

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

Minutes of meeting held on 13th November, 2019 at Staplehurst Youth Centre

- 1. Present:** Cllr. Colin Bowden (CB), Robin Oakley (RO), Tom Burnham (TB), John Kelly (JK), Margaret Arger (MA) Chairman, Robin Kenworthy (RK), Colin Love (CL), Cllr. Joan Buller (JB)
- 2. Apologies:** Cllr. Paddy Riordan (PR), Cllr. Adele Sharp, Cllr. John Perry (Attending MBC Meeting), Gill Smith (GS).
- 3. Membership of the Group.** The Chairman welcomed Cllr. Sue Forward (SF) who is the Parish Council's representative on the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). SF had come to the meeting as she believed that she could contribute to discussions on matters relating to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. It was agreed that SF would attend future NPRG meetings as an ad-hoc member, as and when she considered that she had something to convey resulting from her attendance at KALC meetings, or she could E-mail the Secretary if unable to attend.
- 4. Minutes of Meeting on 25th September, 2019:** Agreed
- 5. Matters Arising.** It was noted that the Parish Council now has a group which is interested in sowing seeds of wild flowers on roadside verges and other similar sites.
- 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, is still awaited and nothing has been heard from SLR. The Secretary was asked to contact the Parish Clerk and advise him that there is still no progress, with a request that the Parish Council should consider the way forward. This is now urgent as developers are taking the wording of the current Neighbourhood Plan and using it to their advantage. This Group suggests that if the council is not minded to buy the necessary computer software to do the revisions in house, perhaps they should go to Fera who prepared the original Neighbourhood Plan and ask them to quote for the work, as the PC will probably require their services in the future.
- 7. Maidstone Borough Local Plan – Call for sites for housing.** SF said that Cllrs. Louise Brice and John Perry have already met in Staplehurst with Rob Jarman of MBC Planning Department. SF said that the Maidstone Area Committee of KALC are leading on opposition to the Local Plan and its list of sites offered. The Secretary noted that there are 32 sites offered in Staplehurst parish which, if planning permission was granted on all of them would result in at least 4000 homes being built. It was noted that many of the sites offered were sites for which planning applications had already been made and refused, in some instances more than once. CL suggested that Staplehurst should join with neighbouring parishes to challenge MBC and liaise with adjoining parishes in Tunbridge Wells Borough whose proposed developments could severely impact on Staplehurst regarding traffic and usage of the station. After some discussion it was agreed that the Group should ask the parish council to seek support from adjoining parishes to oppose any further development without first obtaining infrastructure improvements. It was noted that the traffic lights at the crossroads are already overloaded and this with less than 100 new homes occupied out of 750 which are being built. This is likely to be causing air pollution at peak times. It was also questioned as to whether MBC have taken into account the increased traffic on the A229 caused as a result of housing developments at Villages such as Sissinghurst, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst in Tunbridge Wells Borough. It was noted that a meeting is to take place between MBC officers and Staplehurst Parish Councillors PR, CB, JP and JB to discuss the call for sites and this is provisionally arranged for 26th November, 2019. The Secretary was asked to thank the Parish Clerk for his excellent spread sheet giving details of the sites offered.

- 8. Provision of places at Staplehurst Primary School.** The Parish Clerk has contacted the primary school governors for their views on the future expansion of the school to accommodate children from the new houses currently being built. The school governors state that they have space to accommodate more children at this time. One of the teacher governors has informally advised the Clerk that the school has capacity for the next 2-3 years but beyond that the intake may need to be increased by 0.5 year intake.
- 9. Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme. (FORS).** This scheme is a voluntary accreditation scheme encompassing all aspects of safety, fuel efficiency, vehicle emissions and improved operations. FORS helps fleet operators to measure and monitor performance and alter their operations in order to demonstrate best practice. It is open to operators of vans, lorries, buses, coaches and other vehicles, and to the organisations that award contracts to these operators. It was agreed that the Group should alert the parish council to the scheme's existence and that the PC should alert MBC as to its existence.
- 10. David Wilson Homes (DWH) Dickens Gate site, foul and surface water drainage.** CB reported that he has spent some considerable time looking at the schemes for drainage from the site and had concluded that the report which DWH had offered as the working manual for the drainage systems does not satisfy the discharge rate requirements. This has been reported by the Parish Council to MBC, saying that it was not satisfactory, but to date there has been no resolution of the matter.
- 11. Reported Decisions:** JB reported that she would be representing the Parish Council at an appeal hearing on 10th December 2019 against MBC's decision to refuse the planning application 18/505100 Care Housing in George Street.
- 12. 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.
- 13. Sainsbury's:** Sainsbury have indicated that they will be making a decision by December 2019 regarding the construction of a supermarket but nothing has been heard to date.

Meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Next meetings: 4th December 2019, 8th January 2020, 5th February 2020

Robin Oakley

19 November, 2019

