

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 7.15 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Green, Kelly, Kemp, Manning, Perry, Sharp, Spearink and Silkin who was in the Chair.  
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Butcher, Gosling and Reardon whose apologies were accepted. Councillor Lain-Rose's apologies were received after the meeting.

**URGENT ITEM:** - Councillors agreed to accept two items of urgent business in respect of Pullen Farm and the local bus service.

**COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:**

Lobbying – Councillors Buller and Perry declared they had been lobbied in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors Ashby and Buller declared they had been lobbied about the library. Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about Chapel Lane street lights.

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in items on the agenda – Councillor Perry declared an interest as Borough Councillor in the Neighbourhood Plan and its relationship with the MBC Local Plan. Councillor Kelly declared an interest in Finance Group's recommendation about the cleaning contract for Bell Lane toilets.

Requests for dispensation – none requested.

**APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES** Pages 1403-1405 of 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015 were proposed for approval by Councillor Kemp, seconded by Councillor Ashby, approved by councillors, signed by the Chairman and made available at [http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_meetings.aspx](http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx). Councillor Buller abstained.

**ACCOUNTS & FINANCES**

1. Accounts for payment for approval. Proposed by Councillor Kemp, seconded by Councillor Ashby, the list of accounts for payment was approved (Councillor Kelly abstaining).
2. Summation of Accounts to 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Noted by councillors and published at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_meetings.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx).
3. Budget 2015-16 (including list of donations and subscriptions) – for approval. Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Perry, councillors voted nem con to approve the Finance Group's proposal for the 2015-16 budget of a net precept requirement of £123,552, equating to £54.98 per Band D property per year (2014-15 £54.93). They also approved the proposals for donations and subscriptions as listed in Finance Group's report dated 6<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and published at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx). The Clerk advised that MBC had confirmed that its Parish Services payment for 2015-16 would be unchanged from 2014-15, i.e. £7,060.
4. National Allotment Society 2015 Membership – Invitation for renewal (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Sharp, councillors voted nem con to approve the Parish Council's membership renewal due on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at a cost of £55 plus VAT.
5. Quotation for Electricity Supply – Bell Lane Toilets (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Ashby, councillors voted nem con to approve acceptance

of the quotation from LSI Brokers for the electricity supply to Bell Lane Toilets with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> February on the basis of an estimated annual cost of £204.76.

6. Quotation for Hedge Work – Jubilee Field & Surrenden Playing Field (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Manning, councillors requested that two further quotes be obtained.

### **CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-**

1. Urgent Items – Chairman Silkin advised that Corylus Planning had invited representatives of Staplehurst, Headcorn and Frittenden Parish Councils to a meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January in Headcorn about proposals for a solar farm at Pullen Farm. Councillor Kelly volunteered to attend. Councillor Spearink advised councillors about recent incidents on local bus services.
2. Neighbourhood Plan – Report from Steering Group – *Chairman Silkin closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public*. The Chair of RSG stated that the Rural Settlement Group wished the Parish Council to continue developing the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and that FERIA Urbanism would need to receive clear guidance on how it should proceed, particularly in the context of MBC's latest announcement about new sites proposed for development. Other residents commented on the importance of taking a design-led approach to the plan and thinking beyond the immediate plan to take into account how plans and issues in other parishes and towns affect Staplehurst. *Chairman Silkin reopened the meeting*. Councillors discussed proposals due to go before MBC's Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> January, which included recommending three additional sites and 220 new dwellings for Staplehurst. They agreed that in time for the committee meeting a letter be sent from Chairman Silkin to the MBC Chief Executive, recording the Parish Council's concerns about the proposals and how little account appeared to be taken of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. They also agreed that the letter be copied to ward borough councillors, leaders of the borough council and the party groups, Helen Grant MP and the Chairman of the Maidstone area of Kent Association of Local Councils. Councillors Silkin and Perry said they would attend and seek to speak at the committee meeting. It was also noted that Borough Councillor Watson and the Chair of RSG would attend.
3. Borough Councillor Update (JP) – no further issues to report.
4. Caretaker's Report – no issues to report.
5. Action with Communities in Rural Kent – Invitation to support e-petition (for decision) – Councillors noted the e-petition seeking retention of Government investment in ACRK was available at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/73418> and that KALC was encouraging members to support the petition. Councillors were encouraged to consider responding to the invitation on an individual basis.
6. Flooding Conference – Invitation from CPRE to attend (for decision) – Councillors Kemp and Spearink agreed to attend the conference on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February at a cost of £40 per place.
7. Land at Oliver Road – Update on Green Space – Chairman Silkin reported that with the Clerk he had met a representative of Taylor Wimpey to discuss possible terms on which the Parish Council could consider taking on responsibility for the grassland and woodland areas connected to the Oliver Road development. He said he was awaiting a response from Taylor Wimpey, which he hoped to bring soon to Full Council for a decision.
8. Library, Registration & Archive Services – Consultation (for review and response) – Councillors noted that KCC's consultation had opened and would run until 8<sup>th</sup> April. Noting that individuals were free to respond and that there would be a roadshow event at Staplehurst library on 30<sup>th</sup> January, they agreed to defer consideration of a Parish Council response until a later meeting. They agreed that details of the roadshow should be headlined on the village website.

9. MBC Economic Development Strategy – Report on Briefing 13/01/15 – Chairman Silkin and Councillor Kelly reported that the briefing had taken the form of a workshop to generate ideas about how more jobs could be created in the borough. Documents from the event were given to Councillor Buller for review.
10. Surgery with Borough Councillor Watson 09/01/15 – Report on Parish Issues – Councillor Ashby reported that the surgery had been busy and covered questions about dog mess, parking and mobility issues on pavements, Sainsbury's, the Post Office, the Library and the local running club.
11. Trees in the Village Competition 2015 – Invitation to enter (for decision) – Councillors decided not to submit an entry.
12. Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations – Invitation to workshop 03/02/15 – Councillors Buller and Kemp agreed to attend the workshop.

### **COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS** – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Next meeting 20/02/15. Report of meeting 09/01/15 (PS). [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst\\_transport.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx) Councillor Spearink reported that it was recognised that punctuality had recently been affected by roadworks; the mobile phone app does not appear to work in all areas due to variability in the mobile phone signal.
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, NK, RS, PS) Next meeting 27/01/15. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc\\_emergency\\_planning\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc_emergency_planning_group.aspx)
3. Planning Committee (PB, MA, JB, TB, AG, SG, PK, NK, PS) [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_meetings.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx)
4. Allotments Project Group (TB, PK, JB, BM) Next meeting? [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub\\_groups\\_1.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_1.aspx)
5. Strategy & Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SL, RS) Next meeting? [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy_group.aspx)
6. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, SL, JR) Next meeting 10/02/15. Report posted at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx). Recommendations of report of meeting 06/01/15 (except where covered under 'Accounts & Finances' above) for decision by Full Council: (a) Bell Lane Toilets (b) Chapel Lane Street Lights (c) Pensions Policy (d) Village Centre Strategy. (a) Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Kemp, councillors agreed the Group's proposal (item 2.2. in its report) that the Parish Council accept MBC's offer of a further five year lease for Bell Lane toilets. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Burnham, councillors agreed (Councillor Kelly abstaining) the Group's proposal (item 2.3 in its report) for tender arrangements for the toilet cleaning contract to run from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. (b) Councillors discussed Finance Group's recommendation (item 3 in its report): "(i) subject to confirmation of feasibility, safety etc. from contractors, any useable spare parts from Crowther Close be given to residents *for their own use only*; (ii) Chapel Lane lights to be included in regular maintenance of remaining Parish Council lights until they cause additional expenditure or become unsafe (when they would be decommissioned)." Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Burnham, a proposal to amend the wording 'would be decommissioned' to 'could be decommissioned' was defeated by five votes to four. Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Ashby, the Group's original recommendation was approved by seven votes to three. (c) Proposed by Councillor Kelly, seconded by Councillor Green, councillors agreed nem con the Group's proposal (item 4 in its report) that arrangements should be made for pension auto-enrolment of eligible staff as soon as possible. (d) Councillors agreed the Group's proposal (item 6 in its report) that work should commence on setting up a Focus Group to consider the long-term strategy for rebuilding the Village Centre.
7. Playscheme (TB, JB, NK) [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth\\_activities\\_1.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth_activities_1.aspx)
8. Publicity & Website Group (TB, PK, MA, JB, NK, SL, JR) [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity\\_website.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx) Councillor Buller advised that she was seeking articles for the Spring Village Update by 26<sup>th</sup> January. Councillors agreed that the Update should include details of Parish

election information events on 9<sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm – 8.30pm (Village Centre) and 14<sup>th</sup> March 10.00am – 11.00am (Youth Club).

9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, JB, AS) Next meeting 04/02/15? Minutes of meetings 15/10/14 and 14/01/15 awaited. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural\\_settlement\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx).
10. Surrenden Playing Field Group (TB, BM, JR, AS) Next meeting 20/01/15. <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
11. Village Enhancement Group (TB, PK, JB, PB, JR, AS) Next meeting? [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub\\_groups.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups.aspx).
12. Youth Club (PK) Next meeting? [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst\\_youth\\_club.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_youth_club.aspx)

### **REPORTS FOR NOTING** from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (SL, BM) Next meeting? [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst\\_carnival\\_fete\\_committee.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_carnival_fete_committee.aspx)  
Proposed events on Surrenden Playing Field in 2015 (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Ashby, Councillors agreed to the dates proposed by the Carnival & Fete Committee: 14<sup>th</sup> June - 10K race; 27<sup>th</sup> June – Carnival; 12<sup>th</sup> September – Music and Fireworks.
2. Churchyard Liaison (PB, PK) Next meeting? [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub\\_groups\\_2.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_2.aspx)
3. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting? Minutes of meeting 07/10/14 awaited. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn\\_aerodrome.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx)
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB, PK) Next meeting January 2015 (date t.b.c.). [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee\\_fields\\_users\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx)
5. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, PK, RS, PS) Next meeting 18/02/15. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent\\_association\\_of\\_local\\_councils.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx)
6. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (PB) Next meeting?
7. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group (BM, NK, PS) Next meeting?
8. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting? Reports of meetings 24/09/14 and 20/11/14 awaited. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe\\_day\\_centre.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx)
9. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police\\_liaison.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx)
10. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting? Minutes of meeting 15/01/15 awaited. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police\\_liaison.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx)
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group (JP, NK, PS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting? Report of meetings 02/09/14 and 09/12/14 awaited. <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
13. Speed Watch (JB) <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/speedwatch.aspx>
14. Staplehurst Community Hub (JB) Next meeting?
15. Staplehurst Patients' Participation Group (JB, RS) Next meeting? Minutes of meeting 14/01/15 awaited. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient\\_participation\\_group\\_at\\_health\\_centre.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx)
16. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (AG, SL, BM, JR)
17. Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan Group (NK) Next meeting? Report of meeting 02/10/14 awaited.
18. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (PB) AGM to be held 24/02/15. Report of meetings 11/11/14, 03/12/14 and 06/01/15 awaited. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village\\_centre\\_trust.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx)
19. Village Golf & Sports Club (PB) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>

Chairman.....

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Before the meeting a resident asked for an amendment to Finance Group's recommendation about Chapel Lane street lights. Another resident congratulated Finance Group on its draft budget and for holding the precept to its proposed level.

**POLICE REPORT:** After the meeting PCSO Gardner's report was circulated to councillors and showed 10 crimes: 3 theft from motor vehicle, 2 burglary other than dwelling, 2 burglary, 1 criminal damage, 1 taking vehicle without consent, 1 attempted burglary.