

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 8.05 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Gosling, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Reardon, Riordan, Sharp, Smith (from the point indicated in the minutes), Spearink, Whittle (from the point indicated in the minutes) and Silkin who was in the Chair.  
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Claridge.

**CO-OPTIONS TO FILL COUNCILLOR VACANCIES** followed by the signing of the Declaration(s) of Acceptance of Office. There being two vacancies on the Parish Council and the requisite statutory notices having been published, Councillors considered details of Mrs Gillian Smith and Mr Laurence Whittle who had volunteered for co-option. Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Spearink, councillors voted nem con to co-opt both Mrs Gillian Smith and Mr Laurence Whittle to the Parish Council. The Declarations of Acceptance of Office were signed and Councillors Smith and Whittle took their places at the Council meeting.

**COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS** regarding items on the Agenda:-  
Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.  
Interest in Items on the Agenda – none declared.  
Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

**APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES** Minute pages 1577-1579 of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 were proposed for approval by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Silkin and made available at [http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_meetings.aspx](http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx). Councillors Perry, Sharp, Smith and Whittle abstained.

**FINANCE REPORTS:-**

1. Surrenden Playing Field – Quotation for Grounds Maintenance 2017 (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Burnham, Councillors APPROVED the quotation from Landscape Services for grass-cutting of the field in 2017: 16 cuts of main field £625.49; 16 cuts of Fence Line £281.99. Councillors NOTED that the prices were 2% higher than in 2016.
2. Surrenden Playing Field – Quotations for play area works (for decision). Councillor Reardon reported that he had obtained one confirmed up to date quotation. Councillors AGREED that in accordance with Financial Regulations a further two up to date quotations should be obtained. Councillor Reardon agreed to source the information in time for the Parish Council meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January.
3. Transport Accessibility Group – 2017 Subscription (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Chairman Silkin, Councillors AGREED to make a payment of £25 to the Transport Accessibility Group, being £15 subscription and £10 donation.

**URGENT MATTERS (1)** (at Chairman's discretion, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting)

1. NatWest – raised by Councillor Spearink. Councillors discussed the permanent closure of NatWest Staplehurst branch. The Clerk reported on his telephone conversations with NatWest area management: he had repeated a previous request for the mobile branch to stop at Staplehurst and this was under consideration; he had highlighted the need for improved communication from the bank; the bank had firmly stated that the closure

decision would not be reversed; the bank would contact the Parish Office again to respond to its request for a meeting. Councillor Lain-Rose stated that cashpoint provision within SPAR was under consideration. Councillors discussed investigation of other possible service providers prepared to take over the site and contacting Sainsbury's. Councillor Perry said that he would write to Helen Grant MP.

**CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:-**

1. Bell Lane Car Park – (i) Concerns expressed at Parish Surgery (Min1578) – namely that builders' use of the car park meant less room for the public. It was recognised that this was a temporary issue. Further comments about this MBC car park were made: the surface was of poor quality - MBC has stated it has no funds for repairs; the number of spaces could be increased by better configuration and reducing the grass area; Councillor Perry said he would ask MBC about transfer of the car park freehold. (ii) Provision of electric charging points (for comment) – a resident who wanted an electric car but who had no off-road parking had at the instigation of KCC contacted the Parish Office. Councillors commented: public facilities were generally for top-up and not designed to provide long-term parking; developers could be asked to include charging points on new estates; parking spaces in the village were at a premium. The Clerk reported that Southeastern Railways had advised that there were no plans for such points in the new car park, although power provision would be made to facilitate future provision. Councillor Burnham suggested asking the Department of Transport to make such provision a requirement for the franchise renewal.
2. Fishers Farm Development – Correspondence from Bovis Homes relating to a proposed meeting (Min1574) (for noting). Councillors NOTED the response from Bovis Homes to the Parish Council's invitation and AGREED to continue to seek an early meeting.
3. NALC Dependant Carers Survey – For response by 18/01/17. Councillor Silkin volunteered to complete the survey about payment to local council members of allowances covering dependants and childcare. Councillors AGREED to discuss the Parish Council's policy at a future meeting.
4. Parish Council Planning Committee – Proposal for appointment of new member(s) (JB) (for decision). Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Gosling, Councillors Sharp and Smith were appointed nem con as members of the Parish Council's Planning Committee.
5. Remembrance Sunday 2017 – Correspondence re arrangements (RS) (for comment). Chairman Silkin explained that, with the closure of the Staplehurst sub-branch of the Royal British Legion, Reverend Silke Tetzlaff had called a meeting to discuss arrangements for future Remembrance Sundays. Councillor Reardon volunteered to attend the meeting. Councillor Manning said that he would also be attending.
6. Parish Surgery – Reports on parish surgeries held in the library 26 November & 3 December (PR/RS). Councillor Riordan said that following discussion with a visitor to the library a group of volunteers had been co-ordinated to assist the Guides with work on the Guide Centre's floor. Following a short discussion about the use of social media to disseminate such stories Councillor Lain-Rose volunteered to arrange a meeting to look further into the subject. Chairman Silkin said that a visitor had suggested that groups of volunteers could take responsibility for specific areas around the village, citing the example of the planted area of The Parade. Councillor Lain-Rose said he would be speaking to representatives of the landlord. Councillors AGREED that the subject should be placed on the agenda for January's meeting of Full Council.
7. Staplehurst Surface Water Management Scheme – Draft Report by KCC (PS) (for comment). Councillor Spearink commented that the report included a reference to the pond at the end of Bell Lane and he highlighted that the Parish Council had undertaken the necessary works in the area to address drainage issues.

8. Volunteer Support Warden Scheme – Invitation from KALC and KCC to join a scheme to engage volunteers to support the work of the KCC Community Wardens (for decision). The Clerk said that he had spoken to the local community warden about the scheme and that she saw some merit in it. Councillors AGREED to consult neighbouring parishes to ascertain what interest they might have in a shared resource.

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

1. Clerk’s Report – item deferred.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
  - a) Headcorn Road Parking Survey – Report on survey results and decision re next steps. Item deferred.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
  - a) MBC Local Plan Hearing 08/11/16 – Oral report by Councillor Buller on hearing covering Rural Service Centres, including possible development at Lodge Road Staplehurst. Item deferred.
  - b) Neighbourhood Watch – Oral report by Councillor Buller on Neighbourhood Watch awards. Councillor Buller asked the Clerk to write to Mr David Ralph to congratulate him on receiving a Neighbourhood Watch area award.

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

1. Borough Councillor’s Oral Report – Councillor Perry said that he and Councillor Brice would speak at the borough council’s meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December when the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan would be made and thereby formally become part of the local development plan.

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

1. Patient Participation Group – Minutes of AGM 26/10/16. Item deferred.

**URGENT MATTERS (2)** (at Chairman’s discretion, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting)

Councillor Lain-Rose reported that the Youth Club was temporarily closed. Councillor Manning reported that the Carnival & Fete Committee had given £4,000 in grants to local recipients.

Chairman.....

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Before the meeting a resident spoke about traffic problems caused by parking on Church Hill and about the closure of the NatWest branch. After the meeting a resident spoke about the poor condition of the pavement at the Parade. The Chair of the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team said that a meeting would be held at 7.30pm on 7<sup>th</sup> December in the Free Church.