

STAUNTON ON WYE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the annual meeting of Staunton on Wye Group Parish Council held on Monday 18th May 2026 at 7 p.m. at Staunton on Wye Village Hall, Staunton on Wye, Herefordshire.

PRESENT: Councillor Nigel Sellar (Chairman) and Councillors Boddington, Andrews, Jones, Shepherd, Arthur, Pearson-Gregory, Skyrme and Williams.

In attendance: David Thame (Clerk)
Joel Durrell (Lengthsman)
Councillor Robert Highfield (Herefordshire, Castle Ward)(from item 2026/12)
One member of the public

2026/1. Election of the Chairman

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Nigel Sellar be elected Chairman for the 2026/27 municipal year. The Chairman to make the required declaration of acceptance of office.

2026/2. Election of the Vice Chairman

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Michael Jones be elected Vice Chair for the 2026/27 municipal year.

2026/3. Apologies for absence

Councillor Price was absent.

2026/4. Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

Councillor Shepherd declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 2026/15. The Clerk reported receipt before the meeting of a written request for a dispensation submitted by Councillor Shepherd to speak but not vote on item 2026/15 on the grounds of section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011 that the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area. The Council considered the request and **RESOLVED** that the dispensation be granted for the purposes of item 2026/15 believing that the extent to which there is some personal benefit and the extent of the public benefit obtained by agreeing to a dispensation.

2026/5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2026 (copies previously circulated), and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2026/6. Chairman's Announcements

None.

2026/7. Standing Orders

It was **RESOLVED** that, having reviewed standing orders, they be re-adopted.

2026/8. Financial Regulations

It was **RESOLVED** that the Financial Regulations be re-adopted with an amendment to regulation 6.1 to replace “Lloyds Bank” with “Unity Trust Bank.”

2026/9. Code of Conduct

It was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the code of conduct.

2026/10. Policy Review: Data, Information and Accessibility

It was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the suite of policies on data protection, freedom of information/publication scheme, reviewing and re-affirming the website accessibility and confirming tests of accessibility, re-adopting the privacy policy, re-adopting the information technology, to confirm the Council's adherence to the Transparency Code, and to confirm the clerk as data controller and data protection officer.

2026/11. Working Groups

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Shepherd, Arthur and Jones to the Lengthsman Working Group and Councillors Sellar, Boddington and Jones to the Finance Working Group.

2026/12. Outside Appointments

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Andrews and Williams as trustees to the Jarvis Eleemosynary Charity and Councillor Williams to the Jarvis Educational Foundation to serve for the 2026/27 municipal year.

2026/13. Public Session (15 minutes)

A member of the public spoke about the proportion of the parish precept devoted to tangible benefits to the community over the last five years, and the target budgets in future years. The Clerk pointed to financial information available on the Council website.

2026/14. Insurance

The Clerk reported that, arising from a refreshed legal understanding of the consequences of agreements under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Lengthsmans Agreement with Herefordshire Council may give rise to risks which are not covered or not adequately covered by existing insurance, or if covered may require further risk mitigation to reach the standards required for professional indemnity insurance. The Herefordshire Association of Local Councils was recommending that until there was clarity from Herefordshire Council and insurers, it would be unwise to proceed with works under the agreement, although bidding for funding in anticipation of a satisfactory outcome was not discouraged.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that in view of the expiry of the existing policy on 19th August 2026 the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to make necessary arrangements to ensure continuity of insurance cover.

2026/15. SY2A Little London

Mindful of the discussion minuted above, the Council considered 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. A price quotation from the Lengthsman suggested the application be in the sum of £8,850 excluding VAT. The scheme depended on organising the collection of field and highways run off into a ditch adjacent to Walnut Cottage and thence, via a private field ditch of around 100 metres length, into a system of field drains. Earlier that evening the Council had visited the site with the Lengthsman to inspect the extent of the works. The Lengthsman was present throughout the discussion on this item, and answered questions.

The Clerk reported correspondence with Herefordshire Council and his efforts to secure commitments from Herefordshire Council to use the skills of their Floodrisk Team to model the surface water drainage consequences of the proposal, and if not to offer to indemnify the Parish Council against unforeseen consequences.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to make an application to Herefordshire Council's Public Rights of Way Fund as described by the Lengthsman but that:

- (1) Herefordshire Council be invited to share with the Parish Council the results of their model of surface water drainage and the impact of the scheme on drainage expectations and flood risk, or to undertake as part of the funding award to grant sufficient to the Parish Council to allow it to employ drainage consultants to undertake such a study, and to make that payment even if the scheme does not proceed, and that no work on site can begin until there is a satisfactory assessment;
- (2) that the Clerk approach the assumed owners and tenants of the private field drains upon which the scheme depends to ascertain their co-operation and approval;
- (3) that the scheme depends on the regular clearing of the private drains between Walnut Cottage and the extensive field drainage system, and also regularly clearing of drains on the highway verge elsewhere on SY2A, and that an annual maintenance plan with associated budget will be necessary before the Council could undertake the project, understanding that the cost of maintaining SY2A and its associated drainage remains the highways authority's responsibility and is not the Parish Council's.

2026/16. Grants and Donations Policy

The Council considered adopting a grants and donations policy based on the Almeley Parish Council model (copy circulated in advance). After discussion it was **RESOLVED** not to adopt the policy, and that during the current financial year the Council does not have the resources to make grants or donations, but that the matter be referred to the Finance Working Group for consideration as part of the budget process.

2026/17. Annual Parish Meetings

The Council received the draft minutes of the annual parish meetings held on 11th May 2026.

2026/18. Neighbourhood Development Plan

It was **RESOLVED** that, bearing in mind the wide support for a review of the neighbourhood Development Plan at the Annual Parish Meeting, that a working group of Councillors Boddington, Andrews, Pearson-Gregory and Sellar, together with the Clerk, devise a scheme of work and report to the next meeting of the Council.

2026/19. Planning Consultation - 261125 - Land west of Orchard Cottage, Staunton-on-Wye, Hereford, HR4 7LR

The Council considered the planning consultation for variation of condition 2 of planning permission 252528 (Proposed erection of two dwellings with access, landscaping, provision of the mandatory biodiversity net gain and drainage works) - to incorporate design changes. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, respond to the application.

2026/20. Planning Consultation - 260804 - Swan Cottage, Letton, Hereford, Herefordshire HR3 6DH

The Council considered the listed building consent application for chalk paint to existing internal beams. It was **RESOLVED** to make no objection.

2026/21. Planning Re-consultation - 253284 - Former Jarvis School, Staunton on Wye, Herefordshire, HR4 7NF

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the delegated action of the Clerk in responding to the planning consultation on viability assessments association with Conversion to 20 no. flats, the erection of 28 no. new-build dwellings, and associated works including drainage, landscaping and infrastructure works.

2026/22. Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Arising from the discussion on item 2026/21 it was **RESOLVED** that Herefordshire Council be invited to regularly supply decision notices as required by Article 25(3)(a) of the 2015 Order.

2026/23. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

The Council received the cash book and bank reconciliation for 2025/26, including the restated reconciliation for 2024-25.

The received the Annual Internal Audit and the completed internal auditor section of the Annual Governance and Accountability returned and it was **RESOLVED** that the reports be noted.

In the light of the internal auditors report, the Council considered its responses to the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) and **RESOLVED** to answer in the affirmative to all ten assertions.

The Chairman and Clerk/RFO signed the section 1 of the statement accordingly.

The Council considered the Accounting Statement (Section 2), which had been signed by the Responsible Financial Officer before submission to the internal auditor and had been circulated to members before the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to approved the section 2 accounting statement.

The Chairman and Clerk signed the accounting statement accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the Responsible Financial Officer's recommendation on the commencement date for the exercise of public rights (3rd June to 14 July 2026), and agreed publication of the notice on 1st June 2026 on noticeboards and the Council website.

2026/24. Financial Report

The Council considered the report of the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, including the cash book with budget monitoring (circulated in advance and now attached).

The Responsible Financial Officer drew the Council's attention to a serious financial risk. Excluding ad hoc grant applications, the Council can anticipate a further £7,275.50 second half precept in September 2026. A payment order for the lengthsman's scheme has been received in respect of £1,305.00. The Council's budget for 2026/27 is £18,337. The Council will realise unreserved funds of £8,407.98 plus projected income income £8,580.50 totals £16,988.48. This gives the authority no room for manoeuvre and will require tight budget monitoring.

It was **RESOLVED** to make an internal transfer to the deposit account of £7,000.

It was **RESOLVED** that, having considered the Clerk's report and the requirements of the Practitioners' Guide, the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils 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 is minded to appoint HALC as internal auditor 2026-27, but that the Clerk seek a written assurance of the HALC Audit Services' integrity and report further.

It was **RESOLVED** that for the purposes of Financial Regulation 6.6 the following regular payments due to contract or obligation be authorised in advance:

Description	Frequency	Notes
Information Commissioner	Annual	£52.00
Autela Payroll Services	Every six months	£80-£120
Clerk's salary	Monthly	As per contract
HMRC	Monthly	NI/PAYE as per P32 notice

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council reviewed and considered the continued use of BACS electronic payments, and is satisfied.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council has reviewed the efficiency and safety of banking arrangements, and re-affirms its signatories as Councillors Andrews, Arthur, Jones and Sellar, and confirms the terms of the bank mandate.

The Council considered a request for a grant to support the maintenance of the churchyard at St Mary The Virgin, Staunton on Wye. The Clerk advised that following the commencement of Section 82 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 the power to maintain open churchyards granted by section 214 of the Local Government Act 1972 is now unconflicted, and available for use. It was **RESOLVED** that, as determined at minute 2026/16, no grants or awards be made in the 2026-27 financial year.

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

PV74	B J Arthur (parish meeting)	£91.77
PV73	Viking Office UK Ltd (noticeboard, stationery)	£256.87
PV69	D H Thame (printer ink)	£27.91
PV68	Staunton on Wye Village Hall (meetings Jan-Marc 26)	£53.00
PV66	D H Thame (meeting leaflets)	£28.26

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the following payments made since the last meeting under delegated powers or earlier resolutions:

PV71	HMRC Tax month 1	£143.00
PV70	Clerk's salary Tax month 1	£470.25
PV67	Autela Payroll Services	£105.60

It was **RESOLVED** to note the following forthcoming direct debit payment:

PV72	Information Commissioner	£52.00
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The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signed _____ Date _____