

Minutes of a Meeting of Staploe Parish Council Held at 7.45pm on Thursday 16th January 2025 in the Village Hall at Wyboston.

Present: Cllr. J. Ibbett, Cllr. G. Meola, Cllr. E. Meola, Cllr. J. Thomson, Lucy Crawford (Clerk) and two members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllr. P. Yockney (dispensation granted)

2025/001. Declarations of Interest

None

2025/002. Public Open Forum

Cllr. G. Meola asked the Clerk to chase BPHA about the uneven path on Duloe Common
Cllr. E. Meola asked the Clerk to ask Anglian Water to collect some remaining A-frame road closure signs.

2025/002. Approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 21st November 2024

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

2025/003. Borough Councillor Sira's report

Monthly Borough Report January 2025

- ***Parking error***

An error on the fees and charges report that showed a £2 charge for Sunday parking had not been spotted by any Council members before the new year.

The error has now been corrected to show no charge as originally intended.

- ***Glass collection***

In December 2024, Bedford Borough Council announced it would be expanding its glass recycling trial to an additional 12,000 households across the Borough.

The initial phase of the trial demonstrated success through an 28% increase in overall recycling tonnage and minimal disruption to existing collections. The Council will continue to monitor the expanded programme which will see areas of Bedford, Bromham, Kempston, Stewartby, Sharnbrook, Wixams, Odell, Wilden, Renhold and Kempston Hardwick take part in the extended trial.

- **Wixams Station/Universal**

Wixams Station is proceeding smoothly and is currently being funded by S106 resources. A decision on Universal is also being anticipated this year and, if positive, would fundamentally change the station. Increasing its size with financial costs/management being taken up by central Government.

The Mayor and Council officers continue to have ongoing meetings with representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Universal.

- **Flooding Alliance**

In response to the recurrent and devastating flooding affecting various part of Bedford Borough, the Mayor and North Bedfordshire MP have teamed up to head a new flooding alliance.

The collaborative committee brings together key decision makers in flood planning, defence ect... such as Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to address the region's persistent flooding challenges.

The key objectives are as follows:

1. *Flooding and Flood Prevention*
2. *Flood-Resistant Housing*
3. *Improving River Quality*
4. *Addressing Pollution*

- **Buses**

The Borough Council has conducted an in-depth review of the Bus network which has found that many rural routes are underutilised, showing extremely low passenger numbers. This indicates the current network does not accurately serve the needs of residents.

The review has provided the Council with an opportunity to reduce these redundant routes, adjust schedules to align with demand with aim of create a more reliable/financial sustainable service overall. There will also be no reduction in overall funding for bus services in Bedford Borough.

- **Temporary Accommodation**

The Council has made a strategic invested into Temprary Accommodation, acquiring 31 self-contained apartments, offering secure, affordable, and supported living environments for individuals and families facing homelessness.

The initiative provides affordable supported temporary accommodation for homeless individuals while reducing the reliance on costly and less suitable nightly or hotel accommodations.

Taken together, there is an estimated annual cost saving of £802,433 when compared to alternative accommodation methods. Additionally, for a specific property, the Council can potentially receive a 40% discount on the acquisition of the property subject to meeting all of Local Authority Housing Fund funding criteria.

- **Strategic Agreement with BPHA**

Bedford Borough Council is embarking on a partnership with BPHA to develop much-needed affordable and sustainable housing across multiple sites. This collaboration includes the redevelopment of the former Robert Bruce and Margaret Beaufort Middle School sites, the Prebend Street Car Park, and the sale of land near the former Greyfriars Police Station.

The partnership emphasises the need for housing to meet local needs with modern, energy efficient homes.

2025/004. Planning

- There are no planning applications to consider.
- Planning permission was granted on 4th December for the second solar farm at Bassmead. Application 22/01998/MAF at Land North Of Bassmead Manor And Home Wood (Staploe Access Is From Kimbolton Road, Hail Weston).
- Risk of unplanned development in Bedford Borough due to changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. There have been recent changes to planning laws introduced by the Labour Government under a revised [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) (12 December 2024). This includes a new housing target for Bedford Borough and in summary the changes indicate that:
 - Bedford Borough's annual target for housebuilding has reduced to **1,202** and its base requirement over the next five years (with a 5% "buffer") is therefore **6,010 homes**. BUT very importantly for our area over-delivery in previous years can no longer count.
 - The Borough's currently identified deliverable supply over the next five years is **4,371** which means there is a shortfall of **1,940 homes** against the requirement.
 - So, from 15th January 2025, the Council will be able to demonstrate a housing land supply of only **3.46 years**.
 - When a Local Authority is unable to demonstrate a housing supply of 5 years planning rules mean that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development in assessing planning applications. This is sometimes known as "tilted balance" where the balance is tilted in favour of sustainable development. This has significant implications for our parish. Bedford Borough Council's Local Plan would normally mean that development in areas classified as "Open Countryside" would not be considered suitable for new housing development and our whole parish is classed as open countryside. However, under a tilted balance situation the Local Plan holds less importance and national policies take precedence. Much of our parish would still be considered an unsustainable location due to the lack of facilities, services and public transport but the risk of unplanned development is greater.
- The Government has asked local planning councils to prepare an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF, i.e. by no later than **6 March 2025**. Borough Council officers have confirmed that Neighbourhood Plans "do offer some protections" in some circumstances, in particular where the Neighbourhood Plan "became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made" and "the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement." Our housing requirement figure identified by Bedford Borough Council is zero but we have been advised that allocating a

small site may still improve the protection from unplanned development that our Neighbourhood Plan can offer.

- See agenda item **2025/009. Neighbourhood Plan Update** for the Parish Council's response to this.
- Cllr. E. Meola suggested that the Borough Council should not have been taken by surprise on this and should have been doing more to prevent the Borough losing its 5 year supply.

2025/006. Consider how to respond to the East West Rail non statutory consultation and Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report

East West Rail | Consultation 2024

Deadline 24th January

- It was resolved to respond to say that Staploe Parish Council does not support route E and would prefer route B. We believe that the route should not go through bedford which will be extremely disruptive and that a southern route and southern parkway station serving the new proposed housing developments and universal studios should be used.
- However, if route E is to go ahead then we support the comments from Bedford Borough Council ([Bedford Borough Council Response to EW Rail Consultation](#)) but with a few key changes:
- We support Option 1b for the approach to Tempsford not Option 1c because it will be more central in the new development at Tempsford.
- If EW Rail do pursue option 1c they should be aware that it will need deeper foundations as it will be based on borrow pits used for building the A421/A428
- We think all new stations should be funded in full by EW Rail, not from housing development
 - Staploe Parish Council objects in the strongest terms to any suggestion that the NHS or the hospital should have to pay for the new multistorey car park. This should be paid for as one of the capital costs of the EW Rail project and there should be nothing for the hospital to pay in the short or long term.
 - Adequate parking provision must be maintained at all times at the hospital. Parking is already very challenging at the hospital.
 - We are concerned that land allocated for new operating theatres has been included in the EW Rail scheme.
 - Homes purchased at the Poets should be filled at the earliest opportunity – too many are standing empty.
 - Bedford station building should be improved.
 - Bedford should have an improved service and fast trains to London should return.
 - EW Rail are aiming for no increase in noise levels. The existing track is old and noisy and needs to be upgraded. EW Rail should aim for reduced noise levels vs the current situation
 - The new stations must be paid for by EW Rail, not by additional housing development.
 - We believe there should be a tunnel through the Clapham hills not a cutting. This is a beautiful landscape to be preserved.
 - We would prefer option 1b – the most southerly route.
 - If you do choose Option 1c then you will need deep foundations because you will be constructing it on land used as borrow pits for the new A428.

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- It is essential that the new A428 has easy access to the new Tempsford station to avoid congestion on local roads.
- There should be good access to the new Tempsford station from local roads as well.
- We would like to see active travel options created to neighbouring settlements and a cycle path adjacent to the railway throughout.
- There must be no reduction in the train service in St Neots

The full draft response is available here:

[Staploe-EW-Rail-Consultation-Questions-DRAFT.pdf](#)

Proposed by GM and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

TR040012-000019-East West Rail - EIA Scoping Report.pdf

Deadline 31st January

It was resolved to respond to say that there must be robust mitigation for noise, screening, air pollution during construction and green infrastructure / biodiversity. It is essential that landscaping planted for screening purposes is planted at the first available opportunity to published timelines and adequately maintained (regular watering, weeding, and replacement as necessary if plants die).

There must be good access to Tempsford station from the new A428 and existing local roads.

Section 3.5.15 states:

“3.5.15 In a cutting around 9m deep, the railway would pass beneath the B1046 St Neots Road, which would require a new bridge over the railway (replacing the one currently being constructed over the new A421 dual carriageway), though it would remain close to existing ground level.”

This seems a colossal waste of public money.

Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.

2025/007. Village Hall, Community Cabins, Playing Field and Football Club.

- Village Hall – update re questionnaires asking whether residents support rebuilding the village hall from members of the committee. The Village Hall Committee will report back after their meeting on 23rd January. It was resolved that the Neighbourhood Plan should include an aspiration for a new Village Hall in Duloe.
- Community Cabins
 - Lock repairs. Gearing Locksmiths are due to replace the chub lock on the right cabin once the decking has been completed. £258 + VAT fitted. The door handle has fallen off the left cabin door and the lock is also very old. Replacement with 5 keys will cost £160 + VAT. It was resolved to go ahead with both lock replacements. CIL funding to be used. Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.
 - Frost protection. Quote received from James Kumara approximately £1020 for 4 downflow heaters on a dedicated circuit. The Clerk is seeking alternative quotes but no one has come back to her yet. The pipes froze again on 15th January creating a leak in the right cabin. The water was switched off but the system was in regular daytime use by workmen laying the decking so we left heaters on overnight but a heater tripped a switch and failed so the remaining water in the pipes caused a burst. Waterworx Plumbers are coming on Monday to repair the pipe at a cost of £106.68. The Clerk emphasised the importance of

resolving this so that the cabins are frost free. Cllr. E. Meola suggested asking James of JDSI to quote for heaters. As there is absolutely no heating lagging the pipes is unlikely to be sufficient. Cllr. E. Meola proposed insulating and refitting the cabins (potentially funded from the Mayor's Climate Change fund) before fitting the heaters. He will seek quotes. Seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

- Decking. Will George has replaced the decking at a cost of £6,837 to be paid from CIL funds.
- Mayor's Climate Change fund – the Clerk has expressed an interest for insulation and solar panels at the Community Cabins and is awaiting quotes.
- Cllr. E. Meola suggested getting an annual maintenance check at the cabins.

- Playing Field

- It was resolved to permit an adult ladies team to play their games on the field on Sundays for a trial period of one year. Probably starting in August/September 2026. They would have around 12 games a year. Charges will be negotiated nearer the time. Proposed by Cllr. E. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

2025/008. Highways and Rights of Way

- A428 Social Value Fund. Average Speed Cameras -results of the consultation and determine whether to apply. The Clerk reported that the consultation closes on 24th January but there are certainly a good number of residents who object to the proposal to introduce average speed cameras in Staploe and Duloe and so far the majority object to the use of any parish funds. It was resolved that if the majority of residents do not want to use Parish Council funds for the cameras then we should not apply to the A428 fund for them. But other speed reduction measures could be considered.
- It is important to meet with Bedford Borough Council Highways Department to discuss:
 - Options for traffic calming
 - Speed limits in Duloe, Staploe and on the Bushmead Road.
 - Safety measures at Duloe Butts, Two Brewers on the Bushmead Road and Dairy Farm in Honeydon.
 - A meeting was postponed but is due to be held very soon.
- Permanent speed sign in Staploe. Councillors suggested that the Council might ask for a donation for this.
- Consider proposal for 50mph speed limit on Bushmead Road with 40mph in some locations eg. Between Shakers Way and Cadbury Lane. It was resolved to include this in the discussion with Bedford Borough Council Highways Department and to come up with a comprehensive plan for the parish.

2025/009. Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Clerk reported that the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group are meeting tomorrow evening (on 17th January) to discuss the first draft of the NDP prepared by our planning consultant Sally Chapman. In view of the news regarding the loss of Bedford Borough Council's 5 year housing supply and the information that a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) can offer some protection if sites are allocated to meet the housing requirements for the parish the Parish Council discussed whether they would support a proposal to allocate a small site for development if this was recommended by the NDP Steering Group. **It was resolved that the Parish Council would support the allocation of a small site for up to 5 homes in the Neighbourhood Plan if that was recommended by the NDP Steering Group.** Proposed by Cllr. E. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

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In addition, it was resolved to allocate up to £300 extra for Neighbourhood Plan expenses eg. mapping / printing if needed to complete the plan if these are not covered by the Locality grant. Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Thomson.

2025/010. Ward Fund

- A new noticeboard for Duloe has been installed.

• 2025/011. Finances

- Receipts and payments, sign schedule of payments

Staploe Parish Council Transactions for Approval January 2025									
Date of meeting:	16th January 2025								
Receipts									
Bank	Reference Number	Date	Cleared	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Total	
Barclays Main Account	100	14.11.2024	Yes	Aviva	Insurance claim	£3,299.80	£0.00	£3,299.80	
Unity Trust Savings Account	104	31.12.2024	Yes	Unity Trust Bank	Interest on Unity savings	£211.31	£0.00	£211.31	
Barclays Savings Account	105	02.12.2024	Yes	Barclays	Interest on Barclays savings	£26.39	£0.00	£26.39	
Barclays Main Account	107	12.12.2024	Yes	Bedford Borough Council	Community Infrastructure Levy	£3,359.33	£0.00	£3,359.33	
Payments									
Bank	Reference Number	Date	Cleared	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Total	
Barclays Main Account	097	20.11.2024	Yes	Anglian Water Business	Water & sewerage for Communi	£47.95	£0.00	£47.95	
Barclays Main Account	098	03.12.2024	Yes	Anglian Water Business	Water & sewerage for Communi	£6.60	£0.00	£6.60	
Barclays Main Account	101	26.11.2024	Yes	SSE Eergy	Electricity for street lights	£51.28	£3.45	£54.73	
Barclays Main Account	102	25.11.2024	Yes	Aviva	Refund for overpayment	£570.80	£0.00	£570.80	
Barclays Main Account	106	02.12.2024	Yes	Starboard Systems	Accounting software	£36.00	£7.20	£43.20	
Barclays Main Account	108	16.12.2024	Yes	Will George (W. George Carpentry)	Installing Duloe noticeboard	£150.00	£30.00	£180.00	
Barclays Main Account	109	19.12.2024	Yes	Wyboston Village Hall	Wyboston Village Hall hire	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00	
Barclays Main Account	110	24.12.2024	Yes	EDF Energy	Electricity for Community Cabins	£24.43	£1.22	£25.65	
Barclays Main Account	111	27.12.2024	Yes	SSE Eergy	Electricity for street lights	£49.62	£3.34	£52.96	
Barclays Main Account	112	02.01.2025	Yes	Starboard Systems	Accounting software	£36.00	£7.20	£43.20	
Barclays Main Account	113	17.01.2025		Wyboston Village Hall	Wyboston Village Hall hire	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	
Barclays Main Account	114	17.01.2025		Eyelid Productions	Web support	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	
Barclays Main Account	115	15.01.2025		Waterworx Plumbing and Heating Services	Emergency plumbing cabins	£98.00	£19.60	£117.60	
Barclays Main Account	116	16.01.2025		L. Crawford	Clerk's expenses (Nov-Dec 2024)	£20.25	£0.00	£20.25	

Staploe Parish Council

Prepared by: LUCY CRAWFORD (CLERK) Date: 16/1/2025
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc) RFO

Approved by: JO ISBETT (CHAIR) Date: 16/1/2025
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Bank Reconciliation at 14/01/2025			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2024		42,655.42
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2024 - 14/01/2025		32,801.27
			75,456.69
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2024 - 14/01/2025		24,250.95
A	Cash in Hand 14/01/2025 (per Cash Book)		51,205.74
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 14/01/2025	0.00	
	Barclays Main Account 14/01/2025	12,336.86	JI
	Barclays Payments (Debit Card) At 14/01/2025	20.95	JI
	Barclays Savings Account 14/01/2025	7,084.60	JI
	Unity Trust Savings Account 14/01/2025	31,763.33	JI
			51,205.74
	Less unrepresented payments		
			51,205.74
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		51,205.74
	A = B Checks out OK		

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Staploe Parish Council Reserves Balance 2024-2025. 15th January 2025

Reserve	Breakdown	OpeningBalance	Transfers	Spend	Receipts	CurrentBalance
CIL						
	CIL Tally Ho	£6,730.38				£6,730.38
	CIL Goodwick Farm	£5,000.94				£5,000.94
	CIL Upper Goodwick	£3,818.05				£3,818.05
	CIL Honeydon Barn 1	£1,679.66		£494.95		£1,184.71
	CIL Honeydon Barn 2				£3,359.33	£3,359.33
Total CIL Funds		£17,229.03	£0.00	£494.95	£3,359.33	£20,093.41
Asset replacement (office)			£378.00			£378.00
Community Cabin maintenance			£125.00			£125.00
Decking savings		£500.00	£500.00			£1,000.00
Defibrillator parts & maintenance			£50.00			£50.00
Dennybrook campaign funds		£386.75				£386.75
Deposit for football club		£100.00				£100.00
Election fund		£464.56				£464.56
Freedom of Parish			£150.00			£150.00
Gov domain			£55.00			£55.00
Grass & hedge cutting field and common		£517.00	£303.00	£148.50		£671.50
Insurance claims				£3,299.80	£3,299.80	£0.00
Literature & information		£30.86				£30.86
Neighbourhood Plan Grant		£6,739.49		£6,741.49	£6,587.00	£6,585.00
Play area assets		£53.38				£53.38
RAIDIUS funds		£706.41				£706.41
Social events		£83.56	£180.00	£479.86	£338.00	£121.70
Street light inspection & repairs		£589.50	£300.00	£125.00		£764.50
Tree works & inspections		£789.00				£789.00
Village Hall Rebuilding Reserve		£7,292.90	£1,500.00			£8,792.90
Total Earmarked		£35,482.44	£3,541.00	£11,289.60	£13,584.13	£41,317.97
TOTAL RESERVE		£35,482.44	£3,541.00	£11,289.60	£13,584.13	£41,317.97
GENERAL FUND						£9,624.92
TOTAL FUNDS						£50,942.89

The decking costs were £6,830. £1,000 of this will be paid out of the decking replacement reserve. The remainder of £5,830 and the locksmith costs of £418 will be paid out of CIL funds so the total CIL funds will fall from 20,093.41 to £13,845.41 after these payments have been made.

It was resolved to retain the RAIDIUS funds and review the need for them in a year. These funds were raised to campaign against illegal development in Upper Staploe in 2007. The same landowners still own the land.

January 2025

- Precept requested £15,510.

Parish	Total Precept 2025/26	Total Amount the Borough Council will Pay to the Parish Council	Council Tax Base (Band D Equivalent Properties)	Council Tax Charge for a Band D Property in 2025/26	Increase or Decrease in Council Tax Charge	% Increase or Decrease in Council Tax Charge
	£'s	£'s		£'s	£'s	%
Staploe & Duloe	15,510.00	15,510.00	146.06	106.19	4.96	4.9%

- Review bank mandates, direct debits, and standing orders and consider rotating bank signatories

Bank Mandates				
Signatories				
Lucy Crawford	Not to sign cheques or authorise payments from main account. Only signatory (simple mandate) for the payments account (with debit card). But Councillors have to authorise transfers to the payments account.			
Jane Thomson	Online and standard signatory			
Phil Yockney	Online and standard signatory			
Joanna Ibbett	Standard signatory			
Direct Debits				
Supplier	Frequency	Date	Amount	
Scribe	Monthly	2nd	£43.20	Exact
SSE	Monthly	27th	£53.00	Approximately
EDF	Monthly	24th	£25.65	Approximately
Anglian	Quarterly	3rd Mch, June, Sep, Dec	£6.60	Approximately
Anglian	Quarterly	20th May, Aug, Nov, Feb	£47.95	Approximately
ICO	Annual	19th July	£35.00	Exact
Standing Orders				
None				

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It was resolved not to rotate bank signatories. Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

2025/012. Policies

- The internal audit arrangements were reviewed and signed.
- The equality and diversity policy was reviewed and approved without amendments

2025/013. Meeting dates 2025

Day	Date	Location	Meeting Start Time	Booking time	Notes
Thursday	16 th January 2025	Wyboston Village Hall (meeting room)	7.45pm	7.30-10.00	Followed by a meeting of Duloe and Staploe Village Playing Field Charity
Thursday	20 th March 2025	Wyboston Village Hall (Main Hall)	7.00pm	7.00-10.00	Annual Parish Meeting (when the PC report back to parishioners and residents raise any matters of their choice) followed by a parish council meeting
Thursday	15 th May 2025	Wyboston Village Hall (meeting room)	7.45pm	7.30-10.00	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (when we elect our chairman)
Thursday	17 th July 2025	Wyboston Village Hall (meeting room)	7.45pm	7.30-10.00	
Thursday	18 th September 2025	Wyboston Village Hall (meeting room)	7.45pm	7.30-10.00	Followed by AGM of Duloe and Staploe Village Playing Field Charity
Thursday	20 th November 2025	Wyboston Village Hall (meeting room)	7.45pm	7.30-10.00	

The meeting closed at 9.50pm