

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 4th December 2017 at 8.05 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Gosling, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Riordan, Sharp, Smith, Spearink and Burnham who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Claridge, Reardon & Silkin.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – As members of the Jubilee Field Management Committee Councillors Lain-Rose, Perry and Riordan declared an interest in the agenda item relating to Jubilee Field floodlighting.

Requests for Dispensation – Councillors Lain-Rose, Perry and Riordan requested dispensation to participate in discussion and voting on the item of declared interest in accordance with section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011. Dispensation was GRANTED.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Proposed by Councillor Ashby, seconded by Councillor Sharp, minute pages 1661-1664 of 20th November 2017 were APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Burnham and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Jubilee Field Floodlighting – Request from Jubilee Field Management Committee to fund a planning application. Councillor Riordan reported that the Jubilee Field Management Committee wished to install floodlighting for the main football pitch. This would help the men's football team progress towards higher levels of the league and increase the field's capacity to accommodate all types of user for longer periods, especially during autumn and winter. He requested Council's agreement to fund a planning application (cost £195) with the aim of obtaining an agreed proposition that could then be presented to potential funders. RESOLVED: the requested funding of £195 for a planning application for floodlighting on Jubilee Field be AGREED; the Council is to be satisfied with the content of the application; the Council should submit the application.
2. Surrenden Playing Field – Proposal from Landscape Services for 2018 grass cutting. Councillors noted the quotation of £934.69 for 16 cuts was 3% higher than the 2017 price and RESOLVED to accept the proposal.
3. Transport Accessibility Group – Invitation to renew membership for 2018 (cost £15). Councillors NOTED the work of the Group on bus service issues and RESOLVED to pay £20 for 2018 membership and donation.
4. Wimpey Field Trees and Summer Bulbs – Proposal to purchase trees and bulbs for planting (further to Min 1663 - PS). Councillor Spearink explained that the estimated expenditure figure would cover trees for the school area on the field, ornamental trees, summer bulbs and shrubs with an allowance for contingency. Councillors NOTED that the requested amount anticipated part of the budget previously planned for 2018-19. Councillor Spearink confirmed that the requirement for 2018-19 would therefore be reduced from £8,000 to £6,000. RESOLVED: proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Riordan, the requested expenditure of up to £2,000 be AGREED.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Bell Lane Car Park – Report and proposal to investigate the scope for management by the Parish Council. Councillor Riordan reported that he and Borough Councillor Brice had met MBC's Parking Operations Manager and reviewed some parking issues in

Staplehurst. Bell Lane Car Park: councillors discussed the implications of the Parish Council seeking to manage and take on ownership of the car park. After some debate it was RESOLVED that the Clerk should ask MBC for the following information: a clear plan of the title held by MBC; whether freehold or leasehold would be offered; an indication of the financial consideration that would be sought; comment on the application of business rates; comment on the car park's condition. On separate parking issues Councillor Riordan reported: additional yellow line provision in Chapel Lane and Church Green was unlikely as KCC did not have funding; no need for additional yellow lines in Station Road had been established; a school working group was looking at parking in the vicinity of the school.

2. Dawkins Trust – Correspondence from Trustee re formalisation of Parish Council's nominated trustee representative (Min 1640). It was reported that Dawkins Trust had formally updated its nominated trustees; they included former Councillor Whittle who was willing to continue as trustee. Councillors NOTED with thanks former Councillor Whittle's position and that the Trust would undertake a review in twelve months.
3. Grass Verge Land North of Marden Road – Procedure for clearance of vegetation on unregistered land, which is damaging residents' fence (for discussion and decision). Councillor Buller reported that her discussions with a resident of Corner Farm Road had led to investigation of the status of a strip of grass land on the north side of Marden Road. The land was situated between the junction with North Down and the Corner Farm Road footpath to the east. It had emerged that the land was unregistered and neither KCC nor MBC were maintaining the vegetation which was growing against fences of residential property. After some debate about what action, if any, the Parish Council wished to take it was RESOLVED: the Clerk should write to occupants of immediately neighbouring properties to seek their views on the use of Community Payback resource to clear vegetation, noting that neither the Council nor Community Payback could be held responsible for the residents' fences; with a view to future management the Parish Council should seek to take ownership of the land subject to its satisfaction with the costs of doing so.
4. KCC Volunteer Support Warden Scheme – Invitation from KCC and KALC to participate in funding the recruitment of volunteer support wardens. NOTED by Councillors with no action to be taken.
5. Public Conveniences – Invitation from National Association of Local Councils to support a proposal by Falmouth Town Council under the Sustainable Communities Act to make granting business rate relief on public conveniences mandatory (deadline 15/12/17). RESOLVED: support the proposal and the Clerk to complete the relevant questionnaire.
6. Street Trading Licence - Application for renewal of licence granted to Pizza D'Onore to trade at Staplehurst Village Centre: Invitation from MBC to comment (by 11/12/17). RESOLVED: no objection.
7. Traffic Regulation Order: Clapper Farm Lane Prohibition of Motor Vehicles – Notification of order by KCC to implement a 'prohibition of motor vehicles' (except for access) restriction in Clapper Farm Lane from its junction with Battle Lane to a point 200 metres north of its junction with Marden Road (for noting). Councillors NOTED that the issue of the order rectified a previous administrative oversight.
8. Parish Council Surgeries – (i) Reports on key issues raised (AG/TB) – the only item raised had been a question about the premises licence covering Jubilee Field; (ii) Appointment of representatives for future dates. RESOLVED: parish council surgeries would not be held on 23 & 30 December.

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

1. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported: the new caretaker and Parish Support Officer had started work and the office space had been reconfigured; Christmas lights had been

installed on lamp columns in the High Street and timer issues with two lights had been reported; the Parish Office team was making preparations for the Council's social event; work on the next draft of the 2018-19 budget was continuing ahead of a Finance and Strategy Group meeting; in January the office staff would be attending workshops on new data protection legislation – he requested any councillors interested in attending to respond quickly as places were limited; following the resignation of Cllr Whittle the vacancy had been advertised for the statutory period to allow for the calling of an election, which had now expired so the Returning Officer had advised that the Parish Council could proceed to co-opt; KCC had advised that the Marden Road zebra crossing should be installed before Christmas; KCC had advised that the formal order had been given for yellow lines to be extended further along Headcorn Road although an implementation date was not yet known; the Parish Office had received from MBC an adoption copy of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan which was available for reference in the office during normal opening hours.

2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - a) Hen & Duckhurst Farm – Report by Neighbourhood Plan Review Group on David Wilson Homes Exhibition 09/11/17. Councillors NOTED with thanks the report and that it was issued solely on behalf of the non-councillor members of the Group.
 - b) Station Redevelopment Group – Report of meeting 21/11/17 including proposal to meet Network Rail. Councillors NOTED the report published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx> and asked the Clerk to seek a meeting with Network Rail. Councillor Perry said he would ascertain a suitable contact.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
 - a) Neighbourhood Watch – Report of meeting 27/11/17. Councillor Buller reported: the public meeting had been attended by about fifty people; a leaflet drop was being investigated, for which County Councillor Hotson had indicated he could possibly provide some financial support; the meeting had learned about 'Fields of Vision', a group that shares information about security issues in the countryside. The Clerk distributed a report by the Chair of Staplehurst Neighbourhood Watch that covered similar ground.

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

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – Councillor Perry reported that key business before MBC included the role of planning referrals committee and discussions between MBC and KCC about a Leeds-Langley relief road. He commented that at its latest meeting MBC Planning Committee had approved an application relating to a site in Linton that was not in the Local Plan.
2. Kent Association of Local Councils – Report of KALC Maidstone Area Committee meeting 27/11/17. Chairman Burnham's report was NOTED and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting):-

No items

URGENT MATTERS (at Chairman's discretion, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting)

No items

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting a resident commented favourably on the quality of the Christmas lights and reported that the timing of two of them was faulty.