

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
South Hall, Village Centre
Monday 13th December at 7.30p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillors Buller, Bowden, Castro, Hotson, Lain-Rose, McPhee, Perry and Riordan who was in the Chair and Parish Clerk, Miss A Smith. New Councillors McLean, Clifton and McLaughlin joined the meeting after agenda item 2.

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Councillor Smith and Spearink for health reasons and Councillor Sharp for personal commitments.

2. CO-OPTION TO FILL COUNCILLOR VACANCIES followed by the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillors considered the personal statements and brief presentations provided by Mrs McLean, Mr McLaughlin and Mr Clifton as candidates for co-option. Mrs McLean was proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor McPhee, Mr McLaughlin was proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor Buller and Mr Clifton was proposed by Councillor Hotson, seconded by Councillor Perry. All Councillors agreed to vote for the three candidates together in one motion. Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Buller it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the co-option of all three candidates. All candidates signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took their places at the Council meeting. Chairman Riordan formally welcomed the new councillors.

Councillor Lain-Rose joined the meeting at this point.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the agenda:

- 3.1. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests – None declared.
- 3.2. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda. None declared
- 3.3. Requests for Dispensation. None requested.

4. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

4.1. Pages 1960 – 1964 of 29th November 2021 available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>. Proposed by Councillor Bowden, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes which were signed by Councillor Riordan who was in the Chair.

5. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

5.1. Accounts for Payment – for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor Hotson, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 25th November 2021 to 8th December 2021 totalled £1,840.73; income for the period was £0.

Approved Payments 25th November - 8th December 2021 **Amount**

Approved Payments 25th November - 8th December 2021	Amount
Clr Reimbursement Community Payback Refreshments	47.16
Homeleigh Timber - Caretaker Boots & Bristle Brush	42.98
Bradley Hawkins - A229/Chestnut Avenue Hedge Cut	60.00
Bradley Hawkins - Mowing & Strimming Wimpey Field	75.00
NALC - Levelling Up The Nation Webinar (AS)	51.71

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Hugofox Ltd - Silver Subscription December	23.99
Khurshid Khosla - Reimbursement Edging Logs GSG (WBF)	28.00
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Clean/Open Nov	736.84
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilet Sundries Nov	36.40
HM Land Registry - Land Search Lodge Rd	4.00
Adobe - Subscription November	15.17
Amazon - Cordless Trio Telephone Handset Parish Office	79.00
HM Land Registry - Title Register Search Lodge Rd	3.00
HM Land Registry - Title Register Search Lodge Rd	3.00
HM Land Registry - Title Plan View Lodge Rd	3.00
MBC - Council Tax Room 1 December	62.00
MBC - Council Tax Room 2-3 December	72.00
Business Stream - Bell Lane Toilets Water Oct/Nov	69.39
Opus Energy - Surrenden Pavilion Electricity Nov	15.36
Opus Energy - Parish Office Electricity Nov	88.89
Opus Energy - Bell Lane Toilets Electricity Nov	23.03
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection Nov	64.80
Arron Services Ltd - Hosted Exchange Service December	214.32
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	1,819.04

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE

21.69

5.2. Summation of Accounts – for noting

NOTED by Councillors and published at <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>.

5.3. Report of the Finance and Strategy Group Meeting

NOTED by Councillors and published at - [Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/)

5.3.1. Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Bowden, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the following annual contracts be renewed; Landscape Services be appointed to carry out the mowing at Surrenden Field a cost of £1,517.30 p.a.; that Forestry First be appointed to cut Surrenden Field hedge £1,460.00 p.a., the Youth Club hedge £100 p.a., Youth Club grass mowing £400.00 p.a. and A229/Chestnut Avenue grass mowing £600.00 p.a.; and Brad Hawkins be appointed to cut the hedge at A229/Chestnut Avenue at £255.00 p.a.

5.3.2. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor McPhee, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the next Quarter Contract Reviews and Payments as follows; the bi-annual PAT testing with South East PAT Testing £50 up to 50 items and £1 per item thereafter and annual contracts with Paxman Services (UK) Ltd for Bell Lane Toilet sundries £600 variable est.; Playsafety Ltd inspection of play equipment at Jubilee and Surrenden Fields £165.00; annual subscriptions with Action with Communities in Rural Kent £120.00, Weald of Kent Protection Society £25.00, National Allotment Society £55.00, Kent County Playing Fields Association £20.00 and Kent Pond and Tree Warden £50.00 and under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for annual donations to RBL Poppy Appeal £100.00; Staplehurst WI re Village Clean-up £50.00; Staplehurst Community Events Group Stay Safe event £100.00; Medway Valley Countryside Partnership £50.00; Heart of Kent Hospice £250.00; Involve Kent £75.00; Kenward Trust £100.00; Staplehurst Parish magazine £75.00; CAB Maidstone £200.00; Samaritans Maidstone & Weald £100.00; Staplehurst Community Centre for Debt Advice £200.00 and Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance £250.00.

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5.4. Community Payback Lunches

Proposed by Councillor Bowden, seconded by Councillor McPhee it was RESOLVED to APPROVE as s137 payments, the list of those previously made between 10th April 2021 and 4th December 2021 inclusive, amounting to £1062.70 in respect of purchasing lunch for the Community Payback Team. Councillor Lain-Rose abstained in the vote.

5.5. Wimpey Field Management Plan

Following discussion about the management needs of Wimpey Field, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the commissioning of Medway Valley Country Partnership to undertake a review and produce a new 10-year Management Plan for the nature reserve, at a cost of £1750 + VAT.

5.6. Repainting of the ornate safety railings on the High Street.

Councillor Riordan was able to confirm that KCC Councillor Parfitt-Reid had agreed to provide £300 from her Members Grant fund to pay for the paint, however Council needed to approve the project and expenditure in the first instance. Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Perry it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the painting of the railings to be undertaken by the Community Payback Team at an anticipated cost of £300 + VAT.

6. CORRESPONDENCE AND PARISH ISSUES**6.1. Christmas Volunteer Celebration**

Councillor Riordan explained that due to the increase of COVID cases locally, and the increased prevalence of the new variant, he and Vice Chair Councillor Perry in conjunction with the Clerk had taken the disappointing decision to postpone the celebration until more appropriate conditions were available. Proposed by Councillor Castro seconded by Councillor McPhee it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the postponement of the event.

6.2. Ways of Working with Community Payback

After much discussion it was agreed to defer this item to a future meeting.

6.3. Request by Maidstone Lions to create a community recycling collection point

Councillor Buller updated Councillors on progress to date. More investigation on potential locations for a collection point for certain items needed to be undertaken. Councillors therefore deferred any decision pending a further report back from Councillor Buller.

6.4. Fire Hydrant Initiative

Councillors discussed the large number of fire hydrants in both the main village and rural areas and the implications of undertaking this project. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Council would support the project by undertaking an annual fire hydrant survey for those hydrants within the main envelope of the village, leaving the rural ones to the Fire Service; subject to the Fire Service being happy with this arrangement.

6.5. Request from KCC to consider installation of kerbs in a section of Marden Road

Proposed by Hotson, seconded by Councillor Bowden, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE by a majority that KCC carry out the work to include installing a dropped kerb for one resident and recommend that KCC conduct a wider consultation when ready to undertake the project.

7. PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS**7.1. Clerks Report**

The Clerk updated Councillors that she was making good progress with the project to repaint the Skate Park walls through a community project using a local artist and local youths. Early indications are that the project will exceed the initial funding granted by the Welcome Back Fund, but the Clerk had been able to negotiate to an increase in the grant to cover the costs. She confirmed that she hoped to get a

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paper to Council for approval at the next Council meeting, in order to hit the deadlines for the funding. The Clerk also updated Councillors that she had been facilitating conversations between a local resident group and the East Kent Schoolboy Scramble Club who run events on the Duckhurst Farm site. Historically this has been a contentious issue due to the noise. She was able to confirm that through discussions the residents and club had now come to an agreement on dates for the 2022 season.

7.2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project Activities

7.2.1. Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

Councillors NOTED the report of the meeting of 24th November 2021, published at [Neighbourhood Plan Review Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/Neighbourhood-Plan-Review-Group).

7.2.2. Communications Group

Councillors NOTED the report of the meeting of the 2nd December 2021, published at [Communications Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/Communications-Group)

7.3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors

7.3.1. Chairman's report – Councillor Riordan thanked Councillor Perry for chairing the previous meeting in his absence. He also thanked Councillor Buller and the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group for their work in preparing the Regulation 19 submission. He confirmed that the winners of the Staplehurst Merit Awards had been notified that day, and he thanked JBH Refurbishments for their kind sponsorship of the awards. Councillor Riordan extended a warm welcome to the new Councillors. He reminded Group Chairmen to submit their proposed meeting dates to the office for the creation of a calendar of dates for 2022. He ended by thanking all councillors and office staff for their hard work during 2021 and wished them and their families a Happy Christmas and new Year. Councillor Buller responded on behalf of the Council, thanking the Chairman for all his hard work and contribution throughout the year.

8. REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS

– for noting

8.4. KALC Executive Committee Meeting – (for noting) notes from meeting of the 16th October 2021. Councillors NOTED the report.

8.5. Maidstone Area Committee of KALC – (for noting) notes from the meeting of the 29th November 2021. Councillors NOTED the report.

8.6. Maidstone Area Committee of KALC – (for noting) Response to MBC's Regulation 19 Consultation. Councillors NOTED the report.

Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Castro, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the suspension of standing orders for 15 minutes to facilitate the completion of business.

8. REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS **cont...**

8.1. Borough Councillors Report – Oral reports by Councillor Perry & Councillor Brice
Councillor Perry confirmed he had submitted his own response to the Regulation 19 Consultation which included a request to remove a previously agreed site. He advised that MBC had now approved with the 2/3rd majority required to move to a four yearly election cycle. He was now hopeful that this would enable the retention of the historic parish boundaries during the Boundary Commission Review which for

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Staplehurst would result in retaining the same boundary at Borough and Parish levels and keeping with two Ward Councillors. He finished by wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

8.2. County Councillors Report – Oral report by County Councillor Parfitt-Reid – None

8.3. Police Report

Councillors noted the Police Report for November. Chairman Riordan advised Councillors that he and the Clerk were holding a follow up meeting with Chief Inspector Woodward on Friday 17th in the afternoon. He confirmed that he would be following through on progress since the Community meeting and raising ongoing concerns raised by Councillors.

8.7. Attendance at Maidstone Area Committee Meetings in 2022

Councillor Riordan briefed Councillors that in 2022, 4 out of 5 of the proposed dates for these meetings clashed with Staplehurst Parish Council meetings, making attendance challenging. Following discussion, proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Buller it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that one of the Parish Council Representatives could attend these meetings instead of Council, however this would still be considered attendance in the attendance records that are published in the annual report each year. It was also agreed that Councillors Lain-Rose and Smith would continue to be the agreed representatives.

9. REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

None

10. URGENT MATTERS

None.

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PUBLIC FORUM

Before and during the meeting a member of the public spoke about items 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 on the agenda. Another member of the public commented that some of the Christmas light motifs weren't working, and the Clerk advised that every effort was being made to get them working.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm