

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 3rd July 2017 at 7.40 p.m. (public forum) 8.45p.m. (main business)

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Gosling, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Reardon, Riordan, Sharp, Smith, Spearink, Whittle (until the point indicated in the minutes) and Silkin who was in the Chair.

Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillor Claridge.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – Councillors Lain-Rose and Riordan declared interests in items relating to Jubilee Field car park and spectator barrier as they were on the Field's Management Committee.

Requests for Dispensation – Councillors Lain-Rose and Riordan requested and were granted dispensations to speak and vote on the items of declared interest in accordance with section 33(2)(c) of the Localism Act 2011.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Councillor Buller requested the addition of the words 'Councillor Buller abstained' at the end of Finance Report No.4 Youth Club fence on Minute page 1625. Subject to this addition, minute pages 1625-1628 of 19th June 2017 were proposed for approval by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Sharp, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Silkin and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx. Councillors Ashby and Whittle abstained.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Jubilee Field Car Park – Proposal and quotations for works to alter car park to create a parking area for use 24/7 (for approval). Councillor Riordan explained that the new area would be accessible 24/7 via a separate drive behind the outer hedge. He said it was designed to provide parking for occasional users of the field and skate park and would address safety concerns arising from vehicles parking in front of the main gate or on the road. Proposed by Councillor Whittle, seconded by Councillor Ashby, Councillors RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Wealden Groundworks for £7,780.
2. Wimpey Field – Proposal to fund activity day run by Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP) (for approval). Councillor Lain-Rose commented that following SPC's agreement to hold an activity event costing £250 it had become clear that MVCP had underestimated the resources required; if SPC wished to hold an event the cost would be £750. Councillor Lain-Rose said that grant funding was being investigated but in case of need the Wimpey Field Group wished to seek Council's agreement to fund the full cost of £750. Councillors RESOLVED nem con to APPROVE the expenditure.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. A229 Crossroads – Note of discussion with Kent Highways about land between High Street and Chestnut Avenue (for noting). Councillors NOTED that representatives of Kent Highways had met representatives of the Parish Council to explain that they were investigating possible ways to improve the A229-Marden Road-Headcorn Road crossroads and that they had requested assistance in approaching Croudace Homes about restrictive covenants relating to land between High Street and Chestnut Avenue. Councillors NOTED that the Clerk had approached the company which had said it would not agree to any variation or removal of the covenants. Councillors RESOLVED that the

- Parish Office should undertake a survey of homes in Chestnut Avenue to seek opinions about Kent Highways' investigations.
2. CCTV in Staplehurst – Discussion paper relating to additional sites/cameras (LW) (Deferred Min 1626). Councillor Whittle discussed his proposal that the Parish Council acquire three more mobile CCTV cameras for installation on access roads into the village, which he felt would be beneficial for detection and deterrence as the village population expanded. He drew Councillors' attention to indicative cost information obtained by the Clerk and observed that expenditure was not budgeted in the current year but could be planned for 2018-19. Councillors discussed the use of CCTV and various approaches to camera deployment including exploiting their mobile capability. Proposed by Councillor Whittle, seconded by Councillor Riordan, Councillors RESOLVED that the Clerk should obtain further information on cameras and costs for review by Finance Group.
 3. Dawkins Trust – Invitation to nominate a trustee (for decision) (Deferred Min 1626). Councillor Whittle said that he would meet a representative of the trustees to discuss their expectations of a Parish Council representative and that he would report back to the next Council meeting.
 4. Hen & Duckhurst Farm – Correspondence from DHA Planning on behalf of Crest Nicholson (for noting). Councillors NOTED DHA Planning's information that Crest Nicholson would not be pursuing its interest in developing land at Hen & Duckhurst Farm as its negotiations had broken down and that another developer had agreed terms. Councillors RESOLVED to seek an update from KCC about the status of the judicial review action referenced by DHA Planning. *During a brief closure of the meeting Borough Councillor Brice said she was investigating the status of the site with MBC Planning Officers and would seek further information from Crest Nicholson/DHA Planning.*
 5. Jubilee Field – Request from Staplehurst Football Club via Jubilee Field Management Committee for permission to erect a wooden spectator barrier alongside one football pitch (for decision). Councillor Riordan explained that the barrier was a requirement for the football club to play at a higher level and that, as a post and rail barrier, it could be removed should circumstances change. Proposed by Councillor Whittle, seconded by Councillor Riordan, Councillors RESOLVED to give the requested permission to the Management Committee.
 6. Parish Council Surgery – (i) Report on key issues raised 24 June and 1 July (RS/TB); subjects raised were: Bell Lane – fly-tipping and disposal of grease in a drain (reported to MBC); Bell Lane junction with High Street; bollards at the Parade; fly-tipping behind Alen Square (private land); overgrown hedge in Headcorn Road. (ii) Appointment of representatives for future surgeries; 29th July Councillor Spearink.
 7. Railway Tavern – Correspondence from MBC: decision on submitted nomination for designation as asset of community value (for noting). Councillors NOTED that MBC had ruled that there was insufficient evidence to support the nomination of the Railway Tavern as an asset of community value (confirmation of decision published at <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/communities-and-wellbeing/community-right-to-bid>). Councillors Perry and Riordan said they had questioned the decision although there was no formal right of appeal. *Councillor Whittle left the meeting.*

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

1. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported: the Parish Office had taken up distribution failures with the company employed to deliver the annual report, Friends of Health Centre newsletter, play scheme leaflet and fete programme and the Chairman had written to the Company Director; the CCTV servicing programme was under way; the Parish Office had received a number of enquiries about planning questions and about overgrowing

vegetation; the Headcorn Road hedge was on KCC's schedule for cutting within a few weeks and in the meantime the village caretaker had attended to some particularly intrusive growth; the village caretaker had repaired the lid of the Church Green salt bin; the premises licence application for Jubilee Field had been submitted; the Parish Office had completed the switch to new broadband and was investigating options for upgrading the office technology .

2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - a) Employment Group – Report of meeting 26/06/17 (for noting). Councillors NOTED the report by Councillor Lain-Rose about the work of the Employment Group (formerly Staff Group) since its formation in 2015, including: the introduction of new employment contracts and pay scales; reviews of job descriptions, staffing levels, pay, pension benefits and annual leave; planning for the future. Councillor Lain-Rose thanked the Group members and the Parish Office staff for their support.
 - b) Station Redevelopment Group – Report of meeting with MBC 20/06/17 (for noting). Councillor Buller discussed the report (published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>) and said that she was encouraged by the interest shown by the Director of Regeneration and Place. Councillors NOTED the report. Councillor Buller asked that MBC's designation of Staplehurst as a Rural Service Centre be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.
 - c) Village Centre Redevelopment Group – Report of meeting 26/06/17 (for noting). Councillor Lain-Rose explained that the meeting had discussed the Village Centre Management Committee's views on redevelopment strategy, the Youth Club site and future working relationships between the Parish Council and Village Centre trustees. Councillors agreed that more time was needed to consider the report and further discussion was DEFERRED until the next meeting.
 - d) Youth Club Site – Proposal for installation of public seating (for comment). Item deferred.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
 - a) Discussion of MBC Planning Policy relating to Sprinkler Systems – Councillor Spearink said that some years ago the Parish Council had raised with MBC the subject of sprinklers in new build homes and making them a planning condition. He recommended that in view of the recent tragic fire in west London the subject should be raised again. Councillors RESOLVED nem con to write to MBC on this basis.

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

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – Councillor Perry reported that MBC had discussed the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan and the Examiner's report; the plan had not been passed to proceed to referendum but further work is to be done to find a way forward. He reported that the Democracy Committee was looking at how planning referrals were managed. The Local Plan is being taken forward with the aim of an autumn delivery. *Chairman Silkin temporarily closed the meeting for a report from Borough Councillor Brice* who said: she had asked MBC to look into the level of fly-tipping; progress was being made to resolve the unauthorised development on land off Clapper Lane; it would be a good idea to look into whether Wimpey Field could be formally designated a conservation area. *Chairman Silkin reopened the meeting.*

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

1. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee – Notes of meeting 20/06/17 (JP). Noted by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx.

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

No items.

SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT- SURRENDEN PLAYING FIELD & NICHOLSON WALK:-

1. To move that the public be excluded from item 2 due to its confidential nature. As no member of the public was present the motion was not moved.
2. To consider an update report on the proposed freehold transfer of Surrenden Playing Field and Nicholson Walk. Councillors NOTED the content of the Clerk's confidential report dated 27th June 2017 and that following a meeting with MBC's representatives clarification about its proposed terms of transfer was awaited.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting members of the public asked questions and raised comments on a number of issues during a useful and extended discussion. (1) Parking on roads around the school and problems created for local residents: school governors have set up a working group and borough and county councillors are working with the school. (2) Hen & Duckhurst Farm development: interest in knowing more about the background to judicial review action by KCC. (3) Railway Tavern: MBC's decision not to recognise it as an asset of community value should be challenged. (4) Carnival & Fete Programme: the distribution problems meant sponsors did not get value for money and no copies remained for a 'welcome pack' project; the Parish Council has taken up the service failures with the distribution company. (5) The possibility of development between Pinnock Lane and The Bartons: a Wates Developments site map submitted as part of the Maidstone Draft Local Plan consultation in October 2015 sets out a potential development area; the current version of the Maidstone Draft Local Plan includes a smaller area for 60 homes and some amenity space; this area is not in the made Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and its inclusion in the Draft Local Plan has always been opposed by the Parish Council; at this stage there is no live formal planning application for the site. (6) A question about the value of the Neighbourhood Plan: it is part of the Local Plan framework and must be used in determining planning applications; it has already protected against major development proposals outside the plan; MBC's ability to demonstrate a housing supply in excess of five years strengthens the defence. (7) There is much frustration about the failure to deliver infrastructure improvements (e.g. new supermarket) and about the loss of village amenities (e.g. bank); it is important to comment on planning applications and respond to consultations – the Post Office's rethink on the location of the Staplehurst office is an example of what can be achieved; good communication is critical and comments indicate there is room for improvement - ideas are always welcome.