

Minutes of a Meeting of Staploe Parish Council Held at 7.45pm on Wednesday 20th August 2025 in the Village Hall at Wyboston Village Hall.

The meeting was postponed from 16th July due to the Clerk being unavailable for personal reasons.

Present: Cllr. J. Ibbett (Chair), Cllr. E. Meola (Vice Chair), Cllr. G. Meola, Cllr. J. Thomson, Lucy Crawford (Clerk), Borough Cllr. S. Sira and 14 members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllr. P. Yockney

2025/054. Declarations of Interest and Registers of Members Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

Cllr. J. Thomson confirmed that there had been no changes to her register of interests form over the past year. The remaining Councillors will check and confirm after the meeting.

2025/055. Vacancies

There are still two vacancies created by the resignation of Damian Smith and Veronica Zwetsloot. The Parish Council are delighted to have received two verbal expressions of interest from residents of Staploe, both of whom were in attendance at the meeting. The Clerk asked them to send a written application and we will put co-options onto the agenda for the next meeting in September.

2025/056. Open Forum

Public Comments About Planning Application 25/01596/FUL – Stationing of Caravans in Upper Staploe

***Staploe Resident 1:** there have been repeated applications which were very similar in content to this one. All have been rejected. A stable was given permission but the permission expressly states it is not to be used for residential purposes.*

***Upper Staploe Resident 1:** there is an injunction in place. How robust is it?*

***Clerk:** the injunction was made on 18th April 2017 and is very robust. It forbids three members of the Rooney family and “Persons Unknown” from stationing caravans there (whether by themselves or by encouraging other people to do so). If they breach the injunction they will be sent to prison. However, it also says that “if planning is subsequently granted it will not be a breach of the order or do anything provided by that planning permission, provided that all terms of that planning permission are complied with.” Hence this planning application.*

***Upper Staploe Resident 2:** do we know who owns the land?*

***Clerk:** I checked the land registry today and it still says that the Rooneys own it but according to Bedford Borough Council that is out of date and it has changed hands at least once since it was last updated on the Land Registry.*

***Cllr. J. Thomson:** can we find out who paid to redeem the field?*

***Upper Staploe Resident 3:** the field is not a sustainable location. It would be entirely dependent on the private car. There are no safe active transport routes near the site and no facilities or public transport.*

Upper Staploe Resident 1: the application 20/02106/COU for a change of use for a mobile home to be used for employees working at St Dunstons was refused. Why would this be any different?

Upper Staploe Residents 4&5: residents are not permitted to keep a mobile home in their garden – it would not be in keeping with the rural setting. Why would this be any different?

Cllr. G. Meola: nothing has changed since the previous applications were refused.

Upper Staploe Resident 1: because the field has been largely untouched and only parts of it grazed sporadically and not for some time it has become a very good habitat for a range of wildlife.

Upper Staploe Residents 4, 5 and 6: we have all seen badgers regularly on the site

Upper Staploe Resident 7: we have seen otters in our pond just north of the site on two occasions in the past year.

Upper Staploe Resident 2: there is a confirmed badger set near the mirror opposite Gypsy Lane on the Bushmead Road, another on Gypsy Lane and another transient set on the boundary with the site.

Upper Staploe Resident 6: residents have to jump through loads of ecological hoops to get planning permission – the ecological report submitted with this application doesn't look detailed enough.

Resident of Staploe 2: it seems unfair if some people are permitted to develop in the countryside and others are not.

Resident of Staploe 1: the permission for the stable has now lapsed without it being built. The hardstanding that was laid was not signed off by a building inspector and was very poorly laid. It should also be noted that the site was left in a terrible state with burned out caravans in the past. The Council had to spend a lot of public money clearing the site.

Resident of Upper Staploe 2: the septic tank that was previously connected on the land was never properly connected. It just discharged into the ditch. They also asked where the applications stop. So many applications have been refused – can they just continually apply? If one pitch is allowed then more may be permitted. The Rooneys said they were planning to divide it up and rent out lots of pitches in the past.

Residents of Upper Staploe 3 & 4: the planning statement attached to the application stated that "The site has been identified as an amber impact risk zone for Great Crested Newts. The applicant appointed a qualified Ecologist to complete an eDNA survey on the nearby pond; however, could not achieve access to the site from the landowner despite numerous attempts." The residents have not been made aware of any attempts to survey their pond for Great Crested Newts.

Cllr. G. Meola: the highways access was granted for a horse paddock in 2011. Since that time the road has become a lot busier and residential use is likely to require more frequent access being required. With frequent road restrictions and closures related to works at the Black Cat

roundabout on the A1 the Bushmead Road is busier than ever. It is not a suitable access for residential use.

Members of the public were asked for a show of hands. All 14 unanimously objected to the planning application and several present knew of other residents who could not attend but expressed their objections to the application.

Borough Cllr. S. Sira will write to the planning department to explain our views on the application but she is unable to comment on the application herself.

Other Matters for the Open Forum

The Anglian Water facility near Duloe has been stripped (criminal damage).

The tree near the Staploe sign needs work and may be unsafe.

2025/057. Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th May 2025

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

2025/058. Borough Councillor Sira's report

There was no written report as none is produced in August but Borough Cllr. S. Sira explained that the Borough Council will be meeting to discuss starting a new Local Plan tomorrow (Thursday 21st August). Cllr. E. Meola expressed his disappointment because he is concerned that delays leave us vulnerable to unplanned development. Cllr. G. Meola expressed her concern that so much public money has been wasted on Local Plan 2040 and it seems that concerns of local residents re speculative development are regarded as of secondary importance to the plans to develop Universal Studios. Borough Cllr. S. Sira explained that it is not always possible for a political leader to implement their policies – they need the numbers to be able to carry out their policies in the Council Chamber.

Borough Cllr. S. Sira is planning to restart the Ward Forum meetings.

2025/059. Response to two unauthorised encampments on Duloe playing field.

- Report from the Clerk. 13 caravans arrived on Duloe Playing Field on 1st June and left on 4th June. It was an unauthorised encampment and we served an eviction notice costing £370.02 ex VAT and then began getting quotes for fencing to deter future encampments. Unfortunately, just as we were finalising the quotes and meeting contractors on site, caravans returned on 30th June. A second enforcement notice cost £508.27 ex VAT. Following their departure we installed fencing and a gate along the boundary of the playing field and spines of fencing at 8m intervals on the verge at a total cost of £10,975 ex VAT. This was funded from Community Infrastructure Levy funds. There was some discussion about whether bunds, ditches and height barriers would be better than a fence and gate. We sought advice from the Borough Council's contractor and the bailiff's recommended contractor. After much advice and discussion, we felt that a low timber fence and a metal gate should be sufficient deterrent and would be easier to maintain and look more in keeping with the rural setting. We paid £100 for advice. The fencing on the verge was added to prevent long vehicles parking on the wide verge but still allowing space for visitors such as dog walkers, footballers and residents to park cars on the verge when needed. We have added reflectors to the end fence posts closest to the road.

- **It was resolved to ratify:**
 - the decisions made by e-mail / WhatsApp on 1st June to spend up to £500 on serving eviction notices
 - the decisions made in an emergency online meeting on 3rd June to spend up to £3000 on eviction if needed and a further £3300 on a new fence.
 - the decisions made in an emergency online meeting on 4th July 2025 to spend up to £10,500 on fencing and £2,300 on a gate. (In fact the final bill for fencing was £10,975 ex VAT and the total bill for both evictions was £878.29).
 - the decision made by e-mail to pay £100 ex VAT to a contractor for advice
 - Proposed by Cllr. J. Thomson and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett. Unanimous.
- **It was resolved to delegate authority for the Clerk to spend up to £4000 on evictions on Parish Council land if required in future.** Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. G. Meola.
- **Having been previously circulated it was resolved to adopt a confidential unauthorised encampment procedure.** Proposed by Cllr. E. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.
- Cllr. G. Meola proposed that some funds be set aside for maintenance of the fence and gate in the next budget.

2025/060. Planning

- **It was resolved to respond to a proposed dog paddock at Lower Honeydon Farm with the following comments: “The Parish Council have no objections. Our only comments would be that it would be good to allow enough space to park 2 or 3 cars in case of group bookings and to allow for crossovers i.e. one person arriving before another has left. Also, it would be good if it was clearly signed and if there was a way to prevent access after dark to prevent any anti social behaviour. We wish you every success with your new venture.”** Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and Cllr. J. Thomson.
- Consider whether to comment on the following applications:

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
25/01596/FUL	Full planning application	Application for the use of land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes, and dayroom and hardstanding ancillary to that use.	Land East Of Chestnut Cottage Accessed From Bushmead Road Staploe	12/09/2025	25/01596/FUL

It was resolved to object to this application. Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett. The following objections will be made:

History:

The site in question was purchased and then occupied by the Rooney family in 2007 without planning permission. All planning applications were refused by the Borough Council.

The owners appealed under Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/A/11/2149691. On 31st August 2011 the Planning Inspector stated that the appeal was “dismissed insofar as it relates to the 2 transit pitches and the day room. The appeal is allowed insofar as I grant temporary, personal, planning permission for the use of land for the stationing of caravans for the residential purposes for 2 gypsy pitches together with formation of hard standing and I grant permanent planning permission for the formation of new vehicular access and the erection of

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

stables for the applicant's horses on land north of Bushmead Road, known as St Joseph's Farm, Upper Staploe, St Neots, Bedfordshire PE19 4JD in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 10/02302/FUL, dated 10 September 2010, subject to the 14 conditions set out in the annex to this decision". One of the conditions was that the permission was for three years.

When that expired in 2014 the Rooneys applied for permanent permission 14/03009/S73 but this was refused and a stop notice came into force. The Rooneys did not comply with the stop notice so in 2015 the Borough Council cleared all the fly tipping, the hard standing, and the septic tank. Replacing the topsoil was out of the budget and the entrance has remained in place as it was granted permission in connection with the stable (which was never built).

On 6th December 2016, the Borough Council took out another injunction against Mrs Rooney as she was proposing to move onto the field again. The Council received a planning application 16/03661/FUL on 19th December 2016 to bring mobile homes onto the site and live in them again. The Borough Council returned the planning application and advised the agent on 12th January 2017 that it would not be considered because it would constitute a breach of the pre-existing enforcement notice.

On Monday 3rd April 2017 Bedford County Court issued an indefinite Injunction in relation to the St Joseph's site. It forbids the Rooney family and persons unknown from taking up residential occupation of the site and also forbids them from causing or allowing any caravans, mobile homes or other forms of residential accommodation to be stationed on the land. In addition, the court ordered that there should be liberty to apply to vary the injunction and should planning permission be granted for residential use the injunction would cease to apply.

Of relevance is the recent planning inspector's dismissal of the appeals at Keysoe for a similar application. The decision was made in April 2025. Appeal A Ref: APP/K0235/C/22/3303840 Appeal B Ref: APP/K0235/C/22/3303839 Land known as Land South West of The Manor, Pertenhall Road, Keysoe, Bedfordshire MK44 2HR. The appeal was dismissed largely on the grounds of potential harm to biodiversity (greater crested newts, badgers and bats), its minor adverse effect on landscape character in the countryside, the effect on the amenity from nearby roads and rights of way, its creation of an urbanising effect on the rural nature of the local area, and lack of access to facilities and services.

Of particular note is the argument that Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Bedford's Settlement Hierarchy Addendum, April 2022, produced as part of the evidence base for the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040, assesses the sustainability of all the settlements in the Borough. Keysoe and Brook End scored only 4 points in that assessment, with the highest scoring settlement scoring 92. Keysoe and Brook End is rated as a Group 4 Settlement and is ranked joint 59th, with only two other settlements achieving lower scores. It should be noted that Upper Staploe has an even lower rank than Keysoe and Brook End and scores zero points in that assessment which scores accessibility and the availability of facilities in various settlements and hamlets.

Grounds for our objection to this application:

1. This site is an isolated site in open countryside. Upper Staploe consists of 7 isolated dwellings each surrounded by agricultural fields. It scored zero points in Bedford's Settlement Hierarchy Addendum, April 2022 and ranks bottom of the list for accessibility and availability of facilities. There are no facilities, and it is only accessible by private car. There is no public transport, no pavement and the only route to a shop, school, or doctor is 2.4km along Bushmead Road which is a fast, busy road at 60mph with no pavements and narrow, uneven verges with overhanging vegetation often forcing you to walk in the road. It is extremely rare to see any pedestrians on the road. Similarly, it is not a safe route for cycling. This is not a sustainable location. There is no safe verge to walk on. This is a busy 60mph road frequently used by large HGVs.

2. We object to the statement that this is previously developed land. No permission was granted for the hard standing and septic tank that were installed in the past. Even if it had received permission the hard standing was not properly laid and was never signed off by building control. The stable block was never built and the

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

permission granted has now lapsed. The site was left in a very poor condition in 2011 with burned out caravans on it which the Borough Council had to clear and considerable public funds were used to return the land to its previous state.

3. We also object to the statement that the previous use of 2 gypsy and traveller pitches was acceptable to the planning inspector in 2011 in terms of character. This was a temporary use to enable the occupants to find alternative accommodation. The planning inspector stated, "I agree with the conclusions of the previous Inspector who considered that the development appears unduly stark and that it unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the countryside."

4. On p4 of the preliminary ecological assessment it repeatedly describes the site as an urban location with surrounding physical barriers. The location is anything but urban. It is an isolated field in the open countryside. The "surrounding physical barriers" are barbed wire fences around most of the site and a wooden fence near the road. They are not significant physical barriers for most animals, but they would prevent a horse from escaping. They were only installed in November 2024. So we do not accept that there are surrounding physical barriers to most wildlife. These fences would not pose an obstacle for most wildlife and cannot be described as physical barriers.

5. The development could potentially cause harm to biodiversity on the site. Since the Borough Council took direct action to return the land to an agricultural field the field has been used periodically for grazing horses. Large parts of the land were overgrown with scrub and residents walking the footpath have seen badgers, roe deer, muntjac, many birds, bats and other wildlife on the site in the extensive scrub. There is a pond to the west of the site and many ponds in our parish show evidence of great crested newts. The owners of the pond are not aware of anyone requesting to survey the pond – contrary to the claims made in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment. Otters have been seen just north of the site in 2024 in the grounds of Silver Birches. Something has made a burrow / den or set just inside the boundary of the site in question adjacent to 2 The Barns, Tally Ho Farm, Gypsy Lane, Upper Staploe, St. Neots PE19 5JH. We suspect it is a badger because they are regularly seen in the garden of 2, The Barns. There is also a confirmed set just behind the mirror at the junction with Gypsy Lane and Bushmead Road. This is very close to the site in question. 14 members of the public attended our Parish Council meeting and many mentioned how prolific the wildlife is on the site since it has been undeveloped since 2011 and uncultivated since 2007. The description of it as "bramble scrub" does not accurately reflect the biodiversity present or the value of this site as a wildlife habitat and we believe a much more detailed survey is required.

6. The proposed development will urbanise the site which was an agricultural field with a diverse rural hedgerow before the site was occupied in 2007. It now has a large layby and fences by the road which are not in keeping with the rural location. The proposed development will reduce the amenity for those walking Footpath 21. It is incorrect to say that the site can't be seen from the footpath as stated in the planning statement – it definitely can. View of the site from Footpath 21 It will also be seen by those driving along the Bushmead Road and it will give an urbanising appearance out of keeping with the open countryside views along this road.

7. The planning inspector foresaw potential planning creep and in the 6 December 2011 decision allowed stables but point 53 says "I have restricted the use of the stables to prevent any domestic use of the building." Therefore, permission to build stables did not imply permission for domestic use.

8. A recent planning application in open countryside in Duloe (25/00525/PIP) was refused and all of the reasons given apply to this application. The reasons given were: a. "The proposed development would be located in the open countryside outside of a defined Settlement Policy Area boundary and would therefore be contrary to the spatial strategy contained within Policies 3S, 4S & 7S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. b. The proposal would represent an unsustainable form of development which would be heavily reliant on private car use by virtue of the location away from day-to-day services, limited public transport provision and unsafe pedestrian and cycle access routes to the development site from surrounding settlements. This would be contrary to Policy 53 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 and the overarching aims of the National Planning Policy Framework of achieving sustainable development, with particular regard to Section 2 (Paragraph 7) and Paragraphs 115 (a) and 117(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). c. By

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

virtue of the location and scale of the development proposed, it would erode the rural, verdant and undeveloped character of the application site, resulting in an unacceptable urbanisation and domestication of the land. This would not compliment the wider site context and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and would result in irreversible harm to the established character of the application site, contrary to Policies 7S (xi), 28S (i, ii, and iv), 29 (i and ii), and 30 (i) of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030”

9. Similarly, an application for change of use to site a mobile home in the grounds of St Dunstons Farm (also located in Upper Staploe) on application 20/02106/COU was rejected for the following reasons: “The proposed residential development is located in the open countryside and does not accord with the spatial strategy contained within Policies 3S and 4S nor the development in rural areas strategy contained in Policy 7S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. Due to the site location it is highly likely that residents of the new development would be reliant on the private car to meet day to day needs and so would not contribute to the creation of a safe, accessible and healthy community and would not allow occupants to make a meaningful contribution to supporting the vitality and viability of the very limited services and facilities in nearby settlements. The development is therefore contrary to policies 2S, 3S, 51S and 53 (i) of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 and the aims of paragraphs 78, 91, 102 and 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.” Both of these arguments are relevant in this case. It is open countryside, it does not accord with the special strategy, it would be reliant on the private car, it would not contribute to the creation of a safe, accessible and healthy community and would not allow occupants to make a meaningful contribution to supporting the very limited services and facilities in nearby settlements.

10. We are aware that the planning inspector granted permission for an access to the highway on Bushmead Road for the stables that were granted permission. However, highways access for a stable is likely to be used relatively infrequently compared to residential use. Bushmead Road has become much busier since 2011 and there have been many accidents in recent months. Due to the roadworks on the Black Cat roundabout, there are times when a lot of the A1 traffic uses the Bushmead Road and it is extremely busy. This situation is likely to continue for several years with the works on the Black Cat / A428 and then the East West Rail. We do not believe that the access is safe for regular residential use.

11. There have been around 10 applications / appeals to develop this as a gypsy / traveller site over an 18 year period and all have been refused except one temporary permission which expired in 2014 and another permission for a stable block that was never built and has now lapsed. The planning inspector has twice dismissed appeals for caravans to be sited permanently on this site. An indefinite injunction was served on this site regarding the siting of caravans in 2017 and we believe this should stand for the reasons given above. Nothing has changed. The application should be rejected. Repeated applications waste valuable time for the planning department and Parish Council and cause unnecessary stress and uncertainty for local residents.

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
25/01589/FUL	Full planning application	Demolition of conservatory and erection of single storey rear/side extension	Brookside Honeydon Road Colmworth Bedford MK44 2LT	11/09/2025	25/01589/FUL
It was resolved not to object to this application. Proposed by Cllr. J. Thomson and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.					
25/01438/CPNQ	Prior notification for change of use (Class Q)	Change of use from an Agricultural building to a dwellinghouse including associated	Upper Goodwick Farm Goodwick Drive Honeydon Bedford	17/09/2025	25/01438/CPNQ

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

		building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building. This is not a planning application.	Bedfordshire MK44 2LS		
Whilst this is not a planning application and so the Parish Council are not statutory consultees we can still comment on whether we think Class Q should apply in this context. It was resolved to contact the Borough Council to say that the drawings are not clear. It looks possible that the footprint of the building may have been extended but the drawings need to be clearer to be sure. Provided that the footprint has not increased then the Parish Council do not object. Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.					

Report:

- 25/00771/CPNMA Farm Buildings At Tythe Farm Staploe Road Wyboston Bedfordshire. Change of Use. Refused
- 25/00525/PIP Permission in Principle for 5 self build homes in Duloe - refused

2025/061. Village Hall

No updates.

2025/062. Social Events

- Report on the rounders and picnic held on 29th June. It was a great event and well attended. People sat in the shade under the trees and played rounders.
- Fish and Chip night Saturday 15th November 6.30pm for 7pm meal at Colmworth Village Hall – van and hall are all booked. This will be advertised on the website and noticeboard.

2025/063. Consider projects for the ward fund

- Suggestions were:
 - signs for Upper Staploe (but this is the Borough Council's responsibility and they have confirmed this so the Clerk will chase them).
 - Refitting the cabins

2025/064. Community Cabins and Playing Field

- Insulation, and heating scheme of works have been sent out to those who previously quoted but those who have quoted have not replied since giving them the scheme. The Clerk will chase this.
- Solar panel quotes have been received. Councillors suggested the Clerk talk to Cambridge Power to see if they might help.
- In order to apply for the Climate Change Grant we need to get an Energy Performance Certificate which has been commissioned from Malcolm Watkins and will be conducted shortly.
- Fire safety. The Clerk has been in contact with Sandy fire station who have requested she does an assessment. Cllr. E. Meola kindly offered to ask one of his employees to do this.
- Repairs to the safety surfacing. The Clerk has received a quote from Wicksteed to replace the safety surface tiles with wet pour for £11,556.91 or from Playsource for £6,543 or CPM Playgrounds (local and recommended by the Clerk at Colmworth for £6,150. Having installed the fencing at the playing field we now only have £3,055.17 remaining in the CIL fund. **It was resolved that the Clerk should investigate Lottery Funding – Awards for All for this.** Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

- Decking treatment. The decking was beginning to lift and twist in places. Will George who fitted it has repaired it but recommended using some decking treatment with UV protection. Due to the delay in the July meeting and the need to treat it urgently the decision to purchase this was made by e-mail between meetings. It was purchased for £75.11 incl VAT. **It was resolved to ratify this decision made between meetings.** Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. E. Meola. The football club kindly offered to apply it.
- Teenagers are beginning to climb on the roof of the cabins again. This damages the light fittings inside the cabin and is not safe. Anti climb paint would cost £133.29 ex VAT for 20 litres. **It was resolved to buy this and use the cabin maintenance budget.** Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.
- Our regular 3 year tree inspections on the Playing Field and Common will be £350 for both and will be undertaken by Pinta Cristian of AV Landscapes this week. This will come out of our reserve earmarked for this purpose.
- Consider request from St Neots Town Youth Football Club to stop using the pitch for u17s girls' team and instead use it for their youngest teams. u7s, u8s, or u9s playing 5v5 & 7v7 games. They will guarantee to keep the cars under 40 at a time (as per last season). **It was resolved to permit this but to request that the traffic be kept to a minimum.** Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.
- Consider a request for a team to play Bubble Football on 20th September. **It was resolved to refuse this request as it could cause damage to the pitch which is maintained by St Neots Youth Football Club with whom we already have an agreement.** Proposed by Cllr. E. Meola and seconded by Cllr. G. Meola.

2025/065. Assets and repairs

- Hamlets Exchange (Phone Box). **It was resolved to approve the quote by Will George to repair the rotten base of the door for £180.** Proposed by Cllr. J. Thomson and seconded by Cllr. E. Meola.
- Honeydon Triangle streetlight now repaired by UK Power Networks. May not be any charge.
- Honeydon speed sign. This has not been working since January. The replacement PCB did not fix the problem. Morelock visited and found the battery was faulty and replaced it. We have returned the PCB and requested a quote for a second battery as they both appear to have been faulty. The cost of the callout and repair was £249.60 incl VAT (after refunding the £100 for a returned PCB) and a further £68 for a replacement spare battery. **It was resolved to approve the payments.** Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.

2025/066. Neighbourhood Plan

- Progress report from the Clerk. The Regulation 14 consultation is complete. Our planning consultant has been advising us how to respond to the comments and representations and the Clerk now needs to prepare a consultation statement and then it will be ready for submission. No more government funding is available for Neighbourhood Plans so we were just in time.
- **It was resolved to ratify the amended Neighbourhood Plan with the provision to make minor adjustments and correct typos if needed. Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson. Unanimous.**
- Consider how to respond to an invitation to prepare a joint Neighbourhood Plan with St. Neots Town Council and other surrounding parishes. **It was resolved not to participate in this joint plan.** It could slow down the adoption of our own plan and may reduce our ability to manage and direct development in the parish. Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

2025/067. Finances

- Performance against budget. The variance on the year to date is an overspend of £13,374.04. This is largely due to spending £11,102 on fencing, advice and reflectors for the playing field, £878.29 on bailiffs for enforcement at the playing field and £1,888 repaying the underspend on the Neighbourhood Plan grant at the end of the last financial year.
- Receipts and payments and schedule of payments. The invoices were examined against the schedule of receipts and payments and approved for payment. They are listed on p11. Proposed by Cllr. J. Ibbett and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.
- Bank reconciliation and reserves. The reconciliation was checked against the bank statement by Cllr. J. Ibbett and is presented on p12. The balance of the reserves is presented on p13.
- It was resolved to apply for the VAT refund on the fencing payment now rather than wait until May next year. Proposed by Cllr. J. Thomson and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

2025/068. Communication

Consider whether the Clerk's e-mail should be visible on the website or whether we should only provide a contact form for online security reasons as recommended by our web provider (Eyelid).

It was resolved to keep it visible on the website because it allows for easier communication with the Clerk and it is publicly available on the Borough Council website anyway. Councillors do accept that this may increase the risk of cyber attack but feel that ease of communication is important.

2025/069. Policies

- Savings rates. Barclays base rate savings is currently at 1.2% reducing to 1.1% in November. We have £2,922.28 in this account so we earn around £32 per year. The Unity Trust savings account is currently at 2.25% and we have £18,952.27 in the account so we earn around £426 per year.
- FSCS cover still applies to all our savings.
- The fidelity guarantee is for £25K
- Data Protection, GDPR and CCTV. Having been previously circulated it was resolved not to update them.
- Complaints procedure. Having been previously circulated it was resolved not to update this policy.
- The Clerk confirmed that the required documents are published online as per transparency code (all items of expenditure above £100, end of year accounts, annual governance statement, internal audit report, list of councillor or member responsibilities, details of public land and building assets, minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings).

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

Transactions for Approval at Staploe Parish Council Meeting on 20th August 2025

Payments

Payment Ref	Date	Supplier	Description	Total
028	16.05.2025	SSE Energy	Electricity for street lights	£52.96
029	28.05.2025	Anglian Water Business	Water & sewerage for Community Cabins	£22.05
030	28.05.2025	Community First Insurance	Annual insurance premium	£625.11
031	29.05.2025	Bradgate	Grass cutting Field & Common	£178.20
032	02.06.2025	Anglian Water Business	Water & sewerage for Community Cabins	£6.84
035	09.06.2025	Bryan Lecoche	Eviction notice for playing field	£444.02
	09.06.2025	Megan Bates	Refund for cancelled cabin hire	£0.00
037	17.06.2025	EDF Energy	Electricity for Community Cabins	£27.60
038	25.06.2025	SSE Energy	Electricity for street lights	£54.73
040	01.07.2025	Starboard Systems	Accounting software	£43.20
042	16.07.2025	EDF Energy	Accounting software	£33.34
043	30.06.2025	Bradgate	Grass cutting Field & Common	£178.20
044	18.07.2025	BATPC	BATPC subs	£103.00
045	18.07.2025	Graham Hall Building Services	Advice re fencing playing field	£120.00
046	30.06.2025	Bradgate	Grass cutting Field & Common	£178.20
047	18.07.2025	Colmworth Village Hall	Colmworth Village Hall hire	£58.50
049	18.07.2025	Bryan Lecoche	Eviction notice for playing field	£609.92
050	18.07.2025	Information Commissioners Office	Data Controller Registration	£47.00
052	21.07.2025	W. Howkins & Co Carpentry	Fencing of the playing field and gate	£13,170.00
053	21.07.2025	The Paint Shed	Decking treatment	£75.11
027	16.05.2025	EDF Energy	Electricity for Community Cabins	£21.78
034	02.06.2025	Starboard Systems	Accounting software	£43.20
054	21.07.2025	JPN Enterprises (Amazon)	A4 Paper	£17.49
055	21.07.2025	K G Brown Limited (Amazon)	Reflectors for playing field fences	£32.21
056	19.07.2025	Amazon	Notebooks	£10.31
059	21.07.2025	Unity Trust Bank	CHAPS Payment Fee	£28.00
060	25.07.2025	SSE Energy	Electricity for street lights	£52.96
061	01.08.2025	Starboard Systems	Accounting software	£43.20
063	19.08.2025	EDF Energy	Electricity for Community Cabins	£26.83
064	19.08.2025	HM Land Registry	Land registry	£7.00
065	19.08.2025	HM Land Registry	Land registry	£7.00
066	21.08.2025	Bradgate	Grass cutting Field & Common	£178.20
067	20.08.2025	Morelock Signs	Speed sign repairs	£249.60
068	21.08.2025	Morelock Signs	Parts for speed sign	£81.60

Receipts

Payment Ref	Date	Customer	Description	Total
062	08.08.2025	St Neots Town Youth Football Club	Community Cabin hire	£125.00
041	02.07.2025	HMRC	VAT refund	£3,191.36
039	30.06.2025	Unity Trust Bank	Interest on Unity savings	£186.96
036	06.06.2025	Megan Bates	Refund for cancelled cabin hire	-£44.00

[Signature]
20/8/25.

[Signature]
20/8/2025

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

20 August 2025 (2025-2026)

Staploe Parish Council

Prepared by: Lucy CRAWFORD
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Date: 20/8/2025

Approved by: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Date: _____

Bank Reconciliation at 19/08/2025			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		35,190.42
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2025 - 19/08/2025		11,395.94
			46,586.36
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2025 - 19/08/2025		21,303.27
A	Cash in Hand 19/08/2025 (per Cash Book)		25,283.09
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 19/08/2025	0.00	
	Barclays Main Account 19/08/2025	3,406.24	
	Barclays Payments (Debit Card) A 19/08/2025	2.30	
	Barclays Savings Account 19/08/2025	2,922.28	
	Unity Trust Savings Account 19/08/2025	18,952.27	
			25,283.09
	Less unrepresented payments		
			25,283.09
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		25,283.09
A = B Checks out OK			

SPC Minutes August 2025 (postponed from July)

10 September 2025 (2025-2026)

Staploe Parish Council Reserves Balance 2025-2026

<u>Reserve</u>	<u>OpeningBalance</u>	<u>Transfers</u>	<u>Spend</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>CurrentBalance</u>
Earmarked					
CIL Tally Ho	1,978.69		1,978.69		0.00
CIL Goodwick Farm	5,000.94		5,000.94		0.00
CIL Upper Goodwick	3,818.05		3,818.05		0.00
CIL Honeydon Barn					0.00
Village Hall Rebuilding Reserve	8,792.90	1,500.00			10,292.90
Tree works & inspections	789.00	453.00			1,242.00
RAIDIUS funds	706.41				706.41
Street light inspection & repairs	764.50	300.00			1,064.50
Decking savings					0.00
Election fund	464.56				464.56
Dennybrook campaign funds	386.75				386.75
Grass & hedge cutting field and	671.50	75.00			746.50
Deposit for football club	100.00				100.00
Social events	121.70		58.50		63.20
Play area assets	53.38				53.38
Literature & information	30.86				30.86
Gov domain	55.00				55.00
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	1,888.00		1,888.00		0.00
Community Cabin maintenance	125.00				125.00
Defibrillator parts & maintenanc	50.00	235.00			285.00
Freedom of Parish	150.00				150.00
Insurance claims					0.00
Asset replacement (office)	378.00	125.00			503.00
CIL (New)	3,359.33		304.16		3,055.17
Total Earmarked	29,684.57	2,688.00	13,048.34		19,324.23
TOTAL RESERVE	29,684.57	2,688.00	13,048.34		19,324.23
GENERAL FUND					5,449.46
TOTAL FUNDS					24,773.69