

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 7.15 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Claridge (until the point indicated in the minutes), Gosling (until the point indicated in the minutes), Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Reardon, Riordan, Sharp (until the point indicated in the minutes), Smith, Spearink, Whittle and Silkin who was in the Chair.  
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

**APOLOGIES:** none as all members were present.

**COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS** regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interest in Items on the Agenda – none declared.

Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

**APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES** Minute pages 1595-1598 of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017 were proposed for approval by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Silkin and made available at [http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_meetings.aspx](http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx). Councillor Burnham abstained.

**FINANCE REPORTS:-**

1. Jubilee Field Pavilion – Quotation for Replacement Emergency Lighting (for decision). Councillors RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £240 exclusive of VAT on the purchase and installation of two new emergency lights by County Fire Protection in Jubilee Field Pavilion.

**CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:-**

1. KALC Membership and Training Survey 2017 – Invitation from Kent Association of Local Councils to complete survey (deadline 31/03/17 - for discussion and decision). Councillors RESOLVED that the survey should be completed by the Chairman and Clerk.
2. Parish Surgery – (i) Report on parish surgeries held 25 February and 4 March (PR/TB). Subjects raised were: proposed development at Hen & Duckhurst Farm; traffic build-up at Offens Drive and The Parade; parking difficulties encountered by some Bower Walk residents; animal welfare concerns during a proposed fireworks display. (ii) Appointment of representatives for future surgeries: 18<sup>th</sup> March Councillor Sharp; 25<sup>th</sup> March Councillor Lain-Rose; 1<sup>st</sup> April Councillor Gosling.
3. Public Toilets, The Parade – To consider Councillor Lain-Rose's report dated 27/02/17 and its recommendations (SL-R) (for decision). Councillor Lain-Rose discussed his report dated 27<sup>th</sup> February 'Public Toilets, The Parade – Pursue Lease' and its recommendation that Councillor Perry be requested to discuss with MBC officers the scope for transfer of the unused toilet block to the Parish Council and its possible use as a flexible retail unit. He said that the recommendation followed a Business Forum held by Borough Councillor Brice and Councillor Riordan. He reported that since writing the report he had been advised by the Clerk that the Parish Council had no statutory power to develop land for the provision of shops. Chairman Silkin said that the Parish Council could nevertheless seek to facilitate a change. Several members commented that there appeared to be a case to restore the block to its former use as a public toilet, specifically with disabled access. Councillor Claridge commented that Bank House opposite the site would shortly be auctioned. Councillors RESOLVED to monitor the progress of the auction sale and to seek views from Kent County Council (via Councillor Hotson) and Maidstone Borough

Council (via Councillor Perry) about the principle of transferring ownership of the site to the Parish Council.

4. Staplehurst Family Fireworks Group – (i) Request for donation (ii) Request to use Jubilee Field (PR) (for decision). Councillor Riordan commented that residents had formed the Staplehurst Family Fireworks Group and their proposal to hold a fireworks event had generated considerable community interest. He felt the Group was taking a very thorough approach to organisation of the event, arranging insurance and liaising with appropriate agencies. He reported that the Jubilee Field Management Committee supported the Group's request to use the field and sought the Parish Council's agreement too. He said that the Fireworks Group wished to make the display a 'car-free event', with the car park being used for stalls. On the subject of finance Councillor Riordan advised: the Fireworks Group had already obtained some funding, but more was needed to help reach a target of £6,000 to launch the event; there would be an entrance charge; a portion of profits would be paid to local groups and charities with the remainder funding an event next year. Councillors NOTED that an objection had been received from a resident concerned about the impact of a display on horses. Councillor Riordan explained that by holding a ten to twelve minute quality display the Group felt this would reduce period and number of smaller displays at that time. He said the Group was keen to engage with any residents who had concerns about the event. Noting the recreational and community value of the proposed activity, councillors RESOLVED to make a donation of £500 towards the event and AGREED to its use of the Jubilee Field.
5. Staplehurst Carnival & Fete – Request for the Parish Council to fund distribution of 2017 brochure (LW) (for decision). Councillor Whittle stated that he felt the brochure was an important source of local information, a channel for promotion of local business and a key factor in determining the success of the carnival. He requested that the Parish Council support the Carnival & Fete Committee by distributing the brochure in its next distribution exercise which would be for the annual report. Councillor Manning stated that it would be ideal to distribute the brochure before the 10K run on 11<sup>th</sup> June. Councillors RESOLVED to AGREE IN PRINCIPLE to distribute the brochure subject to satisfaction with the cost and requested that quotes be obtained from third party distributors before the next Parish Council meeting.
6. Village Centre Contingency Fund – To consider Councillor Lain-Rose's report dated 27/02/17 and its recommendations pursuant to Min1523 of 04/04/16 (SL-R) (for decision). Councillor Lain-Rose discussed his report 'Village Centre Contingency Fund – Released Funds' and commented that in April 2016 the Parish Council had released £10,000 from the Contingency Fund to the Trustees of the Village Centre on condition that the Trust subsequently advise the Parish Council of a repayment plan. His report recommended that the Clerk send a letter to the trustees to ascertain their plans on repayment. After considerable discussion about the release of the funds and the 'Parish Council – Village Centre Trustees Joint Statement' dated January 2014 councillors RESOLVED by majority to send a letter as recommended by the report.
7. Village Centre Management Committee – Appointment of two parish council representatives as trustees (RS) (for decision). *Councillor Claridge left the meeting during this item.* Chairman Silkin stated that to meet the requirements of the Village Centre Trustees it was necessary for the Parish Council to confirm formally its two nominees. Councillors discussed the role of trustees and particularly those nominated by the Parish Council. Councillor Buller requested sight of meeting minutes and said that she felt it was important for the village centre's history to be documented. Councillors RESOLVED that the Parish Council's nominees should remain Councillors Ashby and Silkin (Councillors Ashby, Gosling, Sharp and Silkin abstaining).

**PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS** (from Committee/Groups/Office on specific issues or as regular update)

1. Clerk's Report – The Clerk reported; (i) he was pursuing responses to enquiries about Facebook training; (ii) Staplehurst School had confirmed its availability for Summer Play Scheme; (iii) letters had been sent to Bovis Homes and Redrow Homes seeking a joint meeting about Fishers Farm; (iv) the damage to Bell Lane verges had been raised with KCC, MBC and the Bell land developer's agent; (v) arrangements were in hand for the clean-up on 18<sup>th</sup> March; smaller frames were awaited for the 'volunteer' signs; (vi) Wimpey Field transfer documentation for execution was awaited.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
  - a) Objectives 2017-18 – Discussion of activities and model objective (CC/RS) (for decision further to Min1596). *Councillors Gosling and Sharp left the meeting during this item.* Chairman Silkin explained that Councillor Claridge had drafted an objective to pursue progress on securing a large supermarket in Staplehurst. He invited councillors to state which activities (as discussed Min 1596) they would like to take on. There was considerable discussion about the approach. Councillor Perry stressed the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan as the foundation for the Parish Council's objectives. Councillor Whittle said he felt an important benefit of the exercise was to encourage fresh ideas. Councillor Buller stated that the former Rural Settlement Group (now Neighbourhood Plan Review Group) was an appropriate choice to undertake Neighbourhood Plan monitoring; she said she would be happy to review regeneration of the station; Councillor Reardon said that he had initiatives planned for Surrenden Field; Councillor Riordan said that he would continue to pursue parking issues. Chairman Silkin deferred further discussion until the next meeting to include Councillor Claridge.
  - b) Village Centre Redevelopment Group – Notes of meeting held 16/02/17 (for noting). Councillor Lain-Rose commented that the notes were a draft and that he would make available the final copy in due course.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only.
  - a) Community Payback – Councillor Spearink reported that Community Payback teams had almost completed work at Bell Lane pond, most recently planting bulbs and plants. He advised that the drainage pipe there was starting to silt up. Councillor Spearink said he now intended to deploy the teams to Wimpey Field. He invited councillors to suggest tasks for the teams once they completed work there.
  - b) Wimpey Field – Councillor Spearink reported that he and Councillor Riordan had met representatives of Staplehurst school, who were very interested in the opportunities offered by the open space.
  - c) Annual Parish Meeting 2017 – Report of meeting 02/03/17 (SL-R/RS/LW). Councillor Whittle discussed the working group's draft agenda for the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting. He explained that the aim was to invite interested parties to run stalls before the event and then to have refreshments afterwards. The stalls would be 'open for business' from 5.00pm and the meeting proper would start at 6.00pm. He said the planned date was Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May. Chairman Silkin asked councillors to consider and volunteer for the roles to be filled and to be ready to discuss the event at the next meeting of full council.
  - d) Salt Bins – Discussion of future requirements pursuant to Min 1597 (PS/LW). Councillors RESOLVED that locations of preferred sites should be sent to Kent Highways for assessment.

**REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS** for noting:-

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – Councillor Perry commented that MBC was considering its medium term financial strategy; planning fees would be increasing; Council Tax would

be increasing by just over 2%; he would have liked to see an increase in enforcement resource but this had not been agreed.

**REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS** (written reports for noting):-

No items.

**URGENT MATTERS** (at Chairman's discretion, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting)

No items were raised.

Chairman.....

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Before the meeting two residents outlined plans for a Staplehurst Family Fireworks event on 4<sup>th</sup> November and spoke of the engagement undertaken with members of the community.