

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 18th February 2019 at 7.50 p.m.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors Kelly, Pontet, Riordan and Smith whose reasons for apology were accepted.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – Councillor Lain-Rose declared that he had made a new declaration due to a change in his employment.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – As trustees of the Village Centre, Councillors Ashby, Sharp and Silkin declared an interest in the related agenda item. Councillor Perry declared that he was a member of MBC Planning Committee and would exercise due discretion in discussion of Hush Heath Winery in view of planning issues currently under consideration.

Requests for Dispensation – Councillors Ashby, Sharp and Silkin requested and were granted dispensation to speak on Staplehurst Village Centre in accordance with section 33(2)(e) of the Localism Act 2011.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES: Chairman Burnham stated that Councillor Kelly had requested the following addition to Minute page 1743, line 4: after 'the field's management structure needed to be addressed' insert 'first to enable the Parish Council to progress any further'. Councillor Lain-Rose requested the following addition to Minute page 1744, line 3: after 'requested allocation to three specific roads' insert 'Councillor Lain-Rose wished to have his disappointment noted that a member of the public stretched their remit by requesting the allocation of the three road names directly to the MBC officer after they had informed the Council at a previous meeting that it would be up to the MBC officer to decide the allocation of street names and suffixes'. Subject to inclusion of the two additions, proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Sharp, Minute pages 1742-1745 of 28th January 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/>. Councillors Ashby, Perry, Reardon and Symes abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting (1):

1. Hush Heath Winery – Consultation on application 19/00380/LAPRE to vary the current premises licence 18/02446/LAPRE to (i) remove the condition limiting the sale of alcohol to tasting samples only; (ii) allow on-sales of alcohol 10.00-19.00 Monday to Sunday (for dates other than the 12 permitted event dates when separate arrangements apply) <https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-licensing/search.do?action=simple&searchType=LicencingApplication>. [Deadline for comments 26/02/19]. Councillors AGREED to Chairman Burnham's proposal to discuss this item at an early point in the meeting in view of the public interest. *Chairman Burnham temporarily closed the meeting to allow contributions from the public before and after Council's discussion of the item.* Councillors discussed at length the application and comments made by residents and the representative of the winery. Their comments included: the Parish Council was not a statutory consultee for licensing matters but in this case there was clearly a significant amount of local resident interest; the challenge was how to balance the interests of the residents and the business; the application to allow on-sales until 19.00 seven days a week appeared to be designed to provide some operational leeway; MBC encouraged initiatives that increased visitor numbers; whilst the decision on the

variation request would be for MBC's Licensing Committee, it was noted that MBC planning enforcement had been notified about some planning issues and their response was awaited; light, noise and traffic were key concerns, although it was recognised that farming had evolved and the scale of production often involved more noise; the local road infrastructure did not support large-scale vehicle movements and the lanes were being damaged. It was RESOLVED: Chairman Burnham would draw up a statement about the issues to convey that the Parish Council was in favour of encouraging local business while at the same time being mindful of residents' concerns; the statement would be sent to the relevant MBC authorities to help facilitate a coordinated approach to site activity.

FINANCE REPORTS

1. Accounts for payment – for approval. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Perry, the list of accounts for payment was APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 22nd January to 12th February totalled £8,557.38; income for the period totalled £156.27.
2. Summation of Accounts – for noting. NOTED by Councillors and published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>.
3. Grass-Cutting – Quotation to cut grass east of the hedge between High Street and Chestnut Avenue (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Perry, it was RESOLVED to ACCEPT the quotation of £520 from Forestry First.
4. Surrenden Playing Field Lease – Quotation for legal fees relating to new lease (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Silkin, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, it was RESOLVED to ACCEPT the estimate of £950-£1,250 plus disbursements from Buss Murton.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting (2):

2. A229 Traffic Survey – Comments by Staplehurst Community Speedwatch Team Leader. Councillors thanked the Speedwatch team leader for his summary of the survey data. The team leader volunteered to assist Councillor Symes with displaying the information at the Stay Safe Staplehurst event on 23/02/19. Councillors requested that the information be sent to Kent Highways, the police, Staplehurst's member of parliament and press. Councillor Lain-Rose volunteered to draft a press statement. Councillors also requested information about the cost of an interactive speed sign.
3. Community Events Group – Request to use Surrenden Field for 10K run (09/06/19), Fete (29/06/19) and Funfair (date t.b.c.). RESOLVED: the request was AGREED.
4. Local Government Ethical Standards – Invitation from KALC to comment on the report issued by the Commission on Standards in Public Life <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-committee-on-standards-in-public-life>. Councillor Lain-Rose commented on some of the report's recommendations: he supported the recommendation that Councillors should be presumed to be acting in an official capacity in their public conduct, including statements on publicly-accessible social media (no.3); he supported Best Practice item 2 that Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation; he felt recommendation 19 'Parish council clerks should hold an appropriate qualification, such as those provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks' should be modified to allow for working towards a qualification; he felt recommendation 25 'Councillors should be required to attend formal induction training by their political groups' should extend to non-political councillors. Councillors NOTED the report and AGREED that the comments be sent to KALC.
5. Village Centre Development – Correspondence seeking information about future plans. Councillor Sharp said that the trustees of the Village Centre would be responding to the resident's letter. She commented that the trustees had put the work of the former Village Centre Redevelopment Group to good use; the North Hall had been renovated and longer-term plans were being made. The AGM had been delayed by the transitional arrangements

between old and new organisation taking longer than expected, notably the dealings with the Charity Commission; the AGM was likely to take place in June. In response to a question from Councillor Lain-Rose, Councillor Sharp said that no membership arrangements had been concluded for the new organisation. Councillor Ashby commented that at the AGM there would be news of ways in which interested residents could become involved. Noting that the Village Centre planned to produce an annual report in time for the AGM, Councillors AGREED that it could be distributed with the Parish Council's annual report around the end of May or early June.

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

1. Clerk's Report – The Clerk reported: the closure of Marden Road had been extended until 27th February; from 25th February there would be roadworks on Headcorn Road connected to the Bovis Homes development, with traffic managed by two-way traffic lights; a site meeting had been held with Redrow Homes to receive an update on progress: the Redrow representative had emphasised that the development would be very much a public area and the facilities such as footpaths and fitness trail would be available for all to use; the Redrow representative had also stated that Pile Lane was unofficially open for vehicles notwithstanding the closure indicated on some websites. The Clerk reported: the caretaker was replacing the damaged noticeboard at the Parade; the Parish Support Officer had been working with Councillor Symes on the Stay Safe Staplehurst event; the Clerk had been working on a number of policies and risk assessments which would be progressed over coming weeks. The Clerk reminded councillors that MBC would be holding presentations about the Local Plan review at Lenham (13 March) and Yalding (21 March).
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - 2.1. Neighbourhood Plan Review Group – Report of meeting 23/01/19 – NOTED by Councillors and published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/neighbourhood-plan-review-group/>. Chairman Burnham reported that he, Councillor Buller and the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group had met MBC to discuss possible revisions to the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan. He said the meeting would be discussed by the Group and a report would be issued to Full Council. It was observed that the timing of the review vis-à-vis the Local Plan Review would be an important consideration. Councillor Lain-Rose thanked the Chair and Secretary of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group for attending the meetings relating to neighbourhood plans for Goudhurst and Cranbrook & Sissinghurst.
 - 2.2. Play Scheme – Note of meeting with Play Place 04/02/19 (for noting). The report was NOTED by Councillors. Councillor Buller highlighted that it was proposed to increase the cost of a Play Scheme session by 50p, the first increase in some years. This would help to offset some of the increasing costs and recognise the fact that funding is no longer received from MBC. The increase was AGREED by Councillors. The Clerk said that he had requested use of the school hall for three weeks from 29th July and awaited a response.
 - 2.3. Parish Council Policies – policies for approval pursuant to recommendations of the Parish Council's Data Protection Officer: (i) CCTV; (ii) Document Retention and Disposal; (iii) Subject Access Request. RESOLVED: the policies were APPROVED and published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only.
 - 3.1. Wimpey Field – Councillor Forward reported: the caretaker had helped to reposition a bench that had been removed from its fixings; considerate visitors had been picking up dog-waste bags left by less considerate ones.

- 3.2. Planning Training – Councillor Forward reported that she had attended a KALC training course and that much of the course covered what she had learned through experience on the Parish Council’s planning committee.
- 3.3. Defibrillator – Councillor Manning commented that some of the notices about the defibrillator that were displayed in shops in the centre of the village had faded.
- 3.4. Village Update – Councillor Buller thanked Councillor Reardon for editing the latest edition of the Village Update and thanked all volunteers who helped distribute it.

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

- 1. Borough Councillor’s Report – Councillor Perry reported: MBC would meet next week to fix 2019-20 council tax; MBC was preparing for the possibility of a no-deal Brexit; he had attended the Kent Association of Local Councils Maidstone Area Committee meeting on 11/02/19 and there had been a big discussion about the code of conduct for local councillors; MBC was reviewing the Local Plan and it was clear that the maintenance of a five-year housing supply was very important.

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

No items.

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 a resident stated that he was particularly interested the parish council’s views on items relating to the A229 traffic survey and the Village Centre. Before and after discussion of the Hush Heath winery item Chairman Burnham closed the meeting for comments by from members of the public. Two residents voiced concerns about: breaches of planning conditions; expansion of business beyond the level envisaged in previous planning and licence applications; adverse impact on residential amenity; damage caused and risks posed by a high volume of large vehicle movements. On behalf of a group of residents a file containing representations and supporting exhibits was handed to the Chairman. A representative of the winery said that the company sought to act responsibly and engage openly with residents while running a successful business that brought benefits to the community.

The meeting finished at 9.50pm.