

Minutes of a Meeting of Staploe Parish Council Held at 8pm on Wednesday 1st April 2026 in the Village Hall at Wyboston Village Hall held after the Annual Parish Meeting which began at 7pm. Postponed from 18th March 2026.

Present: Cllr. J. Ibbett (Chair), Cllr. G. Meola, Cllr. E. Meola, Cllr. M. Clark, Cllr. R. Arnold, L. Crawford (Clerk) and one member of the public

Apologies for absence: Cllr. J. Thomson

Open Forum

A resident of Staploe petitioned the Council for a fixed speed sign to be installed at the east end of Staploe and until this was installed for the existing one to move back to the eastern end of the village (from its current location at Falls Farm). The Clerk explained that the volunteer who manages the sign has to reprogramme it from 20mph to 30mph each time he moves it so he keeps it in one place for two charging cycles (usually around 3-4 months) before moving it. She also explained that previous applications have been made to purchase a fixed sign to the A428 fund but they have not been successful. The resident asked the Parish Council to use some of their reserves to buy it. This matter was discussed under 2024/026 Highways.

2026/016. Declarations of Interest and Registers of Members Interests

Cllr. J. Ibbett declared an interest in the application at Yew Tree Cottage as she owns land adjacent to the cottage.

2026/017. Parish Councillor Vacancy

Following her co-option at the Parish Council meeting in January H. Down has decided to support the Parish Council without actually becoming a member and she decided not to sign the declaration of acceptance of office. Therefore we still have a vacancy for one Councillor.

2026/018. Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st January 2026

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.

2026/019. Planning.

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
26/00313/S73	Variation of condition application	Application to vary condition 2 of planning permission 22/01813/FUL for alterations to the approved substation.	Land East And West Of Little Staughton Solar Farm Kimbolton Road Hail Weston	24/03/2026	26/00313/S73#
The Parish Council resolved not to object to this application.					

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26/00423/FUL	Full Planning Application	Two storey extension and alterations to existing office	Paul Jolley Associates St Dunstan Farm Bushmead Road Staploe St Neots PE19 5JF	03/04/2026	26/00423/FUL
It was resolved to support this application.					
26/00264/FUL	Full Planning Application	Proposed conversion of existing garden building to Annexe	Yew Tree Cottage Honeydon Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 2LP	20/03/2026	26/00264/FUL
It was resolved to object to this application. Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/C/21/3286486 granted permission on the condition of the kitchen and bathroom being removed. This application would grant permission for a new dwelling in the countryside which is contrary to Bedford Borough's Local Plan 2030. The location is not sustainable and would rely on the private car.					
26/00208/FUL	Full Planning Application	Demolition of agricultural building and erection of replacement dwelling house.	Upper Goodwick Farm Goodwick Drive Honeydon Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 2LS	12/03/2026 extended to 19/3/2026 for SPC	26/00208/FUL
Staploe Parish Council considered this application at our meeting on 1st April 2026 and resolved not to comment because the building already has permission to become a dwelling.					
25/02539/S73A	Change of Use	Change of Use of domestic outbuilding for dog grooming business (development already carried out).	The Shieling Honeydon Road Colmworth Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 2LY	09/02/2026	25/02539/S73A
This application was considered at our meeting in January and the Parish Council resolved not to comment.					

Clerk's report: 25/02034/S73 variation of condition application at Honeydon Barn, Honeydon Road, Colmworth to renew the temporary permission for structures and mobile home during the construction of the dwelling approved under application reference 20/00034/FUL, including variation of condition 2 attached to 23/00681/FUL to allow for extension of time for the mobile home and structures to be removed. The Parish Council objected to this but at their meeting on 12 February 2026 Bedford Borough Council's Planning Committee resolved to grant temporary permission.

2026/020. Assets

- Asset inspection. The Clerk has inspected and photographed the majority of assets. There are still a few to do eg. items stored in Councillors houses which will be followed up after the

meeting. The Clerk noted that the lid of the firework proof dog bin near the A1 is very rusty. It still works but we may need to consider replacing it in the next budget. Cost is approximately £220 ex VAT (Wybone)

- Speed sign battery needed. One of the two batteries in the Staploe speed sign is likely to need to be replaced this year. Cost is likely to be around £53
- Street light inventory. The Clerk has reviewed the inventory, photographed the lights and done a visual check of the lamp post outside number 3, Duloe. No changes or maintenance are needed.
- CCTV – faulty cable replaced with a PAT tested cable. Cllr. E. Meola will arrange a repeat PAT test.

2026/021. Social / Community Events

- Litter pick – report from Cllr. M. Clark who coordinated the litter pick in Staploe and Duloe and Cllr. J. Thomson who coordinated the litter pick in Honeydon on 7th and 8th March. Around 18 bags of litter were collected. The Clerk has requested help from the Borough Council with some hazardous waste in Shakers Way.
- It was resolved to hold a summer BBQ and rounders event on the playing field on Sunday 28th June. Cllr. R. Arnold offered to obtain quotes for a catered barbecue and ice creams. E. Meola kindly offered to make a donation. There is £84 in reserve for a social event. It was resolved to use the event to raise money for an extra speed sign in the parish if the grant is unsuccessful.
- Fish and chip night on Saturday 14th November. Starting at 7pm in Colmworth Village Hall. Codswallop will attend again – at 7.30pm as their minimum spend threshold is lower at 7.30pm than at 7pm. Jasper Squire aka the Mandolin Minstrel has kindly offered to provide live music for the token cost of two portions of fish and chips. It was resolved to thank him and accept his very generous offer.

2026/022. Bedford Borough Consultations

- Consider how to respond to Bedford Borough Council's design codes consultation. The Parish Council did not comment on these.
- Consider how to respond to Bedford Borough Council's housing allocation policy. The Parish Council did not comment on these.

2026/023. Village Hall, Community Cabins and Playing Field

- Village Hall asset inspection. Cllr. G. Meola will conduct this soon.
- Village Hall mandate changes. These have still not been processed by Barclays.
- New electricity contract for the cabins (EDF ends on 8th May). The Clerk sought quotes via Cardinal Energy and Exact Energy for the cabins. This year we will pay £340.72 for electricity at the cabins and our budget is for £441. The cheapest quote was from Smartest Energy for a 24 month contract which would be approximately £295 for the same energy use we had this year. They are an established company. Alternative, higher quotes were supplied from YU Energy, EON and British Gas. See table below from Cardinal Energy.

It was resolved to accept the 2 year quote from Smartest Energy.

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Current Supplier Renewal Offers

Supplier	Commodity	Contract Term (Months)	Standing Charge (p/day)	Unit Rate (p/kWh)	Est Annual Cost (Excl VAT)
EDF	Electricity	12	50.000	27.600	£347.49
EDF	Electricity	24	50.000	26.900	£343.31
EDF	Electricity	36	50.000	26.700	£342.11

Alternative Supplier Quotes

Supplier	Commodity	Contract Term (Months)	Standing Charge (p/day)	Unit Rate (p/kWh)	Est Annual Cost (Excl VAT)	Est Annual Saving (Excl VAT)
Smartest Energy	Electricity	12	41.020	26.270	£306.77	£40.73
British Gas	Electricity	12	40.000	29.060	£319.72	£27.77
YU Energy	Electricity	12	51.840	25.298	£340.45	£7.05

Smartest Energy	Electricity	24	42.770	23.160	£294.56	£52.93
British Gas	Electricity	24	42.000	27.910	£320.15	£27.35
YU Energy	Electricity	24	57.870	24.572	£358.12	-£10.62

Smartest Energy	Electricity	24	45.710	22.530	£301.53	£45.97
British Gas	Electricity	24	45.000	27.900	£331.04	£16.46
YU Energy	Electricity	24	61.510	24.162	£368.95	-£21.46

- Consider 2 “no dog waste” signs £19.70 for the playing field. It was resolved to purchase these signs for the playing field.
- Replacement of safety surfacing tiles at the play area. These tiles had come loose and had shrunk. They could not be repaired and we were advised that wet pour surfacing would last better. Wet pour surfacing was installed at the end of February at a cost of £6,550 ex VAT of which £6,150 was covered by the National Lottery Awards for All and £400 came from CIL funds. CPM did an excellent job.
- Schedule of regular inspections. H. Down has kindly offered to continue to do these inspections for us. Having been circulated it was resolved that no amendments were required to the schedule of inspections.
- It was resolved to sign the updated agreements with the football club for the 2025/26 season (very late in the season) and a new agreement in advance of the 2026/27 season. The Clerk now has confirmation of teams playing etc.

2026/024. Highways, Speeding and Rights of Way

- Report re continuing issues with HGVs in Manor Farm Lane. The Clerk has received numerous further reports about HGVs getting stuck on the bend at Dairy Farm in Honeydon.
- Consider how to respond to Bedford Borough Council’s offer to erect two signs to direct HGVs left from Whitehouse Farm and left along Mill Road (£500 each). It was resolved to await the outcome of a meeting between Bedford Borough Highways Department, local businesses who use Manor Farm Lane and local residents which will take place on 16th April.
- Consider whether to reserve remaining £2,655 CIL funds to contribute to weight restriction on Manor Farm Lane and direction signs for Whitehouse Farm. It was resolved to wait for the outcome of the meeting with Highways on 16th April.
- Consider purchase of fixed speed sign for eastern end of Staploe (approximately £2600). Grant applications have been rejected. Consider whether to reallocate reserves for this. It was resolved to download the data to compare speeding issues in the various locations, ask Tom Tagg to move it to the eastern end of Staploe until a decision is made on whether to purchase a new fixed sign, apply for an Awards for All grant for a new fixed speed sign for the east of Staploe and revisit the decision on whether to purchase a fixed sign at the next meeting. If a sign is to be installed at the eastern end it was agreed that the current mobile sign in Staploe could be moved around the parish as needed. Cllr. R. Arnold offered to assist with moving the mobile sign, reprogramming it and analysing the data.

- Badger set undermining road in Shakers Way. This has been reported to Bedford Borough Council who have placed some traffic cones in the relevant area and will determine what action needs to be taken in the new financial year.
- Report re damaged bridge on Footpath 8 near Cobholden. This has been reported to the Rights of Way team at Bedford Borough Council.

2026/025. Solar Farm Benefit Schemes

Bassmead – solar farm at High Wood north of Bassmead. Next Energy have renewed their offer of a benefit scheme of £20,000 as a one off payment to be made when they start generating. Their previous deed is due to expire in August 2026. The terms are otherwise the same as for the previous deed. It expires 36 months after the deed is signed. It was resolved to sign the renewed deed.

Cobholden – the Clerk has been in contact with Tim Edmunds of AGR Group who have bought the scheme from Cambridge Power. They have confirmed that there will be a Community Benefit scheme but they will not be finalising it until later in the year.

2026/026. Finances

- Receipts and payments, sign schedule of payments. The payments were checked against the invoices and regular payments checked against the schedule of regular payments (which can be made between meetings) by Cllr. J. Ibbett and Cllr. M. Clark and approved for payment. They are presented on p6
- Bank reconciliation and reserves were checked against the bank statement by Cllr. R. Arnold. These are presented on p7-8
- Performance against budget. This was reported in the Clerk's Financial Report for the Annual Parish Meeting.
- Mandate changes. These have now been approved for the Barclays and Unity Parish Council accounts.
- Review the Financial Regulations. These were reviewed without amendment.
- Approve the schedule of regular payments for 2026-27. Having been previously circulated these were approved for the coming year. This lists the budgeted figures for regular payments and this enables us to pre-authorise payments so that they can be made between meetings and signed off at the next meeting.

2026/027. Policies

- It was resolved to adopt a cooption policy. One of the points in this policy states that:
“Providing that there is no more than one vacancy the parish council reserves the right to defer cooption for up to 4 months if there is a shortage of representation in one of the three hamlets:
 - *Staploe – including Upper Staploe*
 - *Duloe – including Duloe Butts and Cobholden,*
 - *Honeydon- including Begwary and Bushmead**and no candidate applies from that hamlet. This is to enable more time to find a candidate from that hamlet and to aim for all three hamlets to be represented on the Parish Council.”*
 - Review the Parish Council risk assessment. The Risk Assessment was reviewed and updated to reflect the introduction of Assertion 10 (IT security), the Parish Council being appointed sole corporate trustee of Duloe and Staploe Village Hall, updating the name of the person who inspects the playing field and updating information about the grit bins in view of our new PC owned bin in Hondydon Road.
 - It was resolved to adopt an IT policy
- The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Staploe Parish Council April 2026

List of Transactions for Approval at Staploe Parish Council Meeting on 1st April 2026					
Receipts					
Bank	Payment Ref	Date	Customer	Description	Total
Barclays Main Account	154	13.02.2026	St Neots Town Youth Football Club	Community Cabin hire	£125.00
Barclays Savings Account	159	02.03.2026	Barclays	Interest on Barclays savings	£7.45
Total					132.45
Payments					
Bank	Payment Ref	Date	Supplier	Description	Total
Barclays Main Account	151	30.01.2026	Sally Chapman (Chapman Planning)	Advice on Neighbourhood Plan	£150.00
Barclays Main Account	152	01.02.2026	Starboard Systems	Accounting software	£43.20
Barclays Main Account	153	02.02.2026	EDF Energy	Electricity for Community Cabins	£29.40
Barclays Main Account	158	02.03.2026	Starboard Systems	Accounting software	£43.20
Barclays Main Account	160	04.03.2026	Anglian Water Business	Water & sewerage for Community Cabins	£6.84
Barclays Main Account	161	05.03.2026	CPM Playgrounds	New safety surface at play area	£7,860.00
Barclays Main Account	167	16.03.2026	James Dougan (JDSI)	CCTV maintenance	£102.00
Barclays Main Account	162	17.03.2026	EDF Energy	Electricity for Community Cabins	£27.27
Barclays Main Account	166	17.03.2026	Bradgate	Grass cutting Field & Common	£210.00
Barclays Main Account	163	18.03.2026	Lucy Crawford (L. Crawford)	Clerk's expenses	£21.42
Barclays Main Account	154	20.02.2026	Anglian Water Business	Water & sewerage for Community Cabins	£55.08
Barclays Main Account	156	23.02.2026	SSE Energy	Electricity for street lights	£67.61
Barclays Payments (Debit Card) Account	157	23.02.2026	Tesco	Bin bags for playing field	£2.60
Barclays Main Account	164	24.03.2026	Lucy Crawford (L. Crawford)	Clerk's salary and WFH allowance Q3	£1,242.49
Barclays Main Account	165	24.03.2026	Bedfordshire Pension Fund	Clerk's pension Q4	£406.22
Total					£10,267.33

Staploe Parish Council April 2026

13 March 2026 (2025-2026)

Staploe Parish Council

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

Date: 13/3/2026

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

Date: 1/4/2026

Bank Reconciliation at 12/03/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		35,190.42
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 12/03/2026		29,471.61
			64,662.03
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 12/03/2026		38,029.25
A	Cash in Hand 12/03/2026 (per Cash Book)		26,632.78
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 12/03/2026	0.00	
	Barclays Main Account 12/03/2026	4,488.44	RSA
	Barclays Payments (Debit Card) A 12/03/2026	15.20	RSA
	Barclays Savings Account 12/03/2026	2,947.99	RSA
	Unity Trust Savings Account 12/03/2026	19,181.15	RSA
			26,632.78
	Less unrepresented payments		
			26,632.78
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		26,632.78
	A = B Checks out OK		

**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 / Cabin	8,792.90	1,500.00			10,292.90
Tree works & inspections	789.00	453.00	150.00		1,092.00
RAIDIUS funds	706.41				706.41
Street light inspection & repair	764.50	300.00	502.00	377.40	939.90
Decking savings					0.00
Election fund	464.56				464.56
Dennybrook campaign funds	386.75				386.75
Grass & hedge cutting field ar	671.50	75.00			746.50
Deposit for football club	100.00				100.00
Social events	121.70		429.50	391.90	84.10
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 maintenanc	125.00				125.00
Defibrillator parts & maintenai	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		704.16		2,655.17
Tot Earmarked	29,684.57	2,688.00	14,471.34	769.30	18,670.53
TOTAL RESERVE	29,684.57	2,688.00	14,471.34	769.30	18,670.53
GENERAL FUND					5,964.85
TOTAL FUNDS					24,635.38