

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 1st September 2014 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Burnham (in the Chair until the point indicated in the minutes), Gosling, Green, Kemp, Lain-Rose, Manning, Sharp, Spearink and Perry who was present and in the Chair from the point indicated in the minutes.
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Buller, Butcher, Kelly, Reardon and Silkin whose reasons for apology were accepted.

URGENT ITEMS: - Councillors agreed to take one item of urgent business relating to outline planning application 14/502010 Hen & Duckhurst Farm, Marden Road. *Chairman Perry joined the meeting and took the Chair.*

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

Lobbying – All councillors declared they had been lobbied about outline planning application 14/502010.

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in items on the agenda – Councillors Burnham and Kemp declared an interest in outline planning application 14/502010 but they were deemed non-prejudicial to the discussion.

Requests for dispensation – none requested.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Pages 1368-1371 of 18th August 2014 were proposed for approval by Councillor Ashby, seconded by Councillor Green, approved by councillors nem con, signed by the Chairman and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. Urgent Item – Outline Planning Application 14/502010 Hen & Duckhurst Farm, Marden Road. *Chairman Perry closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public which are summarised in 'Public Forum' at the end of these minutes. On conclusion of the contributions Chairman Perry reopened the meeting.* Councillors discussed their views on the principle of building 250 dwellings on the proposed site and the specific access proposal. They commented:
 - i. notwithstanding references to the lack of an MBC five year land supply, the application is premature in relation to the draft stage of the MBC Local Plan where the site's inclusion should be seen as an interim step rather than a definite position;
 - ii. the emerging status of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan carries significant weight and, whilst councillors acknowledge the site's inclusion in the emerging plan and the outline nature of the application, the application is not consistent with the plan and a proposed 10% increase in houses in Staplehurst merits a more comprehensive appraisal of all the issues involved;
 - iii. the proposed single access point and the strain the resulting traffic would put on Marden Road and the crossroads give cause for concern; references to not precluding potential further links are inadequate and a more definite proposition covering proposed site roads and other access points is essential;
 - iv. the proposed offsetting of the roundabout might calm traffic approaching the village but there would be no such impact on westbound traffic; the roundabout would be

- incompatible with the increasing number of heavy goods and agricultural vehicles that are using and would be using the road;
- v. an assessment of cumulative traffic volumes should examine the proposal in the context of development envisaged in surrounding areas both in and outside the borough;
 - vi. the submitted plans do not clearly show a three metre path and cycleway on Marden Road east of the proposed development and to avoid damage to hedgerows this would mean narrowing the road and moving electricity poles;
 - vii. there are major problems of sewage disposal, flooding and general drainage issues on Marden Road and in the vicinity where infrastructure is failing to cope with current housing levels before even contemplating expansion; there is no evident connection with the sewer system to the west of the proposed site;
 - viii. authorities are currently reviewing existing flood data, which adds to the sense that the application is premature;
 - ix. there is a need to explain how adequate provision would be made for schooling and healthcare; councillors wish to see details of how these and all the above infrastructure requirements would be addressed;
 - x. comments that parking would only be provided on plot 'where possible' and about the consequent need to look to street-parking are unacceptable in the light of the well-known parking problems in the village.

In conclusion councillors felt that the premature nature of the application meant it failed to deal satisfactorily with key issues of infrastructure and with Neighbourhood/Local Plan context and that these points needed to be addressed if the application were to demonstrate how the site could sustain the proposed number of houses. For all the preceding reasons councillors voted unanimously to recommend REFUSAL and asked that the application be reported to MBC Planning Committee.

2. Neighbourhood Plan – (1) Update & Next Steps (2) Invitation from Loose Parish Council. Councillor Lain-Rose said he felt the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan should contain an infrastructure delivery plan. The Clerk advised that the Feria representative would be available to meet the Steering Group after the MBC Design Southeast Parishes Workshop on 17th September. *Chairman Perry closed the meeting to allow contributions from members of the public.* The Chair of RSG stressed the importance of a meeting about the Local Plan to be held with MBC on 18th September. *Chairman Perry reopened the meeting.* Councillors noted the invitation from Loose Parish Council to attend its Neighbourhood Plan events.
3. Caretaker's Report – The Clerk advised that on 4th September the Caretaker would be receiving training from MBC on the use of equipment.
4. Citizens Advice Bureau Maidstone – Invitation to AGM and to make a donation. Councillor Lain-Rose volunteered to attend the AGM on behalf of the Parish Council. Councillors agreed to make a donation of £220 to the CAB and to review the amount when setting the budget for next year.
5. Healthwatch Kent – Invitation to Information Event (Maidstone, 8th September). Noted by councillors without comment.
6. Litter-Picking – Update Report. Councillors agreed to request resource from Community Payback to undertake litter-picking in rural lanes and to advise the Parish Office by 15th September of preferred locations.
7. Maidstone Borough Council Update – Verbal Report. Chairman Perry said there was currently much discussion about budgets and about the Local Plan. Councillor Spearink commented on the amount of litter along the riverside in Maidstone.
8. Parish Council Surgery – Verbal Report. Councillor Gosling reported that there had been one enquiry about Sainsbury's petrol station.

9. Sustainable Communities Act – Correspondence: proposal to allow councils to sell electricity. Noted by councillors without comment.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Local Transport (TB, BM, PS) Next meeting 19/09/14. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx
Councillor Spearink advised there would be a meeting with the constituency MP on 18th September.
2. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, NK, RS, PS) Next meeting? Minutes of meetings 19/06/14 and 24/04/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc_emergency_planning_group.aspx
3. Planning Committee (PB, MA, JB, TB, AG, SG, PK, NK, PS)
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx Councillor Burnham reported that the Planning Committee had asked that the Parish Council write to MBC and the constituency MP about the land opposite the north of Clapper Lane.
4. Allotments Project Group (TB, PK, JB, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_1.aspx
5. Strategy & Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SL, RS) Next meeting?
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policy_group.aspx
6. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, SL, JR) Next meeting 16/09/14. Report of meeting 11/08/14 awaited.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx
7. Playscheme (TB, JB, NK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/youth_activities_1.aspx The Clerk reported that he and Councillor Buller had met a representative of Play Place to review how the scheme had gone this summer. An evaluation report is to be submitted to MBC, which will include a financial analysis that will be shared with the councillors.
8. Publicity & Website Group (TB, PK, MA, JB, NK, SL, JR) Report of meetings 25/03/14 and 15/07/14 awaited.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx Councillor Ashby said that any further offers of assistance to deliver Village Updates would be welcome.
9. Rural Settlement Group including Neighbourhood Plan (JP, JB, AS) Next meeting 10/09/14. Report of meeting 13/08/14 posted at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.
10. Surrenden Playing Field Group (TB, BM, JR, AS) Next meeting? <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
Councillor Burnham said he was awaiting a meeting date from Councillor Reardon.
11. Village Enhancement Group (TB, PK, JB, PB, SL, JR, AS) Next meeting?
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups.aspx. Update on actions relating to signage and vegetation (Mins 1363-64) and planters (Min 1367). The Clerk advised that Councillor Kelly was recording sites where vegetation needed attention.
12. Youth Club (SL, PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_youth_club.aspx Councillor Lain-Rose said Youth Club would reopen on 2nd September.

REPORTS FOR NOTING from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (SL, BM) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_carnival_fete_committee.aspx
2. Churchyard Liaison (PB, PK) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_2.aspx
3. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting? Minutes of meeting 03/06/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx
4. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, PB, PK) Next meeting? Minutes of meetings 26/06/14 and 27/03/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx
5. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, PK, RS, PS) Next meeting 22/10/14.
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx
6. Kent Community Alcohol Partnership (PB) Next meeting?
7. Knoxbridge A229 Residents' Group (BM, NK, PS) Next meeting?
8. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting 24/09/14. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx
9. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
10. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting 20/11/14. Minutes of meetings 21/08/14 and 27/05/14 awaited
http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
11. River Beult Catchment Improvement Group (JP, NK, PS) Next meeting 30/09/14?
<http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) Next meeting 02/09/14. <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
13. Speed Watch (JB) <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/speedwatch.aspx>

14. Staplehurst Community Hub (JB) Next meeting?
15. Staplehurst Patients’ Participation Group (JB, RS) Report of meeting 22/01/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx
16. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (AG, SL, BM, JR)
17. Staplehurst Surface Water Management Plan Group (NK) Next meeting? Steering Group Progress Report for July 2014 for noting; protocol for agreement. Noted by councillors.
18. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (SL & PB) Next meeting? Reports of meetings 15/04/14 and 13/05/14 awaited. http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_centre_trust.aspx
19. Village Sports & Social Club (PB) Next meeting? http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/ot_hers.aspx

CHAIRMAN:

Chairman Perry thanked councillors for their support during his four and a half years as Chairman of the Parish Council. Councillors thanked him for all his work in the role.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Comments about outline planning application 14/502010 covered a range of issues. Some speakers questioned the claimed compatibility with the emerging draft Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and many felt the application was premature given where the Neighbourhood and Local plans currently stood. A resident said that the Masterplan’s ‘potential’ links fell far short of being consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan. Many speakers were worried about the lack of sufficient infrastructure to support current housing, never mind future development, citing concerns about increased risk of flooding, poor drainage, sewage disposal, road capacity and safety, strain on health facilities and the lack of school places, which they felt were not addressed and should be. Speakers were concerned that the proposed access point would create unacceptable pressure on Marden Road and the crossroads. A resident stated that, contrary to a report that Kent Highways would ‘frown upon’ access to Lodge Road, a meeting with Kent Highways had indicated that it would not do so. A resident highlighted that the proposed ecology-offset areas would not be compatible with use as public open space and that the offer of funds towards existing spaces provided no extra amenity value. Residents said that the proposal’s on-street parking policy should be resisted. A speaker said that the proposal ignored the context of future commercial development, probably in the north of the borough, which would create additional journeys to and from new housing in the south which would go beyond existing road capacity. The agent for the developer put forward its position that the site was a preferred location in the draft Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and was recognised in the draft Local Plan, observing that MBC needed to demonstrate it had a five-year land supply. He said that the proposed roundabout on Marden Road was intended to be off-line to help calm traffic. He commented that the mix of housing was to be confirmed.

PARISH COUNCIL SURGERY: Councillor Kemp to attend the surgery on 27th September.