

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 5th November 2018 at 7.35 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Forward, Lain-Rose, Manning, Perry, Pontet, Reardon, Riordan, Sharp, Silkin, Smith, Symes and Burnham who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr MJ Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillor Kelly whose reason for apology was accepted.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-
Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – Councillor Buller declared she was a member of Staplehurst Free Church and would not participate in discussion or voting on the possible donation.

Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Minute pages 1725-1728 of 15th October 2018 were APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Burnham and made available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>.

DISCUSSION OF CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS:-

1. To note the provisions of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders and their application to discussion of confidential items at Parish Council meetings. Chairman Burnham said that information discussed by the Parish Council during an agreed confidential session on 15th October had been divulged to a third party. He commented on the importance of trust and reminded Councillors of the requirements of Standing Orders (especially 11.4) and the Code of Conduct (especially member obligation no.5) as set out in the Clerk's note (Standing Orders and Code of Conduct available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/>). NOTED by Councillors.

FINANCE REPORTS

1. Accounts for payment - for approval. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Smith, the list of accounts for payment was APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 6th September to 18th October totalled £21,632.00; income for the period totalled £8.88.
2. Summation of Accounts – as at 18 October 2018 (for noting). NOTED by Councillors. Published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>.
3. A229 Traffic Surveys – Quotations for undertaking traffic surveys requested by Full Council (Min1726) (for decision). RESOLVED: accept quotation of £800 from Streetwise for surveys at four sites over seven days.
4. Finance & Strategy Group – Recommendations of meeting 25/10/18. Meeting report published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/finance--strategic-planning-group/>:
 - a. Internal Auditor's Draft Report – the report to be noted (item 6 of meeting report). Councillor Perry commented that it was a good report and reflected well on the Parish Council's procedures. NOTED by Councillors.
 - b. Bank Accounts – additional bank accounts to be opened per item 7 of report. Noting the limitations of the Deposit Protection Scheme, proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Ashby, it was RESOLVED to open a 31-day savings account with Cambridge & Counties and a 95-day notice account with Nationwide. It was also RESOLVED to open a new 32-day notice account with Lloyds Bank.

- c. Contract Renewals – to be undertaken in accordance with item 8 and Appendix B of the report. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Riordan, it was RESOLVED to renew the arrangements set out in Appendix B of Finance & Strategy Group's report: lease of Parish Office; hire of Parish Council meeting venue; Play Scheme management; churchyard funding; Youth Worker funding; Royal British Legion donation; printing of annual report and Village Update; grass-cutting and hedge-cutting at Surrenden Field; hedge-cutting at Jubilee Field; subscriptions to Transport Accessibility Group, National Allotment Society and Kent Pond & Tree Wardens.
- d. Donation Requests Received – Responses to be given in accordance with item 9 and Appendix C of the report. Proposed by Chairman Burnham, seconded by Councillor Sharp, it was RESOLVED to make donations of £100 to Staplehurst Free Church, in recognition of its support of Staplehurst Emergency Help Team, and to the Parish Magazine. Requests for donations to 'Staplehurst Poppies' and Citizens Advice Bureau Tunbridge Wills were declined in accordance with recommendations because the Parish Council had already given funds to these causes.
- e. Tree Work at Chestnut Avenue – To approve the purchase and planting of two nursery standard horse chestnut trees to replace felled trees per planning consent (item 11 of report). Proposed by Chairman Burnham, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, it was RESOLVED to accept the quotation of £265 from Forestry First.
- f. Surrenden Field – Councillor Perry commented on item 10 of Finance & Strategy Group's report. He said he thought MBC would be amenable to granting a long lease (125 years) over Surrenden Field. He said he wished to put on record his view that criticism of MBC officers' management of the freehold discussions was inappropriate. He sought councillors' views on the possibility of a long lease. The consensus was that an offer of a long lease with favourable conditions would be given due consideration.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Action with Communities in Rural Kent – Invitation to AGM at Teynham Village Hall (2.00pm on 13/11/18) (for decision). Councillors were asked to notify the Parish Office if they wished to attend the event.
2. Dharma Gym for All – Correspondence seeking land or a building for a new Centre for Sporting Diversity. Councillors NOTED the club's letter received on 29/10/18. Councillor Riordan will contact the club to arrange a meeting.
3. Kent County Council 2019-20 Budget Consultation – Invitation to comment (deadline 21/11/18) <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/finance-and-budget/our-budget>. Chairman Burnham volunteered to draft a response on behalf of the Parish Council.
4. Maidstone & District Neighbourhood Watch – Invitation to AGM 29/11/18 (for decision). Councillors Buller and Symes volunteered to attend the meeting.
5. Maidstone Borough Council Strategic Plan – Cllr Burnham's report on consultation event 25/10/18 (for noting). Councillors NOTED the report of the meeting attended by Councillors Burnham and Perry, at which MBC had presented a list of objectives. Chairman Burnham commented on the main points raised by attendees: the provision of adequate infrastructure should be an objective in its own right; there were too many objectives; many objectives were not within MBC's gift; many objectives were focused on urban areas; there was confusion between action and objectives; insufficient weight was given to Parishes' views.
6. Maidstone Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities – MBC Consultation on draft strategies (for comment by 09/11/18). Councillors NOTED that: consultants working for MBC sought comments on two draft strategies; the Clerk had sent the documents to local sports clubs who were invited to comment directly; the reports stated that participation in sports in Staplehurst was in the highest quartile nationally; the range of sports covered in the reports was limited. Councillors discussed the desirability co-ordinating a strategy to cover

- sport in Staplehurst. RESOLVED: Councillor Riordan to convene a working group of councillors and interested local residents. Councillors Manning, Perry, Pontet and Smith volunteered to join the group.
7. Parish Council Surgeries – (i) Report of surgery 27/10/18 – Councillor Ashby reported that it had been a quiet surgery; (ii) Appointment of representatives for future surgeries – 24/11/18 Councillor Buller, 29/12/18 Chairman Burnham.
 8. Remembrance Day – Arrangements for commemoration events (for noting). Councillor Reardon discussed the Parade and Beacon-Lighting planned for 11th November. He commented: participants in the parade were requested to assemble at the Village Centre at 10.00am; the parade would be led by a 'war-horse' led by a soldier in period uniform; the beacon service on Surrenden Field would start at 6.30pm and the beacon would be lit at 7.00pm. The beacon would be extinguished at 8.00pm. Councillors thanked Councillor Reardon for his work on the event.
 9. Textile Bank – Request to site a textile bank on Parish Council land (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Ashby, it was RESOLVED to negotiate conclusion of a contract with Rag Solutions International Limited for the siting of a textile bank at Jubilee Field to generate a monthly income of £70. Councillor Silkin asked to be consulted about the content of the proposed contract.
 10. Wimpey Field – Request from Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and Natural England to create a pond habitat for Great Crested Newts in the southwest corner of Wimpey Field (for decision). Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, it was RESOLVED to agree to the request and to sign a landowner agreement with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership and Natural England.

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

1. Clerk's Report – The Clerk reported: the next site meeting with Redrow Homes would take place on 08/11/18; he and the caretaker had put up poppies on High Street lamp columns; two further requests for CCTV footage had been received; he and the Finance Officer had prepared budget scenarios following Finance & Strategy Group's initial discussions of the subject; he and the Chairman would be discussing youth worker provision with the Chair of Staplehurst Youth Group; The Youth Group's AGM would take place at 7.30pm on 08/11/18; a speaker and venue had been booked for the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 25/03/19.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - a. KALC Finance Conference – Report by Cllr Perry of conference held on 18/10/18 (for noting). NOTED by Councillors and published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/reports-for-noting/>.
 - b. Street-Naming Policy – Update of Parish Council Policy adopted 04/07/16 (Min1545) (for decision). It was NOTED that the substance of the policy remained unchanged from that adopted in 2016 in that it covered: individuals with a strong link to the parish who had fought in World War One; individuals who had contributed to the parish of Staplehurst; names appropriate to the development and/or relevant area. It was also noted that Mr Peter Spearink had offered to continue coordinating information about suggested names. Proposed by Chairman Burnham, seconded by Councillor Lain-Rose, the reviewed policy was APPROVED and published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/policies--procedures/> and Mr Spearink's offer was accepted with thanks.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only.
 - a. High Street Railings – Chairman Burnham reported that he had attended Kent Highways' Parish Seminar and discussed with the district highways manager the railings at the steps near Vine House, which were damaged by a lorry some months ago. He reported that Kent Highways had investigated the cost of replacing the railings and

found that a custom-made replacement would cost in the region of £11,000 whilst a non-identical set of pre-made railings would be £3,000 or standard railings would cost a few hundred pounds. Kent Highways had indicated that if local consensus was for anything other than a standard solution, then this would need to be matched by a substantial financial contribution. Councillor Silkin commented that the damaged railings dated from the 1990's and would not be considered to have heritage value. After some discussion, Councillors AGREED that Chairman Burnham pursue discussion with Kent Highways on the basis that: a prompt temporary solution should be implemented for health and safety reasons; £11,000 was expensive, but a better than utilitarian solution should be sought to respect the nature of the conservation area and surrounding buildings; the Parish Council could investigate whether local companies could supply a solution to meet Kent Highways' requirements.

- b. Jubilee Field – Councillor Riordan reported: the rear shutter needed attention; there had been an attempted break-in at Jubilee Field, which had been reported to the police; the Fireworks event on 03/11/18 had been a great success.

The meeting having reached two hours in duration, Chairman Burnham asked members if they wished to continue, which was AGREED.

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

- 1. Borough Councillor's Report – Councillor Perry reported: MBC was reviewing park and ride provision; judicial review action involving MBC and KCC was due to take place in the High Court; MBC was reviewing its strategic and local plans and working on budget scenarios.

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

- 1. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – Minutes of meeting 11/10/18. Noted and published at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/emergency-help-team/>.

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

No items.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: Before the meeting residents spoke about the Parish Council's street-naming policy and the need for a co-ordinated sports strategy in Staplehurst.

The meeting finished at 9.40pm.