

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
South Hall, Village Centre
Monday 6th September at 7.30p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillors Bowden, Buller, Castro, George, Grimwood, Lain-Rose, McPhee, Perry, Sharp, Smith, Spearink, Riordan who was in the Chair and Parish Clerk, Miss A Smith.

1. APOLOGIES:

No Apologies were received. Councillor McNeill was absent.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the agenda:

2.1. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests – None declared.

2.2. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda. None declared.

2.3. Requests for Dispensation. None requested.

3. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

3.1. Pages 1926 – 1931 of 9th August 2021 available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>. Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor McPhee it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes which were signed by Chairman Riordan.

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

4.1. Accounts for Payment – for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor George, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 5th August to 19th August totalled £19,755.11; income for the period was £0.96.

<u>Approved Payments 5th August - 19th August 2021</u>	<u>Amount</u>
KCC - Christmas Motif Licence to Attach to Street Columns	30.00
Bradley Hawkins - Wimpey Field Mowing/Strimming	100.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Annual External Audit March 2021	720.00
A & C Blasting Services - Jubilee Field Skatepark Sandblasting	8,112.00
Community Centre for Debt Advice - Donation	200.00
Samaritans Maidstone & Weald - Donation	100.00
Citizens Advice Bureau Maidstone - Donation	300.00
Staplehurst Parish Magazine - Donation	75.00
Kenward Trust - Donation	100.00
Involve Kent - Donation	75.00
Heart of Kent Hospice - Donation	250.00
Cllr Reimbursement CP Refreshments	31.50
Staff Home Working Allowance - July	52.00
KCC Commercial Services - Office Stationery	54.00
Cllr Reimbursement CP Refreshments	43.46
HMRC - Tax & NI July	1,414.84
Medway Valley Countryside Partnership - Donation	50.00
Staplehurst Scouts Group - Donation	400.00
Choice Support - Planter Maintenance August	410.80
Staplehurst Community Events Group - Donation Stay Safe	100.00

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Staff Payroll & Pension Costs July	5,793.01
Royal British Legion - Replacement Poppies x8	24.00
Amazon - Stationery Items	14.89
Amazon - Stationery Items	7.99
Amazon - Office Key Clips	40.20
Amazon - Rechargeable Batteries	10.04
Sage (UK) Ltd - Instant Payroll Annual Subscription	234.00
Sage (UK) Ltd - 50 Accounts Annual Subscription	242.40
Opus Energy - Parish Office Electricity July	77.32
Opus Energy - Bell Lane Toilets Electricity July	18.45
Opus Energy - Surrenden Pavilion Electricity July	17.41
E-on - Street Light Energy July	54.77
BT - Broadband & Telephone Chgs Aug-Oct	200.63
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection July	81.00
MBC - Council Tax Room 1 Sept	62.00
MBC - Council Tax Room 2-3 Sept	72.00
Lloyds Bank Charges - August	7.00
Arron Services Ltd - Hosted Exchange Services Sept	171.00
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	19,746.71

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE

8.40

4.2. Summation of Accounts – for noting

NOTED by Councillors and published at <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>.

4.3. Office Photocopier

Proposed by Councillor Bowden, seconded by Councillor Castro, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE entering into a 5-year lease with KCS for the SHARP MX2651FK at an estimated cost of £138.08 per quarter.

4.4. Staplehurst Society

Staplehurst Society updated their request to confirm that they would ask for ongoing support from the Parish Council with effect from April 2022 for the payment of the extra meeting room facility in the Village Centre on a Monday morning for £10 per session. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE this expenditure and for £480 to be included in the annual budgeting process for 2022 and each year thereafter. Councillors also AGREED that the proposal for a museum to be developed for the Staplehurst Society within the Village be passed to the CEG for consideration. Councillors also discussed the Brattle Farm Museum, and suggested it should be included for consideration in the CEG project.

4.5. Welcome Back Fund

4.5.1 Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor McPhee it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the purchase of 6 Glasdon Jubilee 110l bins from Glasdon for £2,586.86 + VAT and to reclaim the money from MBC. Councillor Riordan confirmed that he had volunteered to lead a group to install the bins.

4.5.2 Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Castro, it was RESOLVED to SUSPEND 11.1 (h) of the financial regulations in favour of the requirements of the SLA with MBC for the Welcome Back Fund. It was also RESOLVED to APPROVE the appointment of DVC Ltd, to provide new white lining for car parking spaces in the two car parks at the Parade at a cost £1465.00 and reclaim the money from MBC.

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4.5.3 Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Sharp it was RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of up to £100 for closure signs to facilitate item 4.5.2. above.

4.5.4. Proposed by Councillor Grimwood, seconded by Councillor George it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the purchase of paint at a cost of £120.00 to enable repainting of the bollards in the Parade and reclaim the money from MBC. Councillor Riordan confirmed that this work would be undertaken by the Community Payback Team.

5. CORRESPONDENCE AND PARISH ISSUES

- 5.1. Councillors NOTED with interest the emails and letters of thanks from various local charitable groups for donations from the Parish Council.
- 5.2. Councillors NOTED with interest the written and oral reports from Councillor Buller and Riordan about the overwhelming success of this years Summer Play Scheme. It was AGREED that a letter of thanks should be sent to Play Place. Councillor Riordan also extended thanks to the office team for all their work in organising the event. The Clerk advised that NALC had been in touch asking for an article to be written for 2021 Points of Light publication. Councillor Buller had prepared the article which was being submitted.
- 5.3. Design Code and Neighbourhood Plans
Councillors discussed the report from the Clerk and the proposals to take the draft Design Code forward. It was suggested that the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group should lead a team to submit an expression of interest in the Government Pilot Scheme for the creation of the Design Code for Staplehurst.

The meeting was temporarily closed to seek the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group's input and agreement to take forward the creation of the expression of interest, which was given. The meeting was then re-opened.

Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Buller it was RESOLVED by majority to APPROVE a) setting up a meeting with MBC Strategic Planning Team to discuss the draft model code and how to take it forward, b) for the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group to lead a group to develop and submit an application for the expression of interest in the Government Pilot Scheme.

6. PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS

6.1. Clerks Report

The Clerk advised Councillors that the Residents Community Meeting had been confirmed at the 28th September, to be held at Staplehurst Primary School Infant Hall. Chief Inspector Gary Woodward, Maidstone District Commander West Division had accepted an invitation to speak and respond to questions at the meeting. She advised that the cost of the hire of the school hall would be £45. She urged Councillors to speak with neighbours/friends and promote the event. The Clerk updated Councillors that the MBC Community Protection Team had now recommenced their surgeries in the library, every other Tuesday morning 10-11am from the 14th September. Again, she requested that Councillors direct residents to this valuable resource, otherwise it might be lost to the village. At the request of the Clerk, Councillors discussed reinstating the Councillor Surgery Meetings at the Library. It was AGREED that these meetings would recommence on the last Saturday of each month. Councillor Spearink volunteered to attend the first event on the 25th September. The Clerk agreed to circulate a rota for Councillors to volunteer participating in the surgeries and to seek approval from KCC for these events to recommence. The Clerk raised Councillors' awareness on behalf of Councillor Louise

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Brice to an event being held by the Friends of All Saints Church on Sunday 12th September between 3-5pm at the church. As a non-religious group, Councillors were invited to attend and promote the groups activities whose focus was the use and ongoing maintenance of the Church building. Finally, the Clerk updated Councillors on the progress for the two casual vacancies that had arisen following the resignation of two Councillors. She advised that she hoped the first vacancy would be released for co-option by the end of the week and that she would commence local advertising for candidates.

6.2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project Activities

6.2.1. Communications Group – Councillors NOTED the report of 26th August 2021, published at [Communications Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#)

6.2.1.1. Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy v 1.9

Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Sharp it was RESOLVED by majority to APPROVE, the policy v.1.9 as presented.

6.2.2. Community Enhancement Group – Councillors NOTED the report of the 5th August, published at [Community & Leisure Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#)

6.2.3. Greener Staplehurst Group – Councillors NOTED the report of the 23rd August, published at [Greener Staplehurst - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#) Councillor Riordan confirmed there was a new Chair of the Greener Staplehurst Group and thanked the outgoing Chair Councillor George for his tireless work on behalf of the group.

6.2.4. Neighbourhood Plan Review Group Councillors NOTED the report of the meeting of 18th August 2021, published at [Neighbourhood Plan Review Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#). Councillors discussed the item mentioned about the proposed route for the Sainsbury's courtesy bus, and it was noted that there was documentation in the S106 agreement that proposed a more favourable route. Councillor Riordan confirmed that he was in discussion with Sainsbury's over the proposed route and would keep Councillors informed. Councillors also discussed the item about the proposed draft Design Code and enquired if it would come back to Council for approval.

The meeting was temporarily closed to allow the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group to advise Councillors that the draft code would indeed be re-presented to Council for approval in due course, but that the agreed item earlier in the agenda may now have an impact on the timing of when this would occur.

6.3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors

6.3.1. Chairman's report

The Chairman reported further on the success of various events; the Summer Play Scheme; the Skate Jam, the GSG Wimpey Field Walk which had all been very well received. He commented that he was pleased to see the items for the Welcome Back Fund now being moved forward and gaining momentum. He was sad to report the two resignations from Councillors Thomas and Gartan, and wished to record his thanks for all their hard work and contribution over their time in office. He urged Councillors to support the upcoming events of the Village Clean Up on the 18th September and also the Residents Meeting on the 28th September. Reiterating the importance of these events to the village. Following the Chairman's comments, Councillors

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spoke about the Skate Park and the graffiti and it was AGREED to explore options for professional graffiti/youth involvement in providing appropriate graffiti for the area that may prevent casual and inappropriate graffiti occurring. The Clerk suggested that the funding from the Welcome Back Fund might be able to be redirected in this way and agreed to investigate this. It was AGREED by Councillors that efforts should be made to engage with the youth in the village to try to develop activities that would be of interest to them.

7. REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS

– for noting

- 7.1. Borough Councillors Report – Oral reports by Councillor Perry & Councillor Brice. Councillor Perry updated Councillors on the the Local Plan consultation was moving forward and MBC were hopeful of launching the Regulation 19 consultation phase in the next month or so; that there would be a separate Development Plan for Gypsy and Traveller sites. Councillor Perry advised Councillors on the progress towards changing the governance of MBC and moving towards a more cabinet based arrangement, but using a more hybrid approach. He expressed confidence that this would bring greater input and control of decision making to Councillors. He confirmed that a limited consultation on moving to a 4-year election cycle was under way and that whilst yet to be agreed, the majority of response to date supported this move. He also advised that this would feed into the boundary review and could enable maintenance of the continuation of ward and parish boundaries being aligned. Councillor Perry advised that Councillor Brice had been unable to attend due to an accident, and Councillor Riordan asked that best wishes be passed to her for a speedy recovery from the Parish Council.
- 7.2. County Councillors Report – Report by County Councillor Parfitt-Reid: Unfortunately, Councillor Parfitt-Reid had to give her apologies but Councillor Riordan read an email from Councillor Parfitt-Reid as an update. She confirmed that she was meeting with the Highways Schemes Project Manager on the 16th September and sought input from Council for that meeting. She also confirmed that she had shared the Covid Recovery Grant scheme with Ward Councillor Brice.

8. REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

None.

9. URGENT MATTERS

None.

10. SPECIAL MOTION AND REPORT

- 10.1. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Castro it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that the public be excluded from item 10.2 due to its confidential nature.
- 10.2. 2021/22 pay review
Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Sharp it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Support Officer and Caretaker all be offered contracts of employment based on the NALC contract of employment and that the green book of terms and conditions of employment be adopted, effective from the 1st April 2021. It was also RESOLVED to APPROVE that the 4 roles be placed on the NALC Spinal Column Pay Scheme at the points recommended in the

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report, and that the nationally agreed pay rise be adopted and paid when finalised effective from the 1st April 2021. Additionally, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE to offer the Caretaker an increase in contracted hours to 50 per month. It was RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Support Officer's annual leave allowance be ring fenced for the period of their employment; and that pension arrangements remain via the NEST scheme for those eligible.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM

At the end of the meeting, but before the confidential session, a resident spoke about attending the MBC Mayors tea party and suggested that the Parish Council might wish to invite the Mayor to a future event.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm