

**STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**MONDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**Public Forum**

A resident, who attends the Men's Shed, spoke passionately about the need to retain and reopen the Youth Club as soon as possible as it services the community from young people to older people. The resident provided some ideas to council about how work could be done, some additional access improvements and generously offered support.

**Borough Councillor's Report (Standing Item):**

Cllr Perry raised a number of points

- MBC Budget 2024/25 coming along soon
- Maidstone Town Centre Strategy – evolving as reviewing some earlier work
- Air Quality Action Plan approved – impacts on areas of Maidstone
- Fees and Charges for 2024/25 to be approved soon – helps reduce the impact on the Council Tax
- Council Tax reduction scheme has been running 10 years and approved for another year – this is targeted to support those in real need
- Contentious issue of a "Quarry for Kent Ragstone" – impacts on ancient woodland – but if not here then have to environmental impact elsewhere. KCC issue.

Cllr Riordan raised a number of points;

- Mostly dealing with planning issues raised by residents – Bovis Homes and liaising with Golding Homes
- Also arranged for Sue King from Enforcement to come and speak at the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Parish meeting
- Supported Sutton Valance Parish Council opposition to large housing development as appreciate how much work goes into a NDP (Cllr Perry also opposed application)

**County Councillor's Report (Standing item):**

**Present:** Cllrs Riordan, Ash, Pett, Perry, Farragher, Eerdeken, Martin, Arger, Alesi Castro, Hotson, Sharp and the Clerk.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Mclaughlin, Ahmed and Mclean
2. **COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:**
  - 2.1. Declarations of Lobbying - NA
  - 2.2. Changes to the Register of Interests - NA
  - 2.3. Interests in Items on the Agenda
    - Cllr Perry item 6.1 and 12.2
    - Cllr Riordan item 6.1
    - Cllr Alesi – item 12.2
    - Cllr Sharp item 12.2

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

#### 2.4. Requests for Dispensation

Cllr Riordan requested to speak on item 6.1 but not vote.

Cllr Sharp proposed Cllr Alesi seconded to approve Cllr Riordan's dispensation request – agreed majority 10 for 2 Abstained

Cllr Perry's request for dispensation to speak and vote on item 6.1

Cllr Alesi proposed and Cllr Eerdeken seconded for Cllr Perry's request for dispensation to speak and vote on item 6.1 – agreed majority 8 for, 3 against and 1 abstained.

### 3. **APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Cllr Ash proposed and Cllr Castro seconded to approve Pages 2145 – 2151 of 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](http://Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge (staplehurst-pc.uk)) agreed majority 11 for, 0 against and 1 abstained. Duly signed by Councillor Riordan

Cllr Hotson asked Cllr Riordan to clarify the collection time for Bulky Waste – Cllr Riordan to report back.

### 4. **FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

#### 4.1. Payment list

Cllr Arger proposed and Cllr Castro seconded to approve the payments list – agreed unanimously

#### 4.2. Summation and Balance sheet

Cllr Martins raised the same query as Cllr Eerdeken at last meeting regarding the Surrenden Field maintenance costs – agreed to speak to the RFO Deborah Jenkins.

#### 4.3. VAT report

Following a debate, where the Clerk apologised that this item should have come to the previous meeting, Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Hotson seconded the resolution below – agreed unanimously

**Resolution;** To retrospectively approve the VAT Consultant fee £440 plus VAT to attend a Employment, Finance and Strategy meeting to discuss VAT report.(Project Budget)

#### 4.4. Jubilee Field Improvements – 10 minutes

Following a debate – clarify spelling of "Chute lock" Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded the resolution below – agreed unanimously

**Resolution:** to

- i. approve the proposed solutions to long standing problems at Jubilee Field – chute lock for the entrance barrier gate (Council Jubilee Field budget) and manual security shutters for pavilion doors.(JFMC responsibility)
- ii. Report back with quotes

### 5 **CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS - attached**

The Clerk raised several points;

- Sainsburys Shuttle Bus -I am still chasing
- Response to our complaint regarding MBC Planning already circulated - noted
- Lack of Police Report – Clerk to write again to Police – (Cllr Riordan attending Cluster meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and will report back at Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November)

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

## 6 **PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION**

### 6.1 Local Plan Review 2023 consultation report

Cllr Ash led the debate which included the following;

- Retain the existing housing figures – some sites still to be completed / handed over
- Clarify / confirm housing numbers – 177? - proposed on the sites yet to receive planning approval
- GTTSP – clarify location, number of sites and pitches
- Need to take the opportunity to add in items into “Community infrastructure”, same as other Parishes, such as HIP items
- Need to clarify who will manages open space associated with developments

Cllr Riordan thanked Cllr Ash and Robin Oakley for all their hard work.

Cllr Castro proposed and Cllr Hotson seconded the resolution below – agreed majority for 11, against 0 and 1 abstained

**Resolution:** To delegate authority to the Clerk in consultation with Cllr Ash and Cllr Arger to finalise the Parrish Council comments on the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan Review 2023, and forward to Maidstone Borough Council by 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### 6.2 Staplehurst Monarchs FC report

Following a debate Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Arger seconded an amendment “to increase the opening hours of the pavilion lounge prior to the match kick-off to two hours before for refreshments but remain as one hour before for sale of alcohol”

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Arger seconded the resolution below – agreed majority for 11, against 0 and 1 abstained

**Resolution** – to increase the opening hours of the pavilion lounge prior to the match kick-off to two hours before for refreshments but remain as one hour before for sale of alcohol”

### 6.3 Youth Club report

Following a debate the main points were;

- This is an emergency for the community users that we need to sort out.
- If it closes for any length of time groups may fold or at least lose members
- The current users are being supported by the Scouts, Girl Guides centre and Community Centre. Option of moving equipment can be explored.
- We should consider the work required to keep the building operational for 5 years’ while we review options such as a new Youth / Community building on the site or a new Youth / Community building at Surrenden Field, seek funding and obtain appropriate permissions.
- Realistically the Youth Club will be closed until Christmas 2023.
- We should engage with other youth groups in the village not just the Youth Service on a way forward
- Figures from balance sheet are set out below;

Funding	Surrenden Field	Youth Club	To be allocated
Council reserves	£ 26,500	£ 15,000	

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

CIL funding to be allocated			£ 9,902
CIL funding to be received			£ 43,265
Total	£ 26,500	£ 15,000	£ 53,167

Note a figure of over £100,00 was mentioned at the meeting, the actual total is £94,667 – **not all should be spent on one building** - plus option to apply for grant funding.

Cllr Castro proposed and Cllr Hotson seconded the resolution below – agreed majority for 11, against 0 and 1 abstained

**Resolution; To;**

- i. Keep the Youth Club building closed until work to rectify the Fire Risk Assessment issues are completed
- ii. Delegate to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman to spend up to £1,000 of Youth Club Earmarked Reserves to engage a surveyor to clarify if the partition wall can be taken down, options to improve the disabled toilet and the safety of roof structure and report back on the work required.
- iii. Delegate to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman to spend up to £1,000 of Youth Club Earmarked Reserves to get an electrical test of the Youth Club and report back to Council with work required
- iv. For SCenic to consider and report back to Council before Christmas 2023 the long term options;
  - Demolition and rebuild of new Youth Club on the Youth Club site
  - Development of new pavilion at Surrenden Field to include a meeting room which the Youth Club and others could use plus consider alternative uses for the Youth Club site

Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to suspend Standing Orders of the Council and continue with the meeting until 10:30pm – agreed majority 11 for, 1 against and 0 Abstained.

6.4 Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – update report

Following a debate, which highlighted the good work of Cllr Alesi in getting the group back up running plus the commitment of the volunteers – training etc plus. In addition the need for sand bags in case of storm flooding, Cllr Castro proposed and Cllr Riordan seconded the resolution below – agreed unanimously

**Resolution To**

- i. donate the virtually phone number and 8 walkie-talkies to SEHT to support their community work.
- ii. For SEHT to report back regarding sandbags

7 **CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:**

Noted letter from Girl Guides, feed into the EGM tomorrow.

**8 PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS (from Committee/Groups/Office on specific issues or as regular update)**

8.1 Chairman's Report

Obtaining quotes for the brickwork at the Parade

Sue King, Enforcement Officer coming to next Parish Council meeting.

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

- 8.2 Committee and working group minutes for noting
- 8.2.1 Planning Committee minutes of 16th October 2023.
- 8.2.2 Road Safety Group next meeting 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- 8.2.3 JFMC meeting to be arranged
- 8.2.4 SCEnic meeting minutes 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- 8.2.5 Communications Group meeting to be arranged
- 8.2.6 3G multi-sports pitch working group minutes 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- 8.2.7 Employment, Finance and Strategy Group minutes 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- 8.2.8 NDP Review Group meeting to be confirmed
- 8.2.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting minutes to follow

**9 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting) - No items**

Noted the PPG – minutes of meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**10 URGENT MATTERS - NA**

**11 SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT – NA**

**12 Confidential**

**12.1 Volunteer Awards**

SCEnic to consider nominations for Youth Award and report back to Council

**12.2 Legal update**

**12.2.2 Allotments:**

Allotments were discussed and agreed a report to the next Council meeting on the transfer of the allotment land, fencing and barrier to car park.

**12.2.2 JFMC**

The Council discussed options for the management of the Jubilee Field, Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Riordan seconded the resolution below – agreed unanimously

**Resolution; to**

- I. accept the surrender of the Jubilee Field management lease from the Jubilee Field Management Committee Trustees
- II. that the existing arrangements remain in place until there is a formal legal surrender of the Jubilee Field management lease
- III. appoint and instruct Kingsford Solicitors to draft a deed of surrender of the management lease for JFMC Trustees to sign – £700 plus VAT plus HMLR fee up to £50. (Professional fees budget)
- IV. write to the Girl Guides Association to reassure them, that the Katie Lamb Centre, is safe guarded until a new lease is in place and report back with option of either existing lease remain intact by default or surrender old lease and re-grant a modern lease

**12.3 CCTV update**

Signed Chairman.....Date.....

The Council discussed the future of CCTV and Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Riordan seconded the resolution below – agreed majority for 11 , against 0 and 1 abstained

**Resolution; to**

- I. Appoint Cam Tech Securities to install a new router /WorldSIM card system at Jubilee Field £578 plus VAT plus the cost of a Cherry picker (CCTV budget)
- II. Officers to report back to Council on the efficiency of the new system so Council can consider next steps.

***These minutes are not verbatim but a summary of discussion at the meeting.  
The decisions are accurate.***

Closed.....10.30pm

Signed Chairman.....Date.....