

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Virtual Meeting via Zoom video-conference
Monday 15th March 2021 at 7.00p.m.

1. PRESENT:

Councillors Bowden, Buller, Castro, George, McNeill, Sharp, Spearink, Thomas, Riordan who was in the Chair and Parish Clerk, Miss A Smith. Councillor Perry arrived late (see minutes for arrival)

2. APOLOGIES:

Apologies received from Councillors Lain-Rose and Gartan due to work commitments. Apologies were noted and accepted.

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. Councillor George declared an interest in item 4.1

3.3. Requests for Dispensation. Councillor George requested and was granted a dispensation to participate in discussion and voting on item 4.1 in accordance with Section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011.

4. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

4.1. Pages 1893 – 1896 of 22nd February 2021 available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>. It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes with the following amendments; 1) P1894, item 6.2.1 (b) Proposed by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Riordan and 2) P1895, item 6.2.1 (d) each working Group also provide a brief summary with 2-4 photos for the report.

5. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

5.1. Accounts for Payment – for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor McNeil, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 27th January to 9th March totalled £18,190.52; income for the period was £0.00.

<u>Approved Payments 27th January 2021 - 9th March 2021</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilet Clean/Open Jan	695.49
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilet Sundries Jan	80.18
Homeleigh Timber – Caretaker - Sadolin re Bench	20.70
Choice Support - Village Planter Maintenance February	410.80
KCC Commercial Services - Stationery	17.98
SLCC - Local Council Administration Book	123.80
HMRC - Tax & NI January	1,420.91
Choice Support - Planter Maintenance October	410.80
Choice Support - Planter Maintenance November	410.80
Staplehurst Village Centre - Parish Office Rent October	350.00
Staplehurst Village Centre - Parish Office Rent November	350.00
Staplehurst Village Centre - Parish Office Rent December	350.00
Staplehurst Village Centre - Parish Office Rent January	350.00

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Staplehurst Village Centre - Parish Office Rent February	350.00
Staplehurst Village Centre - Parish Office Rent March	350.00
Hugo Fox - Website Silver Subscription March	23.99
Payroll & Pension Costs February	5,845.04
Staff Reimbursement re CD Drive	25.99
Paxman Printing - Village Update Spring	207.00
Kent County Council - Street Light Timers x7 re Xmas Motifs	246.02
Cllr Reimbursement re Flower Seeds GSG	78.50
Staff Reimbursement re Tithe Map of Staplehurst	32.00
KALC - Staff Training Webinar	42.00
SLCC Staff NPPF Training Webinar	36.00
KCC - LGPC Cessation Liability 2/2	3,450.00
Staff Home Working Allowance x52 weeks	312.00
Staff Home Working Allowance x52 weeks	312.00
KCC Commercial Services - Stationery	54.72
Homeleigh Timber – Caretaker - sadolin re Benches	47.10
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Clean/Open Feb	695.49
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Sundries Feb	22.58
Amazon - Seed Trays GSG	41.69
Amazon - Compost GSG	19.98
Business Stream - Bell Lane Toilets Water Jan	35.32
Opus Energy - Parish Office Electricity Jan	151.92
E-on - Street Light Energy January	54.77
BT - Telephone & Broadband Feb-Apr	214.26
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection January	64.80
Business Stream - Bell Lane Toilets Water February	38.82
E-on - Street Light Energy February	49.47
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection February	48.60
LLoyds Bank Charges - February	7.00
Arron Services Ltd - Hosted Exchange Service Feb	171.00
Arron Services - Hosted Exchange Services March	171.00
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	18,190.52

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE

0.00

5.2. Summation and Balance of Accounts – for approval.

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

5.3. Request for donation for Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance – (for decision)

Letter received from the Air Ambulance service requesting a donation towards the purchase of 2 ventilators. Proposed by Councillor Buller and seconded by Councillor Thomas, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE a payment of £250 for the KSSAA with payment to be made in the next financial year.

5.4. Request for donation from Staplehurst Community Events Group – (for decision)

Request for a donation of £100. Proposed by Councillor Bowden and seconded by Councillor Sharp, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE a payment of £100 for the Staplehurst

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Community Events Group, towards the cost of the Safer Staplehurst Exhibition in the Autumn. To be made in the next financial year.

5.5. Chestnut Avenue Tree Survey – (for decision)

Report on the trees in Chestnut Avenue, requiring further investigation; to appoint GRS Arboricultural Consultants to undertake a resistograph survey for £350.00. Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Thomas, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the commissioning of the survey at a cost of £350.00 as outlined in the paper from the RFO. Councillors noted that they were looking to preserve the trees wherever possible.

6. CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting: -

6.1. Staplehurst Community Events Group – (for decision)

Request to approve giving permission to the SCEG to hold the following events on Surrenden Field, a) Picnic in the Park – Aug 1st, b) Fun Run 5k & 10K – September 12th. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor George, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE giving permission to SCEG for the two events on Surrenden Field.

6.2. NALC Star Council Awards – (for decision)

To consider making an entry in one or more of the categories on behalf of the Council. Following a discussion Councillors decided the Council should submit a nomination, particularly detailing the wide-ranging support and activities given to the Village over the preceding year. Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Sharp, it was RESOLVED to AGREE that Councillor Riordan prepare a submission on behalf of the Council for the Council of the Year award.

6.3. Correspondence and Proposal from Team Rubicon – (for decision)

To approve working with Team Rubicon to offer a Talent Pathway Programme event at Jubilee Field Skate Park during 2021. After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Spearink and RESOLVED to APPROVE that a sum of £920 be spent in establishing the event. It was NOTED that budget from the youth provision could be allocated towards this event. Councillors thought that some form of dedication might be considered towards an ex-Councillor, in recognition of their work in supporting the Skate Park.

6.4. Letter from Staplehurst Community Events Group – (for noting & decision)

Letter from SCEG requesting acknowledgment of their organising of formal events, in particular for insurance purposes, in Council publications; to note and agree how to respond. Councillors RESOLVED that the Chairman and the Clerk should prepare a written response.

7. PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS:

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

7.1. Clerk's Report

The Clerk updated Councillors on the co-option process for the 3 vacancies. She had published a closing date for applications as the 19th March and was on track for bringing applications to Council as planned on the 6th April meeting. Following discussion, the Clerk agreed with Councillors that the Annual Parish Meeting should be rescheduled for the 12th May after purdah, in the meantime groups had been approached for written reports. The meeting would be planned to be run virtually (pending legislation extensions), using a standard format, but without a speaker. Final decisions on running the event would be made closer to the date. The Clerk confirmed that MBC had accepted the proposed precept. She also updated Councillors that early discussions were taking place with regards setting up the summer play scheme, and requested an additional Councillor to volunteer in support. Councillor Riordan volunteered. It was also hoped that once dates were finalised for the scheme, that work could take place to also organise the

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BioBlitz event that happens concurrently. The Clerk thanked Councillors who had assisted with the changing of signatories on banking documents, and confirmed she would advise Councillors when cards and readers were available.

7.2. Written reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting.

7.2.1. Greener Staplehurst Group – (for noting)

Report of meeting on 15th February. The report was noted and published at [Greener Staplehurst - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#). Councillor Riordan stated that there was another member of the public wishing to join the group and it was agreed that an invitation be sent. The work of one member of the group in preparing a draft litter strategy was also commended and it was reported that once the group had finalised it, it would be brought to Council for approval.

7.2.2. Neighbourhood Plan Review Group – (for noting)

Report of the meeting of 17th February was NOTED and published at [Neighbourhood Plan Review Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#).

7.2.3. Road Safety Group – (for noting)

Report of 4th March was NOTED published at [Road Safety Task and Finish Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#).

7.3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only.

Chairman's Report - Oral report by Councillor Riordan. The Chairman reported to Council that the new Sainsbury's was due to open on the 24th, and he would be attending to represent the Council. He also updated Councillors on progress in obtaining updated quotes for the CCTV replacement systems; the Payback team returning to operation on the 20th; and a recent Chairman's training event he had attended. He advised Councillors that he had been working with the Clerk to try to resolve residents' concerns over the slow opening of the play park on the new Woodlands Green development. He commended the Council's Support Officer for her work in enhancing the Council's website and social media presence. He reminded Councillors and Group Chairs of the need to submit their reports and photographs to the Communications Group for the preparation of the Annual Report. He also mentioned that Councillors could still advise residents that they can still register for postal voting if they are concerned about attending in person. He thanked the Deputy Clerk for her work in getting the 2nd street light in Chapel Lane ready for installation, which is planned for this week. He also commented that he had been working with the Clerk to try to finalise the agreed pathway sign project, and the new pathway to be installed in Surrenden Field. The Chairman also commented that he was pleased to see such interest in becoming a councillor for the parish, and reminded Councillors of the need to consider what skills/expertise they felt would be of benefit when reviewing the pen pictures in the weeks to come. Finally, he reminded Councillors that the Community Hub would continue operating along with the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team for the time being.

The meeting was closed to receive the report from County Councillor Hotson

8. REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS
for noting

8.1. County Councillor's Report – Report by County Councillor Hotson

Councillor Hotson commented that he felt it was an excellent idea for the Council to enter into the NALC Star Council Awards and he commended the Council on how they had excelled during this last most difficult year, both in terms of supporting the residents and continuing business as usual. He confirmed he'd be happy to attend an APM on the 12th

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May subject to the outcome of the election. He updated Councillors on correspondence he had been having with regards to the re-opening of the Libraries within the area. He encouraged Council to consider lobbying KCC to get the local library included in the next round to be re-opened. He updated Council on the reduction of Member grant sums available for the next financial year but advised that there were additional monies being made available for COVID related activities and therefore Council could make requests where appropriate. He advised Council that the Monarch's Youth management team had joined a working party to look into the potential of a new all-weather pitch at Jubilee Field.

There was a brief discussion following Councillor Hotson's report on the issue of the re-opening of the Library and it was agreed that Councillor Riordan should prepare a letter to seek early inclusion for Staplehurst in the re-opening programme.

The meeting was then re-opened.

8.2. Police Report – PCSO report February 2021

Councillors noted the report from the PCSO. Councillor Riordan and the Clerk reminded Councillors of the importance of encouraging residents to report any issues, via appropriate websites, and also by calling 101 in the moment, if appropriate.

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

None

The meeting was closed to allow members of the public to speak in the public forum

10. PUBLIC FORUMS

A resident spoke about issues being experienced by a number of residents regarding a long-term issue of poor gas supply, resulting in them not being able to use their heating and other gas appliances. Despite their individual efforts over 4 years, they had still not reached a solution with SGN the gas supplier. They asked what the Council could do to assist. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to SGN in the first instance to investigate and see if she could assist in finding a solution. A resident spoke about the importance of the library being re-opened as soon as possible. The resident also enquired whether a Village Clean Up would be planned when the restrictions are lifted. Councillor Riordan, confirmed that it was being considered as and when restrictions allowed. The resident also enquired as to why it seemed the temporary bus stops had been removed from Station Road. Councillors agreed to review the situation and speak with Sainsburys if required.

The meeting was reopened to consider item 12

11. SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT

- 11.1. To move that the public be excluded from item 10.2 due to its confidential nature. It was RESOLVED to CLOSE the meeting to the public and press to consider item
- 11.2. To consider and approve the proposed plan and expenditure for Operation Forth Bridge. Councillors considered the plan prepared by the Clerk.
- 11.3. Item 1, proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor McNeill, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the purchases to the value of £369.90.
- 11.4. Item2, proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor McNeill, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the proposed expenditure for £100.

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- 11.5. Item 3, proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Spearink, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the plan related to the Parade, for the expenditure of £147.50. Items 4 & 5, proposed by Councillors Riordan, seconded by Councillor Spearink, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the plan and for the Clerk to seek the required permissions.

Councillor Perry arrived during the above item and therefore did not participate.

12. Borough Councillor’s Report – Oral report by Councillor Perry

Councillor Riordan invited Councillor Perry to give his Borough Councillors report at this point as he had now been able to join the meeting. Councillor Perry updated Councillors regarding the elections and efforts to ensure they are Covid secure. He also updated Councillors on the Boundary Commission Review at MBC and the implications for Staplehurst should changes be recommended. Finally, he updated Council on the Local Plan Review. He advised that MBC had received over 3000, consultation responses. They hoped to have considered these by the end of April, but the matter would be slightly delayed due to purdah. He reminded the Council that they still have a further opportunity to comment in the Section 19 Consultation phase, but commented that it was a tight timescale to get everything completed and to the Inspectors by the end of the year.

Chairman.....

Proceedings finished at 9.10pm.