

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 19th August 2013 at 9.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Butcher, Gosling, Green, Kelly, Kemp, Manning, Spearink and Perry who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr MJ Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Burnham, Lain-Rose, Reardon and Silkin whose apologies were accepted. Councillor Sharp was absent.

URGENT ITEMS: - Councillors agreed to take one item in respect of the A229.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan and allotments. Councillor Buller and Chairman Perry said they had been lobbied about the Carnival & Fete.

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 1286-1288 of 5th August 2013 were proposed for approval by Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Ashby, approved by councillors nem con, signed by Chairman Perry and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

ACCOUNTS & FINANCES

1. Summation of Accounts to 9th August was circulated and noted.
2. Accounts for payment for approval. Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Kemp, the list of accounts for payment was approved nem con.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Urgent Items – Councillor Spearink observed that the weekend's fatal crash on the A229, although not in Staplehurst, reinforced the need for completion of resurfacing and replacement of cats' eyes on the road.
2. Neighbourhood Plan – *Chairman Perry closed the meeting to allow a contribution from the Chair of the Rural Settlement Group.* The Chair of RSG remarked on the importance of the MBC Leader's statement that a shortlist of preferred sites for development would be available around 15th September. *Chairman Perry reopened the meeting.* Councillors agreed to expenditure of £42 on some colour content in the Neighbourhood Plan section of the Village Update.
3. Allotments – Councillors noted correspondence from Golding Homes dated 8th August.
4. Caretaker's Reports – The Clerk advised the Caretaker had repaired a seat at Surrenden Field and carried out routine maintenance.
5. Carnival & Fete – Chairman Perry reported he had met representatives of the Carnival & Fete Committee. Councillors agreed that there was no question of needing a contract between the Parish Council and the Committee and that the Surrenden Pavilion water and electricity supply should be freely available to the latter. Councillors agreed that Councillor Manning should hold a key for the Surrenden Gate and Pavilion. To encourage more helpers to join the Committee councillors decided to publish a request in the Village Update.

6. Churchyard Agreement – Chairman Perry said a date for a meeting with the Rector was yet to be fixed.
7. County Councillor Meeting – Chairman Perry reported on the latest review meeting with Councillor Hotson, which covered correspondence with MBC about Surrenden Playing Field and Bell Lane car park, an enquiry about street trading and possible funding for upgraded streetlights. Councillor Hotson had advised he would be unable to offer funding towards UpRockin in 2014.
8. Developers' Proposals – Chairman Perry reported on a meeting with Bovis Homes. The company discussed its recent public exhibition and shared updated draft plans which it said would be finalised for a formal planning application in the next few weeks. Councillor Butcher asked councillors to consider what projects could potentially benefit from S106 funding. The Clerk undertook to recirculate the most recent list of projects for councillors to review and provide suggestions.
9. Duckhurst Farm Motocross – Councillors noted correspondence between a resident and MBC about noise from motocross events.
10. Library Surgery – Councillors Gosling and Kemp reported that an accessibility issue raised with them had been resolved by the recent change in bin collection arrangements.
11. NALC Future Strategy – Consultation. Discussion deferred.
12. Parish Council Meetings – Proposed dates for 2014 were agreed.
13. Supermarkets – No further news to report.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Next meeting 20/09/13 http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx
Councillor Spearink said he was having daily discussions about the bus service. Councillor Buller said she was looking into an alternative telephone number for contacting Arriva. The Clerk said he had been telephoned by Arriva who had advised the company was deploying more inspectors to check on drivers. He had provided Arriva with specific instances of shortfalls in service.
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting?
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc_emergency_planning_group.aspx
3. Planning Committee (PB, MA, JB, TB, AG, SG, PK, NK, JP, PS)
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx Councillor Butcher said he had asked the Assistant Clerk to look into a query raised by Councillor Manning.
4. Allotments Project Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_1.aspx
5. Strategy & Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SL, SG, RS) Report of meeting 06/08/2013 to be posted at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy_group.aspx Chairman Perry discussed the Group's recommendations. Councillors resolved that the terms of reference for the Village Enhancement Group and the policies on grants and donations should be adopted. They also asked the Clerk to make revisions to standing orders as proposed by the Group, noting that NALC is undertaking its own review to be published later this year, such revisions to be formalised at a future meeting of Council.
6. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, SL, JR) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx
7. Playscheme (TB, JB, NK) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth_activities_1.aspx Councillor Buller reported that this year's scheme had concluded and a debrief was being arranged with Play Place.
8. Publicity & Website Group (JP, TB, PK, MA, JB, NK, SL, JR) Next meeting? Report of meeting 02/07/13 awaited.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx Councillor Buller confirmed that the Village Update would be distributed week commencing 2nd September.
9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, MA, JB, AS) Next meeting 11/09/13. Report of meeting 14/08/13 to be posted at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.
10. Surrenden Playing Field Group (TB, BM, JR, AS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>

11. Village Enhancement Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, PB, SL, JR, AS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups.aspx. Councillor Kelly asked that contact be made with Taylor Wimpey about the green space at its planned Oliver Road development.

REPORTS FOR NOTING from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (SL, BM) 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
3. Village Sports & Social Club (PB) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/ot_hers.aspx
4. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting 01/10/13. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx
5. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB) Next meeting? Report of meeting 27/06/13 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx
6. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, PK, RS, PS) Next meeting 25/09/13. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx Chairman Perry advised he would be unable to attend the next KALC meeting. Councillor Butcher will attend.
7. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (PB) – Next meeting 04/09/13.
8. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group (BM, NK, PS) Next meeting? Report of meeting 29/05/13 awaited.
9. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting 25/09/13 (AGM). http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx
10. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
11. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting 19/09/13. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Report of meeting 02/07/13 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, PS) Next meeting 25/09/13. Report of meeting 31/07/13 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx
16. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (SL, BM, JR)
17. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (SL & PB) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx
18. Youth Club (SL, PK) Next meeting 21/08/2013. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_youth_club.aspx
Councillor Butcher asked for volunteers to attend the Maidstone Youth Action Partnership event at the Youth Club on the morning of Saturday 28th September.

Chairman.....

POLICE REPORT: PCSO Gardner had reported 6 crimes: 3 burglary, 1 burglary other than dwelling, 1 theft and 1 criminal damage. Some arrests had been made. The new mobile police contact point has commenced operation.

LIBRARY SURGERY: 14th September – Councillors Kemp and Spearink.

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting a resident advised that he had been telephoned by Arriva about his complaints of poor service and was awaiting further information.

VISITING SPEAKER: Before the meeting, at 7.30 pm, Borough Councillor Chris Garland, Leader of Maidstone Borough Council, spoke to councillors and members of the public about the Maidstone Local Plan. He said the presumption of the National Planning Policy framework in favour of sustainable development made it important for local councils to develop local plans. He stressed the importance of having an evidence base to justify

targets; the Maidstone target of 14,800 new homes is based on analysis of current population trends.

MBC called for land sites at the start of 2013 and over 200 were submitted; they are being assessed against planning criteria. After shortlisting by mid-September, preferred sites will be put to Cabinet in October before being the subject of public consultation. Final decisions will be taken in mid-2014.

Councillor Garland gave examples of cases in Gloucestershire and in Maidstone where the absence of a local plan and failure to demonstrate ability to deliver a 5 year housing supply counted against the authority when an inspector made a decision. In this respect he acknowledged MBC was on the back foot, but said it had made decisions to help address the issue such as making interim allocations in Allington and Langley and agreeing to a greenfield site in Marden. After these areas it was now looking at lower density development too.

Councillor Garland took questions from councillors and members of the public. He spoke of a disconnect between the Local Plan and local neighbourhood plans but acknowledged the value of parish input and felt that both sides should work together to iron out their differences. In response to concern about sidelining of Rural Service Centres he explained that officers were awaiting input from legal advisers and KCC on land sites and did not want to give any misleading indications; however, he anticipated information on preferred sites would be available around 15th September.

In respect of target fulfilment Councillor Garland said that houses built since October 2011 would count towards achievement.

Speakers expressed concern that the value of planned Neighbourhood Plan events would not be optimised if MBC were to slip in delivery of its timetabled decisions. Councillor Garland said he was pretty sure about the robustness of the timetable but would follow it up. Councillor Garland acknowledged that people's concerns about the timetable and the previously mentioned disconnect led some to question the value of a Neighbourhood Plan. In response he said that by the time of its three-day forum event Staplehurst would know MBC's thinking and its developing Neighbourhood Plan would be a channel for Staplehurst's reply. Speakers felt it was important for MBC representatives to attend the planned events.

Councillor Garland said that the current shortfall of identifiable new housing was approximately 4,500. In theory, whilst achievement of the overall 14,800 target should safeguard unutilised sites, in practice there would be flexibility to build more were there to be a suitable application. It was stated by some speakers that the target was effectively a minimum figure.

Other points covered by Councillor Garland were: policy was that developments over fifteen houses needed to offer 40% affordable housing and it was up to developers to argue for any exceptions; he would provide details of MBC's policy on solar farms; it was KCC that designated Staplehurst as a 'transport hub'.

Chairman Perry thanked Councillor Garland for a most useful discussion.