

Meeting Notes

Community Enhancement Group

Notes of the Meeting held on 30 April 2018 from 19:30 to 22:00

Present: **Parish Councillors Joan Buller, Tom Burnham, Sam Lain-Rose (Chair), Barrett Manning, Paddy Riordan, Adele Sharp** *(from the point indicated)* and **Gill Smith.**

Resident Louise Brice *(from the point indicated).*

In Attendance: **Parish Councillor Elaine Symes.**

1. Apologies for Absence

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Parish Councillor John Reardon.

2. Councillor Declarations

There were no Councillor declarations.

3. Wimpey Fields

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose, explained that the Wimpey Field Sub-Group had been dissolved and this was based on the suggestion from Robert Roberts, as the acting Chair of the Sub-Group to Parish Councillor Burnham. This has been communicated to all Sub-Group members by Parish Councillor Lain-Rose. This measure has been taken to allow for a constructive way forward and to resolve the outstanding issues/concerns regarding the Wimpey Field estate.

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose also commented that in a discussion with Peter Spearink, he expressed that he would like to join the revitalised group of the Wimpey Fields in the future.

Parish Councillor Riordan explained the only outstanding work required on the Wimpey Field is the path extension (previously agreed by the Council) by the contractor Southeast Groundworks. The contractor had paused works, due to the weather and will continue the work required once the weather has improved.

Parish Councillor Manning raised that the agreed extension to the path, would cause further flooding. Parish Councillor Burnham and Riordan explained that hopefully it would improve the current situation and Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that the decision to extend the path had already been taken and the Council cannot change the decision,

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especially as the work is half completed. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that the Group would have to review the situation once the path has been completed.

Parish Councillor Riordan also commented that the water supply was also outstanding. Peter Spearink in liaison with Helen Grant (MP) have successfully secured agreement from South East Water to put the water supply into the Wimpey Fields at no cost. Parish Councillor Riordan has discussed with the Parish Clerk, that the vandal resistant standpipe will cost £250.00 and that the water supply will be metered. The Parish Clerk had advised that the standing charge is approximately the same as our other water supplies to Bell Lane and the Pavilion on Surrenden Field.

Parish Councillor Riordan has already bought a water tank for £88 to be sited at the Wimpey Field as an interim measure until South East Water has carried out the works to connect the supply.

Parish Councillor Reardon proposed that **the Community Enhancement Group recommends that the Council agrees to South East Water connecting the Wimpey Fields to the water supply, purchasing the standpipe for £250, plus additional material costs of up to £100 and for the Parish Office to broker a deal for a metered supply of water.** This was AGREED by the Community Enhancement Group.

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose proposed that **the Community Enhancement Group recommends that the Council reimburses Parish Councillor Riordan for the water tank.** This was AGREED by the Community Enhancement Group.

Parish Councillor Riordan clarified that the South East Water works to connect the Wimpey Fields would not impact on the Bartons, as the water mains goes directly through the Wimpey Fields.

Saxon Mead Development Concerns/Resolutions

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that there have been concerns and issues raised from residents of the new Saxon Mead Development, relating to the Council-owned land of the Wimpey Fields. These issues raised lead to friction between Sub-Group members, as concerns were not dealt with appropriately at the time these were raised.

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose had discussed with the resident(s) concerned and explained the concerns affecting the residents of Saxon Mead Development to the Group, to recommend to Council a response to these concerns.

1. It would be useful if the Council could communicate directly to the residents regarding the works planned or deliveries for the Wimpey Field.

This was discussed by Group members and the general consensus of the Group was that the Council has an access to the Wimpey Field through the Saxon Mead development and the Council does not communicate directly to residents on works that happen on the Surrenden Fields or Jubilee Fields or any other pieces of land that it owns.

It was **AGREED** by the Group to improve communication in general, that all works and activity on the Wimpey Field should be discussed and agreed by the Council (via the Community Enhancement Group), as per policy. This would enable the residents to be aware of what is being discussed or planned for the Wimpey Fields (through the Agendas), providing the opportunity to make representation to the Council (at the

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relevant meeting) and be aware of the decisions relating to the Wimpey Fields (through the Minutes).

It was also **AGREED** that any major works being undertaken on Council-owned land, would be posted on the Council's website and Facebook page. This requires the Communications Group to discuss also.

2. It would be advisable that the Council could communicate to residents when Community Payback team are visiting the Wimpey Fields, with a contact name and number of a responsible person on the Council, in case of an issue.

There was some discussion regarding this, however Parish Councillor Burnham expressed that this is a wider-issue for the Parish Council in terms of a contact number out of hours. Therefore, it was **AGREED** by the Group to refer the issue regarding a contact number for out of hours to the Communications Group.

There are no planned works for Community Payback to be sited at the Wimpey Fields and it was **AGREED** that the Community Enhancement Group would discuss Community Payback in the wider-context at a future meeting, once the transition period has been completed.

Resident Louise Brice arrived at this point.

3. Damaged to the private property(ies) should be rectified at the expense of the Council.

There was some discussion regarding this, and the Group **AGREED** that any damage to property should be rectified at the cost of the Council where there is evidence to substantiate the claim. In addition, the Group **AGREED** that all works or deliveries to any site of the Council should have a responsible person nominated by the Council or the Parish Office to oversee the deliveries and works.

4. There have been posts on Social Media which have targeted a Group of residents, an example was the April Fools post on Facebook constructed by two former Parish Councillors.

There was some discussion regarding the use of Social Media, however, this is not within the remit of the Community Enhancement Group. The Parish Clerk has responded to the compliant regarding this specifically. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose's opinion on the April Fools 'joke' specifically was that it was poor judgement from the author(s) of the post and that it was completely unacceptable and inappropriate.

Resident Louise Brice wished that the Council introduced an acceptable use policy and mandate Councillors to sign the document and highlighted her personal observations that there seemed to be a range of personality issues but it was completely inappropriate for members of the Council to openly attack residents on social media, as they were aggressive in their posts.

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose expressed that based on the suggestion of Louise Brice, that an appendix to the Council's Code of Conduct may be necessary, which would save an additional task for the Parish Office to undertake, as Councillors when accepting their office agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. In addition, the Council's Code of Conduct can be enforced by Maidstone Borough Council's Monitoring Officer and investigated by the Monitoring Officer where breaches are reported.

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The Group **AGREED** to recommend to the Council that an apology letter should be sent to the Saxon Mead development residents regarding unacceptable use of Social Media and remind Councillors of the importance of abiding by the Council's Code of Conduct.

The Group **AGREED** the use of social media should be discussed by the Communications Group and to escalate the planned introduction of the Social Media Policy to be agreed by the Council.

The Group **AGREED** that the Communications Group should investigate how to monitor or manage the Wimpey Field Facebook Group, as it does have a reflection on the Parish Council.

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose stated that revision may be necessary to all Council's Terms of Reference for Groups should include a line that where members of the Group (which could include residents) and they act or are seen to be acting in their role as a member of their Group, they should comply with all the Council's policies and procedures. This was **AGREED** by the Group.

5. There have been anti-social activities being undertaken on the Wimpey Fields.

The Group discussed the activities being undertaken by residents/users of the Wimpey Fields, it was **AGREED** that signage may be necessary to be inform users of the do's and don'ts on the land or investigate introducing Byelaws onto the Field.

Parish Councillor Sharp arrived at this point.

There was discussion regarding CCTV cameras, as the Wimpey Field at present doesn't have any Parish Council CCTV cameras. Parish Councillor Sharp stated that there some cameras down on the field, as it was stated previously by former Parish Councillor Claridge. The Council was unaware of this, and it was **AGREED** by the Group that this needed to be investigated and any cameras needed to be removed until the Council has agreed to cameras being sited on the field and the necessary signage is erected.

The Group **AGREED** to respond to the resident that should anti-social behaviour occur on the fields, then the best route is to report this directly to the police, as the Parish Council does not have the resources or the power to police the village.

6. There are issues with the access to the Wimpey Fields through the Saxon Mead development that require a resolution.

The resident expressed there is an issue with the current layout of the access gate between the Saxon Mead development and the Wimpey Field and it is not fit for purpose, which Parish Councillor Riordan agrees.

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that there is another access issue between the top part of the Saxon Mead development to the woodland area, as this has been blocked, presumably by a resident near the access point. This has been discussed with Taylor Wimpey via the Parish Office and we are awaiting a full response from Taylor Wimpey. In terms of this access, the Parish Office have said this is a potential planning enforcement issue, however, Maidstone Borough Council has not been involved yet.

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Resident Louise Brice expressed that a map of the site and access points should be drawn-up to educate users and visitors of the access points to the field. This was **AGREED** by the Group.

Resident Louise Brice expressed that Taylor Wimpey gifted the land and the Council has turned into more than a Nature Reserve and none of what we have done with the land was in any planning consent. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose disagreed with Resident Louise Brice statement, as the Parish Council has undertaken work on the land in alignment with the Management Plan that was provided to Taylor Wimpey and then to the Council as the new owners. The Management Plan was part of the planning condition for the development.

The Group acknowledged there are some issues that are not within the control of the Parish Council and instead in the remit of the residents and the Management Company responsible.

Parish Councillor Riordan explained the proposal he had that would benefit the Council and the affected residents and members were interested in this possibility and further investigatory work was needed. Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained the gate was the property of the Management Company and it was not in the gift of the Council to be able to alter the layout of the gate. Therefore, discussions between the Council and Management Company, as well as Taylor Wimpey was needed. This was **AGREED** by the Group.

4. Any Other Business

Donation Requests

Parish Councillor Lain-Rose explained that Finance & Strategy Group discussed donation requests that had been sent to the Council. These were discussed:

- Five Acre Wood School – £250 for the hydro pool project.
- Heart of Kent Hospice – £100

The Group members **AGREED** with the outcome of the Finance & Strategy Group discussion. However, the Community Enhancement Group recommended removing the Heart of Kent Hospice in October 2017 as taxpayers do not expect the Council to spend public money on donating to charities. The Group **AGREED** that prior to the Council agreeing this donation to Heart of Kent Hospice that the Council should request further information from the charity as to what the money will be spent on in terms of a project and information on how their charitable objectives impact Staplehurst residents.

Resident Louise Brice had a resident approach her regarding installing a bench on the Lime Trees estate green (outside the play area). It was recommended that the request is sent to the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

5. Confirmation of the Date of Next Meeting

Members CONFIRMED the next meeting of the Group would be Monday 11 June 2018 at 19:30. The meeting will be held at Parish Office, Village Centre.

There was a request that the next meeting would discuss The Parade, as well as, Wimpey Field path cutting.