

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

Minutes of virtual meeting held on 16th February, 2022 at 7.45pm

1. **Present**, Margaret Arger, Chairman (MA), Cllr. Joan Buller (JB), Tom Burnham (TB) Robin Oakley, Secretary (RO), Cllr. John Perry (JP), Colin Love (CL), Robin Kenworthy (RK).
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Paddy Riordan (on Training Course), Cllr. Colin Bowden (CB), Cllr, Adele Sharp (AS)
3. **Minutes of Meeting held on 24th November, 2021:** Agreed, with no matters arising.
4. **Comments on Neighbourhood Plan Objectives O1 – O7.** Cul-de-sacs were again discussed and it was concluded that they should not be isolated, although JP said that whilst people with young children often preferred to live in quiet cul-de-sacs, he accepted that connectivity between all parts of a development are necessary. CL said that when a site is split between developers Maidstone Borough Council should be bringing the developers together to achieve such connectivity, not as happened between the Bovis and Redrow parts of the Headcorn Road development. JP said that if the Design Code becomes part of the revised Neighbourhood Plan (NP) compliance will become part of the planning consideration. MA said that whilst developers of adjacent sites cannot be forced to co-operate there is a need for MBC to give more recognition of the Neighbourhood Plan. JP said that if a design code is part of the NP he would expect Planning Inspectors to recognise this, but he would check if this is the case. It was agreed that RO would re-write O1 to O7, incorporating discussed amendments including connectivity, (with assistance from JB on O7), and circulate it to Group members before passing it to the Parish Council for discussion/approval. JB suggested that garage blocks should be designed out of future site layouts as existing garages remote from their dwellings were often abandoned or not used for garaging vehicles, as there was no electricity or water to them. JB suggested that the sections VH1, and Objectives O8 and O9 should be reviewed next.
5. **Staplehurst Design Code.** MA reported that MBC were only able to offer minimal assistance in preparing the Design Code and no financial help. MA also reported that the application by the Parish Council for funding from the Government's Pilot scheme had only resulted in a series of E-mails, none of which offered any prospect of assistance, the latest one being on 14 January 2022. JP suggested that the PC should approach Kent Association of Local Councils asking them to press MBC to be more proactive in helping PCs and having an officer appointed to help PCs. After some discussion it was agreed that MA should write to the Parish Clerk requesting that, as a matter of urgency, an item be added to the next PC meeting agenda, asking that the PC write to KALC with a request that they ask at the next meeting with MBC, that the council provides neighbourhood plan and design code assistance to parish councils within the borough.
6. **MBC call for potential sites for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan**
A brief discussion indicated that there is no appetite amongst the group members for suggesting any further sites for gypsies and travellers.
7. **Any other business.**
RK again raised the matter of dropped kerbs and tactile areas of paving on footways which he said MBC should be attending to but it was again pointed out that, in general, these are the responsibility of KCC with the exception of those roads and footways on new estates which are unadopted, eg. on Dickens Gate and The Bartons, Skinner and Davies Closes where management companies are responsible.

CL again raised/

CL again raised the matter of traffic rat-running through Hurst Close, Newlyn Drive and Fishers Road and complained that the volume of traffic has become greater in recent months and he felt that residents in

these roads are being subjected to a degradation of quality of life. JB said that the results of the recent traffic surveys are now on the PC's website. JB said that there is a Road Safety Group meeting next week and she would raise the subject of rat-running with Jenny Watson of KCC and seek her advice as to what can be done to prevent it.

RO and RK both said that there is more traffic using Pinnock Lane, Hanmer Way and Bathurst Road to avoid the traffic congestion resulting from the traffic lights at the crossroads. Traffic between the A229 and Marden is also using Pinnock Lane, Five Oak Lane, Five Ash Lane, and Thorn Road to avoid Marden Road in Staplehurst and Howland Road in Marden.

These are both examples of what happens when large numbers of new houses are built without the necessary infrastructure.

8. Dates of future meetings. Wed. 30th March (revised)

Wed. 20th April

Tues. 17th May

Wed. 15th June

Wed. 20th July

Wed. 17th August

Tues. 20th September

Robin Oakley 17th February 2022