

MEETING NOTES OF THE COUNCIL'S:

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT GROUP

held at **Parish Office, Village Centre, High Street, Staplehurst** on
Monday 18 March 2019 between **19:30** and **21:00**

Members Present: Parish Councillors Buller, Forward, Manning, Pontet, Sharp
(from the point indicated), Smith *(until the point indicated)*
and Lain-Rose who was the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Parish Councillors Burnham, Kelly, Reardon and Symes.

Absence was noted by Non-Councillor Member Louise Brice.

2. NOTES OF THE GROUP MEETING

The Group's meeting notes of 25 February 2019 were AGREED as an accurate record by Members.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

Councillors Lain-Rose and Smith declared an interest in the agenda item relating to Jubilee Fields. Councillor Lain-Rose has already been granted a dispensation. Councillor Smith requested and was granted a dispensation for this meeting.

4. PARISH SERVICES

4.1 REPORT – THE PARADE PUBLIC TOILETS

Councillor Lain-Rose introduce the report dated 10 March 2019, which outlined the status of the Public toilet review, specifically relating to the recent visit to The Parade Public Toilets on Monday 4th March 2019. Parish Councillors Buller, Burnham, Forward, Kelly, Lain-Rose and Riordan visited The Parade Toilets and Councillor Burnham provided some photos to all Councillors.

Councillor Sharp arrived at this point.

Members NOTED the details of the report and AGREED that the next steps outlined in Section 3 should be changed from reviewing at the Group's meeting on 29 April 2019 to a meeting after the May 2019 elections.

4.2 REPORT – VILLAGE PLANTERS CONTRACT REVIEW

Councillor Lain-Rose introduce the report dated 10 March 2019, which outlined the previous tendering process for the Village Planters and the options available to recommend to Council.

Members NOTED that Paxman Services (UK) Ltd. was one of the contractors who responded to the Invitation to Tender in 2016.

Councillor Manning expressed that he felt that public flowers and shrubs should be bold and colourful, if they are to be noticed and his personal opinion that the displays in the last few years have fallen short. Councillor Sharp agreed with the comments by Manning.

Councillor Manning explained that other villages (such as, Coxheath, Headcorn and Tenterden) have hanging baskets throughout their villages on lamp posts. Members NOTED scope to increase the scope of the Village Planters, to enhance the attractiveness of the village and this should be reviewed, prior to the invitation to tender is published.

Councillor Manning also circulated a paper on his thoughts on the suggest plants/flowers which was outlined in Appendix One.

Councillor Sharp expressed that the cylinder planters do not look attractive and maybe changing the colour from the cream colour to another colour might help. Councillor Manning disagreed and said that keep the planters the off-white colour and ensure that the Council receives colourful and bold planting, which could include trailing.

Councillor Sharp also expressed that the planters also should have height. However, the 'grass' that are in the planters, Councillor Sharp and Smith felt looked like the planters were growing weeds. Councillor Forward explained that grass was very good for water conservation.

Councillor Sharp was not happy with the changing of the plants based on seasons, as she felt it would be better to have permanent features and some planters were removed and new ones added based on seasons.

Councillor Manning wished that the suggested Weeping Cheery in Appendix One was removed from the list and Members AGREED.

Councillor Pontet offered to speak to the commercial team at her place of employment, with the view to add potential contractors to the tender list. Members welcomed this.

Councillor Lain-Rose reminded Members that although there are areas of improvement in this contract, it should be reminded that the Council when deciding the contractor, chose the contractor as they were a local charity and knew that the charity would be growing their own plants and that it would not at the same standard as other commercial contractors.

Members discussed the requirements set out in the Invitation to Tender:

- Members AGREED with bullet point one – “Earth and compost mix renewal (when required, suggested timescale 1 year)”.
- Members AGREED to amended bullet point two – “Planting of ‘garden-ready’ plants and flowers that offer an attractive enhancement to the village, with height and trailing plants that are bold and colourful – suggested plants/flowers are set out in Appendix 1.”
- Members AGREED to move the last line and the sub-bullets to a new bullet point to read – “The planting is to be undertaken three times a year based on the following seasons: (a) Autumn/Winter (October – March); (b) Spring (April – June); and (c) (July – September). However, not all plants and flowers need to be removed and replaced, some may be permanent features, where these are sustainable.
- Members AGREED with the last bullet point – “Watering and maintenance of the six planters, as follows: (a) Autumn/Winter (October – April): 2 visits a week minimum; and (b) Spring/Summer (May – September): 5 visits per week minimum.

Members AGREED with Schedule 1, Schedule 2, Schedule 3 and Schedule 4.

Members AGREED to discuss further the suggested plants/flowers outlined in Appendix One at the next Group meeting to further consider Councillor Manning's suggestions, as well as, receive suggestions from other Members, including Councillor Forward.

5. JUBILEE FIELD

Members NOTED the resignation of the Patrick Riordan that was received on Tuesday 12 March 2019.

Councillor Lain-Rose introduced the report dated 10 March 2019 outlining the current position and the precis of advice given by Councillor Silkin which was supplied at the meeting on 7 February and was documented in the paper dated 14 February 2019.

Councillor Lain-Rose will write to the current Trustees to ascertain whether they wish to continue in their post or wish to resign and receive written confirmation of their resignation.

Councillor Lain-Rose will discuss at the next Jubilee Field Management Committee meeting, issuing a Letter of Comfort to both Football Clubs, as outlined in Councillor Silkin's advice.

Councillor Lain-Rose will progress, with the support of the Parish Council office, the Management & Maintenance Agreement. This should be done as soon as possible, once we confirm who the Chairman of the Jubilee Field Management Committee is (or will be).

Councillor Lain-Rose explained his view, based on Councillor Silkin's advice on the management of the new facility and the way in which this should be achieved, to be as clear as possible and avoiding complicating the situation.

Jubilee Field Management Committee will need to review the financial position and how it improves the position going forward, to minimise the impact on the Council's public finances. This will need to be organised in consultation with the stakeholders involved.

Councillor Forward enquired whether a research study been conducted to ascertain whether Staplehurst fees for pitch hire is in line with other sites, such as Marden. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained he could not remember when this was last conducted but Staplehurst was average, when it last reviewed this.

Councillor Forward commented on the financial contribution disparity between the two Football Clubs and expressed that the Senior's pitch is in very good condition, some of which is due to the drainage work done historically. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that it was his understanding that the Groundsman John Gower manages the pitches and prioritises the major games on the pitches. Therefore, major games of the juniors should still be played on a pitch, which could be the pitch primarily used for the Seniors. However, the juniors are doing drainage work, part of which is funded externally, secured by them and part funded by the Management Committee using the funding secured by Borough Councillors Brice and Perry using their Member's Budget.

Councillor Lain-Rose reported that the pitch-side barriers are being erected this week.

Councillor Smith left the meeting at this point.

7. WIMPEY FIELD

Councillor Forward updated Members on the BioBlitz dates which are now booked with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership – 30th May 2019 (half-term week) and 7th August (middle week of playscheme).

Councillor Forward updated Members that the replacement trees are now in place on the Wimpey Field.

Councillor Forward accepted some Damson Trees from a resident and the Wimpey Field contractor was used, along with the Wimpey Field Warden to place them on the site, which took an hour.

Councillor Forward explained that the planning permission for the pond has been granted and contractor has been appointed. A site meeting will be arranged to discuss the access to the site.

Councillor Forward explained that a meeting with Helen Grant MP booked for the beginning of April 2019, which the Parish Clerk will attend. The meeting will also include a representative from HML (Management Company), Borough Councillor Brice and a resident from The Bartons. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the access issues to the Wimpey Field.

8. DONATIONS

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose introduced the report dated 10 March 2019, which outlines the previous donations provided by the Council and suggested donations for recommendation to Council.

Members **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to Council the following donations for agreement for the 2019-20 financial year:

- Kent, Sussex & Surrey Air Ambulance of £250
- Community Centre for Debt Advice Staplehurst (CCDAS) of £200
- Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) Maidstone of £300
- Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal of £100
- Samaritans Maidstone & The Weald of £100
- Involve Maidstone of £75
- Medway Valley Countryside Partnership of £50
- Staplehurst Free Church of £80
- Parish Magazine of £75
- Community Picnic Event of £300
- Staplehurst Stay Safe Event of £100
- Transport Accessibility Group of £20 (this is possibly taken from Subscriptions)
- Kent Tree and Pond Partnership of £50 (this is possibly taken from Subscriptions)
- Annual Clean-Up (x2) – Refreshment and Venue Providers of £200

This would allocate a total of £1,900 of the £2,500 budget for donations.

Members of the Communications Group will review the use of the Parish Magazine, as a suggestion to publish the details that we donate for is every other publication, rather than every publication.

Members **NOTED** that for the 2018-19 financial year the Council went over budget on donations and Members wanted it to be recorded that the Council should not exceed the budget limit of £2,500 in the 2019-20 financial year.

Members **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to Council politely decline the donation request from the Samaritans Tunbridge Wells, as the Group felt that the donation to the Samaritans Maidstone was most appropriate.

Members discussed, ahead of the review of the Terms of Reference in May 2019, where the remit of donations should sit within the Council and this is prior to any review of the current Council policies. Members **AGREED** that Finance & Strategy's role should be limited to budget setting in relation to donations and that the Community Enhancement Group is responsible for recommending the allocation of the budget. The heavily-weighted rationale for this was due to the regularity of the Community Enhancement Group meetings, against the Finance & Strategy Group meetings. This would require a change of the current Council policies and Members **AGREED** to review this and once agreed would recommend to Council revised policies.

9. YOUTH CLUB

Councillor Lain-Rose introduced the report dated 29 February 2019, which outlined the current status of the drafted Management Maintenance Agreement for the Youth Club site, which is currently being negotiated with the third-party. Majority of the report was following the meeting on 27 February 2019.

Members AGREED that the Management & Maintenance Agreement should have a termination date of 28 February 2050, to coexist with the lease between Kent County Council and the Council. Members felt that the Charity's position on this clause of reviewing annually from or up to a maximum limit of two years from commencement date, would add on both party's workload and is restrictive, as any changes outside this review (indeed from the Charity) would not be permissible, until the review date, which would not allow flexibility.

Members AGREED that there should be a clause that allows for the immediate termination of the Agreement, for both the Council and Charities benefit.

Members AGREED that there should be clauses that allows for variations to the Agreement by either party at any time, providing that both parties agree, and the variation is in writing, and attached as an appendix to the Agreement.

Members discussed the proposed changes to the way in which the Council appoints its representatives to the Charity. Historically, the appointments have meant that the Councillors appointed are Trustees on the Charity. However, it was noted that Councillor Lain-Rose was not a Trustee since being appointed in May 2018.

Members AGREED that the Council will nominate two Parish Councillors, appointed at the annual meeting of the Parish Council to become Committee Members. This is to enable regular Council representation. For clarity, this would mean the Parish Council appointed representatives would not be Trustees of the Charity and therefore, would be fully representing the Council at the meetings. Therefore, Councillor Perry would be a Trustee and continue to be a Trustee but would not be a Parish Council appointed representative.

Members **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to Council that the way in which the Council appoints Committee Members (rather than Trustees) to Staplehurst Youth Group is adopted by the Council from 13th May 2019.

Members discussed the Service Level Agreement for the future Youth Service delivered by the Charity and AGREED that the negotiations need to start as soon as possible after the Maintenance and Management Agreement has been finalised in negotiations.

Members AGREED once the finalised Agreement has been negotiated, this would need to be recommended to Council for approval, prior to signing.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items raised under any other business.

7. CONFIRMATION OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Members CONFIRMED the next meeting of the Group would be held at Parish Office, Village Centre on Monday 08 April 2019 at 19:30.

Councillor Sharp had stated she would like her apologies recorded for the next meeting as she will be on holiday.