

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Virtual Meeting via Zoom video-conference
Monday 22nd February 2021 at 7.00p.m.

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

APOLOGIES - None

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

- 3. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES:** Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Spearink, minute pages 1888-1892 of 1st February 2021 were APPROVED, to be signed by Chairman Riordan and made available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>.

Councillor Lain-Rose joined the meeting at this point.

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Removal of Station Road bus shelter from Asset Register – for approval. Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor George, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that the bus shelter be continued to be insured until such time that it is removed from the asset register, once transition of ownership to Sainsbury's for the new shelter had been confirmed.
- 4.2. Proposals for Surrenden Field path – Councillor Riordan advised Council that confirmation from MBC as the landowner was still outstanding. It was agreed that this item be deferred until approval from MBC was received.
- 4.3. Donation – The donation to GSG from the Blakemore Foundation was NOTED by Councillors. Councillors expressed their thanks for the donation.
- 4.4. Purchase of Edition 12 Arnold Baker Local Administration reference Book – Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor George, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the expenditure of £119 to purchase the book.
- 4.5. Purchase of the CD version of the Tithe Map of Staplehurst Parish – It was proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Perry and RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £62 in total to purchase the CD versions of the Tithe Maps and a CD reader for the office.
- 4.6. MBC Street Trading Policy consultation – Councillor Spearink declared a personal interest in the item. It was agreed that Councillor Sharp would prepare a response on behalf of the Council.

5. CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

- 5.1. Post Office Consultation decision – Councillors NOTED the response from the Post Office.
- 5.2. Email from KCC Councillor Eric Hotson regarding Libraries – Councillors NOTED the response and expressed hope that the library in the village does reopen.
- 5.3. Road name for new development at Bletchingley Farm – It was proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Perry and RESOLVED to APPROVE that the recommendation to MBC Street Naming and Numbering Officer, that the new road be named Bletchingley Farm Perhaps Close or Lane, but that the Officer determine the suffix.

Chairman's initials

- 5.4. Letter of thanks from Mrs Lorna Manning – It NOTED by Councillors who expressed their pleasure that such a good sum had been raised through donations. The Chairman confirmed that he would write to thank Mrs. Manning for the letter on behalf of the Council.
- 5.5. Update regarding Sainsbury's bus service – It was NOTED by Councillors.

The meeting was closed for Borough Councillor Brice to speak

Councillor Brice gave Council an update regarding the availability of jobs at Sainsburys and how to apply for them as Sainsbury's started to advertise them. It was noted that potential applicants would be best to register their interest on the Sainsbury's main job website for any alerts.

The meeting was then re-opened.

- 5.6. Thank you letter from Helen Grant MP re volunteering support for COVID-19 Vaccination Programme – It was NOTED by Councillors, who were pleased to see the letter from Helen Grant MP and Greg Clark MP. Councillors also paid particular thanks to Dr. Faye Hinsley, Alison Broom CEO MBC and the Ridge PCN for their tremendous support to the Weald PCN. Additionally, they noted the excellent work by the staff from the Staplehurst Health Centre in volunteering and attending vaccination centres to deliver the vaccinations. Councillor Riordan also thanked Councillor Perry for his personal contributions.

Councillor Thomas joined the meeting at this point, and apologised for being late due to work commitments.

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

- 6.1 Clerk's Report: The Clerk informed Councillors that UKPN were due to attend Chapel Lane on the 25th February in order to investigate the lack of power to the street light column outside of Providence Chapel. She advised Councillors that the annual painting maintenance programme for Jubilee Field Skate Park was due to commence on the 15th March. This would result in the park being closed for one week during the programme of works. The Clerk invited two Councillors to volunteer to be signatories for the online banking and savings accounts. Councillors McNeill and Sharp volunteered. Finally, the Clerk advised Councillors that the provisional date for the Annual Parish Meeting would need to be rescheduled. Current legislation till the 6th May inclusive allows for virtual meetings only but after the 7th May meetings may need to return to face to face. After discussion Councillors expressed views that the APM should be planned to be delivered virtually. The Clerk agreed to prepare a plan and present to Council at the next meeting.
- 6.2 Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting.

- 6.2.1 Communications Group – The report of the meeting on the 11th February 2021 was NOTED by Councillors and published on the Council's website at [Communications Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#) Councillor Castro thanked resident Robin Oakley for swiftly collating the Village Update in readiness for collection and distribution. He also asked Councillors to promote the electronic version far and wide when it was sent to them. Item a) proposed by Councillor Riordan and seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the appointment of a new design studio for the production of the artwork for both the Annual Report and the Village Update, b) proposed by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Thomas, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE by majority that the Annual Report be reformatted in line with the proposed new modern style, with an A4 production type. Councillor Lain-Rose requested that votes against be recorded. Councillors voting against this proposal were, Councillors, Buller, Lain-Rose and

Perry, c) proposed by Councillor George, seconded by Councillor Perry, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the Freedom of Information Policy, FOI Request Form and Model Publication Scheme for the Council, d) proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Thomas it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that Councillors provide the Communications Group by the 9th April with personal summaries for the Annual Report, and that each working Group also provide a brief summary with photos where possible for the report.

6.2.2. Greener Staplehurst Group – Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor George, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that Councillor Spearink and resident Dr. Richard Smith be co-opted to join the Group.

6.2.3. Road Safety Group – The Report of the meeting on 28th January 2021 was NOTED by Councillors and published on the Council’s website at [Road Safety Task and Finish Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#) Councillor Buller requested a minor change to the notes of the meeting, removing a house name from an item, which was agreed.

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

6.3.1. Chairman’s Report – Oral Report by Councillor Riordan. The Chair reported on the following items; Councillor Gartan had volunteered to take forward a project to review the number and provision of the Parish Council grit/salt bins following the recent spell of bad weather and report back to Council; that all the various Council Groups had been busy with meetings and activities and he particularly noted that the CEG were taking forward the proposal to review the funding opportunity for Electric Vehicle Charging Points. He updated Councillors on the volunteer transport activities helping residents attend vaccination centres, and thanked Councillor Castro for his continued work in leading the COVID-19 support team, and commented that the Community Hub was also working well. He wanted to record his thanks to ex-Councillor Sue Forward for her vibrant and active contribution to the Council following her decision to step down, and wished her all the best for the future. He noted that there was good interest in the vacancies on the Council, and thanked some of the potential applicants who were in attendance at the meeting. He confirmed his offer to speak with each applicant to assist them in understanding the role of a Councillor. He thanked the Deputy Clerk for her work in resolving the issues with the Chapel Lane street lights, and advised that he and the Clerk were due to visit the new Redrow site following concerns raised by local residents with regards the opening of the local play area. Finally, he advised Councillors about what actions had been taken following some motorbike damage to the fields at Jubilee Field and Surrenden Field.

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

7.1 Borough Councillor’s Report (1) (Standing Item): Oral report by Councillor Perry. Councillor Perry updated Councillors regarding the COVID Recovery Group, the surge testing programme in ME15 and the work being done to support the extremely clinical vulnerable group of residents. He confirmed that plans were well underway for the Elections on the 6th May. He briefed Councillors on the Boundary Commission Review of MBC, and confirmed that MBC were on target to review the Local Plan responses to facilitate the Regulation 19 Consultation planned for June 2021. He also advised about the plans to work with KCC regarding Borough wide issues such as transport infrastructure.

7.2 County Councillor’s Report (Standing item): Councillor Hotson advised about the work being undertaken liaising with KCC over the roadworks needed for the Sainsbury’s development; the further investigations over the continued opening of the library in Staplehurst. He urged Councillors to lobby the Cabinet Member to ensure the library remains open after restrictions are lifted. He updated Councillors on the work he had done with Marden PC and the KCC Youth Officer and offered to facilitate similar discussions regarding access to KCC virtual offering for Staplehurst Youth Club. He updated

Councillors on the progress with the Kent Railways Strategy, and reminded Councillors that KCC had determined to raise Council Tax by 5%, with 3% going to Social Care.
7.3 Police Report – Councillors NOTED the PCSO report from January.

Councillor Lain-Rose left the meeting at this point

8. REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting)

- 8.1 Minutes from the JFMC with income and expenditure reporting – Councillors NOTED the report.
- 8.2 Motion to approve permission for the JFMC to install a drainage system around the Kathie Lamb Centre, Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Perry it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the motion.

9. URGENT MATTERS – none

PUBLIC FORUM:

The meeting was temporarily closed to allow the final public forum and for Councillor Louise Brice to submit an additional Borough Council Report

Borough Councillor’s Report (1) (Standing Item) - Oral Report from Councillor Louise Brice – Councillor Brice requested the Council’s Highways Improvement Plan be updated to include a request to have a speed limit reduction to the highway outside of the area known as The Quarter. She updated Council on the correspondence she had with Environment Agency who had confirmed that in January the area had received 200% of the normal rainfall. This was leading to lobbying for the redrawing of the flood maps. She confirmed that KCC had agreed to inspect the culvert in Pinnock Lane. She mentioned the issues of flooding in Marden Road, and advised that Southern Water had suggested a number of ways in which residents might be able to personally make an impact on surface level water. She raised concerns about public access to cross the land at west exit of Lodge Road and urged the Council to consider requesting a Public Right of Way be developed between the end of Lodge Road and the railway crossing to the North. Finally, she commented about the work she was undertaking to lobby Jubilee Field in acquiring an all-weather pitch and Pavilion.

Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Thomas it was agreed to suspend standing orders for a further 15 minutes to allow the completion of business.

A member of the public (who is also a member of the Road Safety Group) addressed Council in respect of the Councillor Brice’s comments regarding the request to add the speed limit reduction to the Council’s Highways Improvement Plan. He advised that item 4 of the HIP did include this request already, and that an item 8b had been added requesting a pavement to the bus stop. He also advised that the Road Safety Group has been discussing the possibility of a pedestrian crossing at that part of the A229, now that there was a Morrisons Daily at the garage. Further discussion took place regarding the possibility of undertaking a traffic survey for that gateway into the Village.

10. SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT - None

Chairman.....

Proceedings finished at 9.10pm.