



STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 7 March 2019
at The Free Church, Staplehurst

Present: Andrew Watson (Chairman), Patrick Blunt, Peter Jeffery, Paul Linaker, Debbie Ling, Ken Ling, Erika Lock, Angela Martin, Bill Piper, Laureen Rodwell, Rory Silkin.

Apologies: Sue Bassett, Graham Billin, Joan Buller, Caroline Highwood, Bob Howse, Kaz Kember, Mira Martin, John Parsons-Smith, Pam Payne, Chris Ralph,

Chairman's Welcome and Remarks: Andrew

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting and also the previous AGM were accepted and signed.

Matters Arising:

Vulnerable residents: Andrew reported that there were 40 on the list, though as spouses are included the reality is smaller. No present action is needed, but the list should be maintained in case of need.

Ken asked how "vulnerable" should be defined; Andrew suggested that it was anyone who would welcome a knock on the door in an emergency situation, such as a fuel shortage.

The issue of recruitment to SEHT was discussed. No clear policy emerged apart from the need to continue making the community aware of what we are.

Chairman's Report:

Andrew started by thanking Laureen for her help, particularly for deputising for him and for organising SEHT's presence at the recent Stay Safe Staplehurst event, Bill for doing the minutes, Bob Howse and the Free Church for providing venues, Tom Burnham and the Parish Council for support and funding, and Mick Westwood and his team for their support, advice and printing.

There had been no emergencies.

The exercise on 6th October had run well, with Community Warden Mira Martin recruiting the Men's Shed, and Peter Jeffery taking charge of the shelter.

A Personal Emergency Plan, designed to prepare households of adverse circumstances, was published in the autumn Village Update.

The response to a feature in Village Update about the Vulnerable Residents Register was low; he suggested a change to our approach, possibly by introducing those residents to schemes offered by the electricity companies.

We need to continue working to raise our profile within the Parish, and we need more residents to attend a training exercise.

Only Horsmonden has shown interest in our offer of help in setting up an Emergency Help Team. Meanwhile we should renew our approaches to other neighbouring parishes, as well as delivering something newsworthy that can be used to promote increased interest in SEHT within our own parish.

Matters Arising:

Regarding our cooperation with other parishes, it seems few of our neighbours have made any progress. However, in the case of Marden, Erika reported that the parish has been involved in

its Neighbourhood Plan, and she expects progress when that has concluded. In response to a question regarding our liaison with Maidstone, Andrew said that Maidstone was preoccupied with preparation for Brexit and was less interested in resilience than previously. He hoped this would eventually change. Our relationship with Kent Resilience Forum appeared unchanged.

Election of Officers:

Andrew said that he was prepared to continue, but as this would be his fifth year he felt it must be his last as Chairman.

The following were elected:

Chairman: Andrew Watson (Laureen/Erika)
Vice:Chairman: Laureen Rodwell (Andrew/Bill)
Minutes Secretary: Bill Piper (Andrew)
Data Manager: Technical: Sam Lain
Privacy, etc.: Rory Silkin
Telephone tree & data management: Laureen Rodwell & Maria Norris

Report on Stay Safe Staplehurst: This was a recent Parish event where the public could meet blue-light services and local organizations involved in safety issues. Overall attendance had been fair. SEHT had had a desk and had met members of the public. Four new members of the team were recruited.

Report on the Telephone Tree: Laureen undertook to update the Tree. Individuals will be contacted by email. Later there will be a trial run. The mobile phone is presently with Andrew and is kept charged. Because it is a pay-as-you-go phone it is not possible to use it for diverting calls. Bill suggested that a smaller group needs to meet to update the membership list.

Other Business:

Paul drew attention to traffic diversions, associated, for example, with recent gas leaks. He suggested that some diversions, for example along B-roads, showed lack of local knowledge. He wondered whether Police or Highways officials would be interested in advice from local organizations such as SEHT. Discussion followed, including a further suggestions of active participation in case of possible or actual traffic problems. It was agreed that Andrew would write to Police headquarters to seek reaction. Bill suggested that a positive response could form the basis of a table-top exercise.

Laureen said that she had been forwarded a request from Boughton Monchelsea for help in setting up their Emergency Help Plan. She had sent a copy of our plan and names of people in the Resilience team who might help.

Bill raised a point about our insurance cover. On the occasion of Stay Safe Staplehurst, we had briefly been asked to pay for personal liability insurance cover for our table in the hall. We believed that, as a group acting on behalf of Staplehurst Parish Council and having no independent income, we were covered by the Council's insurance. It was agreed that Bill would write to the Chairman of SPS seeking clarification.

Patrick asked about how SEHT publicizes itself within Staplehurst, particularly with a

view to public awareness and recruitment. Laureen suggested it was time to write another article for the Parish Magazine. Other ideas mentioned included a letter drop and information on parish notice-boards.

There was discussion regarding SEHT's role in helping blue-light services. It is assumed that they would contact us by the agreed channels, but this has not been put to the test recently.

Date of the Next Meetings: Thursday 6th June. AGM: 12 March 2020.