

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 1st August 2016 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Gosling, Kelly, Manning, Perry, Riordan, Sharp, Spearink and Silkin who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher, Claridge, Lain-Rose 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 1546-1549 of 18th July 2016 were proposed for approval by Councillor Manning, 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. Councillors Burnham and Kelly abstained.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Recommendations arising from Finance Group meeting 29/07/16 – The report of the meeting was noted and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx. (i) New Office Copier Contract: proposed by Chairman Silkin, seconded by Councillor Gosling, Councillors AGREED the recommendation that a new 5-year contract be taken with Kent County Supplies to replace the existing photocopier by a Sharp MX2640NFK with colour and stapling facility, the existing HP Inkjet printer to be retained until it failed at which point a replacement would be purchased; (ii) Unmetered Energy Supply: Councillors AGREED the recommendation that there be no change to the current supplier arrangements.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:-

1. Meeting Dates 2017 – Schedule of dates for Planning Committee, Full Council and Annual Parish Meeting: proposed by Councillor Burnham, seconded by Councillor Ashby, the schedule circulated prior to the meeting was AGREED. The dates will be published on the village website calendar and on noticeboards in the usual way.
2. Rail Passenger Forum – Report received from former Councillor Green: the report was NOTED and thanks expressed to former Councillor Green.
3. Supporting Parish Councils – MBC's survey of views on communication between MBC and parish councils and on implementation of the Parish Charter (completion by individual councillors is requested). Councillors NOTED the invitation for their own action and the deadline date of 30th September.
4. Tree and Pond Walks - Invitation from the Kent Tree and Pond Partnership to hold a village tree walk (for decision). Councillors AGREED to ask the Partnership for available dates when it could lead a walk.
5. Parish Surgery – (i) Verbal report on parish surgeries held 23 & 30 July (PR/MA/JP): issues raised were parking outside the school, the bus service, overgrown hedge between the school field and the A229, churchyard maintenance, ruts on Surrenden Field, weeds in gutters, the auction of property at the Parade, the future of the bank; (ii) Appointment of representatives for future dates: 27th August – Councillor Spearink.

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

1. Clerk's Report – The Clerk reported: (i) Councillor Lain-Rose and the Parish Office had contacted the Parade managing agent's office to seek a plan of the land up for auction and a response was awaited; (ii) the Parish Council's solicitor had advised that the Croudace officer dealing with the transfer of land between the A229 and Chestnut Avenue would be dealing with the completion of transfer on return to the office this week; (iii) Taylor Wimpey had advised that the suggested relocation of the proposed Marden Road crossing to the southern end of Northdown had been rejected by KCC and MBC, so it appeared that the proposed location would revert to west of the current temporary site (confirmation being sought); (iv) the Parish Office had received RoSPA inspection reports for the Skate Park and Surrenden Field Play Areas and distributed them to the Jubilee Field and Surrenden Field Groups; the reports were being reviewed; (v) a meeting with County Councillor Hotson and a meeting of the Strategy and Policy Group would take place in the week commencing 8th August.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - a) Neighbourhood Plan – Update Report (for noting). The written report circulated before the meeting was NOTED. The Clerk gave a verbal update. He reported that MBC Spatial Policy team had verbally advised that it had received a draft report from the Examiner and that it was positive, suggesting only some tightening of some policy wording. The officer hoped to release the formal report in a few days and planned to recommend to MBC Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee's September meeting that, subject to the Examiner's requested modifications, the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum.
 - b) Summer Play Scheme 2016 – Timetable for 1st to 19th August (for noting). Councillors NOTED the timetable. Councillor Buller said she had visited the open morning held that morning and encouraged councillors to visit during the coming three weeks.
3. Verbal Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
 - a) MBC Planning Training Session – Report on session held 25/07/16 (PR). Councillor Riordan said that the session had been very useful and covered topics including reasons for refusal, Section 106 payments and Community Infrastructure Levy.
 - b) Wimpey Field – Report on works undertaken by Taylor Wimpey and planned activities (PS). Councillor Spearink reported that Taylor Wimpey had cut paths and around the pond had undertaken planting. He and Councillor Riordan had met representatives of Twig Group on site and discussed the proposed clearance work for which Twig Group had been appointed (Min1535). They also discussed relocation of the hibernaculum; cultivation, stone picking, grading and seeding of the entrance grass area; installation of a 70m footpath. Prices for these works will be included in a report to the next meeting of Full Council. Councillors Spearink and Riordan stated that Twig Group had provided some very helpful guidance on other issues such as dead branches on trees and trip hazards on paths in the woodland. Councillor Spearink said that a push for more volunteers would be useful; they would be able to assist in a bulb-planting task. He said that as the laying of a new path would help facilitate disability access this would be an opportunity to seek funding from related bodies.

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

1. Borough Councillor's Report – Councillor Perry urged all interested residents to send comments to MBC about the new proposals for the A229-Marden Road-Headcorn Road crossroads, which are to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting on 15th August.

2. Kent Association of Local Councils Maidstone Area Committee – Minutes of AGM 27/06/16. NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx.
3. Maidstone Borough Council Play Area Improvements - Programme Update received from MBC Parks & Leisure Department Councillors NOTED the update and that it discussed the proposals for future grant funding as match funding towards any improvements to 'Strategically Important Play Areas'.
4. Police-Parish Liaison (PB, BM, AS) – Report of meeting 20/07/16 (AS). Councillor Sharp gave a verbal report of her attendance at the meeting. She reported that it covered: the introduction of a neighbourhood watch scheme – many villages did not have one although Staplehurst does; distraction burglaries; the role of the Rural PCSOs; the need to be patient when dialling 101 as the same operators also handle 999 calls; non-urgent incidents can now reported via a new website at <https://www.kent.police.uk/>.

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

1. Jubilee Field Management Committee – Minutes of AGM 14/07/16. NOTED by councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx. Councillor Riordan said he had attended the meeting (reported Min1548). He said there were some concerns about funding and maintenance costs and the Committee wanted to discuss fundraising with the football clubs. It was felt that the mower needed servicing and the pavilion lights needed attention. Chairman Silkin said that if any approach were to be made to the Parish Council full written details of the requirement and associated costs would be needed.
2. McCabe Day Centre (JB) – Minutes of meeting 07/07/16. *Deferred from 18/07/16.* NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/mccabe_day_centre.aspx.
3. Staplehurst Health Centre Patient Participation Group (JB, AS, RS) – Minutes of meeting 06/07/16. *Deferred from 18/07/16.* NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx.
4. Transport Accessibility Group (BM) – Minutes of meeting 24/06/16. *Deferred from 18/07/16.* NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx.

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 a resident voiced her concern about the proposed amount of new housing for the village. Points in the ensuing discussion included: the advanced status of the Maidstone Local Plan and Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan; submitting comments about the Maidstone Local Plan was a good way for residents to register concerns; it was important to give examples and evidence to support comments; the Parish Council and the Rural Settlement Group were working hard to protect the parish's interests when development proposals were made.