

CHAIRMAN PERRY'S NOTES FROM THE COUNCIL POLICY GROUP 01/02/11  
reported to Full Council on 07/02/11

1. Concurrent Functions letter from Cllr. John Wilson. It was agreed that Staplehurst Parish Council (SPC) should respond. It was felt that we should not be solely dependent on KALC and if necessary groups of parishes should act together separately. It was noted that Cllr. Wilson was now Chairman of KALC and there was concern that there might be a conflict of interest as he was also a Cabinet Member on Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). **Action Cllr Perry.**
2. Housing Survey and Future Village Strategy. This had partly arisen from the Housing Survey and the issue of a supermarket. The point was made that if a supermarket were to be developed consideration would need to be given to developing the whole site at the station area to include other shops and facilities. This might have the effect of moving the centre of the village Northward completing what was started in the 1840s. It was accepted that nothing could be done without a valid planning reason. It was felt that these were issues that would need to be considered; but, should SPC act as a catalyst for a future village plan/strategy. It was noted that the survey represented a snapshot at a particular point in time. It provides an useful tool for future decision making; but, it should not be seen as a referendum on a particular issue. The Housing Survey will be on the agenda for the next Council meeting. It was recommended that SPC should endorse the work carried out and consider what approach to take. **Action SPC.**
3. The policy on donations was reviewed and briefly discussed. It was emphasised that as a basic rule SPC donates to organisations and not to individuals. It was noted that just because it was budgeted for didn't mean automatic approval. However, if an item was in the budget it would have been included in the precept calculation and be part of the council tax charge. So Parish Councils as tax levying authorities are in a special position. It was recommended that there should be an agenda item at the beginning of the financial year outlining proposed donations. **Action Chairman and Clerk.**
4. The creation of SPC led sub-groups and committees to manage village related events/tasks. The idea behind this was that there might be savings to had in areas such as insurance. However, after discussing the matter, it was felt it could create problems and there might be issues with SPC's own insurance. It was recommended that that for the moment SPC should leave it alone. **No further action.**
5. Current and possible future projects were reviewed. It was noted that all outstanding actions were either completed or were ongoing. Possible future projects were drainage at Surenden and Jubilee Fields. Both were considered important and have funds included in the budget. A proposal had been received for Jubilee Field and this will be presented to SPC at the next Council meeting. SPC will need to consider whether the Financial Regulations can be waived to allow for single tender action if there was evidence that this could be justified. **Action Cllr Arger, Cllr Perry and SPC.**
6. As a result of new NALC Standing Orders SPC's Standing Orders were being reviewed. It was recommended that the best approach was to take the Model NALC Standing Orders and highlight major changes and additions. The aim was to complete this work within the life-time of the current Council. **Action Cllr Best.**

7. There were three items raised under any other business. These were:

- Rubbish collection on the Headcorn Road. This had been referred to the Policy Group by SPC. There were health and safety issues connected with working by an unrestricted highway but it was recommended that Kent Highways should again be approached. **Action Cllr Arger.**
- It was noted that whenever the Clerk was on leave contingency cover may be needed. In addition, it was recommended that any hours worked during the Clerk's leave by the Assistant to the Clerk over and above her standard twelve hours should be paid at the hourly rate paid to her by Frittenden Parish Council in her capacity there as Parish Clerk. **Action SPC.**
- Regular meetings with Staplehurst's MBC Councillors. This had arisen out of a communication between Cllr John Kelly and MBC Councillor Richard Lusty. It was felt that this would be a good idea; and, as a starting point, it was recommended that a meeting should take place every two months. SPC Councillors would be made up of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Chairman of Planning as ex-officio members, plus say three other Councillors on a rotation basis, along the lines of attendance at Cllr Lusty's monthly surgeries. **Action SPC.**