

## **STAPLEHRST PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE POLICY GROUP**

**PARISH OFFICE 17.30HRS 13 FEBRUARY 2012**

#### **REPORT**

The Policy Group met to discuss the attached agenda. All members were present: Cllrs. Burnham, Paul Kelly, Butcher, Green, John Kelly, Silkin and Spearink. The meeting was chaired by Cllr. Perry.

Agenda item 1: Review of Current Projects. It was noted that these were now mostly part of the remit of the VEG Group. The following points were noted:

- The Notice Board by the Fish and Chip Shop in the Parade needed renewing. Cllr.Spearink was asked to look into this and take what action was necessary.
- Salt bins. An article was in the latest Village Update. It was agreed that steps should be taken to obtain feedback from the Community. A letter had been sent by Robin Oakley suggesting that we designated certain people to be Snow Wardens; this was agreed in principle.
- Planters. We were waiting for final agreement from Kent Highways Services (KHS).
- Public Toilets. We were awaiting a further quote for the painting.
- A letter should be sent to Morrisons thanking them for their work in Bell Lane.

Agenda item 2: TRAMP. Discussion centred on what to allocate the balance of £1049 on. It was agreed that a good option would be the installation of an additional interactive speed signage near the Marden Road/Headcorn Road Junction. It was agreed that we should write to KCC/KHS to ascertain what it would cost and whether they would provide the maintenance.

Agenda item 3: Planning Issues. It was felt that with the likelihood of increasing interest from developers in the parish we should have an agreed policy on how we deal with these requests/demands. For example, how we should react to requests for meetings. After further discussion it was agreed new guidelines were needed and with this in mind the following was proposed:

1. Ask KALC to advise.
2. Contact Clerks from other parishes to see if they had something similar.

In addition to the above, concern was expressed regarding traveller sites and the lack of a coherent policy from MBC. It was agreed that the Chairman should liaise with the Clerk in sending a letter to the Chief Executive of MBC. In addition request Cllr. Lusty to supply the Parish Office with the latest map which plots all the traveller sites.

Agenda item 5: Councillor Standards. This item was deferred.

Agenda item 6: Parade issues. There was general agreement that the state of the Parade gave a very poor image of Staplehurst. It was noted that it was extremely difficult to obtain any response from the owners and in respect of the concerns raised regarding the clamping of vehicles they had made no effort to reply. It was recognised that the Parade was privately owned but it was still a public facility and there were possibly certain obligations on owners. The Group were particularly concerned at the general state of the Parade and it was recommended that our Borough Councillors should be contacted to get clarification on ownership, responsibilities and obligations. It was felt that Paul Fisher should be copied in on the correspondence. In addition advice should be sought from KALC.

Agenda item 7: Supermarket issues. The Parish Council had in conjunction with MBC tried to have a pre-meet with Tesco as had been done with Sainsbury's. Unfortunately this had not been possible and Tesco were now submitting their planning application. It was also noted that Sainsbury's application would be held in March. It was accepted that we would treat both applications in exactly the same manner and so we should plan to hold a public meeting for the Tesco proposal.

Agenda item 8: Possible new projects. The following were considered in detail:

- Disabled toilets by the library. It was understood that the building was owned by KCC. In the discussion that followed questions were asked as to whether there was a demand for these toilets to be reopened. It was accepted that there would be no additional funding from MBC and it could be argued that for a village the size of Staplehurst it was already well provided. One option might be to improve the signage at the Bell Lane site to indicate the facility was available for disabled users. It was recommended that this project should remain on the agenda but held back for the moment.
- Car Park at Bell Lane. There was a general consensus that the acquisition of this site would be worth pursuing as a safeguard against further development. It was recommended that a letter be sent to MBC (Steve Goulette) that Staplehurst Parish Council would be prepared to lease the car park for a peppercorn rent. This would reflect the poor state of the car park and the future repairs and maintenance that would possibly be required to be carried out.

- Skatepark extension. It was agreed that this was an extremely important facility for our community and now that we are staging the UpRockin event this summer it took on an even more important role in the village. There was a general support for this in principle and it was recommended that we should discuss this with representatives of the Skatepark users to obtain their views on what was required; this could be done through the UpRockin group. We would then need to consider how this would be funded. It was noted that any grants received would probably need to be matched.
- Stryker security cameras. It was noted that these cameras were already being praised by the Police and had recorded several incidents this had proved to have been very useful. Consideration might be given to retaining the camera in Market Street and acquiring an additional one at Jubilee Field. It was recommended that first of all we should write to Kent Police to see if they would be prepared to award us a grant. There was also the possibility that we could include this in our Concurrent Functions/Parish Services Scheme submission.

Finally, we had a general discussion regarding the Village Centre. No specific recommendations were made at this stage, although we agreed to write to the Village Centre Management regarding the provision of emergency exits and the lease.

The remaining items on the agenda were deferred. A request was made that the provision of exercise equipment at Surrenden Field be put on the next agenda. This was agreed. The next meeting is planned to take place within the next fortnight.

### **Summary of Recommendations and Actions**

The actions and recommendations to the Council emanating from this meeting are set out below:

1. Follow up on repair of Notice Board in the Parade. **Action: Cllr Spearink.**
2. Recommend establishing Snow Wardens. **Action: Council to consider.**
3. TRAMP balance. **Action: recommend that Chairman writes to KCC/KHS.**
4. Planning issues. **Action: recommend to seek advice from KALC and contact Clerks at other parishes. Write to Chief Executive MBC regarding traveller policy and request map of traveller sites from Cllr Lusty. Chairman and Clerk to pursue.**
5. Parade issues. **Action: recommend that advice is sought from KALC and the views of Staplehurst's Borough Councillors are sought in respect of the ownership, responsibilities and obligations of the Parade. Chairman and Clerk to pursue.**
6. Possible new projects. The following recommendations were made:
  - **Keep the disabled toilet on hold for the moment. Provide disabled signage for the Bell Lane toilets. Action VEG Group.**

- **In principle that the Skatepark be extended. Action: Parish Council liaise with Skatepark users regarding requirements and funding. Action Cllrs Butcher and Perry**
- **Write to Village Centre Management regarding provision of emergency exits and renewal of the lease. Action: Clerk.**
- **Consider retaining the Stryker PoleCat at Market Street and purchase a third for Jubilee Field. Action: Chairman to write to Kent Police to enquire about possible funding.**

John Perry

14 February 2012