

## STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

### Minutes of virtual meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 at 7.45pm

1. **Present**, Robin Oakley, Secretary(RO), Margaret Arger, Chairman (MA), Colin Love (CL), Cllr. John Perry (JP), Cllr. Colin Bowden (CB), Cllr. Adele Sharp (AS), Tom Burnham (TB).
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Paddy Riordan, Cllr. Joan Buller. Robin Kenworthy had tried to attend but had been unable to access Zoom.
3. **Minutes of Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021:** Agreed
4. **Matters Arising.** None
5. **New Members of the Group.** Although they were not present, Cllr. Simon McNeill and Cllr. Natasha Thomas were confirmed as new members of the group which now comprises the following:-  
  
Cllrs. Riordan, Buller, Perry, Bowden, Sharp, McNeill, Thomas, Borough Councillor Brice.  
Residents Margaret Arger, Robin Oakley, Robin Kenworthy, Colin Love, Gill Smith, Tom Burnham.
6. **Election of Chairman:** Margaret Arger was re-elected unopposed as Chairman.
7. **Election of Secretary:** Robin Oakley was re-elected unopposed as Secretary.
8. **Terms of Reference:** The Group's Terms of Reference were circulated to Group Members prior to the meeting and approved at the meeting.
9. **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) Pre-Submission Local Plan.** The Group's comments were agreed and it was recommended to the Parish Council that they be submitted to TWBC by the closing date of xx June, 2021.
10. **Design Code for Housing in Staplehurst.** It was agreed that the draft Code is acceptable, but there are some aspects which need further consideration and possible addition. MA and JP both said that tree planting is fundamental and needs to be emphasised. CL said that we should not be constrained by local designs and when we are taking photographs they should include examples of good and poor design. RO suggested that the houses on the large new developments on the Sutton Valence/Langley road might produce examples of both. It was noted that affordable housing attracts families from urban areas and outer London. CL said that it is important that young people raised in Staplehurst, who wished to remain here, should be able to buy affordable homes. RO pointed out that as a result of the Covid pandemic many residents were now working from home but this arrangement was not ideal if they have children at home and do not have sufficient space where they can isolate themselves from the rest of the family. CL suggested that the parish council should be encouraging construction of small office units for rent to those who are no longer commuting. The offices should include Wi-fi and copiers etc. MA suggested that if the Youth Club building ever became available it could be converted to small office pods. It was agreed that Group members would be requested, in the covering E-mail to these minutes, to each submit 2 photographs, one each of what they regard as acceptable and not acceptable design, in JPEG format to the Secretary before the next Group meeting so that they can be circulated to Group members.
11. **Planning Matters relating to the Queen's speech to Parliament.** RO said it did not seem to be clear what is proposed in planning. MA said that it appeared that there are too many houses to be built in

the South East. JP expressed concern that the future of planning may be changing as the Government wants everything to be agreed in Local Plans which he felt could be dangerous. He stressed that discussion of plans at parish and borough council levels is essential as members of these authorities have local knowledge.

**12. Any other business.** CL raised the matter of boundary issues where residents of Hurst Close believe that houses on the new Bovis development are being built too close to their boundaries and not in accordance with the approved plans. There was some discussion and whilst it was probably outside the remit of this Group, MA suggested that those residents who believe they are affected should write to the Parish Clerk with the facts as they see them and copy their letters to Borough Councillors Perry and Brice, and to the MBC's Planning Officer, Rob Jarman.

**Meeting closed at 9.00pm. Next meetings on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2021 and 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.**

Robin Oakley 27 May 2021