

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 20th November 2017 at 7.45 p.m.

Before the meeting all present stood in respectful silence in memory of former Parish Clerk and Parish Councillor James Dowswell who had recently passed away.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Claridge (until the point indicated in the minutes), Gosling, Lain-Rose (from the point indicated in the minutes), Manning, Perry (from the point indicated in the minutes due to MBC business), Reardon, Riordan, Sharp, Silkin, Smith, Spearink and Burnham 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.
Interests in Items on the Agenda – none declared.
Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

Councillor Lain-Rose joined the meeting.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Minute pages 1657-1660 of 6th November 2017 were APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Burnham and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx. Councillor Buller commented that a public Neighbourhood Watch meeting would be held at the Village Centre on 27/11/17 between 7.00pm and 9.00pm.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Accounts for payment - for approval. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Silkin, Councillors RESOLVED nem con to APPROVE the list of accounts for payment. Expenditure for the period 11/10/17 to 13/11/17 was £19,304.21 and income for the same period was £11,960.79.
2. Summation of Accounts – as at 13th November 2017. NOTED by Councillors and published at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.
3. Trees for Wimpey Field – Retrospective proposal to agree the purchase of trees for planting in community orchard area (est. cost £1,300 to include ties and stakes). Councillor Riordan commented: over the past few months discussions about tree planting had taken place with MBC's tree officer and Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and between some members of the Wimpey Field Group; in the knowledge that funding from the Taylor Wimpey grant was available and to secure availability from a dwindling stock an order had been placed before Council's formal approval of the expenditure; apologies for the retrospective nature of the expenditure were given to members; residents had been invited to sponsor trees and the result would be no net cost to the Parish Council. Councillors NOTED the retrospective expenditure and commended the sponsorship initiative. Councillor Manning requested further information from the Wimpey Field Group about the chosen selection of fruit trees. Councillor Smith asked that information about the initiative including the sponsorship opportunity be posted on the Parish Council's Facebook page and not simply on closed group pages.
4. Update of Financial Regulations – Update of SPC's Financial Regulations following review by Finance & Strategy Group (SL-R). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Silkin, subject to two typographical amendments the updated financial

regulations were APPROVED by councillors (nem con with two abstentions) and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policies_information.aspx.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Code of Conduct Training – Discussion of how to implement the training received from the MBC Monitoring Officer on 01/11/17. Councillor Buller discussed her proposal to facilitate implementation of the advice and training received from the MBC Monitoring Officer on 01/11/17. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, Councillors RESOLVED to append to the Code of Conduct the additional guidance points 1-7 as set out in Councillor Buller's proposal (For 11 – Against 1 – Abstained 1). Updated information to be published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policies_information.aspx.
2. Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute – Correspondence from KALC and the Pageantmaster about preparations for the tribute celebration on 11/11/2018 (Mins 1591-2 and 1595). Councillor Spearink said he would look into plans for the Parish Council's participation in the Tribute and would contact the Rector of All Saints Church about participation in the ringing of the bells across the nation. *Councillor Perry joined the meeting.*
3. Carnival & Fete AGM – Report of meeting and a proposal to deliver the 2018 brochure with the Annual Report (JB) (for discussion & decision). Councillor Buller reported: she had discussed with the Carnival & Fete Committee distribution arrangements for 2018; the committee was prepared to offer manpower to assist in distribution of the Carnival brochure with the Parish Council Annual Report; Councillor Buller would coordinate the arrangements; although the additional content would increase the unit postage cost (where applicable) the number of posted items would be reduced by having additional manpower for delivery; the aim was thereby to execute the delivery at no additional overall cost to the Parish Council. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Smith, Councillors RESOLVED to approve the joint distribution of the Carnival brochure and Parish Council Annual Report as proposed.
4. KALC – Crime Prevention and Safety Conference – Invitation to attend event 07/12/17. RESOLVED: invite a member of Staplehurst Neighbourhood Watch to represent the Parish Council at the event and to fund the cost of £60.
5. Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) – Invitation to respond to Safety & Wellbeing Survey (by 15/01/18) <http://www.kent.fire-uk.org/news/news-releases/october-2017/kmfra-safety-and-wellbeing-plan/>. Councillor Spearink volunteered to review and respond to the survey.
6. Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Policing Survey – Invitation to complete public survey <https://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/listening-to-you/public-consultations/>. Councillor Lain-Rose volunteered to draft a letter in response to the survey invitation. The Clerk stated that information about the survey had been posted on the village website http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/latest_news. Councillors encouraged residents to take time to respond.
7. Parish Council Surgeries – (i) Reports on key issues raised – Councillors Sharp and Silkin reported that there had been no resident visits to the surgery; Councillors agreed to review in January the frequency of the surgeries; (ii) Appointment of representatives for future dates – 9th December Councillor Buller; 16th December Councillor Ashby. Councillor Perry stated his borough council surgery would next be held on 2nd December and not 25th November.

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

1. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported that he had written to the MBC Chief Executive about land north of Henhurst Farm (Min 1659) and received an acknowledgement; the Caretaker had cleared some broken glass from the Surrenden play area; the Clerk and Deputy Clerk had met the Internal Auditor to cover some accounting questions; upgrade of the Parish Office technology and reconfiguration of the office would take place on

- 23/24 November, which would restrict the office's operational capacity at that time: the new parish caretaker and parish support officer would be starting work in the next few days.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - a) Gypsy and Traveller Planning Applications – Referral by Planning Committee of consultation with neighbouring parishes about their appetite for judicial review or other action (Min 1339P & 1341P). Councillors NOTED that informal soundings of other parish councils had not indicated any appetite for the expense of judicial review proceedings but had indicated an interest in a lower level collaboration. Councillor Perry commented that MBC's position vis-a-vis gypsy and traveller sites had been strengthened by the likely adoption of the Local Plan and by a better resourced enforcement team. He recommended that when the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed attention should be given to gypsy and traveller policy. RESOLVED: inform the consulted parish councils and interested residents of the outcome of the soundings; ask the parish councils whether they would be interested in attending a meeting hosted by Staplehurst Parish Council in the new year; update SPC's own record of gypsy and traveller planning applications and sites; consider how best to create a visual representation of the record.
 3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
 - a) Wimpey Field Group – Report of meeting 31/10/17, current work activity and review of group membership. Councillor Spearink commented on the successful exercise to plant spring bulbs and plans to plant summer bulbs. There were further plans to plant trees in collaboration with Staplehurst School and to create a tree-lined colonnade. It was acknowledged that such expenditure in the current financial year would exceed the allocated budget, but the 2018-19 requirement would be lower. The Clerk requested that the Group provide (i) a proposal for consideration by Full Council on 4th December covering the estimated expenditure on trees and further bulb planting; (ii) an estimate of the Group's 2018-19 budget requirement for the next iteration of the draft budget. Councillor Spearink said he would take up an offer from contractors TWIG Group to visit and discuss with the Group grass-cutting requirements for next year. In response to a question from Councillor Reardon Councillor Spearink agreed to provide a list of the different types of bulbs.

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

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – Councillor Perry reported: MBC was undertaking a review of its planning services; there were issues to be resolved between MBC and KCC in order to progress a Leeds-Langley relief road; following MBC's vote in favour of the Local Plan there was now a six week 'pending period' before formal adoption could take place; he had some concerns about the content of the Parish Services Scheme and absence of consultation with KALC.

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

1. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee – Notes of meeting 24/10/17. NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx.

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

No items

SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT – SURRENDEN PLAYING FIELD:-

1. To move that the public be excluded from item 2 due to its confidential nature. Proposed by Councillor Burnham, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, Councillors RESOLVED to

- AGREE the motion due to the commercial sensitivity of the report's information (For 10 – Against 2 – Abstained 2). *Members of the public and Councillor Claridge left the meeting.*
2. To consider the report's recommendations regarding the freehold of Surrenden Playing Field and Nicholson Walk. Councillors reviewed the confidential report dated 13/11/17 titled 'Surrenden Playing Field and Nicholson Walk – Proposed Transfer of Freehold' which set out the status of negotiations with MBC and made recommendations for the next steps. Councillors noted that MBC's latest asking price for the freehold still did not take into account MBC would have to bear the cost of maintaining and improving the playing field were it to take back full ownership, as previously highlighted by Finance & Strategy Group (meeting note 26/10/17 http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx). Councillors discussed the report's recommendations on the next steps, which were APPROVED as follows: Recommendation No. 1 – For 12, Against 0, Abstained 1; Recommendation No. 2 – For 9, Against 2, Abstained 2. Councillors asked the Clerk to draft a suitable letter to MBC covering the agreed action.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting two members of the public commented that the Surrenden Playing Field agenda item should not be a confidential one. The Chair of Staplehurst Emergency Help Team thanked the Parish Council for funding the purchase of some equipment and of refreshments for the team's training day. Chairman Burnham thanked organisers of the French Market and the marshals of the Remembrance Day parade and said that the United Reformed Church would be hosting a coffee morning in support of Lainey's Farm.