

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 6th January 2014 at 7.35 p.m.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher & Reardon whose reasons for apology were accepted.

URGENT ITEMS: - Councillors agreed to take one item of urgent business relating to the impact of adverse weather conditions.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

Lobbying – Councillors Buller, Burnham and Lain-Rose declared they had been lobbied about the local bus service. Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan and the impact of the severe weather.

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 1318-1320 of 16th December 2013 were proposed for approval by Councillor Ashby, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, approved by councillors nem con, signed by Chairman Perry and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Urgent Item – Councillors noted that communication channels had been adversely affected by the power outages arising from the adverse weather conditions over the Christmas period. This meant that many people were unaware of the severity of the problems suffered in parts of the village. Councillor Spearink said that he had telephoned Golding Homes. Calls were also made to UK Power Networks. Councillor Silkin had been to houses at the north end of the village. He said the SEHT had not been contacted either formally by the emergency services or locally. Chairman Perry said that he was seeking a meeting with the Environment Agency. Councillors agreed to make representations about proposed cuts at the Agency and to write to Golding Homes about support offered to tenants.
2. Neighbourhood Plan – Proposal & Quotation from Feria Urbanism. *Chairman Perry closed the meeting to allow contributions from the public.* Councillors and members of the public participated in an extensive discussion and expressed a range of views about whether and how to continue working on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Staplehurst. It was suggested that having a single strategic vision would avoid a piecemeal approach to developer applications and would facilitate dealing with large-scale needs of the village. The need for some kind of plan context from MBC was advocated, but others felt that MBC had a history of delays and that Staplehurst could not afford to wait. It was stated that work to date had generated expectations and that future work should continue to secure public engagement. It was posited that having an emerging plan as soon as possible would put Staplehurst on the front foot when faced with developer applications; it was further suggested that consideration be given to an interim Parish Council policy to refuse any large development proposal until such an emerging plan were in place (advice to be taken from KALC). There was some concern about the cost of employing Feria and relying on them too much and that in

financial terms the engagement would not be justified by the increase in any CIL payments that the parish may receive. Another view was that the Feria charge rates were very reasonable and that to engage them would provide timely resource and expertise that were not available on a volunteer basis, thereby maintaining momentum towards achieving a Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that an application had been submitted for central government funding of £7,000. *Chairman Perry reopened the meeting.* He referenced the points of his report dated 18th December previously circulated to Councillors, highlighting that the timetable aimed to deliver a Neighbourhood Plan by the end of 2014. He said he viewed the proposed expenditure this year as an investment for the next twenty. He then asked councillors to summarise their individual positions on continuing development of the Neighbourhood Plan and on accepting the quotation from Feria Urbanism for £19,100. On conclusion of councillors' statements, a resolution proposed by Councillor Green and seconded by Councillor Manning to continue work on the Neighbourhood Plan and to accept the Feria Urbanism quotation was agreed by eleven votes to two. Councillors also asked that the agreement with Feria Urbanism should contain scope for early termination of their work.

3. Parish Precept 2014-2015 – Options for Review and Decision. Chairman Perry presented a draft of the 2014-15 budget containing three options for the level of Parish Precept. He explained that the all options featured an increase in the Precept but the amount of increase depended on the level of Parish Council General Fund; for example, with a £5,000 increase in the General Fund a Band D property's Parish Precept would be £1.08 per week. It was observed that uncertainty about future legislation and the Parish Council's delivery of more and more services suggested it would be prudent to build up reserves. Proposed by Chairman Perry, seconded by Councillor Spearink, councillors voted in principle to increase the General Reserve by £5,000 (ten votes for such increase, three votes for maintaining the current level).
4. Caretaker's Report – The Clerk reported that the western end of Nicholson Walk was flooded. He said that Kent Highways were due to attend to the A229 flooding this week.
5. KALC Training – Resilience & Reassurance for Local Councils (for decision re attendance). Councillors agreed to send two attendees, one being Councillor Lain-Rose and one further name to be confirmed to the Clerk.
6. Local Bus Service – Councillor Spearink advised that from April two double decker buses would be introduced on the Cornwallis service. He said the 3.15 bus would leave Maidstone ten minutes earlier and wait at Cornwallis. The Clerk advised that the Chairman was in correspondence with the Leader of Kent County Council. Councillor Spearink advised that on the KCC website there was an e-Petition about the cap on Freedom Passes.
7. Maidstone Pet Partnership – Invitation (for decision). Councillors noted the proposed campaign about the launch of the partnership and its first campaign about cat neutering and agreed to support it by way of publicity.
8. Quotations – For hedge work at Jubilee & Surrenden Fields (for approval). Councillors accepted two quotations, each of £330, from SRFC with the proviso that the work should include removal of clippings.
9. Staplehurst PC Branding & Logo – (SL-R) Proposal for noting, then review by Pub & Web. Councillors thanked Councillor Lain-Rose for the designs contributed by college students and made suggestions for areas of improvement. They agreed that further work be directed through the Publicity & Website Group.
10. Lord Lieutenant of Kent's Annual Civic Service – Invitation (for decision). Councillors were requested to advise the Clerk by the end of January if they wished to represent the Parish Council at the service.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Report of meeting 06/12/13 awaited.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting? Report of meeting 19/12/13 awaited.
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
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) Next meeting?
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy_group.aspx
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
8. Publicity & Website Group (JP, TB, PK, MA, JB, NK, SL, JR) Next meeting?
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx Councillor Buller advised that copy for the next Village Update was needed by 25th January.
9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, MA, JB, AS) Next meeting 15/01/14.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx. Councillor Buller advised that the next meeting would be on 15th January.
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.

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? Report of meeting 18/12/13 posted at
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_2.aspx
3. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting 04/03/14.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB) Next meeting?
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx
5. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, PK, RS, PS) Minutes of meeting 18/11/13 and report of AGM 23/11/13 awaited.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx
6. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (PB) Next meeting? Report of meeting 04/09/13 awaited.
7. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group (BM, NK, PS) Next meeting?
8. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting 16/01/14. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx
9. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
10. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group (JP, NK) Next meeting?
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting 04/03/14. <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? Report of meeting 30/10/13 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? Minutes of meeting 12/11/13 awaited.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx
18. Village Sports & Social Club (PB) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/ot_hers.aspx
19. Youth Club (SL, PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_youth_club.aspx

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: No further comments were made.