

Communications Group Minutes 6th October 2022 – 8.00PM

AGENDA ITEMS

Attending: JC (Cllr Jose Castro), PR (Chairman Paddy Riordan), RG (Richard Griffiths - PC Clerk)

1) Apologies

SM (Cllr Stuart McPhee), MC (Cllr Matt Clifton)

2) Minutes of previous meeting 1st September 2022 – 8.00PM

ACTIONS NEEDED

Apologies from JC for late submission of minutes due to COVID. JC asked RG to remind office to contact community groups for interest to be in the Village Update. We don't want any group to feel disaffected.

3) Outstanding actions from previous minutes

Logo publications (JC)

Exploring Office 365 or similar (Office)

4) Councillor Tree

ACTIONS NEEDED

RG to email JC when photos for new councillors are available. JC to update the councillor tree. RG to find a suitable place in the website for permanent display. Marden PC is a good example of how they use their councillor tree.

5) The Logo

ACTIONS NEEDED

Update from PR: PR has met a local artist with previous experience that is very keen to help us with design. RG noted that it would be good to have more than one design so that the Council could choose. JC said that Bob Ham had recommended a designer that had helped them create their own logo. JC warned that we should go upfront in relation to copyright with designs to prevent that the situation we are encountering now repeats in the future.

PR to arrange a meeting with the artist in the coming weeks.

Next steps

6) Next Village Update

ACTIONS NEEDED

- Dates: Timing is tight.

JC to email councillors and groups with dates and articles.
 JC to share a live document (OneDrive) for proofreading. Each proof-reader to use a different colour not to overstep each other.

Early October	WINTER UPDATE – If they take place: Report on Playscheme, September Village Clean-Up. News from the past. PC projects. Community Payback work. Greener Staplehurst Group's report. Road Safety Group's report. Consultation on 2022-23 budget/precept. Planning News. Volunteering update. Neighbourhood Improvement Plan. Village Centre. Remaining 2022 meeting dates. Parish Council contacts.	Copy: 21 October To typesetter: 28 October To printer: 04 November Collation: 12/13 November Distribution: 14 November
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- Proposed front article: Youth Club success

Agreed. We feel it is a success story that needs to be shared and publicised.

- Articles for the Village Update:

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|---|-------|
| ▪ Youth Club Success | SM |
| ▪ Play Scheme | JB |
| ▪ Village Clean-Up (22 nd October) | JC/PR |
| ▪ Greener Staplehurst Group | DG |

▪ PC Projects	PR
▪ The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Review Group	MA
▪ The Jubilee Field	PR
▪ Community Enhancement (SCENIC)	AS
▪ Planning	AS
▪ Staplehurst Health Centre (<i>New Practice Manager</i>)	JC
▪ The Men's Shed	RJ
▪ The Women Institute	PP/VG
▪ The Staplehurst Trefoil Guild	PP
▪ Library User Group	MB
▪ Staplehurst Community Centre	AS
▪ Road Safety Group	AS+PR
▪ Speedwatch	MB
▪ Dates for your Diary	JC
▪ Remaining 2022 meeting dates	RG
▪ Memorials in Staplehurst (4) - Sgt Fitzgerald's story	PS
▪ Volunteering Update	JC
▪ News from the past	JC/TB
▪ Parish Council Contacts	JC
▪ SEHT-covid celebration	JC
▪ Winter Warmer Hub	RG
▪ Sainsbury's Shuttle	PR
▪ SCEG	BH
▪ Happy Christmas note	JC

7) Kent Online/Express

FOR NOTING

We have permission for Full Council to spend £400 a year for two articles. We invited KO to attend the SEHT-covid celebration but they were not available. The group considers that we will wait for a very relevant event/news rather than spending money unnecessarily.

8) E News

FOR NOTING

Goudhurst PC is using this service as a complement/substitution for their newsletter. After thoughtful discussion, the group decided that at present times it is better to continue with the present arrangements of a printed Village Update three times a year and a yearly Annual Report. The reasons for this were: it reaches every household, most people still prefer to read on paper longer texts although this may not be the case with younger generations, it is accessible to absolutely everyone, we also offer the digital edition (.pdf) via our website and social media, during covid we could not deliver door to door and left 1000 copies in main businesses and the reach was significantly reduced, it would put a lot of pressure on the Office to keep it updated with articles and to keep the quality of writing (proofreading) and keeping links up-to-date, etc. Our website partially does that job already, but the office is suggesting that we should add a search engine (there is a lot of content and it is not always easy to find). The Communications Group supports this request.

Against this was the increasing cost of paper so the group decided to keep this possibility in mind for the future.

9) Office IT Update

ACTIONS NEEDED

RG supplied the Communications Group of a breakdown of current IT costs (hardware and software) £3000 yearly approximately + hardware already owned versus a projection of what moving towards a more modern cloud system £2200 + Digital Support. The group discussed this in detail.

The Communications Group will propose to the Parish Council a project to bring the current system up-to-date with a suitable cloud-based system in order to support and enhance the work the office and PC groups do. This will be prepared for December. We discussed the possibility of holding an informative surgery for councillors before the project goes to Full Council.

Next steps:

- Explore possible service contracts – PC Office
- Analyse integration of Sage 50 Cloud (Software for finance) and a cloud system such as Office 365 – PC Office
- Cost of providing councillors with Chromebooks – JC
- One off initial costs – Transfer fee, time-frame – PC Office
- Prepare a projected budget against present costs, considering savings in the long term (paper costs, printing costs, environmental cost, hard disks, Zoom, etc.) – PC Office

10) **Communications Strategy Event**

ACTIONS NEEDED

An event about Local Councils and Communication Strategies is taking place on 26th October. Possibly online. RG to get tickets for JC and one other councillor. It will be a good opportunity to see what new communication tools are being used and how it matches our use of social media and our plans for renewing the IT provision.

11) **Year targets:**

- ~~a) KALC Award celebration~~
- b) Digital display board
- c) Communications Strategy (a Logo)
- d) A Welcome Pack
- e) Additional information in website:
 - i) Village information (maps and groups)
 - ii) Consultations (available and past)
 - iii) Contacts (improve the available leaflet)
 - ~~iv) Who's who tree~~

12) **AOB**

ACTIONS NEEDED

- **New councillors:** if any of the new councillors are interested in communications, they would be really welcome to the Communications Group as we are struggling with numbers. The group meets monthly, the last Thursday of every month at 8pm. Meetings typically last 1 ½ hours.
- The Communications Group thinks that **WIFI access** is advisable at the holds we currently use for our meetings. More so if we consider that our future IT project will propose the use of Chromebooks and/or tablets. Can we provide this from the Office? Should the Community Centre consider providing it as part of their service as it would benefit the many groups that use the facility?
- **Budget:** The Communications Group wants to request that a budget of £8000 for the future year is considered. The projected expenses are as follows:
 - Village Update, Annual Report, Website maintenance £7000
 - A new Notice board outside the Community Centre £1000
 - Digital Display Board £0. We do not want to fund this with our budget. We have requested a grant and we will go ahead with it if it is awarded. We will hold it for the future if not, given the current financial situation.

13) **Next meeting date:** Thursday, 27th October