

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 7th April 2014 at 8.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Butcher, Gosling, Green, Kelly, Lain-Rose, Manning, Reardon, Silkin, Spearink, Burnham who was in the Chair until the point indicated in the Minutes and Perry who was present and in the Chair from the point indicated in the Minutes.
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Buller, Kemp, Perry (part of meeting) and Sharp whose reasons for apology were accepted. Councillors noted that Councillor Perry was absent on council business.

URGENT ITEMS: - Councillor Burnham announced that agenda items relating to the Neighbourhood Plan and the MBC Draft Local Plan would be moved to a later point in the agenda pending the arrival of Councillor Perry who was attending to related business.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

Lobbying – All councillors declared they had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan.
Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in items on the agenda – Councillor Butcher declared an interest in the Youth Club.
Requests for dispensation – a request submitted by Councillor Butcher to speak and vote on business relating to the Youth Club was agreed.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Pages 1336-1338 of 17th March 2014 were proposed for approval by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Butcher, approved by councillors nem con, signed by the Chairman and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Caretaker's Report – no items.
2. Contracts for Review: (a) Electricity Contract Review – Parish Office & Surrenden Pavilion. Councillors considered the review of providers' quotations prepared by the RFO. Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Kelly, councillors voted to accept a three year package provided by Scottish & Southern Energy. (b) Surrenden Playing Field CCTV – Proposed by Councillor Reardon, seconded by Councillor Kelly, councillors voted nem con to renew the maintenance contract with Cam-Tech Security at a net cost of £140. (c) Technology Support – Proposed by Councillor Kelly, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, councillors voted nem con to renew the service contract with Arron Services at a net cost of £395.
3. Kent Rail Summit – Councillors noted that Councillor Burnham and Mr Colin Love would be attending the summit at the end of April and agreed that they should report back to Council. Councillors agreed it would then be appropriate to consider joining Railfuture and the formation of a councillor-resident group to seek to influence key issues. Councillor Green indicated he would be willing to participate in such a group.
4. MBC Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Invitation to submit topics for review. Councillors were asked to submit suggestions to the Clerk before closing date of 27th May.
5. Memorial Project – Councillor Butcher advised that discussion with KCC indicated that the library would not be a suitable site. Councillor Kelly suggested consideration be given to the southwest corner of the Village Centre site and offered to discuss it with the

- Village Centre Management Committee. Councillors were requested to ask their village contacts what other organisations were planning by way of WW1 commemoration.
6. Standing Orders – Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Silkin, councillors voted nem con to approve the draft new standing orders submitted by Strategy & Policy Group subject to the amendments highlighted by the Clerk.
 7. Tree Warden's Report – Councillors reviewed the summary of the Tree Warden's report. The Clerk advised that findings had been reported to appropriate responsible parties and that he and the village caretaker were attending to parish items. He also advised that a quotation of £725 from Forestry First had been obtained for work on the trees along the Surrenden Road side of the playing field, which would be forwarded to councillors.
 8. Youth Club – Councillor Lain-Rose spoke to his report following a meeting with the Chairman of the Youth Club and members of the Parish Council in which the Parish Council's funding of the Youth Club worker had been discussed. Councillor Butcher challenged some of the content in the report and discussed the difficulties involved in providing youth services in the village. He said that the Youth Club had shut for disciplinary reasons about five times in the last year. Some councillors felt it was appropriate for the Parish Council to receive high-level information about activity given the funding it provided. Councillor Butcher said he would provide exception reports, which was agreed. Councillor Kelly reported that a new worker had started at the Club.
 9. Neighbourhood Plan and MBC Draft Local Plan & CIL Charging Proposal Consultation – *Chairman Perry joined the meeting and took over the Chair from Councillor Burnham. Chairman Perry closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public.* Chairman Perry reported that he had just attended a KALC-organised meeting between MBC and parish representatives, from which it had emerged that calculation of the figure of 19,600 houses required in the borough was based on government methodology; MBC's target was 17,100; it would respond to consultation and acknowledged the need to work together. He added that the issue of possible constraints to development had been raised by Maidstone Borough Council. He said these could be used to challenge the numbers currently proposed for Staplehurst in Maidstone Borough Council's Draft Local Plan, but this would need to be supported by evidence. He suggested that a possible starting point for Staplehurst could be the initial estimates proposed by the developers at the Hen and Duckhurst and Fisher's Farm sites which it was understood totalled 442. The ensuing debate covered the housing numbers in the Local and Neighbourhood Plan drafts and the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan; some wished to emphasise that the Neighbourhood Plan went beyond numbers into related questions of the shape of development, associated infrastructure etc. There were differing views on how feasible it would be for the Neighbourhood Plan to challenge the Local Plan numbers. Points made were: development had to be sustainable; a strong evidence-base was needed to support numbers; a view should be taken on timescales; MBC's affordable housing policy was flawed. A counter-position on MBC's 905 houses for Staplehurst was advanced, based on developers' own site proposals (270 for Hen & Duckhurst and 172 for the west side of Fishers Farm). *Chairman Perry reopened the meeting.* Proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Butcher, by majority vote (ten for, one against, one abstention) Councillors voted to pursue a response to the MBC Draft Local Plan based on the principles of: opposing 905 houses for Staplehurst; proposing 442 houses (split 270 to the west and 172 to the east); attaching conditions to 270 houses (alignment of a road to connect with Lodge Road and over the railway ultimately to Maidstone Road, with contribution to the railway bridge) and to 172 houses (contribution to the road/bridge crossing); opposing the 40% affordable housing policy; asking FERIA Urbanism to advise whether it could draw up a response to MBC on behalf of SPC based on the above framework.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Next meeting 11/04/14. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting? Report of meetings 19/12/13 and 24/03/14 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) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth_activities_1.aspx
8. Publicity & Website Group (JP, TB, PK, MA, JB, NK, SL, JR) Next meeting? Report of meeting 25/03/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx
9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, MA, JB, AS) Next meeting 14/05/14. 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. UpRockin 2014 (JP, PB) Next meeting? Councillors agreed not to stage UpRockin in 2014 and to hold funds over until 2015.
12. Village Enhancement Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, PB, SL, JR, AS) Next meeting? Report of Annual Village Clean-Up posted at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups.aspx. Councillors agreed a donation of £50 to the WI in appreciation of their support of the Annual Clean-Up.

REPORTS FOR NOTING from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (SL, BM) Next meeting? 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. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting 03/06/14. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB) Next meeting? Minutes of meeting 27/03/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx
5. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, PK, RS, PS) Next meeting 28/05/14. Report and minutes of meeting 19/03/14 posted at 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 15/05/14. 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? Report of meeting 20/02/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group (JP, NK) Next meeting 09/06/14 <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting 03/06/14. <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) Report of meeting 22/01/14 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 15/04/14. 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: Before the meeting the Chair of RSG observed that the agenda items relating to Neighbourhood Plan and MBC Draft Local Plan referred to updates and not to decisions.