

STAPLEFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH APRIL 2025 IN THE JUBILEE PAVILION AND COMMENCED AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Cllr Gillian Pett (Chair), Cllr Mick Davies, Cllr Anna Disley-Stevens, Cllr Matthew French, Cllr Michael Gatward, Cllr Howard Kettel, Cllr James Northmore
 Stapleford Parish Council Clerk: Max Barrett – Minutes
 South Cambs District Council – Cllr Peter Fane
 James Littlewood – CEO, Cambridge Past, Present and Future
 Jenny Flynn – Chair, Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan
 John Greaves and Zac Britton – SSYI
 Sophie Berridge – Stapleford Tree Project

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were 57 members of the public present

APOLOGIES: Cllr Brian Milnes, Cllr Barbara Kettel, Lesley Watts – Assistant Clerk

Chairman's Welcome and Report – Cllr Gillian Pett

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Parish Councillors in attendance to introduce themselves to the meeting.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and noted that it was excellent to see so many people in attendance. Thanks were expressed to all the groups who have submitted reports for the Annual Parish Meeting – these will be available on the Parish Council website in addition to County and District Councillor Annual Reports.

The Chairman expressed thanks to all Parish Councillors, and to our County and District Councillors. Particular thanks was given to Belinda the former Clerk of the Council, and to former Assistant Clerk Kerry for their invaluable work for the Parish Council over the years. Finally, thanks was given to former councillor Jenny Flynn for all her work with the Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan.

We had a challenging year, particularly with the traveller incursion. We have invested in measures to prevent it from happening again, and CCTV to make the Pavilion safer.

We have a new grounds maintenance contractor and we have received many compliments. The Christmas lights and wildflower areas have received lots of compliments.

There has been some disruption from Rangeford and UKPN, and more disruption expected with the Sawston Greenway cycle path, although we don't have a date yet due to the bus stop.

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Pavilion renovations will be starting later this year, but we haven't got a start date yet. The plans are out for tender and a start date will be announced as soon as we have information. Unfortunately this will mean the closure of the Pavilion and the carpark for 3-4 months while the works take place, but we hope the works will be completed by Christmas. We will also be applying for grants that may be applicable.

The precept has risen this year, because general costs have increased including energy, water, and council tax. We also have a new grounds maintenance contract, and staff costs have increased because we have so few Councillors.

The Parish Council has continued to oppose the Busway through the green belt and the objection has been taken to the Secretary of State for Transport. The Parish Council has agreed to cap the amount contributed to this action to £50,000.

The Village Weekend plans are gathering pace and we hope to see you all at some point over the four days from 26th June to 29th June. You will be receiving information through your door about this, and about the village show. Information is also available on the Stapleford Weekend website. Thank you to all those working hard to make this annual event as much of a success as it was last year.

Finally, a welcome to our new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer Max Barrett, and to Assistant Clerk Lesley Watts. If you have any issues, please address them directly to the Clerk, rather than to individual Parish Councillors

Cambridge Past, Present & Future: CSET update – CEO James Littlewood

James Littlewood – CEO of Cambridge Past Present and Future, gave a presentation to the meeting on status of the CSET busway.

Greater Cambridge Partnership is proposing to build a new busway from the Biomedical Campus out to Babraham Park and Ride.

A coalition has formed to oppose the busway that consists of Stapleford, Great Shelford and Babraham Parish Councils, Cambridge Past, Present and Future, Magog Trust, Hobsons Conduit Trust, and land-owner Stephen Partridge-Hicks. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by sponsors to fund a legal opposition to the plan.

The scheme will cost GCP £160 million which they don't have. The Transport and Works Order (TWAO) was submitted in January 2025, and subsequently our objections were submitted. The Department for Transport has postponed the decision about whether to hold an inquiry with a new deadline 6th June 2025, but we anticipate they will go ahead.

What happens next?

- 6 weeks to submit statement of case once inquiry is confirmed
- Inspectors appointed and date announced
- Agree statements of common ground

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- Proof of evidence to be submitted 4 weeks before inquiry starts
- Inquiry takes place (4-8 weeks)

What happens then?

- Inspector retires to consider evidence and submit report to Sec of State for Transport (3-6 months)
- SoS makes decision (2-6 months)
- If approved, GCP create full business case (2-6 months)
- It would then take even longer to satisfy planning conditions and construction

In conclusion, the busway would likely be constructed 2027 and significant housebuilding will follow from 2029. Lower cost, less damaging options exist, and the plan is to employ a legal team and continue to lobby decision-makers.

Mr. Littlewood also explained that Cambridge Past, Present & Future manages Wandlebury Country Park, and provided background on the services, facilities and volunteer work.

A Q&A followed which is shown below:

Q. Would a Conservative mayor object to the CSET scheme?

A. He has said that he would but his powers are limited. The Green Party and the Conservative Party have said that they oppose the busway.

Q. Why does the business case come so late in the process?

A. They do a summary first but the final business case comes at the end. Many things may have changed which is why benefits of the plan need to be reviewed.

Neighbourhood Plan: presentation – Jenny Flynn, Chair, Stapleford & Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Jenny provided an update and summarised the work that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has undertaken since early 2022 to date. The Plan is now with the examiner and we are awaiting their recommendations.

There are thousands of Neighbourhood Plans that have been adopted in the UK since 2011, and they give communities a direct say in the development of their areas.

Many surrounding areas already have neighbourhood plans, and it was decided to have joint Neighbourhood Plan for Stapleford and Great Shelford to set out a positive and shared vision.

If the recommendations are accepted then we go to referendum, and Jenny urges people to say Yes to the referendum.

Jenny expressed thanks to the Steering Group, and to everyone who has shared their wishes, wants and worries for the future.

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A Q&A followed which is shown below:

Q. Given government desire for development in this area, what is the likelihood they that could overrule all planning?

A. Whatever is built still needs to go through the planning process.

South Cambs District Councillor Peter Fane explained that a Local Plan is being prepared for 2026. In addition we have a development corporation being set up that has a target of 150,000 houses in the area. There will be a lot of additional development in this area due to other things just as EastWest Rail. As the result the Neighbourhood Plan is a valuable document to have.

Cllr Disley-Stevens directed a question to Cllr Fane:

Q. How will it affect us if planning regulations are streamlined?

A. Cllr Fane explained there is a Planning and Infrastructure bill going through Parliament that will give more power to Mayors. There may be a new plan that will phase out Local Plans but there is too much uncertainty at this stage.

Shelford and Stapleford Youth Initiative: presentation – John Greaves and Zac Britton

John and Zac gave a presentation on the work of the Shelford and Stapleford Youth Initiative (SSYI).

SSYI works with more than 300 young people with 11 regular sessions a week. They work with 11-18 year olds, particularly those that are vulnerable and have concerns. The program has developed from open access youth clubs to one-to-one sessions.

John thanked the Parish Council for the support over the years, and also thanked the Church and individuals who volunteer.

SSYI will be at the Stapleford Weekend on 28th June, and if you want to learn more please read the information on the display boards to get an idea of what SSYI do.

People are encouraged people to get involved as there are many young people who would really benefit. A big part of the work is going into schools to talk to young people and share with them the services that SSYI offer.

John explained that they would love to expand and are almost at capacity, although it shouldn't be driven by capacity but by the demand from young people.

A video was shown which explains what SSYI do with testimonials from young people about the benefits.

The Parish Council – Cllr Gillian Pett

The Chairman gave some background about the Parish Council, explaining that it is the lowest tier of local government, and that all councillors are volunteers.

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The Parish Council makes decisions on things like infrastructure, maintenance, safety and sustainability. They can also make representations to the District and County Council.

Village Weekend – Cllr Matthew French

Cllr French provided an update on the Stapleford Weekend, which will be held this year from 26th to 29th June 2025. There are lots of activities being planned including events, a film, the village show, cricket, a bike ride and others. All are welcome to come and enjoy the weekend.

Stapleford Tree Project: update – Sophi Berridge

Sophi Berridge provided an update on the Stapleford Tree Project 2024-2026. The project has generated excellent community engagement and 129 trees have been planted to date.

A map of publicly planted trees has been created and has now been added to the Parish Council website.

Jubilee Pavilion refurbishment: update and timeline – Cllr Michael Gatward

Cllr Gatward explained the proposed refurbishment of the Jubilee Pavilion with plans and artists impressions. Plans include providing external access to toilets, expanding the kitchen, and refurbishing the roof which will allow for solar panels to be added. An AV upgrade will also be included. Quotes are going out from tonight onwards and we should hear back within 6-7 weeks with an idea of costings.

A Q&A followed which is shown below:

Q. Are the doors and windows going to be changed from wood to metal?

A. The wooden doors are an issue so need to be replaced.

Q. Do you know how much it is going to cost?

A. We're not sure yet until we get quotes in. If we can get grants to help us pay then that is ideal.

Cllr Pett explained that we can't apply for grants until we get quotes in, but we will be applying for grants.

Q. Is it a cold roof?

A. Yes it's a cold roof that we want to make into a warm roof, and also fix the acoustics of the main room. The insulation is not currently appropriate and will need to be replaced.

Q. Will the acoustic changes affect how the choir sounds? What is the issue with the acoustics?

A. Currently it makes it hard for conversations and meetings to be heard, but the changes should not affect the choir.

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Q. Will the Parish Council send out official communication to all groups using the Pavilion about the closure dates?

A. It is very likely to be from September and we will send out notification when we know for sure.

Q. What about storage for the chairs and tables?

A. It will be remaining the same.

Open Discussion: any other matters

Vote of thanks: The former Clerk would like to offer a vote of thanks to all Councillors who volunteer their time, and special thanks to the Chair.

Haverhill Road condition: A resident asked if there are any plans for reconstituting Haverhill Road. Cllr Fane explained that the plan is for thorough works after the Rangeford Development has been completed. Cllr Disley-Stevens explained that we have been speaking to County Councillor Brian Milnes and are hoping that the issues are being resolved. The speed limit has been reduced to 40mph and we are hoping that will make a difference. Rangeford may pay for future works in conjunction with Highways. Ultimately the road will be repaired and discussions are positive, but it will take some time.

Sawston Greenway: A resident asked if there any plans to do anything about the condition of Church St. Cllr Pett explained that Sawston Greenway will include Church St and we are hoping that they will resurface the road. Another resident expressed concern that Sawston Greenway funds will get diverted away from cyclists.

Allotments footpath: A resident described that the owners of the allotments land have put a Section 31 (6) on the land which restricts public rights of way. The resident expressed concern that the public access to the existing cut-through will be restricted. The resident asked those in attendance if they would like to provide evidence or support that the path has been used for many years. The resident also expressed interest in a stall at the Village Weekend to promote this. One resident expressed concern that there have been long-standing notices that the path is not a right of way. Another resident expressed support for keeping the allotments publicly accessible, and asked the Parish Council keep that in mind.

Rangeford: A resident asked if Rangeford lorries are meant to come down the top road only. Cllr Pett explained that Rangeford aware of the problem and are stopping vehicles coming in to the site if they have come through the village.

As there were no further questions or comments, Cllr Pett thanked all in attendance for the wonderful turnout and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed 8:40pm

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