



## STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM

### Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 18 August 2022 at The Free Church, Staplehurst

**Present:** Andrew Watson (Chairman), Councillor José Castro, Bob Howse, Mel Alesi, Erika Lock, Lauren Rodwell, Bill Piper.

**Apologies:** Margaret Friswell, Peter Jeffery, Mira Martin, Jason Bardell, Pam Payne, Bob Ham, Stevie-Leigh Harmer,

**NOTE:** This is the first meeting of SEHT since 2019. During the Covid pandemic, its emergency help function was taken over by a group set up by the Parish Council and known as SEHT (Covid).

Those present were welcomed by Chairman Andrew.

Staplehurst remains one of the very few parishes in Kent to have established an Emergency Help Team. This is largely because it is possibly the only parish to have experienced a precipitating event (the fire). In the event of an emergency we depend on Kent Resilience Forum or the emergency services to initiate a response, and there are strict legal limits as to what we may do.

Nevertheless, Lauren believed that in an emergency we may need to act without waiting for emergency services.

There is a list of residents who would turn out in an emergency but this has not been updated since the pandemic. The number of people who have in the past participated in training sessions has been small, and the poor turn-out this evening is an indication that matters have not improved. There is a limited number who have the training to open a shelter. KCC wishes us to have someone on standby.

José doubted that the 45 individuals in the "Covid division" would turn out for a training session, but he suggested that they be asked about their availability.

It was agreed that the SEHT continues to exist, but that a change is needed.

José suggested that the solution is to contact ALL the organizations (i.e. sports clubs, societies, etc.) in the parish and to propose to them that they have a responsibility to the community to be available in an emergency.

Each organization should be asked to send two representatives to a planning meeting and to a training session about setting up a shelter.

It is the role of the committee to arrange whom to contact and who are the key-holders.

Mel reported that the Guides' centre is available for use as an emergency shelter, with sleeping equipment and blankets. (Men's toilets are available in the football club.)

The meeting agreed this is the way way forward.

Lauren Rodwell undertook to manage it. Cllr José Castro undertook to contact the Parish Council.

