

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 4th September 2017 at 7.45 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Claridge (until the point indicated in the minutes), Gosling (until the point indicated in the minutes), Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Riordan, Silkin, Spearink (until the point indicated in the minutes), Whittle (until the point indicated in the minutes) and Burnham who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Reardon, Sharp and Smith.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – Councillor Lain-Rose declared an interest in the Parade content of the 'Parking in Staplehurst' report.

Requests for Dispensation – Councillor Lain-Rose requested and was granted a dispensation to speak and vote on the item of declared interest in accordance with section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Minute pages 1637-1640 of 21st August 2017 were proposed for approval by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Spearink, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Burnham and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx. Councillors Buller, Burnham, Riordan and Whittle abstained. Responding to a question from Councillor Spearink, Councillor Claridge commented that he considered his non-participation in some votes at the previous meeting equated to an abstention.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Local Government Pension Scheme – Report and recommendation on payment of LGPS exit costs (Finance & Strategy Group). RESOLVED: the Parish Council agrees to settle the notified cost of leaving the Local Government Pension Scheme by payment of ten semi-annual instalments of £3,450 and to cover the cost of payments in 2017-18 by transfer from the general reserve.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation – Invitation to comment (closing date 08/10/17). Councillor Spearink stated that he and Councillor Perry attended meetings of the Beult Catchment Improvement Group but meetings had become less frequent. Councillor Perry commented on the responsibility of the Environment Agency for large areas. Councillor Claridge volunteered to complete the survey and would highlight KCC's responsibility for gullies adjacent to highways and landowners/farmers' responsibility for ditches. Councillors accepted Councillor Claridge's offer with thanks.
2. Land North of Henhurst Farm – Proposal to take legal advice on the inclusion of the site in policy H1(50) in the Maidstone Borough Draft Local Plan (JP). Councillor Silkin and the Clerk reported on enquiries they had made about the relative positions of the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan and sources of legal advice. Councillor Perry said that via Staplehurst's MP he was seeking a ministerial statement on Localism, but in the meantime he strongly supported taking legal advice particularly on the key questions of precedence of the plans and materiality of sixty additional homes. Councillor Whittle advocated an action plan that took into account points made by councillors and

- residents (*summarised under 'Public Forum'*). RESOLVED: the Parish Council agrees to allocate up to £3,000 for the taking of legal advice pursuant to the enquiries by Councillor Silkin and the Clerk, such sum to be taken from the general reserve and allocated to the Neighbourhood Plan budget line (Councillor Spearink abstained); the Parish Council agrees to draw up an action plan.
3. Parish Council Surgery – (i) Report on key issues raised 26 August and 2 September - Councillor Perry report he had dealt with a report of fly-tipping and an enquiry about the Neighbourhood Plan. (ii) Appointment of representatives for future surgeries – no further appointments were made.
 4. Railway Tavern – Proposal to commission an independent viability report (JP). RESOLVED: the Parish Council agrees to allocate up to £3,000 for an independent viability report, such sum to be taken from the general reserve and allocated to a new 'professional fees' budget line; the Parish Council shall ask the Planning Inspectorate if it would allow an extension of time for comments on the appeal against MBC's refusal of planning application 16/505966.
 5. Sprinkler Systems in New Buildings – Correspondence from MBC in response to SPC letter pursuant to Min 1631 (for noting). Councillors NOTED MBC's responses of 23 and 24 August to the Parish Council's proposal that sprinkler systems should be a requirement in all new builds. They also NOTED that the government had just launched an independent review of building regulations and fire safety and that sprinklers were required for new builds in Wales. RESOLVED: the Parish Council will write to the leader of the independent review and to Helen Grant MP to put forward its proposal.
 6. Staplehurst Housing Need – Proposal to form working group to provide information about local housing for local people (PR). Councillor Riordan proposed the setting-up of a working group of councillors and residents to source and provide information about local affordable housing to assist local people who were searching for homes. Councillor Whittle counselled that care should be taken to avoid exclusion. RESOLVED: Councillor Riordan will take forward the establishment of a working group to source and provide information about local affordable housing to assist local people (abstentions: Councillors Manning and Whittle). *Councillor Gosling left the meeting.*

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

1. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities (1) - for decision or noting
 - a) Wimpey Field – Discussion of points arising from meeting with residents 01/08/17. *During a meeting closure contributions were made by residents (summarised under 'Public Forum')*. Key points: Councillor Spearink sought clarification of ownership of the grasscrete area and rights of disability access; Councillor Riordan suggested footpaths be signposted to indicate alternative access to Wimpey Field; Councillor Claridge invited resident participation in Council groups; anti-social behaviour should be reported to police in the usual way.
 - b) Parking in Staplehurst – Discussion paper further to SPC objective Min 1601 (PR); additional related correspondence:
 - (i) Parking in Chapel Lane – Correspondence requesting support for extending parking restrictions at the entrance to Chapel Lane
 - (ii) Parking in Station Road – Correspondence requesting a review of the 'traffic situation' and support for implementation of extended parking restrictions.
 Due to time constraints Councillors considered only Section 5 of Councillor Riordan's discussion paper, all other sections and correspondence being DEFERRED. RESOLVED: the Parish Council will ask the village PCSO to increase the frequency of the police presence at the Gybbon Rise bend and will press for action to amend the lay-by markings to restore parking capability for residents.

2. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported on activities: Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were being reviewed; later in September KCC would be launching a consultation on new parking regulations for Headcorn Road; Kent Highways had notified that Pile Lane would be closed from 18th September for up to eighteen months to facilitate construction work by Redrow Homes (County Councillor Hotson was raising questions); MBC had issued the requested premises licence for Jubilee Field; the Parish Office team and Councillors Lain-Rose and Manning had met representatives of Growing Concern to discuss the maintenance of the village planters; preparations were in hand for the village clean-up on 16th September.
3. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities (2) - for decision or noting
 - a) Community Enhancement Group – Updated proposal for establishment of new group further to Min 1639-40 (SL-R report 29/08/17). ITEM DEFERRED.
 - b) Neighbourhood Plan Review Group – Minutes of meeting 05/07/17 and 16/08/17. NOTED by councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.
 - c) Neighbourhood Plan Review Group – Correspondence from the Chair of the Group re: land north of Henhurst Farm; traveller sites; scope of Group's activity. Councillors NOTED the correspondence and commented: land north of Henhurst Farm had been discussed under 'Parish Issues'; the Parish Council would continue to press for action on inappropriate gypsy and traveller site development; the Parish Council considered the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group to be a Group of the Council as described in its terms of reference. Councillor Buller said she would seek to clarify any uncertainty with Group members at its next meeting.
 - d) Parish Council and Planning Committee Meeting Dates 2018 – Schedule of proposed dates (Employment Group report 16/08/17: for approval). Councillor Claridge stated that: the terms of reference of the Employment Group did not enable it to make recommendations on Council policy and strategy other than those related to Council employment practice; the proposal tabled by the Group went beyond its terms of reference and was therefore inadmissible; the matter should be referred to the Finance and Strategy Group. A motion to withdraw the report was not agreed. ITEM DEFERRED.

Councillors Claridge, Spearink and Whittle left the meeting.

4. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
 - a) Crime Level in Staplehurst – Report on current initiatives (CC). ITEM DEFERRED.
 - b) Footpath KM312 – Report of meeting with representative of Carillion 24/08/17 (CC). ITEM DEFERRED.
 - c) Wimpey Field – Reports: Bioblitz event 23/08/17; opening of new footpath (PS). ITEM DEFERRED.

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

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – ITEM DEFERRED.

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

1. Parish-Police Liaison – Minutes of joint meeting of Maidstone & District Neighbourhood Watch Association and Maidstone Parishes-Police Liaison Group 24/05/17. ITEM DEFERRED.

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

No items raised.

SPECIAL MOTION & REPORTS- FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP / EMPLOYMENT GROUP:-

1. To move that the public be excluded from items 2 and 3 due to their confidential nature. Councillors RESOLVED to agree the motion and members of the public left the meeting.
2. To consider the report of the Finance & Strategy Group regarding Surrenden Playing Field and Nicholson Walk Commercial Issues. Councillors NOTED the update from Finance & Strategy Group that discussions about the terms of a possible transfer of the freehold were continuing.
3. To consider the recommendation of Employment Group regarding recruitment of a new caretaker. RESOLVED: the Parish Council shall take steps to recruit a replacement caretaker on the terms and conditions set out in the Employment Group's report dated 30/08/17 subject to minor amendment of sections 1.4 and 1.9 of the job description.

The meeting closed at 10.40pm.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: *Before the meeting subjects raised were:* DCLG should be approached about sprinkler regulations; opposition to development north of Henhurst Farm. Borough Councillor Brice commented: contact with the Planning Inspectorate indicated there was no scope post-inspection to change the Local Plan; she had forwarded the Staplehurst Housing Need Survey to MBC planning officers to assist discussions relating to Hen & Duckhurst Farm; MBC Parking Services Manager Jeff Kitson would be happy to meet (KCC should also be involved); she is to meet the police rural crime inspector; she had contacted the Parade landlord about bin replacement and was liaising with MBC about this. *During the meeting comments were made about:* use of information about councillors (Councillor Claridge); the importance of engaging with parties involved in flood risk management (Borough Councillor Brice); land north of Henhurst Farm – the risk of not having a local plan and the importance of demonstrating a five-year land supply (Borough Councillor Brice), residents on the Taylor Wimpey Development have incurred costs to address drainage problems, The Bartons was not constructed as a thoroughfare, residents pay for maintenance of site roads but there is evidence of pressure on KCC to adopt them, residents would like to take their own action to assist opposition to the site allocation, Headcorn PC incurred considerable costs in opposing land allocation without success, the proposed allocation amounted to subversion of local democracy; Wimpey Field – recognition of private roads and concerns about possible KCC adoption, unhelpful social media comments, anti-social behaviour, discussion and collaboration were helpful and should be the way forward; parking near Staplehurst School – lay-by markings had been altered, which was causing problems to residents, and parking at the bend in Gybbon Rise was creating vary hazardous situations.