

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

Minutes of meeting held on 8th January, 2020 at Staplehurst Youth Centre

1. **Present:** Cllr. Colin Bowden (CB), Robin Oakley, Secretary (RO), Tom Burnham (TB) Margaret Arger Chairman (MA), Robin Kenworthy (RK), Cllr. John Perry (JP), Cllr. Paddy Riordan (PR), Colin Love (CL)
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Sue Forward (SF), Cllr. Joan Buller (JB)
3. **Membership of the Group.** No change. Cllr. Perry requested that E mails relating to the Group should be sent to his personal E mail address: johnperry44@googlemail.com
4. **Minutes of Meeting on 4th December, 2019:** Agreed
5. **Matters Arising.** None.
6. **Amendments to the existing Neighbourhood Plan.** RO reported that the Parish Council was considering whether to buy the necessary software to do the revisions 'in house' or to use the services of Feria who prepared the Neighbourhood Plan. This would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting on 13th January. It was noted that the Group now consider these revisions to be urgent.
7. **Maidstone Borough Local Plan – Call for sites for housing and commercial development.** A discussion took place on the results of MBC's call for sites and it was noted that the paper prepared by the Secretary listing the sites with some appropriate comments has been the subject of some additional comments by MA and TB and the paper has been passed to the Parish Clerk. It was noted that Cllr. Buller has prepared a list of bullet points, taking in the Group's comments, and it was intended that this would be used as an aide memoire when members of the Parish Council meet with the MBC planners. A lengthy discussion took place concerning the surface water and foul water drainage infrastructure. PR reported that there had been serious problems with the foul sewerage system in Marden Road, affecting drainage from the bungalows when the drains became surcharged and blocked. Members had sight of two letters sent to Helen Grant MP (HG) by Southern Water (SW) on 2 January, 2020 and by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) on 6 January, 2020. The Group members discussed them in detail and concluded that both authorities were passing responsibility to each other and that neither was prepared to accept that the adequacy of the sewerage infrastructure should be a key point in reaching a decision on planning applications. In SW's letter they state that they are not statutory consultees in the planning process and Group members expressed their concern that this situation was untenable. JP commented that the sewage treatment works in Couchman Green Lane are working at full capacity and this was with less than 100 new houses occupied from the 700+ under construction. He expressed the view that HG may have to have a meeting with SW Chief Executive to discuss this situation. PR said that when he attended a recent meeting of the MBC Planning Committee he had informal discussions with parish council representatives from Headcorn and Marden and they confirmed that they are also having problems with inadequate foul and surface water systems for the new housing being built in their villages. JP said that he and Cllr. Louise Brice are to have a meeting with MBC planners in which they will point out the effects of flooding on houses in the parish. CL asked how MBC can be held to account when planning permissions are given despite inadequate drainage infrastructure. MA suggested that whenever parish council representatives attended MBC planning meetings, they should, in their 3 minute pieces, raise the issue of accountability.

- 8. David Wilson Homes (DWH) Dickens Gate site, foul and surface water drainage.** There appears to have been now progress made on the matter of final approvals of the drainage systems by MBC.
- 9. Reported Decisions:** PR reported that MBC had refused the planning application to demolish the property Penryn in Station Road and replace it with 4 new dwellings. He said that he anticipated that this decision would be appealed by the applicant.
- 10. Asset of Community Value:** PR said he would speak with the licensee of The King's Head to discuss the community events which are hosted there. It was noted that the minutes of the SNPRG meeting on 31 October 2018 indicated that these events included funeral wakes, sport on television, use by church organisations for social events, Womens' Institute Darts Team, Rector's monthly tea party.
- 11. Sainsbury's:** Sainsbury have indicated that they hope to start work on the new store in Station Approach in the Spring with completion anticipated towards the end of 2020. It was noted that the planning approval given in 2013 included the construction of a new roundabout in Station Road to allow entry and egress from the supermarket site, but since then certain aspects of the site have changed, e.g. the Railway Tavern opposite the site of the proposed roundabout has been closed and turned into a dwelling and an additional house has been built on the site. There have been houses built and are under construction in Headcorn Road, as well as at the end of Fishers Road, all of which have added to 'rat-running' via Hurst Close, and Newlyn Drive and out to the A229 via Fishers Road. CL felt there was mounting concern with residents in Hurst Close for some form of traffic calming. He also commented on cars turning left into Fishers Road from Newlyn Drive not always acknowledging, or being aware of traffic coming from the right. This coupled with the apparent increase in peak time traffic on the A229 indicates that further consideration of this roundabout may be necessary. It is understood that County Councillor Eric Hotson has expressed concerns about this.

Meeting closed at 9.37pm.

Meetings in 2020 are scheduled as follows: February 5, March 4, April 8, May 6, June 3, July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 11, December 9.

Robin Oakley

9 January, 2020