

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
South Hall, Village Centre  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Councillors Bowden, Castro, Hotson, McPhee, Perry, Sharp, Spearink, Riordan who was in the Chair and Parish Clerk, Miss A Smith.

**1. APOLOGIES:**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Grimwood, Buller and Smith for health reasons and Lain-Rose due to transport reasons.

*Councillor Spearink left the meeting at this point*

**2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS** regarding items on the agenda:

- 2.1. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests – None declared.  
2.2. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda. None declared.  
2.3. Requests for Dispensation. None requested.

**3. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES**

- 3.1. Pages 1944 – 1948 of 27<sup>th</sup> September available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>. Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor Sharp, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes which were signed by Chairman Riordan.

*Councillor Spearink rejoined the meeting at this point.*

**4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

- 4.1. Accounts for Payment – for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Castro, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 5<sup>th</sup> August to 19<sup>th</sup> August totalled £11,416.79; income for the period was £0.00.

<b><u>Approved Payments 23rd September - 12th October 2021</u></b>	<b>Amount</b>
Cllr Reimbursement re Plants (WBF)	58.78
Iden Signs - Car Park Closed Signs & Frames	96.00
Playsafety Ltd - Annual Play Area Inspection Surrenden Field	115.80
Playsafety Ltd - Annual Play Area Inspection Jubilee Field	82.20
Cllr Reimbursementre Community Payback Refreshments	54.82
Came & Company Annual Insurance Premium	2,914.56
Staff Reimbursement re Adobe Subscription Mar-Sept	106.19
Kathie Lamb Guide Centre - Meeting Hall Hire Jun-Aug	180.00
The Helping Hand Co. Ltd - Litter Picks/Hoops/Gloves (WBF)	2,101.20
Cllr Reinbursement re Community Payback Sundries	10.44
Hugofox Ltd - Silver Subscription Oct	23.99
D Vidler Contractors Ltd - White Lining The Parade (WBF)	1,758.00
Bradley Hawkins - Wimpey Field Mowing/Strimming	100.00
Workwear Express Ltd - Hi-Viz Volunteer Jackets (WBF)	240.00
Cllr Reimbursement re Community Payback Refreshments	30.10
KCC - KCS Stationery	15.60

Chairman's initials .....

Choice Support - Planter Maintenance October	410.80
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Clean/Open Sept	736.84
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Sundries Sept	92.02
Staplehurst School - Playscheme Hall Hire	955.00
GRS Arboricultural Consultant - Resistograph Chestnut Trees	350.00
Post Office - Stamps 12@96p	11.52
Sainsbury's - Plasters & Antiseptic Wipes (GSG)	5.70
NALC - Biodiversity Webinar	38.93
E-on - Street Light Energy August	54.77
Kent County Council - Youth Club Lease/Purchase Sept-Dec	212.50
MBC - Council Tax Room 1 October	62.00
MBC - Council Tax Room 2-3 October	72.00
Business Stream - Surrenden Pavilion Water 2/2	34.20
Business Stream - Bell Lane Toilets Water Sept	35.69
Opus Energy Ltd - Parish Office Electricity Sept	81.00
Opus Energy Ltd - Bell Lane Toilet Electricity Sept	20.72
Opus Energy Ltd - Surrenden Pavilion Electricity Sept	15.03
E-on - Street Light Energy September	60.92
Business Stream - Bell Lane Toilets Water Sept/Oct	26.47
Countrystyle Recycling Ltd - Waste Collection Sept	81.00
Arron Services Ltd - Hosted Exchange Services Oct	171.00
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>11,415.79</b>

**TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE**

1.00

4.2. Summation of Accounts – for noting

NOTED by Councillors and published at <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>.

4.3. Welcome Back Fund

Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor Sharp, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the purchase of plants, bulbs and other flora for the sum of £530 + VAT, and to reclaim monies from MBC.

4.4. Appointment of Contractors Wimpey Field Gate alterations

Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Spearink it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the appointment of Hartlake Garden Services to undertake the work at a cost of £4,680.00.

4.5. Tree Planting along local verges

Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Sharp it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the purchase of the 19 saplings from MBC for a total cost of approximately £250 from the GSG budget. GSG will be planting the saplings, and it was recommended that GSG be reminded that the vehicular line of site not be impeded. Additionally, Councillors raised other areas where tree work is required and it was agreed that they would send their thoughts to the Clerk to pass on to MBC Parks and Open Spaces for consideration.

4.6. Payment to Play Place for the provision of the summer playscheme 2021

Proposed by Councillor McPhee, seconded by Councillor Spearink, it was RESOLVED to payment of £875+VAT for Play Place Ltd. Councillors commented that it was pleasing to see numbers of children attending increased significantly compared to the last event in 2019.

Chairman's initials .....

#### 4.7. Road Traffic Surveys

Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Perry it was RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of up to £1500+ VAT for 4 x 1-week long road traffic surveys to be conducted on the four gateways into the village.

### 5. **CORRESPONDENCE AND PARISH ISSUES**

#### 5.1. Consultation request from MBC on Community Safety for 2022/2023.

Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Castro it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that Councillor Bowden prepare and submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council, following consultation with other Councillors.

#### 5.2. Consultation on MBC Draft Statement of Licensing Principles – Gambling Act 2005 2022/2025.

Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Castro it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the submission of the prepared response by Councillor Hotson.

### 6. **PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS**

#### 6.1. Clerks Report

The Clerk advised Councillors that she had now booked the Free Church for the volunteer thank you celebration on the 14<sup>th</sup> December. She advised that due to precautions necessary as a result of COVID-19, that numbers needed to be restricted this year and that there would only be a simple provision of mince pies and cakes. She confirmed that MBC had now commissioned the work for the vegetation area around the pond and that she had prepared notice letters for local residents that would be delivered in the week. The Clerk advised that the Support Officer had been busy organising the Remembrance Parade due to take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> November with the Royal British Legion. She confirmed that the High Street would be closed from 10.10am to 10.20 am from Cuckolds Crossroads to the Church. She advised that the wreath to a value of £100+VAT had been ordered for the Parish Council, and Councillor Riordan as Chairman, had agreed to lay it during the ceremony. The Clerk requested two Councillors to become banking signatories to replace the two that had recently resigned; Councillor Smith had previously advised he would do this, Councillor McPhee also volunteered. The Clerk requested volunteer/s to deliver the Councillor agenda packs for meetings. She also advised that she would send out the dates again for the Village Surgeries for Councillors to volunteer to attend. Finally, she reminded Councillors on Planning Committee that they needed a volunteer to attend MBC Planning Meeting that week to speak against an application; Councillor Bowden agreed to attend via MS Teams.

#### 6.2. Membership of Council Working Groups

Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Bowden, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that Councillor Hotson join the Finance and Strategy, Community Enhancement, and Employment Groups and that Councillor Sharp join the Employment Group.

#### 6.3. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project Activities

##### 6.3.1. Communications Group

Councillor Castro reminded Councillors that copy for the next Village Update needed to be submitted to him with photos by the 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Councillors NOTED the report of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, published at [Communications Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-parish-council.gov.uk/communications-group)

6.3.2. Greener Staplehurst Group

Councillors NOTED the report of the 20<sup>th</sup> September, published at [Greener Staplehurst - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#)

6.3.3. Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

Councillors NOTED the report of the meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021, published at [Neighbourhood Plan Review Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#)

*The Chairman closed the meeting to allow the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group to explain that the reason for the next item is that a survey and review of the conservation area had not been conducted by MBC for some years, and the NPRG felt it was time this was done. They were requested that the Clerk initiate the process with MBC. The meeting was then reopened.*

6.3.3.1. Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Sharp it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Clerk initiate discussions with MBC Planning to facilitate a review and survey of the conservation area in the village.

6.3.4. Road Safety Group

Councillors NOTED the reports of the meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 and the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, which have been published at [Road Safety Task and Finish Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#)

6.3.4.2. Councillors NOTED the updated Highways Improvement Plan

6.3.4.3. Councillors NOTED the request from RSG that any volunteers working on the verges of the A229 should wear Hi Vis vests for safety.

6.4. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors

6.4.1. Oral Report by Councillor Perry regarding the closure of the High Weald Academy – Councillor Perry updated Councillors regarding the well-attended public meeting called by Helen Grant MP. He advised that the outcomes were that Helen Grant, MP had set up a working group and would be looking to engage with the Secretary of State to attempt to get the decision reversed and potentially launch a judicial review into the decision to close the school. He thanked Councillor Lain-Rose and the Clerk for their considerable work in compiling the excellent open letter sent on behalf of the Parish Council.

*At this point the meeting was closed for Councillor Parfitt-Reid from Kent County Council to add a further update. Councillor Parfitt-Reid advised that Helen Grant, MP had now instructed solicitors to launch a judicial review having had 3 local families come forward as claimants. She expressed her own concerns over the approach taken. The meeting was then reopened.*

6.4.2. Chairman's report

The Chairman advised Councillors that he and Councillor Castro had attended earlier in the evening the award celebration for the MBC Compassionate Community Award, which had been won by the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team and Community Hub. He thanked and praised all the volunteers who had contributed to the efforts and commented that he was extremely proud that the contributions had been recognised. The Chairman reminded

Chairman's initials .....

Councillors to keep abreast of planning applications, as there were/are a number of potentially controversial applications in process. He advised that along with Councillors, Perry and Buller and the Clerk, he had recently attended a very successful meeting with Sainsbury's regarding the proposed free shuttle bus service and gave Councillors some brief details. He confirmed that Sainsbury's were hoping to launch the service before Christmas. He told Councillors that the most of the new bins were installed at the Parade and that he hoped that MBC's application for s106 money to undertake repairs to Bell Lane car park would be approved soon, allowing the work to take place. He complimented the Community Payback team for their excellent work in recent weeks, but needed to remind all Councillors, but particularly those supervising or instructing the programme of works, that any work on land or property not owned by the Parish Council MUST have permission for the work granted BEFORE any work commenced. He advised Councillors that failure to do this could leave the Council uninsured and could be considered criminal damage. The Chairman commented that the Community Meeting had been well attended and was pleased to see some 'green shoots' of further Police presence but further monitoring was required to ensure this didn't dissipate.

## **7. REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS**

– for noting

- 7.1. Borough Councillors Report – Oral reports by Councillor Perry & Councillor Brice. Councillor Perry updated Councillors on the meeting held by MBC on the 6<sup>th</sup> October to determine next steps for the Local Plan consultation & the outcomes of the Regulation 18 phase. He advised that it had been a difficult meeting but that the decision had been made to move the Local Plan Review forward to the Regulation 19 consultation phase. He commented that there were no further changes proposed in respect of Staplehurst other than those already known, in particular the land at Lodge Road and Home Farm. Councillor Perry advised Councillors that Councillor Brice remained unwell at the moment, hence being unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Riordan offer the Parish Council's best wishes for her recovery.
- 7.2. County Councillors Report – Report by County Councillor Parfitt-Reid. Councillor Parfitt-Reid also updated Councillors on the MBC meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> October. She asked for Councillors to spread the word to groups, organisations and businesses that may assistance recovering from pandemic and confirmed that she had the ability to make grants to support them. She updated Councillors on her work on the Flood Recovery Committee. She also confirmed that she would be willing to join Parish Councillors at their community surgeries.
- Councillor Hotson requested that Councillor Parfitt-Reid consider making a grant to the Parish Council to support with the cost of the road traffic surveys or cost of the summer play scheme.
- 7.3. Police Report – Councillors noted the September Report. Councillor Hotson requested that enquiries be made as to why the PCSO would not be commencing surgeries till the new year.
- 7.4. KALC Maidstone Area Committee – Councillors NOTED the minutes from the meeting of the 28<sup>th</sup> September. They requested that the Clerk respond to item 6.4 of the minutes, offering feedback that the Planning Committee would like if possible a paper copy of all planning applications from MBC.

Chairman's initials .....

*Councillor Hotson left the meeting at this point, and re-joined towards the end of the discussion of item 8.1.*

**8. REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS**

8.1. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee – Councillors NOTED the minutes of the meeting of the 29<sup>th</sup> June.

**9. URGENT MATTERS**

None.

**10. SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT**

10.1. The Chairman advised that the special report had been referred to the following meeting.

Chairman.....

**PUBLIC FORUM**

A member of the public congratulated the Clerk and all those involved in the open letter to the Leigh Academy Trust.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm