

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 17th October 2016 at 7.25 p.m.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors Claridge, Kelly, Perry (for late arrival due to borough council business), Reardon and Silkin.

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 1565-1567 of 3rd October 2016 were proposed for approval by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Spearink, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Vice Chairman Burnham and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx. Councillor Gosling abstained.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Accounts for payment for approval. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, the list of accounts for payment was APPROVED. Payments for the period 10th September to 7th October totalled £22,237.49; receipts for the period were £259.16 (Parish Council) and £0.55 (Village Centre Contingency).
2. Summation of Accounts to 7th October 2016 (for noting). NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:-

1. Crossroads Proposals – Report of Meeting with KCC and MBC 13/10/16. *Councillor Perry joined the meeting during this item.* Councillors NOTED the meeting report. The meeting attendees comprised representatives of the Parish Council, borough councillors and MBC planning officers. No representative of Kent Highways was present. Councillors Buller and Burnham explained that MBC officers were advised that the proposals appeared to make matters worse at the crossroads, that there were restrictive covenants on the land between High Street and Chestnut Avenue and that BT services ran underneath the surface. KCC had ruled out the use of compulsory purchase of property because the circumstances did not fall within those allowable under legislation. *Vice Chairman Burnham closed the meeting to allow a contribution from Borough Councillor Brice.* Borough Councillor Brice commented that the related planning applications for Fishers Farm and Stanley Farm were likely to be discussed by MBC Planning Committee on 27th October; further delay increased the risk of an appeal on the grounds of non-determination. She said she had met with many residents about the proposals. *Vice Chairman Burnham reopened the meeting.* Councillors AGREED that the Clerk should send further comments to MBC to highlight the following concerns: the proposals would aggravate the existing situation; the proposals were incompatible with the Neighbourhood Plan's policies to preserve the rural character of the village; the restrictive covenants and services on the land west of High Street presented real practical issues that had not been addressed; the proposals would put the protected horse chestnut trees at risk. Councillors Buller, Burnham and Sharp volunteered to attend MBC Planning Committee's

meeting on 27th October in the event that related planning applications were on the agenda.

2. Dog Bin Removal Programme – Correspondence from MBC re proposed removal of dog bins and their selective replacement with combined dog-waste and litter bins (for decision). After discussion including a temporary meeting closure for borough councillor input, Councillors AGREED to submit comments about MBC's proposals covering the following points: (i) the proposed replacement bin at the stile at Surrenden Field (ID no. SC4) could be foregone in view of coverage elsewhere on the field; (ii) the sacrifice of SC4 would be acceptable if a proper bin could be reinstated at the southern end of the village (current ID no. SD9); (iii) MBC to be asked for clarification about its policy for bin provision for all new developments; (iv) further to point (iii), with Wimpey Field generating more footfall, MBC should be asked to allocate provision along Bell Lane and The Bartons; (v) lamp post bins were generally inadequate for the level of use; (vi) the limited consultation period was at variance with the Parish Charter.
3. Kent Association of Local Councils AGM – Notice of AGM to be held 19/11/16 and appointment of parish council representatives (two voting, two non-voting) (for decision). Councillor Sharp volunteered to attend. It was AGREED to carry forward the subject to the next meeting to facilitate the identification of more representatives.
4. Parish Surgery – (i) Oral reports on parish surgeries held 8 and 15 October (TB/PR). Subjects raised were: proposed housing south of Marden Road; parking in Slaney Road and outside Homeleigh; the latest copy of the Neighbourhood Plan (available in the library); latest proposals for the crossroads; (ii) Appointment of representatives for future dates (for decision). Councillors Ashby and Buller 29th October; Councillor Sharp 5th November.

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

1. Clerk's Report – The Clerk reported: (i) a missing drain cover at Surrenden Field had been reported to Southern Water; (ii) hedge-cutting had commenced that day at Jubilee and Surrenden Fields; (iii) he had reserved a place on the Kent Highways Parish Seminar on 27/10/16; (iv) the Parish Office was particularly busy with arrangements for the Neighbourhood Plan referendum; (v) he had joined the Tree Walk on 15/10/16.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - a) Assets of Community Value – List of assets prepared by SPC study group (RS/TB/JB/AS) (to decide which, if any, SPC should nominate to MBC as potential assets of community value). Councillors reviewed the list of buildings identified by the study group as suitable for nomination to MBC for assessment and decision as to whether they should be granted the status of an asset of community value. Proposed by Vice-Chairman Burnham, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, Councillors AGREED that applications should be prepared for each of the proposed buildings: The King's Head; Esso Service Station; Peter Jones, Optician; Lloyds Pharmacy; Spar Supermarket; NatWest Bank; Post Office; Library; Railway Tavern; red phone box at Church Green. They also AGREED that applications should be prepared for the open spaces at Church Green and Surrenden Playing Field.
 - b) Neighbourhood Plan – (i) Appointment of observers for referendum (Clerk's report - for decision). The Clerk reported: Mr Colin Love and Mr Robin Oakley had volunteered to observe postal vote opening and Councillor Manning had confirmed his availability to observe polling and counting – AGREED by Councillors. Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham and Lain-Rose also volunteered to attend the counting of votes; the Clerk confirmed that invitations to the count were being extended to borough and county councillors and that other nominations could be accepted up to an overall limit of 21 places; Councillor Perry requested that an invitation to the count be sent to Helen Grant MP. (ii) Publication of referendum information leaflet (Clerk's

report – for noting). Councillors NOTED that four quotations for printing the referendum information had been sought and that one had been received, being from Hop Press for £245; councillors APPROVED the acceptance of this quotation. Councillors NOTED that expenditure on the Neighbourhood Plan and the Staplehurst Housing Survey was allocated to a common budget line and that Finance Group would be reviewing this allocation and in case of need would recommend any adjustments.

- c) Rural Settlement Group – Minutes of meeting 07/09/16. NOTED by councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.
 - d) Wimpey Field – Report of meeting with MBC Tree Officer 11/10/16. Councillors NOTED the Assistant Clerk's report. Councillor Spearink said that he had found the Tree Officer to be very positive and supportive of proposals for the open space. The officer had reported that action contained in the management plan did not require further permission from MBC. As there is a blanket Tree Preservation Order on the area any other tree work would require permission. The possible need for planning permission for laying of roadstone on the footpath is to be confirmed. Councillor Spearink said that the Senior Partnership Officer at Medway Valley Countryside Partnership would be visiting Wimpey Field on 24/10/16. He advised that he was also in contact with Hadlow College and the Woodland Trust.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
- a) Neighbourhood Plan – Update on arrangements for referendum, other than covered under written reports in item 6.2b (Steering Group). Councillor Buller reported that the next Village Update due for issue at the end of October would have a front page article about the Neighbourhood Plan referendum. She advised that no response had been received from the leaflet distribution company used for recent deliveries, so it was proposed to use a combination of volunteers and post for the coming issue. Councillors AGREED the use of volunteers and post instead of the distribution company, noting that the financial cost would be lower than the £380 cost of the third party arrangement.
 - b) Staff Group – Councillor Lain-Rose said that the Staff Group had submitted to Finance Group proposals for the 2017-18 staff budget.
 - c) Village Centre Development Group – Councillor Lain-Rose said that some architects had submitted ideas and these would be discussed at a meeting on 17/11/16. He said he would be meeting MBC on 21/10/16 for a discussion about options for development and to obtain an early view from MBC about what may be possible.

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

1. Borough Councillor's Report – Councillor Perry commented on the following subjects: (i) Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee had declared Surrenden Playing Field was surplus to MBC requirements but had referred to Policy & Resources Committee a decision on disposal and whether it should be freehold or leasehold; (ii) given the Parish Council's ownership of land west of High Street, he was taking advice about his position in any MBC discussion of planning applications involving possible changes to the crossroads.
2. PCSO Report – no report received.

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

No reports received

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

1. Weald Club for Disabled Annual Meeting - Vice-Chairman Burnham reported that he and Councillor Buller had attended the Club's annual meeting and lunch.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting three speakers spoke about the following subjects: what impact the Stanley Farm planning application would have if heard before the Neighbourhood Plan referendum; the Crane Valley Land Trust and whether a similar body could play a role in Staplehurst; concern about the evidence published to support proposals for the crossroads and concern about these proposals' impact on the rural character of the village. After the meeting Borough Councillor Brice spoke about her work in the following areas: the appeal hearing for the Great Pagehurst solar farm application; MBC enforcement activity; infrastructure delivery; bus routes; camera partnerships.