

**STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP**  
**Minutes of meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 at 7.45pm**

1. **Present**, Cllr. Margaret Arger, (MA) Chairman, Robin Oakley,(RO) Secretary, Cllr. Adele Sharp (AS), Cllr. Richard Ash (RA), Mrs. Joan Buller (JB), Mr. Tom Burnham (TB).
2. **Apologies:** Mr. Colin Love (Holiday), Alison Eardley (Another appointment clashing) Cllr. Joris Eerdeken (Work)
3. **Did Not Attend:** Cllr. Paddy Riordan, Cllr. John Perry (Attending MBC meeting) Mr. Richard Smith.
4. **Minutes of Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2024:** Agreed, although it was noted that the date of the Annual Parish Meeting should be 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2024.
5. **Matters arising.** None.
6. MA pointed out that Cllr Ash was attending as a resident for this meeting as he will not be appointed as a Parish Council representative until the Annual Parish Council meeting in May.
7. **Update on Residents' Survey 2024.** MA reported that there has been a good response to the survey and all paper (200) and electronic(100) responses have now been entered on to the computer and she will be having a meeting with Jean Terry in the Parish Office on 2<sup>nd</sup> May to discuss the way forward and how the information can be presented to the Annual Parish Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May. MA noted that the paper responses contained a number of responses relating to matters which were not covered by the questions on the survey, and these will somehow have to be recognised by the Parish Council.
8. **Annual Parish Meeting.** MA reported that local historian Anita Thompson(AT) will be presenting a piece on Staplehurst.
9. AT and MA will be presenting a piece on how Staplehurst happened.
- 10.**Neighbourhood Plan.** AE has prepared the first draft of a NP Task List which invites group members, councillors and others to take responsibility for preparing various sections, and a Programme for the work, both dated February, 2024. Both these documents had been circulated with the agenda for the March

meeting and were discussed at that meeting with the following tasks which are repeated and supplemented below:-

Write a Foreword	Parish Council Chairman
Proofread the document	Robin Oakley
Produce photographs	Alison Eardley to produce a list of what photographs of Staplehurst she requires.
Updating the Parish Council Website and ongoing social media/communications.	Parish Clerk
Station redevelopment	Parish Clerk to contact Network Rail.
Environmental matters	Cllr. Ash will be involved with this section, possibly assisted by Cllr. Pett.
Footpaths and PROW	RG to discuss with the Footpaths Group and seek their involvement.
Open spaces and Views	RG to invite via social media, submissions as to open spaces which residents would like to see identified in the NP, also details of scenic views worthy of preservation.
Public transport	RO has prepared a summary of the public transport services by rail and bus currently serving Staplehurst and this is with AE for approval/comment.
Conservation Area	JB and TB will work on this section, including local heritage assets.
Green Spaces	MA is awaiting a prototype for this section from AE.
The History of Staplehurst	AT and MA are working on an article for the NPR, on the history of Staplehurst, as requested by AE.

**11. General Discussion.** The meeting concluded with a general discussion as to concerns being raised by Group members as to how work is to proceed. MA pointed out that there will not be a Parish Council Election on 2<sup>nd</sup> May because, of the 15 councillors on the present council, 4 were not standing for re-election, and there were no other residents offering themselves for election. It is assumed that the vacancies will eventually be filled by co-option. It is hoped that some of the existing members and co-optees will be able to offer to do some of the Group's work.

Concern was expressed that a considerable amount of time and effort had been taken up in preparing suggested revisions to various sections of the existing Neighbourhood Plan and Group members expressed their concern and frustration

that all this work is apparently going to be abandoned. It was considered that if the work is to be done in a format required by AE we shall need considerable guidance and 'hand-holding'.

**12. Any other business.** There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

**13. Dates of next meetings are agreed as follows.** 16 May, 6 June, and 25 July, 2024. Timings to be confirmed.

Robin Oakley

26 APRIL, 2024