

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Tuesday 7th April 2015 at 8.45 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Gosling (until the point indicated in the minutes), Green, Kelly, Kemp, Manning, Perry, Reardon, Sharp, Spearink and Silkin who was in the Chair.

Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Burnham, Butcher and Lain-Rose whose apologies were accepted.

URGENT ITEMS: - None requested.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan, the Village Clean-Up and buses. Councillor Ashby declared she had been lobbied about litter on Surrenden Field.

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in items on the agenda – none declared.

Requests for dispensation – none requested.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Pages 1417-1420 of 2nd March 2015 were proposed for approval by Councillor Kemp, seconded by Councillor Buller, approved by councillors (Councillor Kelly abstaining). Pages 1421-1424 of 16th March 2015 were proposed for approval by Councillor Manning, seconded by Councillor Green, approved by councillors (Councillors Gosling, Kelly and Reardon abstaining). Minute pages were posted at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx .

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Neighbourhood Plan and Development Proposals – (i) Request for meeting re Iden Park. Proposed by Councillor Kemp, seconded by Councillor Kelly, councillors agreed (Councillor Perry against) to receive representatives of owners of Iden Park, Cranbrook Road, at a future council meeting and to listen without commitment to proposals relating to the site. (ii) Update from Steering Group. Councillor Buller reported that Feria Urbanism had sent a first draft of the Regulation 16 version of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan which would be discussed at a Steering Group meeting to be arranged.
2. Borough Councillor Update – Councillor Perry reported that there was much support in MBC for the proposed Parish Charter. He said he was pressing the MBC for action on litter along the borough's roads; Councillor Spearink said the issue had also been raised at a recent forum he had attended relating to tourism in the area. Councillor Perry advised that he and Councillor Kelly had attended a useful meeting with representatives of Southern Water. He said that post-election MBC would move to a committee structure of governance. *Councillor Gosling left the meeting at this point.*
3. Caretaker's Report – no issues to report.
4. Carnival & Fete – Invitation to take a stall (for decision). Councillors voted nem con to book a stall for the fete on 27th June. Councillor Reardon asked that the Carnival & Fete Committee update its website page; Councillor Manning undertook to take the request to the committee.
5. Consultations – for consideration of a Parish Council response
 - (i) Kent County Council Customer Service Policy (closes 12th May). Deferred for discussion at the next council meeting.

- (ii) Maidstone Borough Council Parish Charter (closes 1st May). Councillor Perry said that the proposed Parish Charter would be a dynamic document, subject to periodic review to ensure it remained relevant. It would not be a legal contract but would aim to set out the relationship between the borough council and the parishes through KALC. Councillors agreed to review the draft charter and discuss any proposals they had for amendment at the next council meeting.
6. Kent County Council Rail Summit 18th May – Invitation to attend (for decision). Noting that the event's date clashed with a parish council meeting, Councillor Buller agreed to ask if Mr Robin Oakley would be available to attend.
 7. Oliver Road Open Space & Woodland – Recording progress to date (PS). Councillor Spearink said he had been taking photographs of landscaping work in progress with a view to building up a collection for future publication and records. Councillors agreed that Councillor Kelly should speak to Forestry First to explore what opinions and assistance it could offer relating to the condition of the trees.
 8. Parishes Conference 21st March – Councillors noted the Clerk's report of the conference (published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>). Councillor Spearink highlighted the interesting presentation given by the representative of UK Power Networks about its Priority Services Register for vulnerable customers.
 9. Surgery Report – Report on Parish Issues. Councillor Sharp reported that there had been one visitor to the surgery on 28th March.
 10. Village Clean-Up – Councillors noted Councillor Buller's report of the clean-up on 21st March (published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>). They agreed to make a £50 donation to the Staplehurst WI to thank the group for its support on the day. Councillor Buller expressed thanks to the Village Centre and the Youth Club for use of their facilities. She said she would approach County Councillor Hotson to discuss possible assistance to acquire bag-holders for future events.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Next meeting 17/04/15. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, NK, RS, PS) Next meeting June t.b.a. Minutes of AGM 23/03/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc_emergency_planning_group.aspx
3. Planning Committee (PB, MA, JB, TB, AG, SG, PK, NK, PS) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx
4. Allotments Project Group (TB, PK, JB, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_1.aspx
5. Strategy & Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SL, RS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy_group.aspx
6. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, SL, JR) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx
7. Playscheme (TB, JB, NK) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth_activities_1.aspx
8. Publicity & Website Group (TB, PK, MA, JB, NK, SL, JR) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx Councillor Buller reminded councillors to complete their contributions for the Annual Report by 10th April.
9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, JB, AS) Next meeting 08/04/15. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.
10. Staplehurst Village Centre Development Group – Status Report – discussion deferred.
11. Surrenden Playing Field Group (TB, BM, JR, AS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx> Councillor Reardon asked about progress with the renewal of the lease. Councillor Perry said he would pursue it with MBC.
12. Village Enhancement Group (TB, PK, JB, PB, JR, AS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups.aspx.
13. Youth Club (PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_youth_club.aspx

REPORTS FOR NOTING from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (SL, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_carnival_fete_committee.aspx
2. Churchyard Liaison (PB, PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_2.aspx

3. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting? Minutes of meeting 03/03/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB, PK) Next meeting 14/05/15. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx
5. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, PK, RS, PS) Next meeting AGM 29/04/15. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx
6. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (PB) Next meeting?
7. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group (BM, NK, PS) Next meeting?
8. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting? Reports of meetings 24/09/14 and 20/11/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx
9. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
10. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting 21/05/15. Minutes of meeting 15/01/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group (JP, NK, PS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting 02/06/15. Report of meeting 03/03/15 awaited. <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
13. Speed Watch (JB) <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/speedwatch.aspx>
14. Staplehurst Community Hub (JB) Next meeting?
15. Staplehurst Patients' Participation Group (JB, RS) Next meeting 15/04/15. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx
16. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (AG, SL, BM, JR)
17. Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan Group (NK) Next meeting? Report of meeting 02/10/14 awaited.
18. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (PB) Next meeting? Report of meetings 11/11/14, 03/12/14, 06/01/15 and 24/02/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx
19. Village Golf & Sports Club (PB) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/ot_hers.aspx

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting the secretary of the Staplehurst branch of the Royal British Legion spoke about the 70th anniversary of VE Day on 8th May, asking whether the Parish Council was aware of or was planning an event. The Chairman responded that the Council had no knowledge of any plans.

Before the meeting at 8.00pm representatives of Pickhill Developments, owners of The Grange, gave a presentation to councillors and attending members of the public about their proposals for fifty dwelling units on their site north of George Street. They explained that, as local people who had engaged with the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan, they felt they understood the area. They stated they believed their ideas were landscape-led and flexible and would meet local needs, e.g. for bungalows and retirement accommodation. They acknowledged the location was outside the accepted settlement boundary but felt there was some support during the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan 2014 consultation for modest development north of the railway line. Councillors and other attendees asked questions about a number of points including: why presenters felt The Grange was better than land-call sites put forward by MBC planning officers and rejected by Scrutiny Committee and/or Cabinet (presenters believe it is better located); the need for a strategic approach to infrastructure, particularly sewerage and drainage (presenters state 'infrastructure already in place'); impact on allocated housing numbers; MBC's and SPC's recognition of the importance of the railway line as a limit for development (presenters take the view that the site's landscape lends itself well to development); how north-south development could shift the centre of the village (presenters believe being north of the village would impact less on the crossroads); the unsuitability of existing railway crossings; what future provision would be made for pedestrian routes (presenters responded that a footpath would be created on George Street).