

## Community Enhancement Group

CEG-1718-001

Notes of the Group Meeting held on Thursday 5 October 2017 from 19:00 to 20:30

**Present:** Parish Councillors Buller, Burnham, Manning, Reardon, Smith and Lain-Rose who was the Chair.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Parish Councillor Riordan. It was noted that apologies for absence had not been received by Parish Councillor Sharp and Borough Councillor Brice.

### 2. Councillor Declarations

#### 2.1. Declarations of Interests in Items of the Agenda

There were no declarations of interests in items on the agenda.

### 3. Chair of the Group (October 2017 – May 2018)

Following the appointment of Councillors on 18 September 2017, the Membership of the Group must agree who will be the Chair of the Group, as set out in the Group's Terms of Reference Section 5. Parish Councillor Reardon proposed Parish Councillor Lain-Rose, those present unanimously **AGREED** to this proposal. Therefore, Parish Councillor Lain-Rose will be the Chair of the Group until the first Group meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2018.

### 4. Membership of the Group – Borough Councillor Louise Brice

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that Borough Councillor Brice had made a request to the Parish Clerk to join this Council Group. He asked whether Members were happy to recommend to the Council to ratify Borough Councillor Brice as a Member of the Group. Members unanimously **AGREED** to recommend to this to the Council.

### 5. The Parade Toilets

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose introduced this item, as recently it was raised at the Parish Council meeting by Parish Councillor Buller (Min Page 1638). Parish Councillor Lain Rose had contacted Lucy Stroud (Corporate Property Manager, Maidstone Borough Council) regarding the arrangements that could be put in place for the Parish Council to take on a sub-lease of the Parade Toilets (in addition to Bell Lane toilets). Lucy Stroud's response was that under the terms of the lease with Kent County Council, Maidstone

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Borough Council are not permitted to assign or sub-let the public toilets. However, that would not prevent an approach to Kent County Council requesting consent for a sub-lease or perhaps the surrender of the lease with Maidstone Borough Council and granting a new lease to Staplehurst Parish Council. The current lease to Maidstone Borough Council is for a 25-year term commencing 18 February 1997, at a nominal rent of £1 per year, with full repairing responsibilities. If Kent County Council agrees to sub-let the toilets, Maidstone Borough Council would seek to replicate the terms for Staplehurst Parish Council. Lucy is happy to approach Kent County Council should the Parish Council wish to proceed. This information was sent by email to Members on 22 September 2017.

Parish Councillor Buller explained that the Bell Lane Toilets were well used by visitors and felt that the Parade Toilets should be opened in addition to the Bell Lane Toilets. Parish Councillor Burnham explained that the Parade Toilets should be dealt with in two separate phases, the first being the disabled toilet and the second being the unisex toilets. The rationale for this is because it is believed the disabled toilets are in a reasonable working order, whereas the unisex toilets have been vandalised. It was also noted that the RADAR key for the disabled toilets would also minimise the chances of future vandalism. It was suggested that the RADAR keys should be held by the Library, Parish Councillors Buller and Manning and/or SPAR. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that if SPAR had a key, employees would have to be trained to only provide the key to adults and reserve the right to ensure the key is not taken, as a signing in and out process could not be implemented.

It was **AGREED** that Parish Councillor Lain-Rose would speak to Lucy Stroud to discuss access to the disabled toilets to ascertain the condition of these prior to recommending to the Council. It was also **AGREED** that Parish Councillor Lain-Rose will look at the existing cleaning contract to ascertain the approach to extend the existing contract and whether there is willingness to do this, should there be a need. It was **AGREED** that the security of the disabled toilets and how to operate a local key/access to the toilets.

## 6. Jubilee Field Management & Maintenance Agreement

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that as part of the Lease with the Jubilee Field Management, the Parish Council requires a Management Agreement. The draft Management & Maintenance Agreement for Jubilee Fields circulated within the report had been noted by the Members. Parish Councillor Smith raised an enquiry about the two different termination dates in 8.1 and 8.5, it was **AGREED** that 8.5 was not applicable to the Jubilee Field. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that the Parish Clerk would review the draft and possible minor changes may be made and this was acknowledged by Members. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that the Maintenance costs for mowing the Jubilee Fields currently costs the Council £1,100 per annum for this financial year. Last financial year the cost was £1,050. It was explained to Members the cost to Jubilee Fields is much higher and it would be useful for the

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Jubilee Field Management to increase the cost to £2,500 for the service. It was **AGREED** by Members to recommend this to the Finance & Strategy Group.

## 7. Budgeting for 2018-19

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that Finance & Strategy Group will be reviewing the budget for next financial year. The consensus regarding Budgeting for Parish Services were that savings should be found where possible, with the balance of new projects. Parish Councillor Burnham explained that there should be a forward plan and other Councillors should be involved in this process. It was **AGREED** that Parish Councillor Burnham would invite Councillors to put forward proposals and thoughts on improvements to the Council's services, to enable the Community Enhancement and Finance & Strategy Groups to prioritise and budget ahead.

There was much discussion regarding this item and it was **AGREED** to recommend to the Finance & Strategy Group the following changes to the Parish Services and Youth Provision Budget(s):

- ) CCTV – The Community Enhancement Group acknowledges that following Parish Councillor Whittle's paper to the Council, that an increase in this budget to cover the cost for purchasing a CCTV camera should be decided by the Finance & Strategy Group, as they are currently dealing with this;
- ) Christmas Lights – The Community Enhancement Group would like to expand the Christmas Lights for 2018-19 and it was noted that new connections need to be installed. Therefore, the recommendation is to extend the lights through Station Road and install a connection around Poyntell Road for a camera (existing or new);
- ) Jubilee Field Maintenance – as recommended in Item 6;
- ) Neighbourhood Plan – The Community Enhancement Group, on the advice of Parish Councillors Buller, Burnham and Smith, feel as though there is not a need for a revenue budget for this type of expenditure. However, Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that in the future we may need to do a formal review of the Neighbourhood Plan and it would be useful to create a reserve for this starting from next year and build this up over a number of years;
- ) Public Toilets – The Community Enhancement Group, based on discussions held under Item 5, would like to increase this budget to cover the costs of initial maintenance associated with reopening and ongoing cleaning for a year, extending the existing contract;
- ) Street Sweeping – Members discussed this expense at length, as the cost of the service is considerable and it is difficult to measure the results/impact of this service. It was noted that Maidstone Borough Council have been street-sweeping more often. It was also raised that expenditure relating to this service is treated as a Section 137 Payment, as outlined in the Local Government Act 1972, enabling the Parish Council to spend up to the product of £7.42 per elector for the benefit of people in the area, on activities or projects not specifically authorised by other powers. The Members were generally unclear

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- whether the service was providing value for money, and felt that they could not recommend its continuation without further evidence of its effectiveness; and
- J Youth Leader – The Community Enhancement Group wished to reduce this level of funding per session, by formalising the service through a Service Specification, as suggested by Parish Councillor Lain-Rose. Members felt that as it was initially delivered as a second evening, the Parish Council should negotiate terms on having two evenings a week. However, the Community Enhancement Group would not be prepared to pay the same level of funding again. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Youth Club should be invited to a meeting to explain the current situation of the Youth Group and for next financial year the funding level remains the same, but will be reviewed quarterly.

## 8. Donations Budget for 2018-19

Members discussed the Donations Budget and it was **AGREED** that the following donations should be recommended to the Finance & Strategy Group. Members were wishing to reduce the level of donations committed and enable reviews of requests throughout the year, prioritising local community projects, rather than established charities.

### AGREED Recommendation for Donations Budget:

- J £200 for Annual Clean Up Refreshment & Venue Provider (£50 x 4);
- J £250 for Kent, Sussex & Surrey Air Ambulance;
- J £200 for Community Centre for Debt Advice Staplehurst (CCDAS) – however, the Group wished to see further details, including annual accounts, before expenditure is released;
- J £300 for CAB Maidstone;
- J £100 for Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal;
- J £100 for Samaritans Maidstone & The Weald (previously was for Tunbridge Wells); and
- J £1,800 for unallocated use throughout the financial year.

### Other Changes to Donations Budget:

Remove £50 for Maidstone Association of Youth – Try Angle Awards (as they have not requested use for this financial year), remove £120 for Kenward Trust, remove £130 for CAB Cranbrook, remove £100 for Heart of Kent Hospice and remove £100 for Fireworks Display (originally unallocated).

## 9. Any Other Business

Parish Councillor Reardon explained that Whites Landscaping wished to sponsor a replacement gate on the Surrenden Field. He enquired whether there needed to be Council approval. It was **AGREED** that it should go to Council. Parish Councillor Manning explained that it would be worth maximising the gap, by removing the stile and using a

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different type of gate. Members **AGREED** that Parish Councillor Reardon would speak with Whites Landscaping and would make the request to the Parish Clerk to include in the next Council's agenda.

## 10. **Date of Next Meeting**

Members **AGREED** the next meeting scheduled was Tuesday 07 November 2017 at 19:00. The venue will be held at the Village Centre, High Street. Parish Councillor Sam Lain-Rose will aim to issue the agenda's and meeting papers by 31 October 2017.