£146.00	£521.00		Assumes £500 from the football club
VAT refunds			£46.63	£46.63		
RAIDIUS			£706.41	£706.41		
Football Club deposit			£100.00	£100.00		
Other (eg. refunds, proceeds from social events / book sales)	£937.89	£-	£233.15	£233.15	£233.15	2022/23 £233.15 in refunded goods (ex VAT)
Total Other Receipts	£18,364.00	£-	£5,826.74	£14,125.74	£8,861.70	
Total Receipts	£32,456.50	£13,335.73	£19,163.29	£27,462.56	£8,862.79	High in 2021 due to Dennybrook donations.

Regular Payments (from precept)						
	Actual 2021/22	Budget to Mch 2023	Actual to 29th Sep 2022	Forecast to 31st Mch 2023	Forecast less budget	Comment
Clerk's salary & pension	£4,181.71	£4,398.24	£2,204.26	£4,355.48	-£42.77	Remain on Salary Point 17 but budget assumed 2% increase in 2021/22 when actually it was 1.75% and a 2% increase in 2022/23. Salaries for 2022/23 have not been agreed so this forecast assumes a 2% increase. 5 hours per week for PC (see Neighbourhood Plan below for extra hour)
Clerk's PAYE	£-	£-	£-	£-	£-	
Clerk's salary & pension extra hour per week for Neighbourhood Plan	£836.34	£879.61	£440.85	£871.10	-£8.52	To assist with the neighbourhood plan (admin not grant funded)
Total staff costs	£5,018.05	£5,277.85	£2,645.11	£5,226.57	-£51.28	
Audit Fees	£265.00	£265.00	£270.00	£270.00	£5.00	External; £200, internal £70
Councillors Expenses	£-	£30.00	£-	£30.00	£-	
Clerk's employment expenses	£320.18	£312.00	£161.10	£312.00	£-	Monthly mileage (£8) and Working From Home Allowance (£18)
Clerk's Other Expenses eg. postage & sundries	£7.92	£40.00	£15.41	£40.00	£-	Postage and sundries.
Training		£80.00	£60.00	£80.00	£-	£50 Clerk's training, £30 for 2 x Cllrs training
Highways Grass Cutting	£1,300.00	£-	£-	£-	£-	Responsibility given back to Borough
Insurance	£511.78	£511.78	£506.24	£506.24	-£5.54	Norris & Fisher pulled out of 3 year deal
Power to street lights	£339.14	£343.20	£170.76	£343.20	£-	Fixed contract with SSE for another 3 years.
Elec (CCTV & cabins)	£130.34	£283.29	£87.89	£283.29	£-	Electricity prices have increased. Now in 2 year deal with EDF 25p per day standing charge (similar) but big increase in consumption to 35.6p per kwh
Water and sewerage for cabins	£191.11	£130.00	£30.33	£130.00	£-	Fixed costs £102.50 Water and foul water costs £3.08 per m3
Maintainance (street lights, speed signs, benches, play area & planters)	£150.00	£200.00	£-	£200.00	£-	2021 fixed drain cover at hall. 22-23 Budgeted for: £0 for planters + £200 for other maintenance eg. noticeboards, benches, play area etc.
Defib costs	£-	£25.00	£-	£25.00	£-	No maintenance first 2 yrs. £25 in case electricity charge. £150 maintenance per year after two years - save for this in reserves.
Play Area Inspection	£68.50	£70.00	£70.00	£70.00	£-	
Play Area Works (assets purchased)	£-		£-	£-	£-	

Regular payments continued	Actual 2021/22	Budget to Mch 2023	Actual to 29th Sep 2022	Forecast to 31st Mch 2023	Forecast less budget	Comment
Play Area Works (consumables / labour)	£-		£141.12	£141.12	£141.12	
Community cabins and picnic area	£438.58	£300.00	£107.33	£300.00	£-	
Playing field grass	£989.37	£1,209.00	£833.00	£1,209.00	£-	Grass cutting £1209 for ten cuts (excluding weed treatments)
Duloe Common grass	£90.00	£100.00	£50.00	£100.00	£-	Grass cutting - 10 cuts
Tree surveys and works	£-		£-		£-	
Subs (SLCC / BATPC)	£205.00	£215.25	£206.00	£206.00	-£9.25	BATPC £93 + SLCC £95 if Clerk on 5 hrs / wk but £112 if on 6hrs / wk
Admin	£255.75	£257.00	£171.03	£257.00	£-	£35 Info commissioner, stationary items (£80) and printer cartridges bought direct (£100), other eg. prof advice, social events (£42).
Literature & info	£-	£-	£-	£-	£-	
Web & e-mail hosting, software subs	£391.80	£275.00	£91.53	£275.00	£-	Assumes Eyelid £100 web support + Cloudnext £100 + £75 software. Gov domain of £110 every 2 years is due in Sep 2023. £55 transferred to reserve in 2022/23 - see transfers to reserve
Other assets (eg. street furniture / tools / office equipment). Excl. playing field/ play area)	£-	£-		£-	£-	
Village Hall Hire	£213.50	£311.00	£36.00	£236.00	-£75.00	Budget assumes 1 APM 3 hrs @£12 /hr, 1 public meeting 2.5 hours @£12/hr, 10 PC / committee meetings of 2.5 hrs @ £8/hr and £15 towards each of 3 social events. Actually one meeting was held online due to Clerk having Covid and there have been no social events other than Jubilee (Harvest Supper cancelled).
Village Hall Works / Maintenance	£150.00	£258.36	£258.36	£258.36	£-	Contribution towards insurance.
Newsletter	£329.75	£300.00	£116.78	£300.00	£-	Assumes 2 issues of 24 pages at £150 per issue.
Donations				£-	£-	
Other	£43.13		£30.00	£30.00	£30.00	Countryside Code signs in 2021. £30 paid to Jane Arnold for Jubilee lunch.
Contingency		£150.00		£150.00	£-	
Total regular payments	£11,408.90	£10,943.73	£6,057.99	£10,978.78	£35.05	An unbudgeted swing seat purchase has largely been balanced out by small underspends on Clerk's salary and village hall hire.

Regular transfers to reserve (from precept)						
Village Hall Savings	£1,500.00	£1,400.00	£1,400.00	£1,400.00	£-	
Hedge cutting savings (field & common)	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£-	
Asset replacement savings	£125.00	£125.00	£125.00	£125.00	£-	Clerk's laptop and printer £600 every 5 years
Tree surveys and works savings	£253.00	£253.00	£253.00	£253.00	£-	Survey cost £360 every 3 years (£120pa). Works £400 every three years (£133pa)
Defibrillator	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£-	
Street light inspection savings	£434.00	£434.00	£434.00	£434.00	£-	Formal inspection to cost approx £1302 in 2023/24
Gov domain (alternate years)	£-	£55.00	£55.00	£55.00	£-	£110 every other year (Sep 21, 23, 25 etc)
Total Regular transfers to reserve (from precept)	£2,437.00	£2,392.00	£2,392.00	£2,392.00	£-	
Regular payments + regular transfers to reserve	£13,845.90	£13,335.73	£8,449.99	£13,370.78	£35.05	
Regular receipts - regular payments & transfers to reserve	£246.60	£-	£4,886.56	-£33.96	-£33.96	We budgeted for regular receipts and transfers to reserve to match regular payments.
Other payments (met from additional receipts eg. grants or earmarked reserves)						
	Actual 2021/22	Budget to Mch 2023	Actual to 29th Sep 2022	Forecast to 31st Mch 2023	Forecast less budget	Comment
Local Plan advice and campaign	£7,167.36				£-	
Ward Fund assets purchased	£638.00				£-	
Other assets purchased from earmarked res			£199.96	£199.96	£199.96	Printer purchased from cartridge refunds
Village Hall payments from earmarked reserve	£100.00			£1,270.00	£1,270.00	Planning application and demolition of hall in 2020/21. Support for insurance in 2021/22. £570 for sewage connection & £700 for land transfer in 2022/23
Repairs to bridge at Old Chapel, Honeydon	£330.00				£-	Cost shared with Thomas Morris
Payments from other earmarked reserves	£17.55			£120.00	£120.00	In 2021/22 we purchased a footpath map. 2022 tree survey on Duloe Common
Police grant for containers	£2,000.00				£-	
Elections					£-	
Speed sign (met by police grant)			£3,890.00	£3,890.00	£3,890.00	
Street light replacement					£-	
Refunds to Borough for payments made in error					£-	
Hall hire for social events (met from ticket receipts)					£-	
Neighbourhood Plan costs met by grant	£1,583.93			£7,914.00	£7,914.00	For green infrastructure review and landscape character assessment
Neighbourhood Plan unspent grant refunds	£6,015.42		£6,288.07	£6,288.07	£6,288.07	
Other donations made by SPC	£-				£-	
Other payments (refunds etc.)	£706.41				£-	£706.41 RADIUS funds returned to bank - bounced in 2021-22
Total Other Payments	£18,558.67	£-	£10,378.03	£19,682.03	£19,682.03	
Total Payments	£29,967.57	£10,943.73	£16,436.02	£30,660.81	£19,717.08	
Other transfers to reserves (not from precept)						
RAIDUS			£706.41	£706.41	£706.41	Received from V. Zwetsloot 15th August
Play area assets					£-	
Total other transfers to reserves	£386.75	£-		£706.41	£706.41	
Total Payments & Transfers to Reserve	£32,791.32	£13,335.73	£18,828.02	£33,759.22	£20,423.49	
Total receipts - (total payments & transfers to reserve)	-£334.82	£-	£335.27	-£6,296.66	-£6,296.66	Approximately equal to the unspent Neighbourhood Plan grant returned.