

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

**EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP MEETING**

**Thursday 21st September 2023**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Cllrs Riordan, Perry, Hotson, Martin Plus RFO and Clerk

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs Eerdekens, Sharp and Arger
- 2. Dispensations - NA**
- 3. Minutes of previous meeting** – agreed minutes of the meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were accurate
  - need to bring forward the preferred contractor list,
  - TV licence for Youth Club agreed.
- 4. VAT update report** – following a discussion the report was welcomed and the Clerk is to arrange a meeting with VAT Consultant and the Group (**Agreed 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 2pm**)  
A major issue is who would manage the Jubilee Field / 3G pitch if it was built:
  - Trust
  - Council – new team
  - Contractor – tender contract.
- 5. Budget setting 2024/25**
  - i. Income – RFO led the discussion and main points summarised below:**  
MBC grants appear secure,  
CIL income dependent on properties built, difficult to estimate, @ £9,000 per year  
Youth Club income estimated £1,000 per year  
Allotments estimated £400 per year  
Remainder Precept - Balance
  - ii. Expenditure principles** – RFO led initial discussion related to “Who does what in Staplehurst” document –

<b>Responsibility / Service</b>	<b>KCC</b>	<b>MBC</b>	<b>SPC</b>	<b>SPC Budget</b>
Abandoned Vehicles		✓		NA
Advertising Banners – depending on location	✓	✓	✓	NA
Advertising – signs		✓	C	NA
Allotments – in near future			*	✓
Benches			✓	✓
Benefits		✓		NA

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Building Regulations / Enforcement		✓		NA
Bylaws – depending on area (SPC only Surrenden Field)	✓	✓	✓	NA
Car Parks		✓	C	NA
Cemeteries – burial related (In Staplehurst Church manages cemetery)		✓		See discussion
Cemeteries – mowing (In Staplehurst Church manages cemetery)		✓		See discussion
Charitable Street Collections		✓		NA
Children’s Play Areas (housing areas)		✓	✓	NA
Children’s’ Play areas / Recreation Grounds			✓	✓
Concessionary Bus fares	✓		C	NA
Council Housing		✓	C	NA
Council Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓
Council Tax		✓	C	Na
Dog Fouling		✓	C	NA
Economic Development		✓	C	NA
Education	✓			NA
Electoral Register		✓	C	NA
Emergency Planning	✓	✓	✓	SETH
Employment promotion		✓	C	NA
Environmental Health		✓		NA
Football pitches			✓	✓
Footpath	✓		✓	NA
Footway lighting – along roads	✓			✓
Graffiti removal		✓		NA

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Grass cutting – depending on area		✓	✓	✓
Grass cutting – Road verges	✓			NA
Gritting and salting	✓			NA
Hackney carriages - Taxis		✓		NA
Hedges and Shrubs – within village			✓	✓
Hedges and Shrubs road side	✓			NA
Highway maintenance	✓		C	NA
Highways	✓		C	NA
Homelessness		✓		NA
House to house charity collections		✓		NA
Housing benefits		✓	C	NA
Housing list		✓	C	NA
Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority	✓			NA
Leisure centre – Cranbrook is TWBC -		✓		NA
Library	✓			NA
Litter control – depends on area litter is in	✓	✓	✓	✓
Markets and Fairs		✓		NA
Noise Nuisance and control		✓		NA
Parks & Open Space			✓	✓
Parking and parking enforcements		✓		NA
Pavements	✓			NA
Pavilion			✓	✓
Planning Policy		✓	C	NDPR group

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Planning Applications		✓	C	Admin
Planning enforcement of approved applications		✓		NA
Pollution – Air		✓	C	NA
Public Toilets			✓	✓
Public entertainment licence		✓	C	Na
Public transport	✓		C	NA
Recreation Ground			✓	✓
Recycling		✓	C	NA
Refuse collection		✓	C	NA
Refuse disposal		✓		NA
Social Services	✓			NA
Street cleaning		✓		NA
Street entertainment licences		✓	C	NA
Street lighting	✓			NA
Street lighting – Nicholson Walk, Chapel Lane and 6 on Maidstone Road			✓	✓
Street Trading Licences		✓	C	NA
Street furniture – benches, bus shelter etc	✓			NA
Tourism		✓		NA
Traffic Road Safety	✓		C	NA
Trees on the Highway	✓			NA

- i) Should we be funding the Church cemetery as it is managed by the Church and is not the Parish Council's responsibility? The Council supports with donation / grant as it is a prominent part of the village. As it is a Closed churchyard potentially all the cost could be transferred to the Parish Council.

We received numerous complaints this year when the previous groundsman stopped – even though it is not a Parish Council responsibility. The likely increase is from £8,625 to £10,548 but on balance we feel we should continue to support. Once this year is completed maybe review the grounds maintenance specification with Church.

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ii.) **Need project / budget ideas from the working groups** – especially, SCEnic, Greener Staplehurst Group and Communications Group. NDP Review group seeking quote from consultant. SETH may make a request.

iii.) **New services:**

CCTV service contract, seeking quotes and will report back. Note Police suggested two references, contractors GDPR policies and either 1 year or 3 years options.

Any other new services? Need to feed into Budget setting.

iv.) **Staff Grades** – Clerk explained staff on NALC grades and need an independent review as roles take on more responsibility plus option of extra staff if Jubilee Field comes under Parish Council management. Seeking quote from Work Nest – recommended by KALC – report back to next meeting. Potential impact on 2024/25 budget.

v.) **Agreed** “coloured working template” great for building budget 2024/25

vi.) RFO raised the issues that due to a historical undercharging the electricity bill for the Youth Club will increase by £11 per month. We have no other options and would like approval today as we need to confirm. The group agreed and report to Council.

### 6. Future management of Jubilee Field

The discussion noted that due to the limited finances a Trustee has raised concerns about the future of the Trust. This is a matter for the Trust not the Council.

The Council cannot force this or stop the process. If the Trustees decide to surrender the lease and dissolve the Trust this is a legal process. It would have an impact on Council budget.

The Trustee could contact the other Trustees suggesting that they either;

- Get new Trustees or
- Surrender lease and dissolve Trust on basis Staplehurst Parish Council takes on responsibilities for the management of the site and includes a representative of each user group at the Jubilee Field on a Committee.

The future management of the Jubilee Field will have impact on the Council budget and potentially VAT implications

7. **£137 grants** – none received

### 8. GDPR update on policies

The Clerk raised the point that mostly amendments in Legislation – from GDPR to UK-GDPR.

However, the CCTV policy needs a rewrite due to proposed changes to service contract and remove “Wildlife Cameras” – RG bring back to this group and then onto Council

### 9. Dates of next meeting

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – 2pm

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 – 2pm

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – 2pm

Aim draft Budget to Council meeting 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024