

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Virtual Meeting via Zoom video-conference
Monday 14th December 2020 at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Bowden, Buller, Castro, Forward, Gartan, George, Lain-Rose, Perry, Sharp, Spearink and Riordan who was in the Chair.
Retiring Clerk Mr MJ Westwood and Parish Clerk Miss A Smith.

Thanks and Congratulations: The Council expressed its deepest thanks and appreciation to Mr MJ Westwood for his exceptional service and wished him and his wife a very happy retirement.

APOLOGIES: Councillors McNeill and Miller whose apologies were accepted. Councillors Rawlinson and Thomas were absent.

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 declared

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES: Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain Rose, minute pages 1874-1878 of 30th November 2020 were APPROVED by Councillors, to be signed by Chairman Riordan and made available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>.

FINANCE REPORTS

4.1 Accounts for payment – for approval. Proposed by Councillor Forward, seconded by Councillor George, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 25th November to 8th December totalled £1,305.68; income for the period was £300.00.

Approved Payments 25th November - 8th December 2020	Amount
PKF Littlejohn LLP - AGAR External Audit 31MAR20	480.00
Cllr reimbursement - CP Refreshments re Parade Xmas Tree	41.16
KCC Kent County Supplies - Stationery	13.72
SLCC - Webinar	42.00
SLCC - Webinar	36.00
J Perigoe & Son - Donation KSSAA Barrett Manning	100.00
SLCC - ILCA Training AS	118.80
Post Office Ltd - Merit Award Gift Cards	250.00
E-on - Street Light Energy November	53.00
Arron Services Ltd - Hosted Exchange Services December	171.00
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	1,305.68

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE 0.00

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

4.3 Finance and Strategy Group – Report of meeting 02/12/20 (for noting) and recommendations (for decision): The report was NOTED.

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- 4.3.1 Surrenden Playing Field Mowing 2021 – Proposed by Councillor Forward, seconded by Councillor Bowden, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £1,458.93 to KCC Landscape Services.
- 4.3.2 Surrenden Playing Field Surface Repairs – Proposed by Councillor Forward, second by Councillor George, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £1,156.48 to KCC Landscape Services.
- 4.3.3 Jubilee Field Skate Park Surface and Ramp Repairs – Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Laine-Rose, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £2,492.51 to KCC Landscape Services
- 4.3.4 Public Toilet Cleaning and Opening at Bell Lane – Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor George, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £7,368.40 plus consumables.
- 4.3.5 Next Quarter Contract Reviews and Payments – Proposed by Councillor Bowden, and seconded by Councillor Forward, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE next quarter contract reviews and payments for the the renewal of the annual contracts with Paxman Printing Services re the Village Update and Annual Report £1,428.00 p.a., Maclin Pumps re Jubilee Field sewage pump maintenance £392.00 p.a., Forestry First Ltd re mowing at Chestnut Avenue/A229 £600.00 p.a., Forestry First Ltd re hedge cutting at the Youth Club £300.00 p.a., Forestry First Ltd re mowing at the Youth Club £400.00 p.a., Forestry First Ltd re hedge cutting at Surrenden Field £1,460.00 p.a., Playsafety Ltd re annual inspection of Surrenden & Jubilee play equipment £170.00 p.a., Cam-tech Services re annual CCTV maintenance £140.00 p.a., Business Stream re Bell Lane toilets water £537.97 p.a., Eco-San Ltd re Bell Lane toilet Sani bin maintenance £80.00 p.a., Business Stream re Surrenden Pavilion water £75.00 p.a., E-on re electricity for Christmas lights £30.00 p.a., Iden Business Services re Internal Audit £400.00 p.a., Arron Services re computer support £450.00 p.a., and payments to JFMC re grounds maintenance £2,500 p.a., Community Payback re refreshments for hedge & maintenance work at Jubilee Field; annual donations to CAB Maidstone £300, CCDA £200.00, KSSAA £250.00, Maidstone & Weald Samaritans £100.00 and annual subscriptions to ACRK £110.00, KALC £1,555.00, WKPS £25.00 and KCPFA £20.00
- 4.4 Staff Training – proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Laine-Rose, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £99 for ILCA Essential Knowledge training for new Clerk.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

5.1 Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review, Section 18b Consultation – Councillors Riordan and Buller gave a brief summary of the Planning working group meeting held on the 8th December. They referenced the draft response that had been prepared at that meeting and circulated to Councillors for consideration. Councillor Perry expressed some concerns over the proposed objection to the site at Home Farm, but Councillor Buller reminded all Councillors of the importance of remaining aligned with the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan. The meeting was closed for approximately 10 minutes to allow the public to speak in **PUBLIC FORUM**, including a submission from Borough Councillor Brice, who urged the Parish Council to consider where they would approve development, were they to object to the development of the land at Home Farm. She suggested that the Council should consider alternatives. Additionally, County Councillor Hotson reminded Councillors that there would be a further stage of consultation and that by that time it was hoped that the jointly commissioned Highways analysis should be available to aid considerations. At the end of the discussion a motion was proposed by Councillor Buller and seconded by Councillor Forward, that it should be RESOLVED to approve the draft response for submission to MBC. This was APPROVED with two abstentions.

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- 5.2 Consultation on the move of the Post Office – The Council had been invited to respond to the public consultation. Councillors discussed a range of positive and negative outcomes of the potential move of the Post Office from a stand-alone site into the SPAR retail outlet. After a lengthy discussion including closing the meeting for approximately 8 minutes to allow the public to speak in **PUBLIC FORUM**, it was proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Forward and RESOLVED that the Parish Council should submit a positive response to the consultation; and that the response should include some specific comments, in particular that any solution would include the following points, 1) that the site retain its ability to hold its parcel collection service, obviating the need for residents to travel to Tonbridge to collect parcels 2) that two dedicated serving terminals be provided, preferably away from the main retail counters to allow for privacy of transactions and reduced impact on queueing, 3) that during peak hours these dedicated serving terminals would be permanently staffed with experienced and skilled staff 4) that existing Post Office staff should be offered employment to retain skills and knowledge, 5) that full accessibility issues be considered to allow less able residents to access services.

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

- 6.1 Clerk's Report: Bus Shelter The Clerk advised Councillors MBC would adopt the new bus shelter on the southbound side of Station Road as part of the new Sainsbury's development. Flooding She advised Councillors that she continued to get concerns raised by residents regarding various flooding events at their properties around the Parish, and she continued to provide advice, support and facilitate engagement with other agencies or organisations including the volunteer Community Flood Warden to provide assistance. Soft Landscapes The Clerk confirmed that specific contact points had been made with KCC Soft Landscapes team to facilitate early notification of planned landscaping projects. This would enable in turn notification of residents. Notices for noticeboards She confirmed that the Admin Officer had prepared and would be posting a thank you poster for all volunteers as requested by Council, as well as notices for accident reporting and the KALC Community Awards Scheme this week. These items would also be posted on the website and news items. Office Closure She reminded Councillors that subject to no major emergencies, the office would be closed from Christmas Eve, reopening on the 4th January.

- 6.2 Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting.
 6.2.1 Communications Group Report: The report of the meeting on the 22nd of November 2020 was NOTED by Council and published on the Council's website at <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/communications-group/>. Attention was drawn to the planned timetable for the Village Update, for Councillors to note for completion of articles.

- 6.3 Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only.
 6.3.1 Chairman's Report: The Chairman commented on the overall performance of the Council during 2020. He mentioned the following points: that the early foundation work to secure a new supermarket in the village had now come to fruition with building well under way and confirmed a site visit would be possible early 2021; that the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team had shone this year supporting in many ways the residents of the village throughout the year; from the Community Hub, to the Volunteer support teams, to the lights and music around the village during the first Lockdown. He noted the significant impact and amazing team work that Councillors and Residents had made through the various Community Groups and Council Groups. He finished by wishing all parties a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

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

- 7.1 Borough Councillor's Report (1) (Standing Item): Oral report by Councillor Perry. Councillor

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Perry thanked the Chairman, in particular for his own significant contribution across the parish throughout the year. He commented that the Local Plan 18b Consultation phase was well under way and that he hoped it could be finalised before any higher central Government targets could potentially come to the fore. He confirmed that he hoped that the Hazlitt Theatre was on the way to being saved. He asked Councillors to note the significant work that he and Councillor Bowden were doing to try to help residents resolve the flooding issues in the Marden Road, and drew Councillors attention to an email from Helen Grant MP that he had seen urging further meetings with the CEO of Southern Water to try to get a final resolution to the problems. He stated that he anticipated Council Tax levels would be fixed in the early new year, once the financial settlement had been determined.

7.2 County Councillor’s Report (Standing item): Councillor Hotson advised that Kent County Council were also waiting finalisation of budgets, pending the financial settlement numbers being known. He drew Councillors attentions to the concerning rise in COVID-19 cases across the County and urged everyone not to become complacent. He commented that he had been working with the Deputy Clerk to try to assist in resolving some of the issues with the Christmas motifs, and advised that the latest thinking was that the motifs may be at fault. He noted the concerns raised around the parish about flooding and hoped that residents and the Council would submit a response to the section 18b consultation on the Local Plan.

7.3 Borough Councillor’s Report (2): Oral report by Councillor Brice Councillor Brice added her concerns to the discussion about flooding around the parish, and hoped that KCC would ensure that the relevant teams continued to funded. She also urged residents to participate in the section 18b Consultation. She finished by commenting about the possible positive development of the sports facilities at Jubilee Fields and the hope that funding may now be available. The meeting was then reopened.

7.4 KALC Minutes of Area Meeting Nov 2020 – Councillors noted the minutes which can be published at [Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils held at the Town Hall Maidstone at 7 \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk)

REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting)

No items.

URGENT MATTERS - at the discretion of the Chairman, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting.

8. Comments on application for renewal of Street Trader Licence –Pizza d’Onore Lodge Road, Councillors

commented that they had no objections to the application and would ratify this at the next meeting.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM:

9. A resident shared concerns over recent flooding in Pinnock Lane and the accident on the A229 the day before. He hoped these items would be raised with KCC. Another resident wanted to recognise and thank the contribution of a past Councillor, Mr. John Kelly who had been a significant contributor both during his time as a Councillor and more recently with the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan. During this final public forum further

discussion on the flooding issues took place and County Councillor Hotson agreed to take forward the concerns raised to the KCC relevant teams.

Proceedings finished at 8.55pm.

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