

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

Minutes of virtual meeting held on 11th November, 2020 (Amended 13th November 2020)

- 1. Present:** Paddy Riordan (PR) PC Chairman and Zoom Host, Robin Oakley, Secretary(RO), Margaret Arger, Chairman (MA), Cllr. Sue Forward (SF), John Kelly (JK), Tom Burnham (TB), Cllr. Joan Buller (JB), Colin Love (CL), Cllr. Colin Bowden (CB), Cllr. Adele Sharpe (AS)
Cllr. John Perry (JP) joined the meeting at 8.45pm during the discussion on Item 7 as he had been attending other meetings.
- 2. Apologies:** Robin Kenworthy (RK)
- 3. Minutes of Meeting held on 14th October 2020:** Agreed
- 4. Matters Arising** Section 106 and CIL money. JK said that it was important that we have a spreadsheet showing how these monies have been obtained and how they have been spent. PR said that the RFO had this information to hand and could produce the spreadsheet. **SF said that much of the Hen and Duckhurst S.106 money would be going to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to be spent on the Lime Trees open space which they owned and that CIL money was what Staplehurst had more say over.** JB pointed out that David Wilson Homes are considering building fewer large houses and more smaller homes and if this happened this would alter the amount of CIL money. RO said that it is important that the Parish Council has a 'wish list' of items which they would like to see paid for with S106 money. PR pointed out that the Jubilee Field is now used by 14 junior football teams and 3 adult teams and it was really necessary to have an all-weather surface. JB said that it is important that the Community Centre have a scheme and costings for improvement/modernisation ready to proceed as without this an application for S106 money cannot proceed. PR said that he had been given a scheme by the trustees and he had passed it to a surveyor who was intending to price it up but it had been delayed as a result of Lockdown 1.
- 5. Maidstone Local Plan – Review of Results of Call for Sites.** JB reported that MBC had only allocated two sites in Staplehurst, Site 066, Land at Lodge Road and Site 114, Land at Home Farm, but whilst that is good news, it is important that the PC should keep the other aspects of the plan, e.g the environment, in mind. PR pointed out that we could either reject or accept the two sites, but if we accept then we should have a plan of action, as to what we want to see form part of the site, e.g. a link road from the Dickens Gate site to Lodge Road. JK said that the Neighbourhood Plan shows our requirements regarding Lodge Road. JB reminded the Group that the Government White Paper has much to say about the need to reach transport and shops from new housing sites. TB and AS both were concerned that the Lodge Road site should not be for housing only but should be a mixed development of housing and industrial to provide employment. TB reminded the meeting that access to the site south of the nature reserve and backing on to Bathurst Road houses, which is in the current Local Plan has still not been resolved, although The Bartons would appear to be the only feasible and practical way of accessing the site. SF said that all MBC councillors for wards on the South side of the borough had fought hard to keep the number of sites as low as possible and we should accept the two sites. SF also pointed out that there are 30 people waiting for allotments and that SPC should be seeking to have some allotments on the Home Farm site. MA said that we should be seeking the link road and the allotments. CL and RO commented on the traffic likely to be using the A229 from Cranbrook, Hartley and Hawkhurst to get to Staplehurst Station and the new Sainsbury's Supermarket. PR and JB have both made comments on this to the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council who are preparing their neighbourhood plan. PR

said that the PC fights hard to get its views heard at MBC but he believed that SPC was being taken seriously and SPC would be ready for full consultation with MBC at the appropriate time.

- 6. Windfall Housing** RO reported that 173 houses has been built on windfall sites in Staplehurst since 1st April, 2011. JB said that MBC factor these into the housing numbers for the borough (later confirmed by JP) and that this was important because of the large numbers of barns, oasts etc. being converted to houses, and single units being constructed on small plots within existing housing estates.
- 7. Tree Preservation Orders** RO raised the matter of well established mature trees on sites which could eventually be built on, quoting as examples, large oak trees on two of the green sites. The two sites included In the draft Local Plan should be inspected to determine whether there are any trees which need to be preserved. JB said that this is important although she cautioned that the procedure for obtaining TPOs can take a long time as there is a big backlog of applications at MBC. PR suggested that the Greener Staplehurst Group (GSG) of the PC could take on the task of surveying the trees and it was agreed and recommended that the PC should ask the GSG to make a start on the two sites.
- 8. Any other business** MA raised the matter of an E-mail from Dr. Richard Smith which had been forwarded to this Group to respond. Dr. Smith had raised a number of queries regarding the Neighbourhood Plan, in particular Policy H4 and the possible road link between Dickens Gate site and Lodge Road. It was agreed that MA would respond by E-mail to Dr. Smith to answer his queries. JK raised the matter of the way in which the owners of the Lodge Road site had stripped it of all vegetation, flora and fauna during the last two months. This is an example of what can happen and is a good example of why TPOs are necessary, and environmental surveys to identify flora and fauna. JB suggested that there should be a piece in a future Village Update encouraging everyone to photograph wildlife on all sites. PR and JP discussed the way forward to have dialogue with MBC regarding the consultation period for the Local Plan and it was agreed that the PC should seek a Zoom meeting with the senior officers Philip Coyne and Mark Egerton. JB thanked the resident members of the NPRG for their continued involvement in the group and this was endorsed by other councillor members.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Next meeting on 9th December 2020

Suggested dates for meetings in 2021 are as follows:-

January 13, February 17, March 17, April 14, May 12, June 16.

Robin Oakley

12 November, 2020