

STANDISH PARISH COUNCIL

draft MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL on Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 7pm

All written reports referred to in these minutes are available on the Standish Village website.

Present: Cllr Sue Hartley (Chair), Cllr Alison Widgery, Cllr Richard Faith, Cllr Oliver Kirkham, Cllr Andreas Biermann

In attendance: County Cllr John Patient, District Cllr Mark Ryder, Elizabeth Oakley (Clerk)

26.01 To receive apologies

Apologies received from Cllr John Parker.

26.02 To receive any declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

26.03 To receive any representations or questions from members of the public (15 Minutes)

(Members of the public are invited to address the Council, give their views and question the Council on issues on the agenda or raise issues for future consideration (at the discretion of the Chair). Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than three minutes.)

26.04 To receive reports from County and District Councillors

A written report had been received from District Cllr Mark Ryder who advised he had raised Green Walk play area location as the developer need find an alternative site. The (new) Local Plan is in the early days of a consultation. It was hoped to make progress in the year before the shadow unitary authority applies from May 2027. Community governance review had been brought forward to align with local government reorganisation. Standish and (Great Oldbury) are included in the review.

A written report had been received from County Cllr John Patient who highlighted the Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee (he chairs) is being reorganised with a wider brief. This is hoped will give more emphasis to Highways. There was no further update on Horsemarling Lane as the officer estimating costs is on sick leave. Cllr Patient had alerted Roger Wyborn to the Standish petition in place to show local support. Highways budgets overall had been reduced however. The council continued to express its dismay that Horsemarling Lane was unresolved. Cllr Biermann supported a strongly worded letter and will raise this with the Residents Association of Green Walk to also get them to engage.

26.05 To confirm the Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 10th June 2026 and receive any

updates. The minutes of 10th June meeting were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. For Matters Arising, item 26.26, Clerk advised training Session 2 Data Protection is due on 10th August at £35.00. Item 26.20; Clerk will conclude explanation of pay variance in annual returns (last two years) by the autumn, but early investigations suggest is due to higher rates of tax and national insurance in the last year.

26.06 To consider any planning applications: including the following: -

S.26/1100/HEDGE field opposite Standish Church, Standish Lane, Standish, hedgerow removal- removal of stretches of hedgerow – the council agreed to comment: - Standish Parish Council strongly objects to application S.26/1100/HEDGE for hedgerow removal on land opposite Standish Church, Standish Lane.

While recognising the applicant's need to improve field drainage, the Council considers that the evidence provided does not justify the removal of part of an important, species-rich historic hedgerow that has formed a field boundary for over 200 years. The Council questions whether the seasonal ponding (approx. 520 metres square) shown in the application is caused by a blocked ditch, noting that the affected area represents only around 0.37% of the 13.97-hectare field and appears only after exceptionally heavy rainfall. Unless there is heavy rainfall, there is no obvious build-up of surface water, rather the water only lies in a depression in the field for a short time. The area of ponding is a low-lying part of the field does not appear to be connected to a blocked ditch system.

The Council also highlights the absence of supporting arboricultural, ecological and habitat management assessments accompanying the application, particularly regarding the impacts on mature trees, including an oak and sycamore, and the hedgerow's biodiversity value. The application does not make clear whether the work proposed involves hedge pruning or permanent removal of part or all of the hedgerow. The Council considers that removal of one side of the hedge would inevitably have a detrimental effect on the remaining hedge and the wider ecological corridor.

The hedgerow that is proposed to be removed is classified as an 'important hedgerow' under The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations therefore it is protected from removal. There needs to be significant justification for the removal of a hedgerow, and the Council can see no justification for this in this application.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) estimates that 40% of hedges (95,000miles) are ancient and/or species rich. Intensification of agriculture led to hedgerow clearance: around 118,000 miles of hedgerows have disappeared since 1950. This is now generally acknowledged by arboriculturists and ecologists to be a huge mistake resulting in habitat and shelter loss for many creatures, severing critical movement corridors and eliminating food sources.

Hedgerows regulate water supply for crops by reducing water loss through evaporation by decreasing wind speed over the ground surface. Hedges play an important role in reducing flood risk, as they increase the rate of water infiltration and slow water flows. They act as a permeable barrier; without them heavy rainfall would create rapid surface run off which would wash away topsoil and nutrients and lead to localised flooding. Their deep roots help to remove water faster from the soil than crops during periods of excessive rainfall.

Old hedges, such as this one, have deep, extensive root systems that bind the earth together. Removing these roots leaves the soil structure looser and more susceptible to collapse and erosion. Organic matter (leaf litter, dead roots etc) from hedges builds and nourishes the soil as a natural fertilizer improving soil health, structure and ability to hold water.

No information has been provided, in this application, to show how the roots of the hedge and trees will be protected from damage if work goes ahead. Given the national decline in hedgerows and their protection under current legislation, the Council believes alternative drainage solutions should be explored, such as installing field drains or constructing a new ditch within the field away from the hedgerow and mature trees.

The Council therefore objects to the application and requests that any drainage proposals be redesigned to protect the historic hedgerow, mature trees and associated wildlife habitat while addressing the applicant's drainage concerns. Any drainage work undertaken should be phased over a period of years to reduce the loss of flora and fauna within the ditch.

To receive update on appeal process: 23/1451/OUT Land Northwest of Stonehouse-mixed use development comprising the following individual, severable and self-contained elements: i) Up to 635 residential dwellings, ii) A primary school, Sport & recreation facilities. Associated works including infrastructure, ancillary facilities, open space (including allotments), landscaping & access – Clerk submitted council response to Planning Inspectorate by the deadline of 6th July. Appeal is scheduled for 2nd and 3rd September. More clarity is required on timetable and procedures to enable planning of councillor input both before and at the appeal.

Action points: Clerk to secure appeal details.

S.26/1170/NEWTPO Beatrice Webb Oak Beatrice Webb Lane Standish New Tree Preservation Order - TPO/0619 – council agreed there need be preservation order on this tree which had high amenity value. Cllr John Parker to be asked to write response to planning officer.

Decisions- (as listed in Clerk's report): council to support the new TPO and respond accordingly

S.26/0185/TPO-John Martin Gardens Standish - Tree 765 Cut-leaved Beech - Reduce entire crown by 1-2 metres all round. Remove dead wood over access. Retain all internal growth – refused

S.26/0521/HHOLD -West Barn Little Haresfield Standish, erection of a detached outbuilding – permitted

S.26/0184/TPO John Martin Gardens Standish -T739 Lucombe Oak - Reduce crown by 3-4 metres in height and 2-3 metres in spread -approved, consent

26.07 To receive an update on the Standish Neighbourhood Development Plan and agree actions

Council accepted the report circulated with thanks. The formal consultation period commencing on 1st July is now running. Clerk was thanked for her work in sending out consultations. Councillors can also respond to the consultation. The drop-in information session is next Tuesday at the village hall. Councillors were invited to attend. Clerk to examine formatting of Section 2, consultation questionnaire, to ensure data can be entered smoothly.

Action points: Clerk to review Section 2 of questionnaire.

26.08 To receive an update on the Multi-User Path project (Horsemarling roundabout to Crowcumpill) and agree actions

Council accepted the update report received with thanks. A new phase to start in September. There had been some design challenges. There will be extra landscaping.

26.09 To receive a report on matters relating to Green Walk including update on petition (Horsemarling Lane speed limit) and agree actions

Cllr Biermann outlined outstanding issues: The Residents Association reported disappointing no engagement with developer. The location of the play area was outstanding as there was none which all could accept. If the developer revives the original planning application objections are expected. This needs to be referred to the district council to correct the original mistake. There was no update on drainage. Cllr Biermann to check on progress surfacing of car park. The Chair had written reference washing line issue and awaited a reply.

Action points: Cllr Biermann to check on progress car park surface issue. Clerk to follow up with SDC on drainage.

26.10 To receive a report on Standish Lane issues and agree actions

There had been no action by Highways.

26.11 To receive a report on local and national climate change initiatives and agree actions

The Great collaboration Plan and emergency plan had been circulated. The Emergency Briefing film showing in Stonehouse had been well supported with a well-focused discussion afterwards. Whats App climate groups are very active.

26.12 To receive update on Neighbourhood Fund application/s and agree actions

A one paragraph summary with cost estimate presented to Cllr Patient for approval will generate the formal application form. The Clerk can assist with completion.

Action points: Cllr Kirkham to draft summary with support from the Clerk.

26.13 To receive a report on the Village Hall Management Committee and agree actions

There had been no main meeting, but preparations are in place for the autumn art exhibition and harvest supper.

26.14 To receive a report on village events and agree actions

As prior report (to June meeting).

26.15 To receive clerk's update and agree actions

Council accepted the report circulated with thanks. Clerk advised end of year financial reports, internal auditor's report, governance statements, exemption certificate and exercise of public rights were uploaded to the website. Three planning decisions (after agenda published) were noted for item 26.06. Clerk to ensure she receives all new planning alerts. The regulation 14 NDP consultation had been launched on 1st July. The Clerk contacted over one hundred consultees the same day. Some parish councils had responded their councils would make NDP consultation a July agenda item. Some clarity was required on community governance review consultation procedures and deadlines. The Clerk had received a phone call that part clarified. Appeal 6009483 (Land LW of Stonehouse) had been submitted and acknowledgement received. Item 26.06: Clerk to clarify dates and procedures for the September appeal to allow time for councillor preparation. The handyperson had submitted an invoice for July to include £80 grass cutting (not the on the agenda) which council approved in addition to the monthly fee. As there was no August council meeting, council approved August pay for Clerk and handyperson. Council also approved expected invoice for summer newsletter in the order of £300 to regular supplier. Clerk due to complete module 2, ILCA qualification over the summer. Correspondence from Haresfield Parish Council Clerk stated road markings on right turn from B4008 into Little Haresfield are confusing. Cllr Widgery to raise with Highways. Clerk confirmed she had reviewed councillor DPI forms on council website, none of which displayed personal addresses. (new legislation requires these be redacted). Councillors confirmed no changes in circumstances requiring DPI updates.

Action points: Clerk to clarify procedures for September appeal and ensure all planning alerts are received before agendas circulated. Cllr Widgery to raise road markings with Highways.

26.16 To receive update on internal audit auditor's report for 2025/26 and agree actions

Council accepted the reports circulated with thanks. The internal auditor had signed her report on 22nd June giving a pass on all criteria. Some recommendations included tidying up frontispieces of new policies and conducting annual review of direct debits. Council agreed to add this latter item to internal checkers list.

Action points: The Clerk to outline all auditor's recommendations for autumn meeting and add approval of direct debits to internal checker's list.

26.17 To receive cashbook/statement of income and expenditure for first quarter financial year and agree actions

Council accepted the report circulated with thanks. The first quarter cashbook showed all transactions in the first quarter through both accounts and balances at the end of the quarter.

26.18 To receive update on website development and email adoption (Assertion 10) and agree actions

Clerk advised current email contract expired end of 2026 and next year's audit, spring 2027, is expected to examine council websites for Assertion 10 compliance in detail. Cllr Kirkham to review email/domain quotations received and make recommendation to the September meeting.

Action points: *Cllr Kirkham to review email/domain quotations and make recommendation to September meeting.*

26.19 To receive update on finger post improvement work and agree actions

A technical specification document from the supplier had been received. Council approved subject to the change of invoice and delivery addresses to Cllr Kirkham. A hard copy signature would be supplied by Cllr Kirkham before Clerk confirmed specification with the supplier.

Action points: *Clerk to arrange address changes, hard copy signature, and confirmation.*

26.20 To receive Handyperson report and agree actions

Council accepted the report circulated with thanks which illustrated work on grass cutting, verges, and strimming. The grass cutting fee was also approved: £80.00.

26.21 To consider preparation of summer newsletter and agree actions

Work to commence as soon as possible with articles to include Neighbourhood Development Plan update, community governance review, local government re-organisation, trees at Green Walk, local events, multi-user path update, recruitment to voluntary positions in the community, and update on Horsemarling Lane.

26.22 To note payments and receipts and agree payment of invoices

Payments were approved

- Handyperson monthly invoice: £250.00
- Clerk's monthly wages: £452.08
- HMRC: £ 96.42 (£ 76.40 PAYE, £ 20.02 NICs)
- GAPTC annual membership 2026/27: £216.65
- GAPTC internal audit service 2025/26: £210.00

For Information: pension contributions

- Employer: £16.52
- Employee: £22.02

Payments approved at June meeting

- Handyperson monthly invoice: £250.00
- Clerk's monthly wages: £452.28
- HMRC: £ 96.22 (£ 76.20 PAYE, £ 20.02 NICs)
- PATA Payroll, Quarter 1: (April, May, June 2026) and arrears calculation: £66.30
- APM councillor expenses: Sue Hartley: £15.30
- APM refreshments: Jonathan Crump: £26.00
- Clerks' mileage-LGR/devolution training: 13 miles@40 ppm= £5.20
- Clerks' mileage-ANPR meeting: 18 miles@40ppm= £7.20
- Clerk's home-office allowance, quarter one: (April, May, June 2026): £78.00 (*not approved*). Revised pro-rata figure of £15.60 for quarter one approved.

Payments agreed and pending –

Receipts – General climate and nature grant: £650.00

Receipt pending: -

26.23 To confirm the date and time of the next meeting of the Council

The next meeting of Standish Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 9th September 2026 at 7.00 pm at Standish village hall.

*All written reports submitted for monthly council meetings are available
on the Standish Parish Council website*