

Staplehurst Parish Council

MEETING NOTES OF THE COUNCIL'S:

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT GROUP

held at **Parish Office, Village Centre, Staplehurst** on

22 July 2019 between **19:30** and **21:00**

Members Present: Parish Councillors Bowden, Buller, Forward, Lain-Rose (Chair), Miller, Sharp and Thomas.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Louise Brice (Borough Councillor) and Parish Councillors Chapman, Langmaid, Rawlinson, Perry and Riordan.

2. NOTES OF THE GROUP MEETING

The Group's meeting notes of 01 July 2019 were **AGREED** as an accurate record by Members.

SLR confirmed that he is recording the meeting.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

There were none declared.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

SLR introduced the report dated 12 July 2019, highlighting key points within the report and asked for Members to express their opinions.

JB expressed that after the May election, there are new Councillors and that the Group is useful to be able to understand things in more depth and ask questions that people may not want to ask in a public setting. Therefore, JB explained that if you reduce the membership of the Group would be restrictive to Councillors learning and development of the Council and choosing who would remain a Group member would also prove difficult.

CB expressed that he felt that it would make the group exclusive and therefore would exclude members that would be beneficial to be involved and felt that Councillors had a duty to be involved as much as possible, where they can to forward projects for the benefit of the community and restricting membership numbers would not enable this.

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AS explained that she could not understand why there was a need to restrict the membership of the Group.

SLR explained that the request to reduce the membership is because of two reasons, one is based on Parish Councillor Riordan's request that the Group was taking too long to discuss items and therefore things were not able to be progressed quickly. The second was the view of Parish Councillor Perry at the Council's Annual Meeting, which was the view of predetermination.

SLR explained that in terms of the items taking longer to discuss, there a multiple number of reasons for this: the first could be the number of questions being asked as Members are new and learning; the second could be that on one item in particular at the last Group meeting was not chaired very well and could be chaired better; and thirdly the amount of repetition in Members discussion adds to the length of the meeting.

SLR explained that in terms of predetermination in is not for the Council as a body to determine whether a Councillor is predetermined, it is for the individual Councillor to decide whether they are or not predetermined or whether they are likely to be challenged by someone else as to whether they are predetermined or not. SLR referred Members to Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the Report, which defined predetermination and predisposition.

AS explained that she felt that in terms of predetermination this was not an issue and did not agree that a Group should restrict the number of residents on involved.

NT expressed that she finds being a member of the Group valuable and provides a platform for her to ask questions. NT questioned how does a Councillor that is not a member of the Group progress something that is within the Group's remit. SLR explained they would propose something through the Parish Office, the Parish Office would refer it to the Chair to include in the next Group agenda and the Group would consider the item and recommend to Council if necessary.

SF explained that she found this Group so valuable in her learning and development as a Councillor, particularly as this Group enables Members to go into much more detail than at a Council meeting, including the history of how we have come to this and understanding the history does influence your decision making process when determining items to move things forward.

HM explained that she had found the Group useful in learning and that she felt that leaving the Group membership as it is currently would be best, allowing the flexibility to allow Members to leave the Group naturally and review ahead of May 2020.

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Members **AGREED** unanimously that the Membership section of the Group's Terms of Reference should remain as it currently is, based on the following rationale:

-) The benefit of having contributions at Group meetings by the Councillors should not be restricted to maximise the pool of expertise, knowledge and skills;
-) The usefulness of enabling learning and development of Councillors; and
-) The Group should not be constrained and should operate as flexibly as possible, to assist in delivering outcomes for the village.

Members also noted that any restriction on Group membership should not apply to one Group, but all Council Groups.

Members unanimously **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** to change Section 5 of the Terms of Reference to read: "Group members, at the first meeting following their appointment, will agree amongst themselves who will be the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Group for the following year." based on the following rationale:

-) This would enable a member to have experience, particularly in chairing a meeting;
-) This would provide support to the Chair of the Group; and
-) This would enable further training and development.

SLR then asked the Members to discuss the wider review, particularly the comments raised by Parish Councillor Perry at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May. HM suggested we continue as we currently are, with the review ahead of May 2020 Annual Meeting of the Council.

5. DONATIONS

SLR introduced the request from the Kenward Trust for a donation. After much discussion by Members it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** a donation to the Kenward Trust of £100 from the donations budget.

6. JUBILEE FIELD

SLR explained that he is aware that there has been occasions that alcohol is being sold/supplied on the Jubilee Fields premises, without the knowledge of the Designated Premises Supervisor. This has been raised several times with the Chairman of the Jubilee Field, Paddy Riordan and other members of the Jubilee Field Committee/Football Club.

SLR requested for the Group to note his intention as the Designated Premises Supervisor to write to the Jubilee Field Committee, with copy to the Football Clubs and the Guides explaining that under no circumstances should alcohol be supplied, sold or consumed on the premises without the prior knowledge of the Designated Premises Supervisor.

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The Group **NOTED** the intension of SLR and that the letter would be sent, with consultation with the Parish Clerk, as the Council is the premises licence holder.

7. SURRENDEN FIELD

There was no update on the 125-year lease with Maidstone Borough Council.

8. WIMPEY FIELD

SF mentioned that the BioBlitz event is happening on 07 August 2019 and believed Robert Roberts would be available to open the gate for Medway Countryside Partnership. SF explained that if he is not available, there is only the Parish Clerk available in the office.

SLR explained that CB, SF, SLR and PR attended a consultation evening at the Wimpey Field to discuss the access with the residents of the Saxon Mead development (also known as The Bartons). SLR explained that we listened to their thoughts, concerns and objections to the proposals by Taylor Wimpey in relation to the relocation of the access gate to the Wimpey Field.

SLR explained that there is a mixed view and there is not a consensus amongst residents. However, SLR expressed whilst listening to the residents with objections, which there were two residents with strongly-held views, the rationale for the objections on balance with the benefits of relocating the access for the benefit of everyone, he would conclude that the relocation was the better options. The main reasons for objections that were raised were:

-) Increasing the likelihood of development south of the Saxon Mead development; and
-) The potential loss of green space; and
-) The potential of damaging attractiveness of the area.

SLR explained that in moving forward, we will ask Helen Grant MP to organise a meeting, with Taylor Wimpey, HML, herself and the Parish Council to discuss this again and propose the alternative proposal and if this is not accepted by the parties, then we will push Taylor Wimpey to go forward with the proposals they submitted to residents.

This verbal update was **NOTED** by Members.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

SF raised that Parish Councillor Spearink is assembling the planters for The Parade and there is a specific fixing that should be used, which SF can source, however, it is not available from the local supplier that was happy to do this at no cost to the Council. Therefore, SF requested that it was agreed to purchase the In-Dex Timber Screws Hex Head at the cost of £18.48 (excluding VAT). SLR explained that he had already discussed this request with the Deputy Clerk & Finance Office, in the absence of the Parish Clerk and utilising the delegated authority in the Section 4.1 of the Council's Finance Regulations this expenditure can be authorised. Members **NOTED** the authorisation.

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SLR introduced the report dated 22 July 2019 for The Parade Bins, as delegated by the Full Council at the last meeting.

NT explained that she had also investigated some bins and found alternatives, which she explained to Members.

Members **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the Council purchases five Black Glasdon Jubilee 110 Litter Bins at the cost of £368.00 each (excluding VAT), with the following additional costs:

-) Keyed lock: no cost
-) Bin-it graphics (set of 4) in silver: no cost
-) Silver litter legends and banding: no cost
-) Metal liner with elastic sack retention kit: £7.99
-) Fixings of the litter bins to the sites, costs variable – would require advise from the Parish Caretaker

POST-MEETING NOTE: There are further additional costs, that the Council will need to consider:

-) *Poster frame (four): £63.84*
-) *3L ashtray – gun metal grey: £84.42*
-) *4 x aperture stubber plates: £39.89*

If you included additional costs the bins would be £597.33 each, a total of £2,986.65 (excluding VAT).

10. CONFIRMATION OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Members **CONFIRMED** the next meeting of the Group would be held at Parish Office, Village Centre on 12 August 2019 at 19:30.