

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Buller, Burnham, Claridge (until the point indicated in the minutes), Gosling (from and until the point indicated in the minutes), Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, 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:** Councillors Ashby (on Parish Council business) and Reardon.

**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 1586-1590 of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017 were proposed for approval by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Spearink, 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 Sharp abstained.

**FINANCE REPORTS:-**

1. Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) – Membership Renewal 2017-18: £50 (budgeted item - for approval). Proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Spearink, the membership renewal was APPROVED nem con.
2. Village Centre Redevelopment Consultation – Proposed donation for catering services (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Riordan, a donation of £50 to Staplehurst WI to thank its members for providing catering services for the consultation event on 21<sup>st</sup> January was APPROVED nem con.

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

1. Annual Parish Meeting – Request from Cllr Brice to re-visit the format of future meetings (for discussion & decision). *Councillor Gosling arrived at the meeting.* Councillors discussed ideas to generate more interest in the Annual Parish Meeting within the legal constraints relating to such events, which covered such points as permissible dates, start time and venue. Councillors acknowledged that although the meeting was facilitated by the Parish Council it was not a Council meeting and should be resident-focused. Ideas included staging a weekend forum for village organisations followed by a question and answer session. **AGREED:** Councillors Lain-Rose, Silkin, Spearink and Whittle to co-ordinate ideas to suggest a proposed format and to liaise with Borough Councillor Brice; Councillor Sharp to check the availability of the Village Centre for Saturdays in May.
2. Parish Surgery – (i) Report on parish surgeries held 21/28 January & 4 February (AG/PS/PR). Topics raised were: the withdrawn planning appeal relating to Stanley Farm; development in villages south of Staplehurst; vacant land in the High Street; electric car issues; a low-flying helicopter. (ii) Appointment of representatives for future surgeries: 18<sup>th</sup> February Chairman Silkin; 25<sup>th</sup> February Councillor Riordan; 4<sup>th</sup> March Councillor Burnham. *Councillor Gosling left the meeting.*
3. Battle's Over – A Nation's tribute – Correspondence from the Pageantmaster about beacon commemoration of the end of the First World War (for discussion and decision). Councillors NOTED the invitation to participate in beacon lighting at 7.00pm on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and **RESOLVED:** (i) to respond to the Pageantmaster that the Parish

- Council wished to participate in the beacon initiative; (ii) to discuss the potential location of a beacon at the next meeting, noting that details submitted by the end of March 2017 would generate an acknowledgement in the Pageantmaster's 'Guide to Taking Part' to be issued in April 2017.
4. Carnival & Fete Committee – Request to separate the annual fete and funfair weekend into two events (BM) (for discussion & decision). Councillor Manning explained that the Committee badly needed additional resource without which the fete could not go ahead; instead, separate and smaller funfair weekend and music events would be organised. He said that he had helped organise a first carnival and fete in 1968. Councillors AGREED to the use of Surrenden Field for two events. A further discussion took place about how to attract additional helpers to secure future fetes. Councillor Perry stated that he felt the Parish Council should be formally involved via an agreed organisational framework similar to some mixed resident/Parish Council groups. Councillor Lain-Rose volunteered to work on a framework. Councillor Whittle said that it was important to identify the key skill and resource shortages and volunteered to assist the Committee.
  5. Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan – Invitation to Visioning Events 22/23 March (for decision). Councillors Buller and Lain-Rose volunteered to attend the event in Cranbrook on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.
  6. Hen & Duckhurst Farm / Lodge Road – Report of meeting with Crest Nicholson and Civils 25/01/17 (pursuant to Planning Committee meeting Min 1298P). Crest Nicholson had advised that it would be delivering the homes agreed at Hen & Duckhurst Farm (outline application consent 14/502010) and it was currently working with Civils to develop a master plan. Councillor Buller commented that the meeting had been positive, with visitors demonstrating in their thinking and proposals a good knowledge of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan. NOTED by councillors.
  7. Local Lottery Scheme Survey – Invitation from MBC and Involve Kent to comment. Councillor Riordan volunteered to complete the survey, taking into account the Parish Council's acknowledgement of the funding challenge in the voluntary sector as well as the misgivings that some held about gambling.
  8. Objectives for 2017-18 – Review of councillors' proposals pursuant to Min 1587 (for decision). Councillors discussed ideas submitted by members and AGREED to assess them taking into account the extent of the likely benefit (whole or part of parish) and SMART objectives. AGREED: Councillors Claridge and Silkin to undertake the further assessment.
  9. Rural Kent Coffee and Information Project – Invitation from ACRK to host a visit by a mobile cafe and information centre (for decision). Councillors RESOLVED to decline the invitation with thanks, noting that in Staplehurst the library was an excellent source of the kind of information covered by the proposed project.

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

1. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported: (i) the Parish Office's new public opening hours (09.00-13.00 Monday-Thursday) and working hours were operational; (ii) the departing RFO's financial duties were being handed over; (iii) he had reviewed a draft of the transfer document for Wimpey Field; (iv) quotes for tree work at Bell Lane pond had been sought and KCC were very pleased with the outcome of work there to date.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
  - a) Communication & Engagement Group – Minutes of meeting 11/01/17 (published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>). After some discussion about the topics raised in the report Councillors RESOLVED that the Clerk should seek quotations for the provision of social media (especially Facebook) training, as recommended by the Group. Councillor Lain-Rose said he was reviewing terms of reference for some Parish Council groups.

- b) Jubilee Field Management Committee – Minutes of meeting 17/01/17 (published at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee\\_fields\\_users\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx)). Councillors NOTED the report. Councillor Riordan commented that the Committee was making good progress. In response to a question from Councillor Perry Councillor Claridge stated that he was looking at an overall approach to maintenance of parish council assets.
- c) Play Scheme – Proposal for dates and times for summer 2017. Councillor Buller proposed that: the summer play scheme be held for three weeks in August (week one 09.00-12.00, weeks two and three 09.00-15.00); a request be made to Staplehurst School to hire a hall as a venue; Councillor Smith join the Play Scheme Group. Councillors AGREED the proposals nem con.
- d) Rural Settlement Group – Minutes of meeting 07/12/16 (for noting) (deferred item Min 1589). NOTED by councillors and published at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural\\_settlement\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx). Councillors NOTED that Councillor Lain-Rose was working on terms of reference to cover the future role of the RSG and would be liaising with the RSG Chair before bringing a proposal to the Parish Council for approval.
- e) Surrenden Playing Field – Quotations for works to be carried out on play area surfaces (for decision). Councillors discussed Councillor Reardon's e-mail report dated 06/02/17 containing comments on three quotations to undertake replacement of the safety surfaces on the play area at Surrenden Field. Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, Councillors RESOLVED to accept Option 1 proposed by RTC Safety Surfaces Limited in its quotation 1701030 dated 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017.
- f) Village Clean-Up – (i) Proposal to hold event on 18/03/17 (for approval) (deferred item Min 1589). AGREED by Councillors. *Councillor Claridge left the meeting.* (ii) Quotations & Proposal for purchase of 4 x 'Volunteer at Work' signs (for decision) (Min 1563). Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Sharp, Councillors RESOLVED to purchase four signs as set out in the Assistant Clerk's report dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at a cost of £168.
- g) Village Update – Update on spring issue and approval of distribution plans. Councillor Buller advised that the target distribution date for the Spring Update was the end of February. She reported that Councillor Reardon had not received replies from distribution companies approached to quote for delivery. Councillors RESOLVED to distribute the Spring Update via volunteers in the main village area and by post to the rural areas.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
- a) NatWest – Oral report of meeting with representatives 27/01/17. Chairman Silkin said he, Borough Councillor Brice and Helen Grant MP had made representations about the closure of NatWest Staplehurst branch to the five bank representatives who attended the meeting. He reported the responses received: (i) NatWest confirmed the branch closure was permanent; (ii) mobile branch provision was under consideration, possibly for visits on Saturday with effect from April; (iii) NatWest had a community banker service to support customers in their use of other channels such as on-line banking; (iv) extension of banking hours at Cranbrook and Sutton Road was under consideration. Councillor Lain-Rose reported that an ATM would shortly be operational at SPAR.
- b) Village Centre Redevelopment Group – Oral report of consultation event 21/01/17. Councillor Lain-Rose reported that over one hundred questionnaire replies had been received, which needed to be analysed. He said he hoped results would be available at the end of February.
- c) Wimpey Field Open Space – Update. Councillor Spearink reported that a working weekend was planned during which low-level branches would be lifted from oak trees

in the central area and some saplings would be removed. He said he was ordering roadstone from KCC to provide infill in a section of the public footpath KM302A, the work to be undertaken with assistance of Community Payback resource which was already making a positive difference with the work they were doing at Bell Lane pond. *Councillor Sharp left the meeting.*

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

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – Councillor Perry advised that the Local Plan Inspector's interim report reduced MBC's target housing number to 17,600 and the Inspector's final report was now awaited. He said MBC Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee would be considering the report at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February. It would also be considering the MBC Strategic Plan and Budget where savings needed to be made.

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

No items received.

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

No items were raised.

**SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT- STAFF JOB DESCRIPTIONS:-**

1. To move that the public be excluded from item 2 due to its confidential nature. As no member of the public was present the motion was not moved.
2. To consider Councillor Lain-Rose's report and recommendations on job descriptions for Parish Office staff. Councillors thanked Councillor Lain-Rose for his work on the new job descriptions. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Smith, councillors RESOLVED to agree the new job descriptions for the Clerk and for the Deputy Clerk & Finance Officer as set out in the appendices to Councillor Lain-Rose's confidential report dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

Chairman.....

**PUBLIC FORUM:** No items were raised.