

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 at 7.30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Gosling, Kelly, Kemp, Manning, Sharp (from the point indicated in the minutes), Spearink and Silkin who was in the Chair.  
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Butcher, Green, Perry and Reardon whose apologies were accepted. Councillor Lain-Rose was absent.

**URGENT ITEM:** - None requested.

**COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:**

Lobbying – Councillors Ashby and Buller declared they had been lobbied about buses. Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan. All councillors declared they had been lobbied about the planning application for Land North of Headcorn Road.

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in items on the agenda – none declared.

Requests for dispensation – none requested.

**APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES** Pages 1392-1395 of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014 were proposed for approval by Councillor Ashby, seconded by Councillor Gosling, 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 Kemp abstained.

**PLANNING APPLICATION**

Land North Of Headcorn Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0DT - 14/505432/FULL. Residential development to provide 167 dwellings, areas of public open space, associated landscaping and infrastructure and the formation of new vehicular access from Headcorn Road and pedestrian access from Fisher Road, Fishers Close, Hurst Close and Headcorn Road. Emergency vehicle ingress only from Fishers Road. (For recommendation). *Chairman Silkin closed the meeting to hold a public forum for comments relating to this application, during which Councillor Sharp arrived. On conclusion of public comments, summarised at the end of these minutes, Chairman Silkin reopened the meeting.* After detailed discussion Councillors voted nem con to recommend REFUSAL of the application to MBC Planning Committee for the following reasons:

- i. the application does not take into account the emerging Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and draft MBC Local Plan;
- ii. the Neighbourhood and Local Plans deal with the proposed development site as part of a larger area encompassing land lying to its east (MBC Local Plan reference H1-37) - the application makes no reference to this land;
- iii. consequently the application offers no vision or master plan for the overall site;
- iv. the application is therefore considered to be premature;
- v. the application contains outdated information, inconsistencies, errors and omissions, such that it appears rushed and generates little confidence in its claims and projections, e.g. access points are missing from some plans, documentation confuses Fishers Road and Fishers Close, incorrect dwelling numbers are quoted, some information is contradictory, there is an acknowledged absence of a report on sewage management;

- vi. the proposed green space fails to deliver recreational facilities and ignores any consideration of creating community land on the western boundary as advanced in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan;
- vii. the application fails to demonstrate convincingly how flooding, drainage and sewage issues will be managed, submitting a flood risk assessment that pre-dates Christmas 2013 floods and taking no account of work under way to redraw surface water drainage maps (ref. KCC's Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan) and manage flows on the River Beult; drainage management is based on a SuDS strategy inappropriate for an area of Wealden clay with a high water table; there is no report on sewage management;
- viii. the Transport Assessment appears based on flawed assumptions - e.g. Cranbrook schools apparently 'can be accessed by bicycle'; there is no mention of many local children who travel to Maidstone schools; information about bus frequency is incorrect and the service issues are not acknowledged; a more current analysis than the March 2012 Appendix 2 'Manual Peak Hour Turning Count' should be presented; the directional analysis of traffic leaving the development appears unsubstantiated but, if it were to materialise, the many more vehicles heading east would encounter both a single carriageway road bridge with an accident history and a stretch of road prone to severe flooding; critically, the assessment shows no evidence of considering the cumulative impact arising from current and planned development in Staplehurst and further afield – this is a grave omission given the likely impact of potential development north and south along the A229 and in neighbouring villages to the west and east and given the known attraction of the railway station to commuters from those areas;
- ix. the Headcorn Road access point gives rise to safety concerns, being located close to the edge of the 30mph limit which traffic is likely to approach at higher speeds and for which the visibility appears inadequate.

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

1. Neighbourhood Plan – Report from Steering Group. Councillor Buller advised the Steering Group had met to continue its review of the consultation comments and that a further meeting would be held on 8<sup>th</sup> December.
2. Caretaker's Report – The Clerk advised that he was awaiting delivery of a hedge trimmer for use by the caretaker.
3. Defibrillator – Update on proposed siting at library (BM). Councillors thanked Councillor Manning for obtaining KCC's agreement to waive the £500 estate works charge it had been proposing to levy on the proposed siting of the defibrillator at the library. They agreed nem con to accept a quotation of £250 from Mr Gary Hicks to install and connect the defibrillator.
4. Kent Highways Parish Seminar – Report (RS/PS). Councillor Spearink said that the seminar had been very worthwhile. Kent Highways encouraged parishes to have salt bins and spreaders; they said there were no recorded incidents of councils being sued for applying ice and snow treatment. Chairman Silkin said that speakers had encouraged the formulation of flood plans. Councillor Kemp advised that workstreams of the Beult CIG and Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan project were taking shape and would inform such a plan.
5. MBC Training on Gypsies and Travellers – Report (MA). Councillor Ashby spoke to her report which she undertook to e-mail to the Clerk. She said that MBC needed to demonstrate a five-year supply of sites but not enough had come forward.
6. Oliver Road Community Site – Update (RS/PK/SG). Chairman Silkin advised that he was awaiting a meeting date from Taylor Wimpey.
7. Parish Council Surgery – Report (SL-R). No report as the surgery was cancelled.

8. Voluntary Action Maidstone – Report on AGM for noting (PS). Councillor Spearink's report was noted and posted at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>.

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

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Next meeting 05/12/14. Report of meeting 19/09/14 posted at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst\\_transport.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx) Councillor Spearink said that Arriva would be providing posters about its mobile app that provided bus information. Councillor Buller said Arriva had not provided a temporary bus stop at the Pinnock Lane-A229 roadworks.
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 06/01/15. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx)
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) Report of meeting 30/09/14 awaited. [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity\\_website.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx). Councillor Buller thanked all involved in distribution of the Village Update.
9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, JB, AS) Next meeting 10/12/14. Minutes of meeting 15/10/14 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? Report of meeting 18/11/14 awaited. <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)
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 03/12/14. [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 15/01/15. [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 08/12/14. <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting 09/12/14. Report of meeting 02/09/14 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) Report of meeting 22/01/14 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) Next meeting 03/12/14. Report of meeting 11/11/14 awaited.  
[http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village\\_centre\\_trust.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx)
19. Village Sports & Social Club (PB) Next meeting? [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/ot\\_hers.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/ot_hers.aspx)

Chairman.....

**PUBLIC FORUM:**

Before the meeting a resident spoke about how he felt parked vehicles were creating risks for pedestrians crossing Offens Drive by the shops. After the meeting the Chair of the Staplehurst Society said that the Society would be willing to consider funding maintenance of two planters at the Marden Road-A229 junction and at Chestnut Avenue footpath, such funding to be recognised by signs on the planters and maintenance costs to be advised.

Land North of Headcorn Road Staplehurst Kent TN12 0DT - 14/505432/FULL. Before Council's discussion of the application seventeen people made comments which are summarised in the rest of this paragraph. The application was premature, weak in content and contained errors and omissions. The application failed to reference the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and MBC Local Plan and was inconsistent with them. The application did not address the site to the east of the proposed development and how the two would fit together. Plans showed no link at Fishers Close and elsewhere there was confusion between Fishers Close and Fishers Road. Waste water and sewage issues were not addressed (a representative of the applicant advised that a report would be submitted). There would be water pressure and supply problems. Residents had concerns about traffic volumes, creation of 'rat runs' and pressure on the Headcorn Road/A229 crossroads. They felt there were flawed assumptions in the Traffic Assessment (e.g. about school travel, direction of traffic leaving the estate, use of dated information). There would be safety issues arising from the combination of vehicle speeds, inadequate visibility at the Headcorn Road junction and inadequacy of footpaths on Headcorn Road. The Transport Assessment did not show any evidence of cumulative assessment of traffic volumes, failing to consider additional vehicle movements that would arise from development not only in Staplehurst but also in the surrounding area and from the increasing use of Staplehurst railway station. The plans did not acknowledge the Neighbourhood Plan's proposal of a green western edge for the site. The application failed to offer green space for people's recreational activity. Buildings, especially of three storeys, would overlook properties to an unacceptable degree. Design was bland and failed to look beyond the immediate area for reference points. There were no 'homes for life' or bungalows. The consultation period was not long enough for the volume of documentation in the application.