

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 1st April 2019 at 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Kelly, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Pontet, Sharp, Silkin, Smith, Symes and Burnham who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr MJ Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Forward and Reardon whose reasons for apology were accepted.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – Councillor Burnham declared he had submitted a new notification of interests declaration.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – Councillors Buller, Silkin and Smith declared an interest in the item relating to Staplehurst Emergency Help Team as they were members of the team.

Requests for Dispensation – Councillors Buller, Silkin and Sharp requested and were granted dispensation to speak on Staplehurst Emergency Help Team in accordance with section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES: Minute pages 1750-1752 of 11th March 2019 were APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Burnham and made available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>.

FINANCE REPORTS

1. Accounts for payment – for approval. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Silkin, the list of accounts for payment was APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 6th March to 26th March totalled £14,504.63; income for the period totalled £404.75. Councillor Kelly abstained.
2. Summation of Accounts – for noting. NOTED by Councillors and published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>. Councillor Lain-Rose commented that the summation showed total expenditure finished under budget for 2018-19, as did specifically expenditure on youth services, council administration and staff. Councillor Perry requested that a variance report be produced to explain the outcomes.
3. Kent Association of Local Councils – Invitation to pay annual subscription of £1,300 for 2019-20 (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Perry, it was RESOLVED to pay the KALC subscription of £1,300 plus VAT for 2019-20.
4. Parish Council Website Upgrade – Proposal to purchase an SSL certificate for the Parish Council website (for decision). Councillors NOTED the Clerk's report and that the proposed certificate would enhance the security of user sessions on the Parish Council website. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Kelly, it was RESOLVED to purchase the SSL certificate via Hugo Fox for a cost of £39.99 per annum.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Bus Service Issues – Follow-up to the discussion of issues at the Annual Parish Meeting. Councillors thanked Mr Oakley for recording bus service failures, a list of which had been circulated before and was available at the meeting. Councillors AGREED to: (i) follow up reliability issues with Arriva; (ii) take up with Kent Highways and Arriva the protocol for relocating bus stops during road works; (iii) take up with MBC the status of developer S106 contributions allocated for bus service improvements. Councillor Kelly commented that if funds were limited, they could perhaps be more usefully deployed on targeted improvements. Councillor Perry said he would take up the service issues with Helen Grant MP.

2. Fete Stall – Invitation from Community Events Group to book a stall at Staplehurst Fete on 29/06/19 (for decision). RESOLVED: reserve space for two stalls at a total cost of £20.
3. Parish Council Surgery – (i) Report of surgery 30/03/19 – Councillor Sharp reported that a resident had discussed MBC’s call for sites; (ii) Appointment of representatives for future dates: 27th April – Councillor Pontet volunteered to join Councillor Perry.
4. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places – Consultation by Maidstone Borough Council on proposals which include an additional polling station in Staplehurst Village Centre (deadline 16/05/19). Councillors AGREED to respond that they had no objection to the proposal for an additional polling station.
5. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – Proposal to formalise insurance cover for SEHT activity (for decision). Councillors NOTED the Clerk’s report of the requirements set out by the Parish Council’s insurer for cover to extend to the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team. Councillors AGREED that the team members were volunteers, that the team worked in partnership with the Parish Council and that the Parish Council was content to cover the team’s liabilities and for the team to be included as a named party under the insurance policy. Councillors NOTED that the Clerk had requested sight of the team’s emergency plan and risk assessment to meet insurers’ requirements and that following receipt of the documents the necessary policy extension could be made at no additional cost. The Clerk offered to assist the team with its risk assessment.
6. Staplehurst Traffic Survey – Note of meeting with Kent Highways 13/03/19. Councillors NOTED the report. Councillor Perry requested that the final word of the section on speed limits be amended from ‘variation’ to ‘deviation’. Councillors AGREED that Councillor Buller and the leader of Staplehurst Speedwatch should follow up the Clerk’s contact with parish councils who were using speed indication devices. Cllr Kelly said that he had seen road markings deployed as calming measures on a number of roads in Cornwall. The Clerk drew Councillors’ attention to similar measures taken in East Farleigh.

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

1. Clerk’s Report – The Clerk reported: the Parish Office had been very involved in organisation of the Annual Parish Meeting and Village Clean-Up; work was under way to produce year-end financial statements and reports; work on creating the new pond at Wimpey Field would commence in the coming days and Helen Grant MP would be hosting a meeting about access to the field on 05/04/19; the next site meeting with Redrow Homes would take place on 11/04/19; ecology works would commence at Hen & Duckhurst Farm on 08/04/19 and would last for about sixty days; the Clerk and Deputy Clerk had met representatives of the Men’s Shed to discuss the Shed’s ideas for planting on Youth Club land and replacement of the gate on the A229 boundary; the Clerk was chasing up progress on concluding the new lease for Surrenden Field; the Parish Office had responded to enquiries about the parish council elections for which nominations would close at 4.00pm on 03/04/19.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - 2.1. Churchyard Liaison Group – Report of meeting 13/03/19. NOTED by Councillors and posted at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/reports-for-noting/>.
 - 2.2. Community Enhancement Group – Reports of meetings 25/02/19 and 18/03/19 <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/community--leisure-group/>. The reports were NOTED. Recommendations: (i) 2019-20 Donations - Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Ashby, the following donations were APPROVED: Kent, Sussex & Surrey Air Ambulance £250; Community Centre for Debt Advice Staplehurst (CCDAS) £200; Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) Maidstone £300; Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal £100; Samaritans Maidstone & The Weald £100; Involve Maidstone £75; Medway Valley Countryside Partnership £50; Staplehurst Free Church (re SEHT) £80; Parish Magazine £75; Community Picnic Event £300; Staplehurst Stay

Safe Event £100; Annual Clean-Up (x2) – Refreshment and Venue Providers £200. Councillor Kelly abstained. It was AGREED to decline a request from Samaritans Tunbridge Wells because the Parish Council supported the Maidstone & The Weald branch. (ii) Appointment of representatives to Staplehurst Youth Club Committee: it was AGREED that the Parish Council should appoint representatives to Staplehurst Youth Group as committee members and not trustees. Councillors Kelly and Perry abstained.

- 2.3. Village Clean-Up – Report of Clean-Up 23/03/19. Councillor Buller’s report was NOTED by Councillors and posted at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/reports-for-noting/>. Councillor Buller commented that the clean-up had been very well supported by over seventy participants and that more bag holders would be useful at future events. Thanks were extended to Councillors Buller and Burnham and to the Parish Support Officer. It was AGREED that a letter should be sent to Southeastern Railways to draw attention to the large amount of rubbish collected from the station area and to seek their cooperation to complete the job and maintain the area in future.
- 2.4. Policy Proposals – Before discussion of the next item, Councillor Perry proposed that discussion of all policy items be deferred for discussion post-election. Councillor Lain-Rose commented that: the policies had been in the pipeline for some time; all policies were subject to regular review to ensure they remained relevant or were amended as appropriate; advice from the MBC Deputy Monitoring Officer had highlighted the pre-election constraint on publicity but also indicated that business as usual continued. The Clerk confirmed receipt of this advice while drawing Councillors’ attention to the Local Government Association’s guidance that undertaking certain types of business including new policies should be ‘carefully considered’ during the period. Councillor Silkin commented that policies were designed to guide new councillors and therefore would be useful. The motion for deferral (proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Kelly) was NOT AGREED and discussion of the individual policies followed.
- 2.5. Member and Officer Relations Policy – New policy for approval <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Silkin, the policy covering working relations between members and employees was APPROVED.
- 2.6. Members’ Learning and Development Policy & Procedures – New policy for approval <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>. Councillor Lain-Rose thanked Councillors Perry and Silkin for their contributions to the development of the policy. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Smith, the policy covering member training was APPROVED.
- 2.7. Press and Media Policy & Procedures – New policy for approval <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>. Councillor Perry commented that he felt the document was too long. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Pontet, the policy covering press and media matters was APPROVED.
- 2.8. Social Media Policy & Procedures – New policy for approval (replacing Social Media Guidelines 2013) <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>. Councillor Lain-Rose said that the new policy had developed from dedicated social media training received by councillors and from engagement with the Kent Association of Local Councils. He said it also took into account the recent report issued by the Commission on Standards in Public Life on Local Government Ethical Standards (Min1747). He said the length of the document reflected the range of subject matter that needed to be covered. Councillor Pontet suggested that readers would find it helpful to be able to see more easily which sections were relevant to them. The Clerk suggested adopting colour coding along the lines used in standing orders. Subject to

the presentational amendments, proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Pontet, the policy was APPROVED.

3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only.
 - 3.1. Annual Report – Councillor Buller requested Councillors to send their contributions to the annual report to Councillor Reardon, the Clerk and herself within two weeks.
 - 3.2. Jubilee Field – Councillor Lain-Rose reported: a meeting of the Jubilee Field Management Committee had been held on 28/03/19, at which he had been elected acting chairman; the football club had received planning consent for proposed enhancement of football facilities on the field; the senior football team’s promotion had been confirmed; he was seeking information about the planned funding arrangements for the new facilities and the Jubilee Field Management Committee’s financial position; clarification was being sought from the trustees of the field about whether they wished to continue in their positions.
 - 3.3. Parish Liaison – Councillor Perry said he would be attending the quarterly MBC-Parishes Liaison meeting on 08/04/19 and invited Councillors to notify him of any issues they had.

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

1. Borough Councillor’s Report – Councillor Perry reported: he had attended hearings relating to planning appeals and to a licence variation for Hush Heath Winery, the latter being granted; at the local election in May Borough Councillors Wilson, Stockell and Greer would be standing down after many years’ service; the judicial review proceedings between MBC and KCC had been halted and it was publicly reported that they had cost MBC £48,000; the MBC committee system was being reorganised.

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

1. Kent Association of Local Councils – Minutes of Maidstone Area Committee meeting 11/02/19. NOTED by Councillors and posted at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/reports-for-noting/>.
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – Minutes of AGM 07/03/19. NOTED by Councillors and posted at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/emergency-help-team/>.

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

No items.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting the Chairman of Staplehurst Emergency Help Team commented on the challenge to recruit volunteers and said that insurance cover under the Parish Council policy would be helpful. A resident said that there was a need for formalised arrangements for bus stops when road works took place in the vicinity.

Proceedings finished at 9.45pm.