

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 20th April 2015 at 7.35 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Gosling, Kelly, Kemp, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry (from the point indicated in the minutes due to MBC business), Reardon, Spearink and Silkin who was in the Chair.

Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher, Green and Sharp whose apologies were accepted.

URGENT ITEMS: - Councillors agreed to take one item of urgent business in relation to a possible footpath between Station Road and Greenhill, the subject having been raised by a resident in public forum.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Silkin declared he had been lobbied about the Neighbourhood Plan and specifically the Hen & Duckhurst Farm site and MBC's approval of the outline application.

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in items on the agenda – none declared.

Requests for dispensation – none requested.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Pages 1425-1427 of 7th April 2015 were proposed for approval by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Ashby, approved by councillors (Councillors Burnham and Lain-Rose abstaining) and posted at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx .

ACCOUNTS & FINANCES

1. Accounts for payment for approval. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Kemp, the list of accounts for payment was approved (Councillor Kelly abstaining).
2. Summation of Accounts to 31st March 2015. Noted by councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.
3. Kent Association of Local Councils Membership – 2015-16 renewal for approval. Proposed by Councillor Kelly, seconded by Councillor Manning, councillors approved renewal of membership of KALC at a cost of £1,140 plus VAT.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Urgent Item – Connection between Station Road and Greenhill. *Chairman Silkin briefly closed the meeting to allow councillors to view maps provided by a local resident and to ask questions.* The resident said he would be pleased to hand over land at the corner of his property (Tall Tree Lodge) to facilitate a footpath. *Chairman Silkin reopened the meeting.* Councillors thanked the resident for his offer. Recognising that other properties would have to be involved, Councillors asked that appropriate contact be made with potentially affected parties and land searches undertaken.
2. Neighbourhood Plan – Update from Steering Group. *Chairman Silkin closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public.* The Chair of RSG observed that questions had been raised about pursuing development of the Neighbourhood Plan, notably after MBC's decision to grant outline planning permission for development on Hen & Duckhurst Farm. He said the Rural Settlement Group supported continuing with the Neighbourhood Plan; he observed that the plan endorsed development at Hen & Duckhurst Farm but that there were infrastructure issues with the related outline planning application. He said that delays in development of MBC's Local Plan had not

helped communities to deal with such applications. He noted MBC had consistently given limited weight to emerging Neighbourhood Plans; however, with some plans becoming more advanced (including Staplehurst's one at Regulation 16 draft stage) he felt MBC would now have to start giving them significant weight. Councillor Buller said she had spoken at MBC Planning Committee and felt that the question of pumping station capacity had not been satisfactorily answered; she also felt that the allocation of Section 106 payments was most unsatisfactory, highlighting the education authority's allocation of funding to Headcorn Primary School. Councillor Kelly said he had a major concern about the Neighbourhood Plan's advancement of a road connection from Hen & Duckhurst Farm to Lodge Road because he felt the connectivity would open the door to even more development and that the limitations of cul-de-sacs and the crossroads capacity acted as a brake on development. Mrs Brice said she concluded from her contact with the developers of Hen & Duckhurst Farm that they were very open to discussions; she said she had contact details and she encouraged the Parish Council to pursue a dialogue. Councillor Spearink recalled that developers had spoken about bungalows on the development and he would like this to be taken up with them. Councillor Perry joined the meeting at this point and Chairman Silkin reopened the meeting. Councillor Perry said he had some reservations about continuing with the Neighbourhood Plan and about the feasibility of a Lodge Road connection; he felt that if the Neighbourhood Plan were to be pursued then rapid action would be necessary. Councillor Kelly said it was primarily the proposed connection to Lodge Road that determined his opposition to the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Spearink said the only advantage he had envisaged had been increased CIL entitlement and he was disappointed that the absence of a Local Plan was delaying this coming into effect. Councillor Buller said she was firmly supportive of the Neighbourhood Plan including a Lodge Road connection or at least laying up for it. Councillor Gosling said it was important to see the plan as long term, a view supported by Chairman Silkin who said that its future weight would be more significant. Councillor Lain-Rose said that much community time and effort had gone into the plan which he felt should continue. Proposed by Councillor Silkin, seconded by Councillor Gosling, councillors voted by majority of ten votes to two (Councillors Kelly and Spearink against) to pursue work on the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors also resolved to seek a meeting with developers of Hen & Duckhurst Farm (Councillors Silkin, Burnham, Kelly, Buller, Perry and Kemp – Councillor Spearink as substitute – to attend). They agreed that they would ask developers to hold an open meeting too. In the context of the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed allocation of developer contributions from Hen & Duckhurst Farm to Headcorn Primary School Councillor Silkin closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public. Mr Gosling as a Staplehurst school governor commented that the school was looking at nursery expansion and it was important to have a project ready to secure funding. He said the site itself had capacity but buildings were needed. Mrs Brice said she was in contact with KCC's education officer; Headcorn School has a plan to address its immediate issues and was therefore a prime candidate for receipt of funding. She said thirteen Staplehurst children currently attended Headcorn School for different reasons, although Staplehurst is now well outside the catchment area that would take the Headcorn School to its capacity. Chairman Silkin reopened the meeting. Councillors agreed that they would seek a discussion with KCC and MBC about funding. Noting how MBC had approached its consideration of the Parish Council's consultee comments Councillors asked that at its next meeting the Planning Committee review the comments submitted for Fishers Farm application 14/505432. Councillor Kemp asked Councillor Perry to raise with planning officers concerns about the inadequacy of notice given to consultees about large applications.

3. Borough Council Update – Councillor Perry said that after the election new governance arrangements would come into force at MBC, with a committee structure replacing Cabinet. Councillor Spearink advised that the new mayor would be making a visit to Staplehurst on a date to be arranged.
4. Caretaker's Report - The Clerk advised that the caretaker had cleared higher volumes of rubbish during the school holidays. He also advised that the second stage of repairs and repainting of the skate park was under way.
5. Consultations – for comment
 - (i) KCC Customer Service Policy (closes 12th May) - Deferred item (Min 1425). Councillors agreed they would respond individually and asked that information about the consultation be posted on the village website.
 - (ii) MBC Parish Charter (closes 1st May) – Deferred Item (Min 1426). Councillors agreed to comment that they would like the signatories to include the heads of service at MBC.
 - (iii) Code of Conduct Complaints – MBC proposal to remove time limit for lodging of complaints. Councillors agreed to comment that they felt a time limit was appropriate and if the three month limit were not retained then six months should be applied.
6. Oliver Road Open Space & Woodland – Update (PK & PS). Councillor Spearink reported that Taylor Wimpey was continuing excavation of the pond. Councillor Kelly said he had contacted Forestry First about undertaking a prima facie review of the trees around the edge of the site; Councillors agreed nem con to expenditure of £100 for the work.
7. Parking on George Street – Correspondence. Councillors noted the correspondence from residents about cars parking in George Street while work on the unmade car park at the station was taking place. Councillor Spearink advised that more vehicles were parking on Lime Trees roads too and that he had contacted MBC Parking Operations. The Clerk confirmed that the police were aware of the situation. Noting that the works were scheduled for around four weeks from the start of April, Councillors agreed to keep the situation under review once the station car park reopened.
8. Surgery – Parish Council Representation on 25th April (for decision). Councillor Lain-Rose volunteered to attend the surgery at the Library on Saturday 25th April.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Report on Joint Transportation Board 15/04/15. Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx Councillor Spearink reported that he and Councillor Manning had attended the Joint Transportation Board and addressed the board about the activity of the Transport Accessibility Group.
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, NK, RS, PS) Next meeting June t.b.a. Minutes of AGM 23/03/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc_emergency_planning_group.aspx
3. Planning Committee (PB, MA, JB, TB, AG, SG, PK, NK, PS) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx
4. Allotments Project Group (TB, PK, JB, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_1.aspx
5. Strategy & Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SL, RS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy_group.aspx
6. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, SL, JR) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx
7. Playscheme (TB, JB, NK) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth_activities_1.aspx Councillors noted MBC had indicated it would only fund acquisition of specific equipment; however, Councillor Perry said he had followed up this announcement and the position was now under review.
8. Publicity & Website Group (TB, PK, MA, JB, NK, SL, JR) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx . Councillor Buller thanked all who had submitted contributions to the Annual Report.
9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, JB, AS) Next meeting 06/05/15. Report of meeting 08/04/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.
10. Staplehurst Village Centre Development Group – the report that six residents had volunteered to join the group was noted.
11. Surrenden Playing Field Group (TB, BM, JR, AS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>

12. Village Enhancement Group (TB, PK, JB, PB, JR, AS) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups.aspx. Councillor Kelly said he proposed to seek costings for the installation of planters in the High Street.
13. Youth Club (PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_youth_club.aspx Councillor Kelly said that he had obtained quotations for work on the Youth Club grounds and would forward them to the Clerk for consideration at the next Council meeting.

REPORTS FOR NOTING from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (SL, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_carnival_fete_committee.aspx
2. Churchyard Liaison (PB, PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_2.aspx
3. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting? Minutes of meeting 03/03/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB, PK) Next meeting 14/05/15. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx
5. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, PK, RS, PS) Next meeting AGM 29/04/15. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx
6. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (PB) Next meeting?
7. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group (BM, NK, PS) Next meeting?
8. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting? Reports of meetings 24/09/14 and 20/11/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx
9. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
10. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting 21/05/15. Minutes of meeting 15/01/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group (JP, NK, PS) Next meeting June/July 2015 (t.b.c.). <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting 02/06/15. Report of meeting 03/03/15 awaited. <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
13. Speed Watch (JB) <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/speedwatch.aspx>
14. Staplehurst Community Hub (JB) Next meeting?
15. Staplehurst Patients' Participation Group (JB, RS) Next meeting? Report of meeting 15/04/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx
16. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (AG, SL, BM, JR)
17. Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan Group (NK) Next meeting? Report of meeting 02/10/14 awaited.
18. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (PB) Next meeting? Report of meetings 11/11/14, 03/12/14, 06/01/15 and 24/02/15 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx
19. Village Golf & Sports Club (PB) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/ot_hers.aspx

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting a resident spoke about a possible footpath from Station Road to Greenhill and said that he was willing to give up land to help facilitate it.

Before the meeting at 7.20pm a representative of the owner of land at Lake House, Iden Park, Cranbrook Road gave a short overview of ideas for the development of nine executive homes on the site which is bordered by footpaths and the A229. An indicative layout plan showed access onto the A229 and a potential site for allotments. The site has been submitted twice in response to land calls by MBC but has been rejected on both occasions.

POLICE REPORT: PCSO Pete Gardner's report showed 10 crimes: 4 burglaries other than dwelling, 2 thefts, 1 attempted burglary other than dwelling, 1 burglary, 1 theft from motor vehicle, 1 criminal damage.