

Stanstead Village Community Centre on Monday 26th January 2026 at 7.30pm

Chair: Cllr Harkness

In attendance: Cllr Wilson, Cllr Green, Cllr Gaskell, Cllr Richards, Cllr Peck, Cllr Jeeves and Cllr Plumb

Members of the Public: none

Clerk: Mrs Julia Howard

Minutes

All members of the press and public are invited to attend Meeting Part 1
Meeting Part 1

- 26/001 Welcome and to approve apologies for absence – Cllr Holt and Cllr Kemp
- 26/002 For members to declare any interests they may have on items on the agenda and agree any dispensations to stay
- a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
 - b. Other Registrable Interests
 - c. Non-Registerable Interests

Cllrs advised that they have an interest in agenda items that relate to Stanstead Village Community Centre & Social Club C.I.C (SVCC) and dispensations as follows:

Cllr Green – has an Other Registrable interest as they are friends with an SVCC committee member as previously recorded.

Cllr Harkness – non-registerable interest as a member of SVCC as previously recorded

Cllr Peck – non-Registerable interest as a member of SVCC as previously recorded

Cllr Jeeves - non-registerable interest as a member of SVCC as previously recorded.

26/003 To adopt minutes of the council meeting held on 17th November 2025.

RESOLVED by show of hands as a true record and signed in the meeting by the Chair

26/004 To receive reports from: District Cllr M Holt /S Plumb and County Cllr R Kemp
Cllr Plumb has sent a report which the clerk will ensure is circulated to the PC. Cllr Plumb gave a summary of his report, commencing with an update on the Local Government reorganisation; the cancellation of the Mayoral elections and the County Council elections has been announced. Grants are available for warm home projects.

New refuse/recycling initiative is due to come in from May 26. BDC Parking prices are expected to increase by around 20%.

26/005 Public Forum members of the public are invited to question Councillors and /or speak on any Parish matters - none

26/006 Admin

a. Review actions from Internal Audit. There are 3 outstanding actions, one of which relates to the recording of the precept request which will be done at this PC meeting. The other two will be undertaken in due course

b. Review of Internal Control Statement – Cllr Harkness will review the internal control statement and report on any actions.

c. Agree scheme of delegation to new clerk – some amendments were
RESOLVED agreed and marked on the draft version which was signed, this will be scanned and kept for records.

26/007 Finances

- a. To approve invoices /accounts for payment per schedule

RESOLVED by show of hands

Schedule of Payments made since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 16-1-26

Bank service charges Sept-Oct 2025	£4.25
Bank service charges Oct-Nov 2025	£4.25
Clerk wages Nov 2025	£329.85
Church Clock time change	£175.00 +VAT
Willow tree x 2 pollarding	£1,100.00 + VAT
Bank service charges Nov-Dec 2025	£4.25
clerk wages dec 25	£330.05
Quarterly playground inspection June	£102.00
Income tax and NI	£247.40

Income Received since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 16-1-26

Stanstead Village Community Centre £80.00

Schedule of payments to be made at the meeting

McAffee renewal due £tbc

Income received since the last meeting

Stanstead Village Community Centre Rent £80.00

- b. To monitor and reconcile receipts & payments to bank statement

Receipts, payments and reconciliation to bank statement (including the bank statement) as at 16.01.2026 circulated prior to the meeting, all pages signed and retained on file.

RESOLVED unanimously that receipts and payments records reconcile to the bank statement at 16.01.2026 by show of hands

- c. To Monitor budget position to 31st December 2025

The Budget monitoring spreadsheet to 31.01.2026 was circulated prior to the meeting,

RESOLVED unanimously by show of hands acknowledge the overspend against the budget.

- d. Agree budget for 2026-27

The PC discussed the budget and advised that it is missing the management costs of the ditch, which needs clearing periodically perhaps every 7/8 years, this will need to be considered at the end of March when looking at the earmarked funds. The budget seems high but there is no identifiable 'fat' to be trimmed. There isn't a budget line for the Community Centre at present.

The proposed budget for 26/27 is £16,192.60.

RESOLVED unanimously by show of hands to agree the budget.

- e. Agree precept figure for 2026-27 and sign request form

RESOLVED Proposed by Cllr Harkness, seconded by Cllr Peck, all in agreement by show of hands. The precept request was signed by the Chair, and the clerk will submit it before the deadline.

The Precept figure of £13,252 for 26/27 is an increase of £1354 on the 25/26 precept, taking a Band D property from £70.13 to £79.30, an increase of 13.07%

In discussion Councillors expressed their reluctance to increase the precept but considered it was unavoidable given that even with the increased precept, the council was eating into reserves to meet the proposed budget for 2026/27.

26/008 Thermal imaging project update – Cllr Jeeves gave a summary of the project update. 9 people have asked for a survey to be done. For those requesting a Thermal Imaging assessment a handout/guide is provided. The survey can show where there is significant heat lost from the property. It is non evasive and won't interfere with privacy. The equipment will be available until late February. Each resident will be contacted to arrange an appointment. SCC has asked for a datasheet to be completed, with number and types/ages of properties surveyed.

26/009 Community Centre update including:

a. Lease agreement update

It was reported that there had been a productive meeting of the working group. Discussion had taken place at the WG around a proposal under which SVCC have responsibility for "internal" maintenance and PC have responsibility for the fabric of the building and "external" maintenance. That left unresolved some expensive items such as fire and burglar alarms, boiler/heating and electrics.

As discussed at item 26/007 above, The PC doesn't have funds to take on any additional responsibilities without increasing the precept. Although the PC would like to support the community centre as a community asset the PC members considered that must be done in a way that meets the needs of all residents of the parish.

PC members considered one specific item needed to be dealt with urgently, that being the fire alarm which required remedial work. Informal discussions with SVCC indicated they also thought the fire alarm work was urgent and that they were willing to pay half.

RESOLVED The Chair proposes that on this occasion only, 50% of the fire alarm repairs are funded by the PC but that the Parish Council will undertake to pay the bill on the understanding SVCC will contribute half the cost. Following discussion, all voted in agreement by show of hands.

As to the more general terms of the on-going lease and other arrangements with the SVCC, it is clear further WG meetings are needed.

New WG proposed by Cllr Harkness, seconded by Cllr Jeeves and agreed by all. The working group will arrange to meet, the PC attendees will be Cllr Wilson, Cllr Peck, Cllr Richards and Cllr Green and the clerk. Cllr Harkness will leave the WG due to numbers.

b. To discuss fire risk assessment and remedial works

Discussed and resolved as above.

26/010 Noticeboards – revamp update – Cllr Richards and clerk to follow this up and arrange purchase. Budget and spend already agreed.

26/011 To discuss planning applications made since the last meeting and any planning issues including:

Decisions:

DC/25/04988 – Woodnook, Lower Road. CO10 9AW erection of attached double front garage Extension - Refusal

26/012 Playground update including:

a. Quarterly /Annual inspections – HAGS are suggesting a site visit in April.

There are a number of urgent repairs required. Cllr Peck and either Cllr Green and/or Cllr Harkness will attend the meeting. There are concerns over the weight limit of some of the fixings for the swings and we awaiting further details.

b. Lighting update – there aren't funds currently available but Cllr Green will look into the options. It is not clear if lighting would increase safety after dark, or reduce it by creating the illusion of more light but with dark spots.

c. To accept update to signage – thanks to Cllr Green for removing the old sign and replacing / updating the others with the correct contact details. Cllr Green has done this at no charge to the PC.

26/013 Willow Trees – pollarding update. This is complete and the PC are happy that it has been done now.

26/014 Neighbourhood plan – The PC is still at the early stages of the neighbourhood plan, and it is costly to continue with this as there are currently no grants available. The initial surveys were done, and the public has had no further communication. Cllr Harkness suggested that the PC should write to the community to provide an update, Cllr Harkness will draft something and then a letter drop will be arranged.

26/015 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Councillors /items for the next meeting's agenda
Cllr Gaskell – residents have asked about the broken footpath sign on the corner of Woodnook, also there is a complaint re: hedge at Sparrows Hall coming across the path at the front of the hall. These both need reporting on SCC website.

26/016 Date of next meeting – Monday 30th March 2026

Meeting close at 21.44

Meeting Part 2 Commenced at 21.45

To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960,
the public and press be excluded from the meeting part 2 due to
the confidential nature of the business to be discussed

26/017 To confirm contract details for new Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
RESOLVED by show of hands

26/018 Outgoing Clerk overtime
RESOLVED by show of hands, details were circulated prior to the meeting.

Meeting closed 21.52