

Stansted Parish Council

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10th December 2025

Mr Damian Roberts
Chief Executive
Electoral Registration Officer
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Gibson Building
Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
West Malling
ME19 4LZ

Dear Mr Roberts

Request for additional Councillors

Following our Parish Council Meeting of 1st December 2025, it was agreed that we should write to the Borough Council to request a Community Governance Review to be undertaken to increase the number of councillors on our parish council. Stansted Parish Council covers the village of Stansted and Fairseat and currently has 7 members. We wish to increase the number to 9. Our electorate is currently over 525 and I have outlined the background for this request as follows: -

Stansted Parish Council is very active and has an ever-increasing workload with numerous sub-committees.

The Parish Council bought and manages our local school building which requires a sub-committee. We are applying for an ACV for the Fairseat Chapel, which will require a sub-committee. We have another sub-committee which is trying to get our parish included within the National Landscape. We have had a section 106 application for the extremely large London Golf club development which has required yet another sub-committee. We also have a sub-committee involved in establishing a traffic plan. Currently we are fighting to keep our only pub open through another hard-working sub-committee. Moreover, we sit on the border of three areas, Sevenoaks, TMBC and Gravesham so we have now added large Local Plans to our agenda.

We need to increase our numbers to allow the workload to be spread over a larger base and to ensure that councillors have the time to involve themselves in the detail of issues. The increasing number and complexity of planning applications, committees and demands on our time necessitates for all members to attend the Parish Council meetings and at least one other committee meeting each month.

We have sought to have a diverse parish council with representatives from both villages and of both genders ranging in age from 35 to 65. Two female members have children under 9 years and 6 of our members work full-time. It is also not unusual for two councillors to be on holiday at the same time reducing our numbers to 5. Although a diverse council offers a very good representation of views it also offers its own challenges. None of the current councillors would like to stand as chair or vice-chair at the next election!

The current workload imposed on each councillor every month amounts to approximately two days. Given that this is all voluntary work it imposes a significant pressure on councillors which borders on being a burden. Our chair has a significant issue with keeping councillors motivated to deal with an increasing workload and without an increase in numbers we will struggle to keep existing members on the committees.

At our last election in May 2023 our long-standing chair and vice-chair stepped down. A new councillor was appointed and took on the role of chair and then stepped down with immediate effect after four months. We then appointed a new chair from within the Parish Council who also stepped down with immediate effect after fifteen months. Our current chair has been 'holding the fort' ever since and wishes to address the succession issue by appointing councillors who fully appreciate the workload and responsibilities the role requires.

Trying to plan ahead and mindful of the need for succession to the role of chair we are aware of two potential candidates who could be interested in joining the parish council if spaces were available. Both candidates could offer knowledge and expertise that will greatly benefit our parish council and both could potentially be interested in taking the role of chair and vice-chair should they be asked to do so in due course. We are aware that individuals can be co-opted, but again, being mindful of filling the role of chair it would be preferable to have candidates as fully involved members prior to taking on a key role in the parish council.

Stansted Parish Council respectfully requests the Electoral Register Officer to consider approving an increase in the number of our councillors from 7 to 9.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly and if you have any queries please contact me.

Yours faithfully

David Rice
Parish Clerk
Stansted Parish Council