

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 6th July 2015 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Gosling and Spearink. Ex Officio: Chairman Silkin, Vice-Chairman Kelly and Vice Chairman Burnham who was in the chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr. M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher, Claridge and Kemp whose apologies were accepted.

APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES: Minute Pages 1212P – 1213P of 15th June 2015 were approved (Councillors Ashby and Kelly abstaining), signed by Councillor Burnham and made available at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

URGENT ITEMS: no items were requested.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

1. Declarations of Lobbying – All councillors declared they had been lobbied about 15/504228. Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about 13/1456 and 15/504821. Councillor Silkin declared he had been lobbied about KCC/TW/0170/2015. Councillor Spearink declared he had been lobbied about 15/504524.
2. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.
3. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda – none declared.
4. Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT: (for comment)

15/504646 **5 The Parade** – for 2 x internally illuminated fascia, 1 x illuminated projecting sign, ATM internally illuminated acrylic tablet and 2 x non-illuminated signs. Councillors agreed to advise the MBC Planning Officer that they had NO OBJECTION to the proposal.

CERTIFICATE OF LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT: (for noting)

15/504425 **Chantilly, Headcorn Road TN12 0BT** – for a proposed development being erection of a single storey side extension. Noted by councillors.

FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS: (for recommendation)

KCC/TW/0170/2015 **Land to the north of existing farm buildings, Knoxbridge Farm, Cranbrook Road TN17 2BT** – Installation of Anaerobic Digester, comprising below ground digester, ammonium sulphate tank, lagoon and associated areas of hardstanding, together with relocated earth bund. Councillors agreed to advise KCC that they had NO OBJECTION to the proposal.

15/504228 **Land Adjacent to Folly Farm, Frittenden Road TN12 0DL** – Change of Use to gypsy/traveller accommodation, stationing mobile homes, utility rooms and touring caravans. *Councillor Burnham closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public (recorded under Public Forum below) following which he reopened the meeting.* Thanking residents for their valuable comments, Councillor Burnham summarised the content of the application and made observations: MBC saved policy ENV28 stated that planning permission should not be granted unless there were special circumstances; the area was known to be subject to surface

water flooding and he found it surprising that the applicant stated that conversion of grassland to hardstanding would not increase this risk; the proposed site access would require alteration work, yet the application stated that no new or altered access was needed; no comments were yet available from Kent Highways; it was proposed to use septic tanks for foul drainage; there was no explanation of how the impact on neighbours' amenities and wildlife would be mitigated. He noted the absence of an agreed MBC policy on traveller sites and made reference to Policy C of the DCLG Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (March 2012) which indicated that 'local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community'; he also referred to Policy D which stated that 'rural exception site policy should seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection'. He observed that the application did not attempt to establish need. He commented that the applicant had not taken pre-application advice and observed that the application was lacking in the documentation required to demonstrate that it had considered fully all the important issues. Councillors echoed thanks to residents who had spoken and also to the many residents who had made their views known in other ways to the committee. They felt that the application was clearly at variance with government and local policy and shared the concerns expressed about flood risk, health risk and provision, schooling provision, sewage disposal and other services, domination of the settled community and highways safety. They felt the application was of poor quality and MBC's communication with residents totally inadequate. They also questioned MBC's apparent encouragement of development on a rural site where no conventional housing development was contemplated either in the Draft Local Plan or the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. For these reasons councillors voted nem con to recommend REFUSAL of the application and asked that a strong letter to this effect be sent to MBC with a request that the application be reported to MBC Planning Committee.

- 15/504524 **Saynden Farm, Five Oak Lane TN12 OHX** – Erection of RTK based station comprising of a satellite receiver and radio signal transmitting antenna on an existing farm building, to transmit a location signal for use by agricultural farm machinery (retrospective). Councillors agreed to advise the MBC Planning Officer that they had NO OBJECTION to the application.
- 15/504557 **Parkwood Stables, Park Wood Lane TN12 ODF** – Removal of Conditions 6 (a), (b), (c) and (d) of Planning Inspectorate's Appeal Decision letter dated 26th June 2013 (cessation of residential use) – Application MA/12/0557 (Change of use of land from agricultural to residential and stationing of 2 mobile homes, 3 touring caravans and 2 utility blocks with associated parking for two gypsy families and keeping of horses) refers. Noting that the conditions had been applied by the Planning Inspector and that no reason had been advanced for their removal, Councillors agreed to recommend to the MBC Planning Officer that removal of the conditions should NOT be allowed.
- 15/504821 **33 Reeves Close TN12 ONN** – Removal of Condition 6 (code for sustainable homes) of planning permission MA/12/2138 for the erection of an attached new dwelling. Councillors agreed not to submit a comment on the application.

REVISED DETAILS:

- 13/1456 **Great Pagehurst Farm, Pagehurst Road TN12 OJD** – Ground based photovoltaic solar farm, access, associated works and grid connection SPC

REFUSED (Min 1130P, 1147P, 1175P & 1187P). Councillors voted to record that the amended information did not change their recommendation of REFUSAL to MBC Planning Committee.

REPORTED DECISIONS: (for noting)

- MA/13/1453 **Land off Clapper Lane** – Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for one gypsy family with two caravans, including one static mobile home, together with the erection of a utility building and laying of hardstanding MBC GRANTED with 13 Conditions. SPC had recommended Refusal (Min 1122P & 1207P). Noted by councillors.
- 15/500628 **9 Hurst Close** – Erection of two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, porch roof, sun tubes and log burner flue MBC GRANTED with 4 Conditions. SPC had recommended Approval (Min 1199P & 1208P). Noted by councillors.
- 15/503194 **Spillsill Farm, Frittenden Road** – Prior notification for the change of use and conversion of barn from agricultural to a single dwelling MBC GRANTED. SPC had Noted (Min 1210P). Noted by councillors.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM – Before the meeting a resident said that amendments to 13/1456 made no difference and there was still a strong sense of feeling against the proposal. During the meeting closure prior to item 15/504228 seven residents and a member of Frittenden Parish Council raised objections to the application. Concerns included the following points: adverse impact on listed properties and Staplehurst Manor; adverse impact on scope for leisure activity in the area; poor highway access and associated safety issues on rural roads; susceptibility of the area to flooding; impact on farming activity; loss of amenity; sewage management; domination of the settled community; inconsistent approach and application of double standards by MBC to traveller/settled communities; failings in the MBC consultation process; Staplehurst's more than fair share of traveller sites; MBC's bias towards rural rather than urban locations for traveller sites; scope for further creeping development from the site; distance from and adequacy of health and education provision; no evidence of pre-application consultation; insufficient information in the application to demonstrate that important issues had been considered; MBC allowing submission of a poor quality application thereby creating further friction in the community.