

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Virtual Meeting via Zoom video-conference
Monday 18th May 2020 at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Bowden, Buller, Castro, Chapman, Forward, George, Lain-Rose (until the point indicated in the minutes), Miller (from the point indicated in the minutes), Perry, Rawlinson, Sharp, Spearink, Thomas, and Riordan who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr MJ Westwood; Parish Clerk Designate: Miss NL Ideson

APOLOGIES: Councillor Rawlinson was absent.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – Chairman Riordan declared an interest in the accounts for payment and said that he would abstain from discussion and voting. Councillors Riordan and Castro stated that they would speak about the Staplehurst Covid19 Emergency Help Team of which they were members – a dispensation was deemed not to be required. Councillor Castro declared an interest in the 'diversity logo' because family members had been involved in its creation

Requests for Dispensation – Councillor Castro requested a dispensation to participate in the agenda item relating to the 'diversity logo', which was granted in accordance with Section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES: Proposed by Councillor Forward, seconded by Councillor Sharp, minute pages 1826-1828 of 27th April 2020 were APPROVED by Councillors, to be signed by Chairman Riordan and made available on web page <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>.

FINANCE REPORTS

1. Accounts for payment – for approval. Proposed by Councillor Forward, seconded by Councillor George, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Councillors Lain-Rose and Riordan abstained. Expenditure for the period 1st April to 12th May totalled £26,234.61; income for the period was £202,154.21.

| <u>Approved Payments 1st April - 12th May 2020</u> | Amount |
|--|---------------|
| Anno Distillers Ltd - Hand Sanitiser Covid-19 EHT | 84.00 |
| KALC - Annual Subscription | 1,818.00 |
| Homeleigh Timber - Padlock re Surrenden Play Area | 33.48 |
| Ecosan Services Ltd - Sanitary Unit Bell Lane Toilets | 95.50 |
| Cooper & Co. Plumbing - New Sink & Tap Bell Lane Toilets | 417.60 |
| Councillor Reimbursement re Shrubs & Plants The Parade | 151.22 |
| Cam-tech Security - CCTV Repairs Surrenden Field | 212.16 |
| Staplehurst Youth Club - Youth Worker 1/4 | 1,000.00 |
| Jubilee Field management Committee - 1/2 Maintenance Payment | 1,250.00 |
| HMRC - 4th Qtr TAX & NI Jan/Feb/Mar | 4,635.97 |
| Arron Services Ltd - Office Laptop | 1,823.94 |
| April Payroll & Pension Costs | 6,174.88 |
| Choice Support - Village Planter Maintenance April | 391.62 |
| SLCC - Clerks Manual | 47.50 |
| Councillor reimbursement re Booker Ltd COVID-19 EHT | 489.36 |
| Iden Signs - Community Hub Signs re COVID-19 EHT | 52.80 |
| SLCC - Document Accessibility Webinar | 42.00 |
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| SLCC - Agendas & Minutes Webinar | 84.00 |
| SLCC - Operation London Bridge Webinar | 42.00 |
| Homeleigh Timber - Oak Sleepers x6 Station Road Planters | 147.60 |
| WKPS - Annual Subscription | 25.00 |
| Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Sundries April | 21.98 |
| Paxman Services (UK) Ltd - Bell Lane Toilets Clean/Open Apr | 695.49 |
| Bradley Hawkins - Mowing/Strimming Wimpey Field | 75.00 |
| All Saints Staplehurst PCC - Churchyard Maintenance 2/3rds | 5,055.33 |
| Photo-Team - VE Day Flyers | 36.90 |
| Personnel Checks - DBS Check | 43.99 |
| ZOOM Video Comm - Annual Subscription | 143.88 |
| Business Stream - Surrenden Pavilion Waste Water 1/2 | 33.44 |
| MBC - Council Tax Room 1 April | 65.75 |
| MBC - Council Tax Room 2-3 April | 75.55 |
| Business Stream - Water Charges March | 90.53 |
| E-on - Street Light Energy March | 54.77 |
| Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection March | 65.76 |
| MBC - Council Tax Room 1 May | 62.00 |
| MBC - Council Tax Rooms 2-3 May | 72.00 |
| Business Stream - Bell Lane Toilets Water Apr | 43.71 |
| SSE - Surrenden Pavilion Energy Jan-Apr | 43.93 |
| SSE - Bell Lane Toilets Energy Feb-Apr | 63.27 |
| Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection April | 82.20 |
| Lloyds Bank - Service Charges April | 6.50 |
| Arron Services - Hosted Exchange April | 171.00 |
| Arron Services - Hosted Exchange May | 171.00 |
| TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE | 26,234.61 |
| TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE | 0.00 |

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

Councillor Miller joined the meeting.

3. Chapel Lane Street Lights – Details of proposed expenditure on heritage street lights (further to approval dated 03/02/20 (Min1812-13) (for approval). Chairman Riordan discussed the Deputy Clerk's report and the options of whether to install (a) two replacement light columns in heritage style or (b) one heritage light column and one standard one. Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Buller, it was RESOLVED to spend up £6,250 on the decommissioning of the old lights and installation of two heritage light columns. It was NOTED with thanks that £2,900 of this sum would be funded from third party donations from County Councillor Hotson, Borough Councillor Perry and a Chapel Lane resident.
4. Finance & Strategy Group – Report of meeting 29/04/20 - NOTED by Councillors and posted on web page: <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/finance--strategic-planning-group/>. Recommendations relating to financial matters:
- 4.1 Annual Statement 2019-2020 – Statement of Accounts for the year-ending 31st March 2020 (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Forward, seconded by Councillor Bowden, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the statement which was published on web page <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>. Councillor Perry asked for a change to be made to the presentation of sub-totals in the balance sheet, which was AGREED.
- 4.2 Parish Council Risk Assessment – Risk Assessment Schedule for 2019-20 (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor George, it was

RESOLVED to APPROVE the assessment which was published on web page <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>.

- 4.3 Parish Council Investment Strategy – March 2020 Update of Investment Strategy (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Sharp, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the strategy which was published on web page <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>.
- 4.4 Next Quarter Contract Reviews and Payments to be made – Contract renewals and subscription payments per Section 12 of meeting report (for approval). Proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Forward, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the items set out in the report: renewal of the annual contracts with Hugo Fox as website provider £39.99, MBC Council Tax for Rooms 1, 2 & 3 £1,347.30, Norton Internet Security £75.00, County Fire Protection re Jubilee Pavilion alarm maintenance £80.00, Sevenoaks District Council re Surrenden Field Premises Licence £75.00 and GDPR-Info Ltd as Data Protection Officer £350.00 and to pay annual subscriptions to Weald of Kent Protection Society £25.00, Parish Online Data Mapping approx. £89.00, ALCC approx. £60.00 and SLCC approx. £393.00 for the Deputy Clerk and new Clerk.
- 4.5 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – To note receipt of a CIL payment and to discuss ideas for possible allocation of the funds (for discussion). Councillors NOTED that the Parish Council had received £9,133.67 as a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment relating to planning application 19/502426 (Redrow Homes). Possible uses were discussed, including for CCTV replacement and at Surrenden Field. Chairman Riordan reported that he was reviewing proposals obtained by the Clerk for CCTV replacement. Some councillors sought more information about the spending of CIL money, which will be provided. Councillors agreed to give further thought to possible uses for the CIL funds.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Dog Control: Public Space Protection Orders – Invitation from Maidstone Borough Council to participate in a public consultation - closing date 12/07/20 (for comment). It was NOTED that the consultation was a public one and was available on MBC website page <https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/other-services/community-protection/tier-2-primary-areas/animals-and-pests/tier-3-primary-areas/dog-control-ppso> and also via the Parish Council's website. They encouraged individuals to respond. Councillors were asked to notify the Parish Office of any specific comments that they wished to propose as part of a Parish Council response.
2. Staplehurst Covid19 Emergency Help Team – Update report (for noting). Councillors NOTED the written report prepared by Councillor Castro. He said that: volunteers had assisted 233 different people, carrying out 435 different jobs; the Community Hub had engaged with 82 different people and had distributed 48 food parcels; he had provided information to the Staplehurst Society to contribute to its records of the event. Chairman Riordan thanked local businesses and borough and county councillors and officers for their support. He said that he had also secured funding support from the Kent Community Foundation.
3. Surrenden Playing Field – Result of survey of residents' views about the height of the eastern hedge (further to Min1819 - for noting) and proposal for cutting instructions to be given to contractors (for decision). Councillors NOTED the Deputy Clerk's report of responses to the survey, given by residents whose properties backed onto the eastern boundary of the field, and that 60% of the responses favoured a height of twelve feet. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Thomas, it was RESOLVED to instruct contractors to cut the hedge to twelve feet in autumn 2020 and to maintain it at that height thereafter.

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

1. Clerk's Report – The Clerk reported: the Parish Office team continued to work from home and were making pre-arranged visits to the office; the Deputy Clerk had prepared the

Annual Governance and Accountability Return which would be presented to the next Full Council meeting; the new Clerk was reviewing the terms of reference of working groups and liaising with the groups' chairmen; the Parish Support Officer was drawing up new templates for meeting agendas and minutes in accordance with website accessibility regulations entering into force in September 2020; the new Clerk would be joining the Clerk at a virtual SLCC meeting and would also be attending some training webinars in coming weeks; the Parish Council's annual report had been sent to the studio for typesetting. The Clerk reminded councillors that recent government emergency legislation had disapplied the requirement for parish councils to hold an annual meeting in May. The Parish Office team nevertheless intended to bring forward over the coming weeks the business usually covered during an annual meeting. The Clerk said he had asked the Chairman and Vice-Chairman about their position on continuing in office. Chairman Riordan and Vice-Chairman Perry stated that they were willing to continue in their positions, which was welcomed by Councillors.

2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities

2.1. Communications Group – Report of meeting 29/04/20 - NOTED by Councillors and posted on web page: <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/communications-group/>. Recommendations for decision:

2.1.1. Adoption of a 'diversity' logo (Communications Group report - item 9). Councillors thanked Councillor Castro and his family for their work on producing the proposed 'diversity' logo which carried the message: 'Staplehurst is for all. Our diversity makes us stronger.' The Communications Group recommended the logo for use on paperwork and in displays and presentations. It was acknowledged that the design was not a Parish Council logo and did not mention the Parish Council. After discussion of a range of views, the proposal was referred back to the Communications Group for further work and consideration of a specific Parish Council logo.

2.1.2. Expansion of the Parish Council annual report to twenty pages (per Clerk's report). The Clerk reported that a large amount of material had been submitted for the annual report, which could be accommodated by increasing the number of pages from sixteen to twenty and the total cost from £398 to £489. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE increasing the annual report to twenty pages at a cost of £489.

2.1.3. Setting up Parish Council accounts on Twitter and Instagram (oral report – Cllrs. Castro & Rawlinson). Councillor Castro reported that he and Councillor Rawlinson had worked on preparing Twitter and Instagram accounts to help the Parish Council reach a wider audience, particularly younger people. He said that Councillor Rawlinson would lead the management of the accounts. Chairman Riordan said that it was essential that the account managers should liaise with the Parish Office about use of the accounts. Proposed by Councillor Chapman, seconded by Councillor Castro, it was RESOLVED to set up Twitter and Instagram accounts for the Parish Council on this basis.

Councillor Lain-Rose left the meeting.

2.2. Employment Group – Proposed actions relating to: (i) staff working during lockdown and (ii) review of Employment Policies & Procedures (for noting). (i) Councillors NOTED the arrangements for reimbursement of expenses incurred by staff in relation to home-working. They also NOTED that Miss Nicola Ideson was now working alongside the Clerk and would take over the position formally on 01/06/20. (ii) Councillors NOTED that the Clerk would delay his retirement and work reduced hours until the end of September 2020 to support the Parish Office and the Council during the transition and current restrictions; during this time, the Clerk would also work with

Councillor Forward on employment policies and procedures. Councillors expressed their thanks to the Clerk for his service to the Council.

The meeting having reached two hours in duration, Councillors voted to suspend Standing Order 3.24 to facilitate the completion of business.

2.3. Finance & Strategy Group – Non-financial recommendation of meeting 29/04/20:

2.3.1. Proposal to amend Planning Committee Terms of Reference – quorum requirement (for decision). It was NOTED that section 4(c) of the Planning Committee's terms of reference stated that the Committee's quorum should be half of the appointed members, with a minimum of three, and that Standing Order 4.4vii set the minimum number for a quorum of a committee as three. It was further NOTED that, with seven members, the Planning Committee's quorum was currently four and that its March meeting had been unable to conduct formal business because it had not reached that quorum. After some discussion, proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Bowden, it was RESOLVED by majority vote to APPROVE the recommendation of Finance & Strategy Group to set Planning Committee's quorum as three members and to update section 4(c) of its terms of reference accordingly.

2.4. Staplehurst Summer Play Scheme – Written report of meeting 30/04/20 and oral report of meeting 14/05/20 (for noting and discussion). Councillor Buller and the Clerk reported that representatives of the Parish Council and Play Place had discussed the feasibility of holding a summer play scheme during restrictions while there was clearly still unease about social gathering. All parties to the discussion recognised that, for practical reasons, a decision needed to be made. The parties had concluded, reluctantly, that the 2020 summer play scheme should be cancelled. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Thomas, it was RESOLVED to cancel the scheme. It was NOTED that discussions would continue with Play Place about the possibility of holding an event at another time.

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

3.1. Greener Staplehurst Group – Councillor George reported: The Parade's planters had been replanted; land between Chestnut Avenue and High Street had been planted; seeds had been sown at the Jubilee Field verges. Chairman Riordan reported that, under advice from Kent Highways, shrubs (not trees) would be planted in The Parade's beds.

3.2. VE Day 75 – Chairman Riordan expressed thanks to Mr Mark Howells who had worked hard to help Staplehurst celebrate the anniversary, notwithstanding the restrictions necessitated by Covid19.

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

1. Borough Councillor's Report – Councillor Perry reported: MBC committees had started to hold virtual meetings; Planning Committee would meet on 21/05/20; the pandemic was having financial consequences for MBC, with business rates and commercial income falling; he had applied for a further grant for the Covid19 Emergency Help Team. Chairman Riordan said that MBC had been very supportive of the help team and asked Councillor Perry to convey his thanks.

2. Police Report – PCSO Gardner's report for April 2020. It was NOTED that there were five crimes listed in Staplehurst. Chairman Riordan commented that PCSO Gardner was in regular contact with him.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting)

No reports received.

URGENT ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Sainsbury's – Councillor Sharp said that she had received an update letter from Sainsbury's. It was NOTED that Sainsbury's had sent it to all councillors.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Four members of the public attended as observers. After the meeting, the Chair of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Review Group offered to help deliver copies of the Parish Council's annual report.

Proceedings finished at 9.29pm.