

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Virtual Meeting via Zoom video-conference
Monday 26th April 2021 at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT:

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

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies received from Councillors Lain-Rose and noted. It was RESOLVED by majority vote that the apologies were not accepted.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS: regarding items on the Agenda

- 2.1. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests. None declared.
- 2.2. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda. Councillor Riordan declared an interest in item 4.1 (due to receipt of a reimbursement).
- 2.3. Requests for Dispensation. Councillor Riordan requested and was granted a dispensation to participate in discussion and voting on items 4.1. in accordance with Section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011.

3. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

- 3.1. Pages 1904 – 1909 of 6th April 2021 available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>. Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Thomas it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes with the following amendment; item 7.1.3 P1907 be corrected with the correct web link for the group notes.

Councillor Perry joined the meeting after this item.

The Chairman brought forward the following item and closed the meeting for a resident to present their report to Council. A second resident was also in attendance for the item.

5. ITEM BROUGHT FORWARD

- 5.6. Councillors were presented a report prepared by a Resident with regards flooding issues in the village, particularly in the south west part of the Parish. The Resident presented a very detailed report and requested assistance from the Council in four ways; 1) help with understanding who owns the ditches and culverts in the area, so the residents could help raise awareness of issues quickly when they arise, 2) for the Council to request that KCC review & update their drainage and surface water management plan, 3) that the Council sign up with the Environment Agency (EA) to be engaged in future consultation on flooding and surface water management issues and 4) that the Council continue to consider flooding and surface water management issues as part of their role as planning consultees, for future planning applications. Councillor Riordan, thanked the Resident for her work in preparing the report and for presenting it so clearly. Councillor Perry advised that he was the MBC representative on the Upper Medway

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Internal Drainage Board (UMIDB), and confirmed that the Board does indeed cover much of Staplehurst in response to overseeing ditches and culverts. He advised that they do enforce matters with riparian landowners. He confirmed that MBC is working to influence the EA to update Flood Maps of the areas. Councillor Perry undertook to raise the concerns with the Executive of the UMIDB. Councillor Buller advised that the Planning Committee always takes into consideration any potential concerns of flooding and surface water management and would continue do so into the future. Councillor Riordan agreed to write to the authorities seeking clarification of a number of the points raised, but explained that due to Data Protection law they would not be able to share landowners' details. The Resident requested that the Council raise awareness of issues via the Council's quarterly newsletters and other forums. Councillors agreed that they would consider including an article in the next newsletter.

Councillor Riordan reopened the meeting.

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

4.1. Accounts for Payment – for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor Thomas, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 26th March to 31st March totalled £3,549.54; income for the period was £260.52.

<u>Approved Payments 26th March - 31st March 2021</u>	Amount
Homeleigh Timber - Materials & Paint Chapel Lane Street Light	50.93
The Living Forest Ltd - Tree Works Footpath KM312	595.20
The Living Forest Ltd - Tree Works Chestnut Avenue	583.20
Choice Support - Planter Maintenance March	410.80
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Clean/Open Mar	695.49
Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Sundries March	86.41
Commercial Services - Surrenden Field Mowing	764.89
County Fire Protection Ltd - Fire Alarm Service Jubilee Pav	96.00
Maclin Pumps Ltd - Jubilee Field Pump 2/2 yr Service	241.20
Cllr P Riordan - CP Refreshments Reimbursement	21.16
Homeleigh Timber - Caretaker Gloves	4.26
	3,549.54

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE

0.00

4.2. 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/>. Councillor Riordan advised Councillors that since the papers had been published, MBC had confirmed that a further £11,085.02 CIL monies are to be paid to the Council in the coming weeks for the Bletchingly Farm Industrial Estate housing development.

4.3. Finance & Strategy Group – report of meeting 21/4/21 NOTED by Councillors and posted on web page: <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/finance--strategic-planning-group/>. Recommendations related to financial matters:

4.3.1. Annual Statement 2020-2021- Proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor George, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the Annual Statement of

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Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 which was published on web page <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>.

4.3.2. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020 – 2021 Part 3

4.3.2.1. Annual Governance Statement – Section 1

Councillors reviewed all items on section 1 page 4 of the statement. It was RESOLVED to AGREE all items 1-8 be marked as YES, and the statement be prepared for signing.

4.3.2.2. Accounting Statements – Section 2

Councillor Riordan advised Councillors that the figure in Box 8 of the Accounting Statements should read £133,490. Proposed by Councillor George, seconded by Councillor Buller it was RESOLVED to APPROVE and sign the Accounting Statements.

4.3.3. Parish Council Investment Strategy – Councillor Perry requested that paragraph 3.1.2 of the strategy, be amended to end the item with the words “...economic growth.” Proposed by Councillor McNeill, seconded by Councillor Spearink, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the investment strategy with the amendment as detailed by Councillor Perry.

4.3.4. Next Quarter Contract Reviews and Payments to be made – Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Perry, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the items set out in the report: the renewal of the annual contracts with GDPR-Info Ltd as Data Protection Officer £350.00; Hugo Fox as Website provider £39.99; MBC Council Tax for Rooms 1, 2 & 3 £1,347.30; Norton Internet Security £105.00; County Fire Protection re Jubilee Pavilion alarm maintenance £80.00; BT Broadband & Telephone £665.40 p.a. for a 2 year contract; Sevenoaks District Council re Jubilee Field Premises Licence £180.00; Arron Services Ltd re Hosted Exchange Service £1,710.00; ICO Data Protection Registration re Data protection Licence £35.00; Contrast Garden Maintenance re Chestnut Avenue/A229 Hedge cutting £200.00; Contrast Garden Maintenance re mowing and strimming at Wimpey Field £1,200.00 and to pay annual subscriptions to Parish Online Data Mapping approx. £89.00, ALCC approx. £80.00 and SLCC approx. £393.00; KALC Annual Subscription £1,620.00.

4.4. Scheme of Delegation – At the Council Meeting on the 6th April (Min 1905, 6.1) it had been agreed to; subject to no change in the legislation before the 6th May; move to a scheme of delegated powers be given to the Clerk for a temporary period, initially until the 21st June, to replace Full Council and Planning Meetings. Councillor Riordan explained the proposed scheme of delegation to Councillors. The Clerk confirmed the scheme need only be activated if the outcome of the High Court application required the cessation of virtual meetings until primary legislation was put in place, the ruling of which was expected later in the week and/or until Council returned to face to face meetings, whichever occurred first. Proposed by Councillor George, seconded by Councillor Castro, it was RESOLVED to adopt the Section 101 Delegation v1 21/4/21 with effect from the 7th May 2021.

4.5. BioBlitz 2021 – Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor McNeill it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the expenditure of £350 for the Medway Valley Country Partnership to run a BioBlitz event on the 11th August.

4.6. Replacement of Finger Post for Five Acre Lane junction with Five Ash Lane – Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Smith it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that KCC replace the stolen finger post with a metal finger post at their expense.

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

- 5.1. Annual Council Meeting – Proposed by Councillor McPhee, seconded by Councillor Grimwood, it was RESOLVED to AGREE to reserve the 4th May and hold the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in the event that virtual meetings are no longer possible after the 6th May.
- 5.2. Request from the WI to hold a picnic in Surrenden Field on the 8/6/21 – Proposed by Councillor George, seconded by Councillor Buller, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the event.
- 5.3. Request from SCEG to name the main vehicle gate at Surrenden Field - Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Spearink it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that SCEG could mount a small plaque naming the main vehicle gate, "The Barrett Manning Memorial Gate".
- 5.4. Use of Council Village Noticeboards – Following feedback from some residents that they would like to allow commercial content on the Parish Council noticeboards, Councillor Spearink gave some background on the history of how the noticeboards had been previously used for Council and community notices only. Proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Buller, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE that the noticeboards continue to be used for Council and community notices only. The Clerk was instructed to renew the previous explanatory notices on the boards, following review by Councillors Spearink and Buller.

The meeting was temporarily closed to allow Resident Arger, Chair of the SPNRG to speak in respect of item 5.5.

- 5.5. Parish Photographic competition – It was AGREED by Councillors that the concept of a competition was excellent. They invited the SNRPG to take forward the item and develop a plan and lead the competition.

Councillor Riordan re-opened the meeting.

6. PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS:

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

- 6.1. Clerk's Report - The Clerk updated Councillors on the ongoing issues regarding gas pressure for some residents, but was pleased to report that SGN had now acknowledged the problems. She confirmed that there was still work to be done to achieve a resolution. The Clerk reminded Councillors of the excellent training opportunities that are available to them. She also clarified for Councillors that the annual year, for the purposes of the annual report, is May to April.
- 6.2. Written reports on Committee, Group and Project activities
 - 6.2.1. Communications Group – Councillors NOTED the report of the meeting on 30th March. The report was noted and published at [Communications Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](#), Councillors discussed the proposals and quotes for the design, printing and distribution of the Village Update and the Annual Report for the forthcoming year. Some concerns were raised over the total costs, in particular the additional cost for the distribution of the Annual Report to the 400+

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rural properties. Councillor Gartan volunteered to hand deliver the rural editions of the Annual Report to save money. Proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Spearink, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the appointment of Paxman Printing for the Village Update, for the 4-colour version, at a total cost of £359 for each edition. Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor McPhee it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the appointment of Paxman Printing for a 4-colour, 12-page Annual Report at a total cost of £775.

- 6.2.2. Road Safety Group – Councillors NOTED the report of the meeting of the 1st April, which is published at [Road Safety Task and Finish Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](http://Road Safety Task and Finish Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge (staplehurst-pc.uk))

6.3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors

- 6.3.1. Chairman's Report - Oral report by Councillor Riordan. The Chairman reported to Council a number of matters; that the Forth Bridge Plan had been well executed by Councillors and Officers and residents had commented very positively; that the shutters at Jubilee Field Pavilion were damaged and needed repair, and that he was progressing the idea of high nets to prevent balls entering the neighbours land; that the work on traffic calming on Cranbrook Road was now complete and that the Council would monitor to see the impact; that a diary of activities for the Community Payback Team was now established and that the Council and the Payback Team were hoping to commence the repainting of the Library on the weekend of the 15th/16th May. Finally, he updated Councillors regarding the unlawful removal of some hedgerow during nesting season and asked Councillors to be aware of such activities and report to 101 where appropriate.

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

- 7.1. Borough Councillors Reports – Report by Councillor Perry.
Councillor Perry updated Councillors that the last MBC Full Council meeting had been cancelled due to purdah. He confirmed that the Local Plan Review was on target for Regulation 19 Consultation to commence from July 2021, and that he was representing MBC in a cross-working party with KCC to discuss traffic modelling. He was also pleased to report that the cross-party working group had been successful in securing the future of the Hazlitt Theatre for the immediate future.

Proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor Spearink it was RESOLVED to APPROVE suspending standing orders for a further 30 minutes to complete business.

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

- 7.2. County Councillor's Report – Councillor Hotson advised that he was preparing his report for the Annual Parish Meeting. He also advised that he had some useful correspondence from a KCC Officer pertaining to the Resident's report on flooding presented earlier. He confirmed he would share with the Clerk for circulation to Councillors. He confirmed that whilst KCC were one party working to minimise the disruption from flooding they were also working with other agencies such as the EA, IDB's across Kent

Councillor Riordan reopened the meeting.

7.3. Police Report – Councillors NOTED the March report from the PCSO.

8. URGENT MATTERS – Following the deferment of the appointment of a contractor for the installation of the new path at Surrenden Field (Min 1893 item 4.2), pending the legal approvals from the landlord MBC, Councillor Riordan invited Councillors to comment on the recently received draft Licence for Alterations. Councillors raised no concerns, which allows the Clerk move the Licence forward for signature. This in turn would allow the appointment of a contractor at the meeting on the 4th May, the last formal meeting until late June at the earliest.

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PUBLIC FORUM

Two residents spoke requesting that pressure be maintained on KCC to reopen Staplehurst Library. They also raised concerns about the new Post Office not being fully functional, and yet the old Post Office had been closed. A resident on the Speed Watch team updated Councillors on their work and that despite the new roundabout drivers were still speeding along Station Road.

Proceedings finished at 9.20pm.