

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 3rd April 2017 at 7.20 p.m.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors Claridge, Reardon, Smith and Whittle.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – Councillor Burnham declared a change to his register of interests which was not material to any agenda item.

Interest in Items on the Agenda – none declared.

Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Minute pages 1603-1606 of 20th March 2017 were proposed for approval by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Ashby, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Silkin and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx. Councillors Gosling and Riordan abstained.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Bell Lane Pond – Quotation for clearance of rubbish (for approval). Councillors reviewed the Clerk's report dated 30/03/17 and RESOLVED to accept the quotation of £140 from Page's Waste.
2. Distribution of Annual Report and Carnival & Fete Brochure – Update on Quotations by Third Party Distributors (Mins 1600 and 1603). Councillors reviewed the Deputy Clerk's report dated 03/04/17. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Ashby, Councillors RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Direct Letterbox Marketing to deliver four items to all households in the parish at a cost of £605 plus VAT. Councillor Buller abstained.
3. Kent Association of Local Councils – Membership Subscription 2017-18 (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Perry, Councillors RESOLVED to renew membership of the association at a cost of £1,250 plus VAT.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Staplehurst Post Office Public Consultation – Invitation to comment on proposed move to new premises and branch modernisation (deadline 28/04/17) (for comment) www.postofficeviews.co.uk. *With the agreement of Councillors this item was taken earlier than scheduled in the agenda due to public interest.* After considerable discussion Councillors RESOLVED to comment to the Post Office on its proposal to move Staplehurst post office from the High Street to Station Road, their key points being: the priority is to retain a post office service in Staplehurst; proposed parking and access arrangements at the new premises need to be improved; reliance on bus services is unrealistic; proposed increase of housing in Staplehurst requires an enhanced service and a second or sub-post office should be considered; the Neighbourhood Plan's policies set out to protect the village heart but also to encourage regeneration of the station area.
2. Carnival & Fete 24/06/17 – Correspondence: invitation to book a stall (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, Councillors RESOLVED to book two stalls at a cost of £10 per stall.

3. Kent Association of Local Councils – Invitation to submit nominations for various roles on Maidstone Area Committee (for decision – submission deadline 31/05/17). Chairman Silkin asked Councillors to advise the Clerk if they wished to submit any nominations.
4. Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation – Invitation to comment on modifications (deadline 19/05/17) (for comment) <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/council/have-your-say/current-consultations/march-2017-local-plan-modifications>. Councillor Burnham proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group be asked to review the modifications, which was AGREED by Councillors.
5. NatWest Community Banker – Report of meeting 28/03/17 (for noting). Councillors NOTED the Clerk's report of the visit to the Parish Office by Ms Augusta Cook-Overy, newly appointed NatWest Community Banker. Chairman Silkin quoted from the Community Banker's role description that the role was 'to be the public face of the brand within the communities I operate, developing a strong presence maintaining the tradition of the bank being a pillar of a thriving community. It is important for us that we do not lose a presence in the community during and following the branch closures, ensuring that our customers still have a point of contact'. Councillor Sharp reported that NatWest had contacted the Village Centre about the possibility of the mobile branch using the premises on a Saturday.
6. Parish Surgery – (i) Report on parish surgeries held 25 March & 1 April (SL-R/AG). Subjects discussed were the proposed relocation of the Post Office and payment of Council Tax. (ii) Appointment of representatives for future surgeries: 22nd April to be confirmed; 29th April Councillor Buller.
7. Pullen Farm Solar Installation – Correspondence: request to Parish Council for a donation towards cost of consultant engaged by residents (for decision). Councillors observed that they had previously declined a similar request from a group engaged in opposing another solar farm appeal (Min1555), having taken advice from KALC and the Clerk at that time. Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Burnham, Councillors RESOLVED to decline the request. Councillor Perry abstained.
8. Remembrance Day Parade – Correspondence: request to Parish Council to assume responsibility for organisation (for decision). Councillors NOTED the letter dated 28/03/17 from representatives of Staplehurst Scouts, Guides, Royal British Legion and All Saints Church and that following the disbanding of the Royal British Legion Staplehurst branch these parties were asking the Parish Council to take responsibility for planning and organising the Remembrance Day parade. Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Spearink, Councillors RESOLVED to provide administrative and organisational assistance to facilitate the holding of the parade.
9. South Eastern Rail Franchise Public Consultation – Invitation to comment on service improvement options and priorities to help inform the award of the new franchise (deadline 23/05/17) (for comment) <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-south-eastern-rail-services>. Councillor Burnham said he would be attending the public information event in Maidstone on 11th April and would report back.

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

1. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported: a Facebook training session for Councillors was scheduled for 24th April; the Parish Office was heavily engaged in year-end work; he was reviewing documentation relating to the Men's Shed and the Parish Council's use of the library; he had been handling completion arrangements the transfer of Wimpey Field to the Parish Council; invitations had been sent to potential stallholders about the Annual Parish Meeting and the NatWest Community Banker had confirmed attendance; the Parish Office had been receiving many comments and enquiries about the proposed relocation of the Post Office.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting

- a) Annual Parish Meeting 2017 – Update on arrangements (Min 1601, 1603-4). Councillors NOTED the status of the draft agenda and responses from potential stallholders – to be reviewed at the next meeting.
 - b) Communications Group – Proposed Terms of Reference (Min 1604) (for approval). Councillors reviewed the Clerk's previously circulated comments on the proposed terms of reference. Councillor Perry said he substantially agreed with the comments and advocated that appropriate modifications be made to the terms of reference. Councillors AGREED that the modifications be made and asked Councillor Lain-Rose to produce a revised document for review by the Communications Group.
 - c) Community Clean-Up – (i) Report of Clean-Up Day 18/03/17 (for noting). Councillors NOTED Councillor Buller's report published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx> and thanked Councillors Buller and Burnham, the Clerk, the Youth Club and Staplehurst WI for their organisation of a most enjoyable and productive community event. (ii) Proposal for donations to supporting organisations (for decision): proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Gosling, Councillors RESOLVED to make donations of £50 each to Staplehurst Youth Club and Staplehurst WI in recognition of their contributions to the event.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
- a) Bell Lane Pond - Councillor Spearink reported that he had been given some additional silver birch saplings.
 - b) Footpath KM312 – Councillor Spearink reported that a tree surgeon engaged by Carillion had inspected the path and adjoining land owned by the company between Bell Lane pond and The Bartons. Although outside his remit the tree surgeon will recommend investigation of drainage issues in the ditches alongside the path.
 - c) Wimpey Field – Councillor Spearink reported that transfer to the Parish Council of the land known as Wimpey Field had been completed and the grant from Taylor Wimpey had been paid. He said that the contractor would start work on the previously agreed path and clearance work (Min 1554) and that the Community Payback team had almost completed the lifting of branches. Councillors thanked Councillor Spearink for all his work on the project.
 - d) Village Centre – Councillor Sharp reported that a Community Payback team had started work in the Village Centre grounds.
 - e) The Parade/SPAR Building Works – Councillor Lain-Rose reported that scaffolding would remain in place for a few more weeks.

REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS for noting:-

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – Councillor Perry commented: the planning application for development of land south of Marden Road would go before MBC Planning Committee on 27/04/17; Parisfield S106 money needed to be spent by November 2017 – Councillor Burnham commented that the Surrenden Field Group would bring forward three quotes for drainage that would use up the remaining balance; there had been a traffic accident at Hawkenbury Bridge on 01/04/17 and he had written to Helen Grant MP and County Councillor Hotson about installation of traffic lights there; he and Borough Councillor Brice had met representatives of Arriva and discussed problems with the reliability of new hybrid buses; they also discussed availability of real-time service information, which was currently available via the Arriva app but Councillor Perry said he would like to investigate the provision of displays at bus shelters.
2. Kent Association of Local Councils – Minutes of Maidstone Area Committee meeting 22/03/17. NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting):-

1. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee – Note of meeting 14/03/17. Councillor Perry's report was NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx.

URGENT MATTERS (at Chairman's discretion, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting)

No items were raised.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting three residents voiced objections to the Post Office's proposal to relocate the Post Office from High Street to Station Road. Two residents asked the Parish Council to consider favourably the request to take on organisation of the Remembrance Day parade. After the meeting two residents made further comment about the Post Office relocation, one resident observed that new speed limit signs were in place on the A229 south of the village and one resident thanked councillors for taking on the organisation of the Remembrance Day parade.