

## STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

### Minutes of meeting held on 25th September, 2019 at Staplehurst Youth Centre

1. **Present:** Cllr. Colin Bowden(CB), Robin Oakley(RO), Tom Burnham (TB)(Chairman), John Kelly(JK), Robin Kenworthy(RK), Colin Love (CL)
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. Paddy Riordan(PR), Cllr. Joan Buller(JB), Cllr. John Perry, Mrs. Margaret Arger.
3. **Membership of the Group.** RO reported that there had still been no response from Hannah Pontet to the invitation to join the Group, and that Karen Langmaid has resigned from the Parish Council.
4. **Minutes of Meeting on 28th August, 2019:** Agreed
5. **Matters Arising.** It was noted that all parish councillors are to have new E-mail addresses.
6. **Amendments to the existing Neighbourhood Plan.** It was noted that the addition of the minor amendments into the software copy held by the Parish Council which Cllr. Sam Lain-Rose (SLR) had undertaken to do, are still awaited. The Group recommends to the parish council that if Cllr. Lain-Rose is not able to complete the changes by early October, the parish council should either obtain appropriate software, so that it is possible for someone else to do the amendments, or contract the work to Feria. Further amendments are probable when the results of MBC's call for sites for housing development are known and if and when the designation of Staplehurst as a Rural Service Centre is removed. In the meantime the minor amendments should be done as a matter of urgency and then signed off by MBC.
7. **Maidstone Borough Local Plan.** CB reported that that it is anticipated that MBC would disclose details of sites offered for housing development to councillors only, by the end of September, but they do not go public until 4th November, 2019. After some discussion it was agreed that the Group could not work without details of the sites. With this in mind it was agreed to cancel the Group meeting scheduled for 23rd October, and replace it with a meeting on 13th November. It was noted that Borough Councillor Louise Brice has started a petition 'William Cornall: Remove Staplehurst's designation as a Rural Service Centre' and would like everyone to support this petition. The goal is to reach 500 signatures; more can be read about it and it can be signed at:-

<http://chng.it/Y9RFKGBdH4>

8. **School Places.** RO reported that the Parish Clerk had written to, and received a response from Staplehurst Primary School saying that the Governors are meeting on 1st October and will respond to the Council after that date, regarding the provision of adequate school places to accommodate the children from the housing developments. After some discussion it was agreed that the provision of secondary school places has the fundamental problem that children from other parts of Maidstone Borough, and from Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling boroughs often travel across borough boundaries to suit parental choice and their ability to pay travel costs. It was considered that the secondary school places at New Line Learning (Cornwallis), High Weald Academy (Angley) and Paddock Wood (Mascalls) could well be filled in future by children from other areas within Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling and Maidstone boroughs which would adversely affect children from Staplehurst. It was agreed that the parish council be recommended to request Cllr. Brice and/or Cllr. Hotson to seek from Kent Education details of how many Staplehurst children currently attend the schools mentioned above and also the other secondary schools in Maidstone and Tonbridge.

9. **David Wilson Homes (DWH) land north of Marden Road.** It was noted that DWH's application to allow an earlier start of work time on Saturday mornings had been refused by MBC.
10. **Reported Decisions:** It was noted that following the unsuccessful planning application to build bungalows on the site in Maidstone Road, adjacent to West View, a new application 19/504275 has been submitted for outline planning permission for the erection of 4 dwellings. Staplehurst PC has recommended to MBC that the application be refused.
11. **Asset of Community Value:** A report is still awaited from Cllr.Sam Lain-Rose following his meeting with the tenant of the King's Head.
12. **Sainsbury's:** Sainsbury had indicated earlier this year that they will be making a decision by December 2019 regarding the construction of a supermarket and this has been reiterated in an E mail dated 10th September from Sainsbury's to Helen Grant MP. Concern was expressed that there is no progress on the supermarket site or the petrol station site in High Street, also owned by Sainsbury. Both sites are looking very shabby and the Group is recommending that the advice of MBC planners be sought as to what can be done, if anything, to put pressure on Sainsbury to either start work or sell the sites to other companies. It was noted that the service station site has had planning permission (now lapsed) for residential development (MA/11/0618) although this might be a less attractive option in view of the costs of soil remediation. It is understood that Cllr. Brice has had discussions with Aldi which indicated that they would only consider building a supermarket in Staplehurst if they could have the Sainsbury's site. Media sources have recently stated that Aldi are seeking a site for a store in Cranbrook.
13. **Any other business.** It was noted that a small group of residents, with the agreement of the Parish Council, are seeking to sow wild flower seeds in some areas such as verges within the parish.

**Meeting closed at 9.55pm.**

**Next meeting re-arranged for 13th November.**

Robin Oakley

26 September, 2019

