

APPROVED MINUTES of the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team meeting held on Thursday 17th September 2015 at The Free Church, Staplehurst. 7.30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Andrew Watson welcomed the following to the meeting; Catherine Abbott, Jason Bardell, Sue Bassett, Joan Buller, Bob Howse, Peter Jeffery, Barbara Keel, Erika Lock, Peter Spearink, Craig Wilson, Emma Wilson, Tony Henley & Kevin Hobson.

1 Apologies for Absence were noted from: Bill Piper, Anne Finlayson, David Ralph, Pam Payne, Diane Buch, Donna Maxa, Rory Silkin, Neal Kemp, Paul Butcher, Laureen Rodwell, Geoff Barber.

2 Minutes of last meeting: 22 June 2015 – Approved and signed.

3 Matters arising/current matters:

ACTION

3.1 Staplehurst Emergency Plan Review 2015 – A report on progress was given by Sue. Craig offered some hand-written notes/comments on ways to improve further the plan. Sue to incorporate these into the next version for consideration. Craig offered to contact Peter at KCC to check when the new template would be available.

Sue B

Craig W

3.2 Staplehurst Emergency Plan Review Appendix 9 - David S-L had yet to report back on his review of this section.

David S-L

3.3 Feedback from Flood Warden Training 17th July 2015 – No-one appeared to have attended. Noted that Andrew Watson and Geoff Barber had already received Flood Warden Training.

3.4 Telephone Tree amendments March 2015 – After discussion it was agreed that no deputy was needed as the SEHT telephone itself would be handed round to members on a rota basis. Sue agreed to add Members' addresses to the Telephone Tree, with possibly a map.

Sue B

3.5 Second equipment bag suggestion – AW offered to speak to Rob Wiles about a duplicate set of bags. Some members appeared unaware of what the Emergency Rest Centre bags contained. Suggested these were brought to a future meeting for inspection/familiarisation. AW to contact Sobell Lodge.

Andrew W

3.6 Rest Centre availability/changes & updates – Peter stated that Greenworld would not be available as a Rest Centre/source of food next year and agreed to contact Frankies Farm Shop instead. Details to be given to Sue to update the plan.

Peter S

Sue B

3.7 Action on Andrew's AOB suggestions from 22/06/15
re: Utilities – Agreed to let this suggestion drop.

4 Emergency Plan familiarization – As the review process was ongoing, this was not progressed. If any member wished to see a copy of the current plan, please contact Sue Bassett at the Parish Office. Copies were held within the Emergency Rest Centre bags for reference in an emergency. Sue to check the latest information would be available by the next exercise.

Sue B

- 5 **Preparation for 17th October Exercise** – The exercise would be activated by Rob Wiles through the SEHT telephone and telephone tree. Other (non-telephone tree) members could be called in at a later stage as/when/if required.

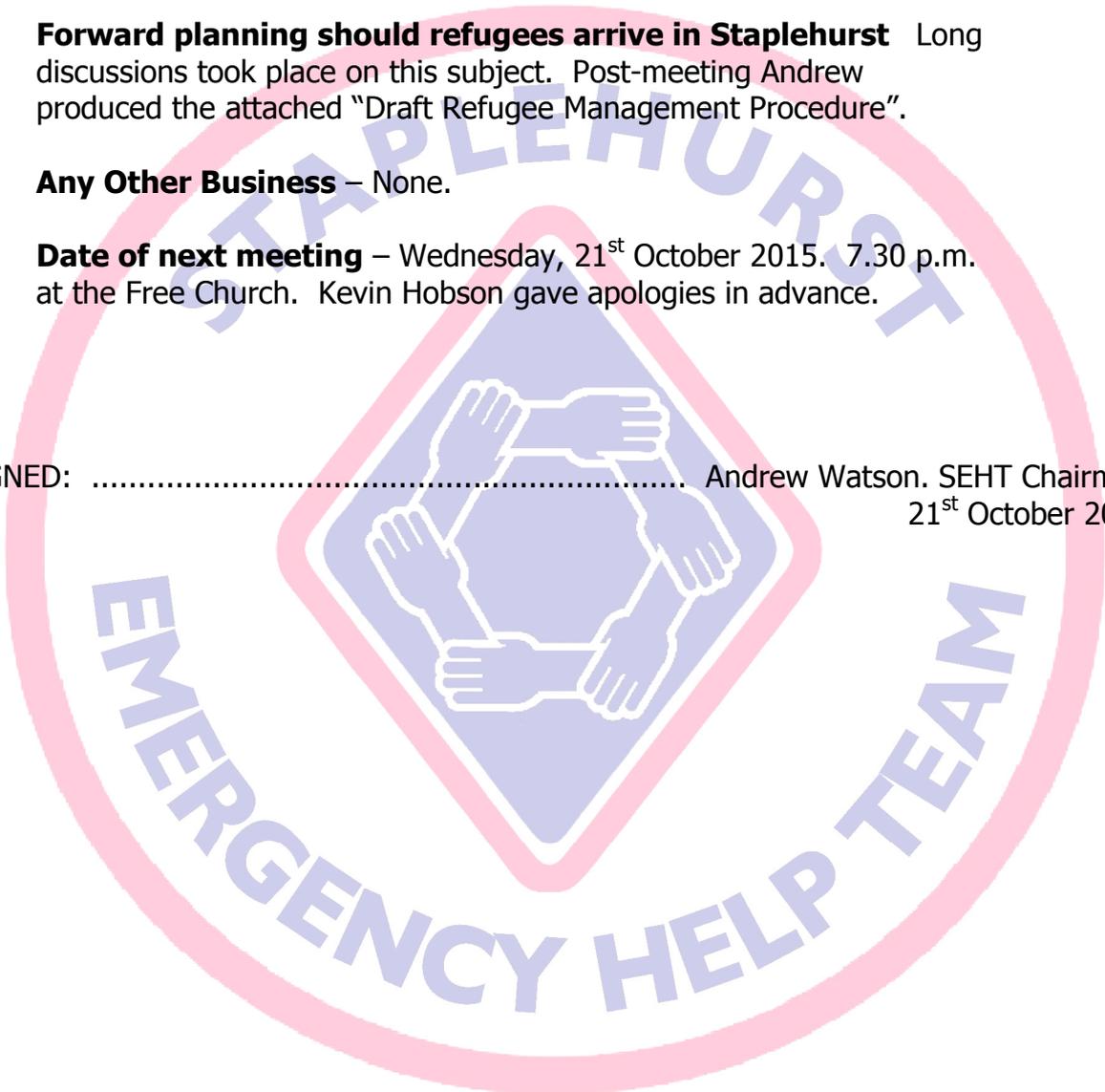
- 6 **Information update** – Andrew commented that he had looked at the Health Centre as a potential Rest Centre and received agreement. Details had been added to the Emergency Plan. Understood that there was an NHS Plan for Complex Care Nurses who would work with 4x4 group to reach vulnerable people in emergency situations.

- 7 **Forward planning should refugees arrive in Staplehurst** Long discussions took place on this subject. Post-meeting Andrew produced the attached "Draft Refugee Management Procedure".

- 8 **Any Other Business** – None.

- 9 **Date of next meeting** – Wednesday, 21st October 2015. 7.30 p.m. at the Free Church. Kevin Hobson gave apologies in advance.

SIGNED: Andrew Watson. SEHT Chairman
21st October 2015



Refugee Management Procedure (Draft 1)

Assumption: It has been reported to a Team Member that a group of refugees (the Group) has been spotted somewhere in the village, and the indications are that they plan to remain in the village overnight. It is unlikely that this report would have come from the emergency services (such as the Police or the Environment Agency) via the SEHT 'phone. It is probable that the Team Member will receive the news by 'word of mouth', from a neighbour.

From the report, the Team Member will know precisely where the refugees have been seen, and the approximate number in the Group. This is the likely starting point. It is not known if this is a group of refugees, illegal immigrants, asylum seekers... and this is not the concern of the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (the Team) – the fact is that they are here, in our village, and they are probably in need of assistance.

Phase 1: Establishing the Plan

1. The Member will decide a suitable meeting point, and will use the 'Telephone Tree' to call Team Members to assemble there.
2. If time allows while the Team is assembling, the Police should be alerted to the situation – that there is a Group of refugees in our village, in all likelihood intending to stop for the night, tell them where the Group is reported to be, and where the Team Members are meeting. It is possible that the Police have some knowledge of the Group already – which might be of use to the Team when they are deciding their course of action.
3. On meeting, the Team Members will agree
 - a) Who is to act as spokesperson, and
 - b) The best place (shelter) for the refugees to be taken to – although the location might have to be changed when more information is available about the Group.

Note:

1. Unless the Group is equipped to camp, and clearly intends to spend the night in the open, they must be offered shelter and support. In this unlikely event, toilet arrangements are the critical issue – and

2. Unless adequate security arrangements can be made (unlikely), Team Members should not offer refugees overnight accommodation in their own homes – the risk of providing 'temptation' to steal would be irresponsible.

4. The spokesperson, accompanied by at least one other Team Member, will approach the Group, asking to talk with their representative/Leader.
5. The Leader and, through him, the Group will be 'welcomed', before the following questions are asked:
 - a) Do you need help? (sound constructive while offering friendship)
 - b) What is your name?
 - c) Where are you from (nationality)? (Note: there is no need to ask 'Why are you here?')
 - d) Is this all of you? (meaning 'Are there more to come, are there stragglers still on the road?')
 - e) Where did you spend last night?

- f) What are your plans? – i.e. where are you going?
6. At this point the Team will decide on the course of action to be taken. On the assumption that the Group intends to overnight in the village, the Team will decide where (i.e. which shelter) shelter is to be provided.

Phase 2: The Operation

1. The planned arrangements will be discussed with the Leader who, hopefully, will have sufficient English to make clear possible difficulties – such as the use of a Church Hall (which might present religious difficulties) as accommodation for the night, and problems the Group might have experienced on previous nights – such as washing and toilet arrangements, and possible sickness within the Group.
2. As set out in the Emergency Plan, various members in the team will take on key responsibilities:
 - a) The key-holder for the selected shelter will be contacted and asked to open the hall.
 - b) The Care Co-ordinator: unless the Group is soaking wet, the first action will be to organise warmth, a hot drink, and food. (Note: on presentation of a SEHT badge, the Spar will provide the necessary supplies, for Maidstone Borough Council's account)
 - c) Incident Information Manager: will provide update to the Police – numbers, shelter location, and any details of the group's recent history and their plan for tomorrow
 - d) Recorder/Resource Manager: will act as 'door controller', recording the names of all those arriving in the shelter, and maintaining a log of any or all who might leave and re-enter while the Group remains 'in residence' there.
 - e) Subsidiary issues such as the supply/loan of towels, temporary bedding, and laundry arrangements, will be addressed by foraging in the local care homes.
 - f) Once the organisation is in place, the Team will agree an overnight timetable (a shift operation) until the Group is planning to leave – manning the door, organising breakfast – maintaining communications and control through the Group's Leader.

Note: The Team Leader/Spokesperson and the Care Co-ordinator must ensure that every effort is made to make the individual members of the Group feel welcome, and any sense of alienation must be minimised. This might not be easy at the outset; but it will tend bring out the best in a group of tired and anxious individuals, at a time when they will inevitably feel extremely insecure – for those with little or no English in particular, and for those with family responsibilities to shoulder. Give them a smile with their cup of tea, and they'll understand that the UK is a friendly place, and that we Brits are the reason why. They'll tell their kids about the welcome they received.