

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 20th July 2015 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Claridge, Gosling, Kemp and Spearink. Ex Officio: Chairman Silkin and Vice Chairman Burnham who was in the chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr. M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher and Kelly whose apologies were accepted.

APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES: Minute Pages 1214P – 1216P of 6th July 2015 were approved (Councillors Claridge and Kemp abstaining), signed by Councillor Burnham and made available at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

URGENT ITEMS: Councillors agreed to take two items of urgent business, both relating to application 15/504228 Land at Folly Farm.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

1. Declarations of Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied about 15/503884. Councillors Buller and Spearink declared they had been lobbied about 15/503821.
2. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.
3. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda – none declared.
4. Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

URGENT ITEMS: Councillor Burnham asked members of the committee to consider two questions in relation to 15/504228 Land at Folly Farm: (i) to write to the MBC Chief Executive specifically about process failures by MBC: noting that these failures had been raised in the Parish Council's comments about the application, Councillors nevertheless felt a separate letter should be sent and asked the Clerk to action this; (ii) whether to become formally involved in a Folly Farm residents' group: Councillors felt that such involvement could prejudice their perceived ability to consider impartially an amended or new planning application but said that they would like to be kept informed about the group's activity.

FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS: (for recommendation)

15/503884 **Land at Pullen Farm, Staplehurst Road, Frittenden** – Use of the land to provide a solar farm and its enclosure by fencing and the erection of just over 39000 solar panels along with the provision of associated transformers, switch gear housing and a substation. Councillor Burnham introduced discussion of the application by stating that 85% of the land was designated as grade 3b agricultural. He said that the applicants had consulted with communities in Staplehurst, Frittenden and Headcorn, which councillors agreed was appreciated. All councillors spoke on the application. Views in support of the proposal were: there was a need to secure alternative sources of power for the future; unlike at Great Pagehurst, the agricultural land at Pullen Farm was graded as low quality and the location was less intrusive. Views against the proposal were: access for construction would be disruptive and difficult; authorities should look to brownfield sites and public buildings before even considering greenfield areas; the parish council's position should be consistent with its opposition to the Great Pagehurst proposal; reservations were expressed about the adequacy of proposed security and the discussion of wildlife in the application; the proposed natural screening would not be effective for 8-10 years given the length of time taken for hedging to grow; the proposals would effectively industrialise the countryside in contravention of MBC policy ENV28 and could open the door to further development. Councillors moved

to a vote and by majority of four votes to three Councillors voted to recommend REFUSAL for the reasons listed and asked that the application be reported to MBC Planning Committee.

- 15/504482 **4 Watkins Close TN12 OPT** – Erection of single storey rear extension. Councillors voted nem con to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.

- 15/504807 **Hamlyn, Station Road TN12 OQQ** – Erection of wrought iron railing, gate and double driveway. Councillors voted nem con to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer with advisory observations about planting the yew hedge too closely and potential issues that outward opening gates could create.

- 15/504902 **10 Newlyn Drive TN12 ODA** – Erection of lean-to conservatory. Councillors voted nem con to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.

- 15/505261 **3 Garden Close TN12 OEW** – Erection of rear conservatory. Councillors voted nem con to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT: (for recommendation)

- 15/504943 **Crampton House, High Street TN12 OAU** – for redecoration of the front elevation. Councillors commended the application and voted nem con to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.

REVISED DETAILS: (for comment)

- 15/503821 **Greenworld Garden Centre, Cranbrook Road TN12 OEU** – Change of use of part of existing retail garden/pet centre building to boarding kennels, and associated facilities. SPC had recommended Approval (Min 1212P). Councillors noted the revised details and suggested clarification be sought about noise levels when dogs were outside.

REPORTED DECISIONS: (for noting)

- 14/503810 **Blossom, Maplehurst Lane, Frittenden Road** – Change of use of land from grazing to residential for one caravan and a touring caravan and one utility shed MBC APPROVED with 6 Conditions. SPC had recommended Refusal (Min 1192P). Noted by councillors.

- 15/503982 **4 Surrenden Cottages, High Street** – Conservation area notification to fell 1no. Willow MBC Raises No Objection. SPC had made No Objection (Min 1213P). Noted by councillors.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM – Before the meeting a resident raised objections to 15/503884 Land at Pullen Farm. A resident commented on a published notice of planning applications that incorrectly listed Pullen Farm as being in Marden.