

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 18th May 2015 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Claridge, Gosling, Kelly, Kemp, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Sharp, Spearink and Silkin who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher and Reardon whose apologies were accepted.

DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE: Declarations were signed by all fifteen members of the Council.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: Councillor Rory Silkin was proposed by Councillor Spearink and seconded by Councillor Perry and accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Councillor Silkin was elected unopposed and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN/MEN: Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Buller, Councillors Burnham and Kelly were elected unopposed.

URGENT ITEMS: - none requested.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan.
Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared. Chairman Silkin reminded councillors that they should review their existing declarations of interests and that a new councillor should complete a declaration within 28 days of election.
Interests in items on the agenda – none declared.
Requests for dispensation – none requested.

ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS OF COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS

1. Local Transport - Councillors Burnham, Manning and Spearink.
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team - Councillors Buller, Butcher, Kemp, Silkin and Spearink.
3. Planning Committee - Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Butcher, Claridge, Gosling, Kelly, Kemp, Silkin and Spearink.
4. Allotments Project Group - Councillors Buller, Burnham, Kelly and Manning.
5. Strategy & Policy Group – Councillors Burnham, Butcher, Claridge, Kelly, Lain-Rose, Perry and Silkin.
6. Finance Group – Councillors Burnham, Butcher, Kelly, Kemp, Lain-Rose, Perry, Reardon.
7. Playscheme – Councillors Buller, Burnham and Kemp.
8. Publicity & Website Group – Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Claridge, Kelly, Kemp, Lain-Rose and Reardon.
9. Rural Settlement Group – Councillors Buller, Kemp, Perry and Sharp plus several resident members; Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Councillors Buller, Burnham and Perry plus members of RSG and the Clerk.
10. Surrenden Playing Field Group – Councillors Burnham, Kelly, Manning, Reardon and Sharp.
11. UpRockin - Councillors Butcher and Spearink.
12. Village Enhancement Group - Councillors Buller, Burnham, Butcher, Kelly, Reardon and Sharp.
13. Youth Club - Councillor Kelly.

ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

1. Carnival & Fete – Councillors Lain-Rose and Manning.
2. Churchyard Liaison - Councillors Butcher and Kelly.
3. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee - Councillors Manning and Perry.
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group – Councillors Butcher, Kelly and Perry.
5. KALC Area Committee Representatives - Councillors Kelly and Silkin; plus Councillors Perry and Butcher.
6. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership – Councillor Butcher.
7. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group - Councillor Manning, Kemp and Spearink.
8. McCabe Day Centre – Councillor Buller.
9. Neighbourhood Watch – Councillors Buller and Kemp.
10. Police/Parish Liaison – Councillors Butcher, Kemp and Sharp.
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group – Councillors Kemp, Perry and Spearink.
12. Sobell Cheshire Home – Councillors Spearink and Perry.
13. Speed Watch – Councillor Buller.
14. Staplehurst Community Hub – Councillor Buller.
15. Staplehurst Patients' Participation Group - Councillors Buller, Sharp and Silkin.
16. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison - Councillors Gosling, Lain-Rose, Manning and Reardon.
17. Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan Group – Councillors Kemp and Spearink.
18. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust - Councillors Ashby and Butcher.
19. Village Sports & Social Club – Councillor Butcher.

Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Gosling, the appointments were approved nem con.

Councillors made suggestions relating to current groups and possible new ones, which councillors agreed to discuss at the next meeting of Full Council. The suggestions and proposers were: (i) take all planning business at Full Council and discontinue Planning Committee (Councillor Perry); (ii) appoint a Parish Council representative to the Staplehurst Library User Group (Councillor Buller); (iii) appoint a representative to deal with tourism and economic development (Councillor Spearink); (iv) establish a working group to manage the takeover of the Oliver Road site (Councillor Spearink); (v) establish a group to deal with staff issues (Chairman Silkin). Councillor Spearink reported that the Staplehurst Society was to focus specifically on history and archive activity.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Pages 1432-1434 of 5th May 2015 were proposed for approval by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Ashby, approved by councillors and posted at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx. Councillors Claridge, Kemp and Lain-Rose abstained.

ACCOUNTS & FINANCES

1. Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Burnham, the Statement of Accounts was approved subject to: (i) insertion of a comma between the words 'Office' and 'utilities' in the parenthesis relating to General Administration expenditure; (ii) deletion of the parenthesis 'shown net of MBC grant' relating to Playscheme expenditure.
2. Approval of Audit Commission Annual Return to 31st March 2015 (sections 1 & 2). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Kemp, the Annual Return sections 1 and 2 were approved. Councillor Perry said he would meet with the Internal Auditor. The Clerk confirmed that the Internal Auditor had signed off both the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Return Section 4.

3. Accounts for payment for approval. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, the list of accounts for payment was approved (Councillor Kelly abstaining).
4. Summation of Accounts to 30th April 2015. Noted by councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.
5. Surrenden Play Equipment – Quotations for Repair of Ark Springer (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Burnham, seconded by Councillor Manning, councillors agreed to accept a quotation of £325 from Safeplay Playground Services to repair the equipment.
6. Try Angle Awards 2015 – Request for sponsorship (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Spearink, Councillors agreed to make a budgeted donation of £50 in support of the Try Angle Awards 2015 event.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Neighbourhood Plan – Update from Steering Group. Councillor Buller reported that representatives of the Group, Councillor Perry and Chairman Silkin had met representatives of Maidstone Borough Council to discuss the current draft of the Regulation 16 Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan. She said it was still unclear whether MBC would insist on a Strategic Environmental Assessment; Councillor Kemp recommended that MBC's decision on this aspect be requested in writing. Councillor Buller said that the stance of MBC officers was to attach little weight to Neighbourhood Plans until they passed referendum and that officers could not rule out further sites coming forward and could not control the phasing of applications. Councillor Buller said it was clear that the Regulation 16 version of the plan for borough-wide consultation would be the final version and it would not be possible for the Parish Council to make further changes. In discussing development matters Councillors Buller, Perry and Silkin reported they had attended the planning appeal hearing that dealt with the application for 22 homes on Land at George Street, which they felt the inspector had conducted in a very fair and professional manner.
2. Borough Council Update – Councillor Perry said that the new borough council would meet for the first time on 23rd May and would appoint committee members during that meeting.
3. Caretaker's Report – the Clerk reported that the caretaker had returned to work.
4. MBC Economic Development Strategy – KALC Response. Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Spearink, councillors agreed to accept KALC's response to MBC's Economic Development Strategy and to convey their approval to the authors.
5. NALC Chairman's Letter to Parish Councillors – Councillors noted the letter from the Chairman of the National Association of Local Councils to all new and returning parish and town councillors in England.
6. Parish Council Allowances – Report of Parish Independent Remuneration Panel received from MBC. Councillors noted the recommendations of the Panel and that Staplehurst Parish Council (i) did not pay a councillor allowance; (ii) allocated a chairman's budget of £500 for discretionary expenditure related to the office of Chairman, rather than a personal allowance of up to £700 as set out in the report; (iii) paid a mileage allowance of 45p per mile for a car which was consistent with the report's recommendation. There being no changes proposed to the Parish Council's practice, proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, councillors asked the Clerk to publicise the Panel's report as requested by MBC.
7. Parish Council Surgery – Representative for next date (30th May). Councillor Kelly volunteered to attend the next surgery. Councillors agreed to consider holding the June surgery, scheduled for the date of the Carnival, at the event itself.

8. Pilot Local Warden Support Officer Scheme – Invitation from KALC (for decision). Councillors agreed to canvass opinion about the proposal to introduce support officers, before responding to the invitation.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting a resident spoke about his concerns about the local bus service; Councillor Spearink discussed the continuing dialogue with Arriva. After the meeting a member of the primary school governing body described the procedure for appointing governors and said that the body would advise the Parish Council when a vacancy arose. A resident voiced concerns about the Health Centre and said many patients were switching to Marden; Chairman Silkin spoke about the role of the Patient Participation Group and about initiatives being taken forward at the Centre.