

STAUNTON ON WYE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of Staunton on Wye Group Parish Council held on Monday 7th September 2026 at 7 p.m. at Staunton on Wye Village Hall, Staunton on Wye, Herefordshire.

PRESENT: Councillor N Sellar (Chairman) and Councillors A Andrews, L Boddington, M Jones, E Pearson-Gregory, W Shepherd and S Williams.

In attendance: David Thame (Clerk)
Councillor Robert Highfield (Herefordshire, Castle Ward)
Nine members of the public.

2026/37. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor B Arthur. Councillor R Skyrme was absent due to illness.

2026/38. Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

Councillor N Sellar declared his interest in item 2026/46 by virtue of being a trustee of Diocesan Board of Finance, which owns the land into which the proposed drainage discharges.

2026/39. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 18th May 2026, 13th July 2026 and 1st September 2026 (copies previously circulated), and that they be signed by the Chairman accordingly.

2026/40. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed the public to the meeting, and drew attention to the opportunity to contribute during the public session which appears on every agenda, but reminded all those present that, outside of that item, it was a formal council meeting.

2026/41. Casual Vacancy in the Office of Councillor for the Parish of Staunton on Wye

The Clerk to report that Jeremy Price ceased to be a member of the authority on 14th July 2026 as a consequence of section 85(1) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

2026/42. Public Session (15 minutes)

A member of the public expressed his concerns about planning application 262253 on the basis of access, and mistaken presentation of the impact on several neighbouring properties, and drainage.

A member of the public drew attention to the impact of planning application 262253 on him, as a close neighbour..

A member of the public asked a question about the cash book.

2026/43. Planning Consultation - 262253 - Land at Worlds End Farm, Staunton-on-Wye, Hereford, HR4 7LN

The council considered the planning consultation for change of use of land to enable the stationing of a caravan for holiday purposes. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council object to the application on the grounds that vehicular access using public footpaths was inadequate and risked damage to the highway and to drainage ditches, that the foul water drainage was unsatisfactory, and that development fell outside the settlement as defined by the revised National Planning Policy Statement, and that the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman be elaborate these points in the Council's response.

2026/44. Planning Consultation - 262281 - Land at Little Orchard, Staunton-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR4 7LR

The Council considered the planning consultation for a self-build dwelling with associated landscaping and infrastructure. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to support the application as a satisfactory and modest solution to local housing need, and in conformity with the existing Staunton on Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan.

2026/45. Complaint

The Council considered the Clerk's report following a complaint about the Council's handling of issues relating to SY2A (copy attached). The Clerk reminded the Council of the terms of sections 43 and 50 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended, which make it clear that the Parish Council has no power to maintain byways open to all traffic, unless they are restricted byways, which SY2A is not. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council note the complaint, notes that responsibility for the surface of SY2A lies with Herefordshire Council does not believe that it has acted unreasonably in this matter given the legal background,

2026/46. SY2A Little London (Minute 2026/15)

Councillor Sellar left the meeting.

The Vice Chairman (Councillor Jones) in the chair.

The Council considered correspondence with Herefordshire Council with regard to making an application to the Herefordshire Public Rights of Way Fund to allow the Lengthsman to complete drainage works at SY2A Little London ahead of resurfacing work by Herefordshire Council. The Clerk reported that Herefordshire Council had failed to give the assurances requested, nor to provide or provide the funding, for the surface water modelling the Parish Council had requested. The Clerk reminded the Council that even if the Parish Council were inclined to believe that the correspondence indicated Herefordshire Council took responsibility for the lack of surface water modelling, highways run-off would eventually drain into land owned by the Diocese of Hereford who had themselves insisted on assurances on flood risk before they would permit drainage into their ditches.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council is disappointed by Herefordshire Council's response for its request to either provide or support the provision of surface water modelling, and believes that by its actions Herefordshire Council has acknowledged that it does not believe they are necessary and therefore assumes responsibility for the consequences of that acknowledgement; and that the Clerk approach

the Diocese of Hereford to ascertain if they would be prepared to allow highways run off to drain into their ditches, and on what basis, and to offer support to enable regular clearing of ditches to allow the project to work successfully; and that Herefordshire Council be advised accordingly, and that the outcomes be reported to a subsequent meeting.

2026/47. Complaints Policy

Councillor Sellar rejoined the meeting.

The Chairman (Councillor Sellar) in the chair.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the draft complaints policy (previously circulated, now attached) and to review in twelve months.

2026/48. Neighbourhood Development Plan (Minute 2026/18)

The Clerk reported that he met with Councillors Sellar, Andrews, Boddington and Pearson-Gregory on 5th August 2026, as agreed by the Council at minute 2026/18, and they had considered how best to make progress with a review of the neighbourhood development plan. The Council considered the report and after discussion it was **RESOLVED**: That -

- (1) an NDP Review Group be formed consisting of all interested residents, chaired by Councillor Boddington, to examine the existing NDP and discern where changes may be required, no decisions to be taken but the mood of the meeting reported to the Council, with the assumption that no more than two Review Group meetings should be sufficient for this preliminary task; and
- (2) the Clerk launch a call for sites, to run parallel with the review meetings, with the aim that both processes complete by March 2027;
- (3) in May/June 2027 the Council will review the outcome of the review meetings and the call for sites, and appoint consultants to prepare a draft reviewed NDP for further public consultation.

Councillor Boddington stated her intention that the first review group meeting should take place before the year end.

2026/49. Biodiversity Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the draft biodiversity policy, to meet the requirements of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, section 40; Environment Act 2021, section 102.

2026/50. Freedom of Information Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the draft Freedom of Information Policy to meet the requirements of Freedom of Information Act 2000, section 16.

2026/51. Lengthsman

The Council considered tasks for the lengthsman. It was **RESOLVED** that the working group meet with the Clerk, and that residents be encouraged to notify their concerns.

2026/52. Newsletter

It was **RESOLVED** to publish a newsletter for house-to-house delivery by councillors, together with social media posts and material for the parish magazine, to explain Council work recently, the NDP review, and to recruit candidates to stand for election in May 2027, with the intention of publishing before mid-October, and thereafter twice yearly.

2026/53. Playground

The Council considered the annual safety inspection report (attached), and maintenance and upkeep at the playground, including play surfaces. After discussion it was **RESOLVED:** That -

- (1) the Youth Club have permission to install another bench adjacent to the newly installed bench;
- (2) the lengthsman be asked to quote for excavating the turf under the bench or benches for the installation of a membrane under bark chippings;
- (3) prices be obtained for topping up the existing bark play surface;
- (4) that the matting under the slide steps be replaced in spring 2027.

2026/54. Highways

The Council considered a response to its request for speed limits on the A438 adjacent to Staunton on Wye, improvements to the surface of C1090, and to C1185 between the Bredwardine bridge and Yew Tree House, the latter two requiring resurfacing. It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Highfield be invited to pursue resurfacing of the C1090 to include traffic calming measures such as coloured surfaces and white lines, and that the relevant Herefordshire cabinet member be invited to visit the parish to better understand the area's needs.

2026/55. Defibrillator.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council acquire a replacement AEG G5 pad and battery, at an anticipated cost include VAT of £455.00, and that the costs of replacing the defibrillator as it enters its 12th year form part of the 2027-28 budget considerations.

2026/56. Footpaths

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors each undertake to walk and report on the condition of access and way marking on a selection of parish footpaths, and that the Chairman would make arrangements to allocate walks, with a view to a report on the state of paths to be considered at the next meeting.

2026/57. Delegated Decisions

The Clerk to report delegated decisions as recorded in the notices published on the Council website (copies attached):

21 July 2026 (Website)
25 June 2026 (planning application response)
25 June 2026 (playground bench)

2026/58. Disciplinary and Grievance Policies

The Council reviewed the disciplinary and grievance policies, and it was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the Disciplinary and Grievance policies first adopted on 8th September 2025.

2026/59. Urgent Business Between Meetings Policy

The Council reviewed the Urgent Decisions Between Meetings Policy and it was **RESOLVED** to readopt the policy adopted on 16th June 2025.

2026/60. Risk Management Policy

The Council reviewed the risk management policy. It was **RESOLVED** to readopt the risk management policy adopted 8th September 2025.

2026/61. Reserves Policy

The Council reviewed its reserve policy. It was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the reserves policy adopted 8th September 2025.

2026/62. Budget Monitoring 2026-27 and Draft Budget 2027-2028

The Council considered budget monitoring for the current financial year, and preparations for the budget in 2027-2028, and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillors Sellar, Jones and Boddington work with the Clerk on the preparation of a draft budget for 2027-28 for consideration at the 7th December 2026 meeting.

2026/63. Internal Audit 2026-27 (Minute 2026/24)

It was **RESOLVED**, in the light of a response from the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, that HALC meets the requirement for internal auditors to be an independent and competent person able to demonstrate independence from the authority's financial decision making, and can therefore be appointed as internal auditor 2026-27.

2026/64. Salaries and Wages

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman and Vice Chairman, meet with the Clerk, to report to the December meeting on salaries and wages as required by Financial Regulation 4.2, and that they should consider the Clerk's letter to councillors (circulated).

2026/65. Noticeboard

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk apply for a highways structures license to place the noticeboard adjacent to the bus stop on C1090.

2026/66. Financial Report

The Council considered the report of the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, including the cash book with budget monitoring (attached). Balances at 2nd September 2026 were current account £1,109.37 and deposit account £9,061.01 including. Excluding the War Memorial Reserve of **£4234.09**, total funds available to the Council are £5,946.29.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk's salary be adjusted retrospectively from 1st April 2026 correspond to the annual NJC pay settlement for 2026-27 for SCP 26 (£19.32 lifted to £19.96)

Councillor Boddington reported that she had conducted the verification of the quarterly bank reconciliation to 30th June 2026, and was satisfied.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Boddington be appointed to conduct the verification of bank reconciliation to 30th September 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the creation of a direct debit to the Information Commissioner.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following invoices for payment:

PV81	GWG Tree & Garden Care	£220.80
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It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the following payments made since the last meeting under delegated powers or earlier resolutions:

PV91	HMRC tax month 5	£143.20
PV90	Salary tax month 5	£470.05
PV89	Clear Councils Insurance	£374.66
PV88	F A White (playground inspection)	£62.50
PV87	Parish Online (Website)	£432.00
PV86	HMRC tax month 4	£143.20
PV85	Salary tax month 4	£470.05
PV83	HALC (internal audit)	£330.00
PV84	Autela Payroll Services	£57.37
PV82	Handy Handyman (bench)	£220.00
PV80	Information Commissioner	£52.00
PV79	Salary tax month 3	£470.25
PV78	HMRC tax month 3	£143.00
PV77	Golden Valley Grounds Maintenance	£540.00
PV76	Salary tax month 2	£470.05
PV75	HMRC tax month 2	£143.20

2026/67. Dates of Meetings 2027

It was **RESOLVED** to meet in December 2026, as already agreed, in early February 2027 and late March 2027, and to fix a date for the May annual council meeting, at the next meeting.

2026/68. Community Morning

It was **RESOLVED** to participate in the Village Hall community morning, 17 October 2026, 10.30am to 12.30pm, with the hope that newsletters would be available and promotional material inviting residents to become parish councillors.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signed _____ Date: _____

DRAFT