

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
AMENITIES COMMITTEE

held at South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 4th January 2010 at 8 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Best, Butcher, Fairfax, Kelly, Munn, Reardon, Sankey, and Knowlden who was in the chair. Chairman Arger and Vice Chairman Perry (Ex Officio).
Parish Clerk: Mrs JS Bassett

APOLOGIES: Councillors Franks and Smith whose reasons for apology were accepted.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

1. Lobbying – All Councillors had listened to the resident's views regarding Clapper Farm Lane. Councillor Perry declared that he had been lobbied in respect of the Annual Village Clean Up and Evening Police Cover.
2. Personal Interest – Councillor Fairfax declared a personal interest in Evening Police Cover.
3. Prejudicial Interest – None.

ENVIRONMENT & CORRESPONDENCE

1. Annual Village Clean Up – Councillors considered the reasons behind the cancellation of the 2009 clean up by Staplehurst Society and agreed to explore whether the existing Parish Council Insurance would permit this event to take place in 2010. It was expected that Risk Assessments and Briefings would be necessary to ensure volunteers carried out the work in accordance with published guidelines. Councillor Arger agreed to speak with Clean Kent and report back.
2. Duckhurst Farm Scramble Club Meetings 2010 – Dates had been advised as 23 May, 20 June, 18 July. Clerk to clarify the duration of the events with the organisers and publish details in the next Village Update.
3. Emergency Planning – Councillor Butcher considered that this Parish ought to have and maintain an Emergency Plan with details of organisations and people who could assist with equipment if needed in an emergency. Agreed that Councillors Butcher, Sankey, Spearink and Kelly would look into this issue and report back to Amenities Committee.
4. Forward Plan for dealing with snow & ice? – Councillor Butcher understood from Kent Highways that they expect Parishes to report to them when salt bins were empty. Agreed to ask the caretaker to check and report to the Clerk when bins needed refilling. Councillors discussed various ideas from hand-spreaders, more salt bins, etc., and understood that Kent Highways would joint-fund the provision of more bins. Councillors agreed to link this issue with the Emergency Planning Group so that risks could be assessed and considered for action.

5. Resident's concerns – Councillors noted the resident's request for late evening police cover and the inadequate sewage pumping station in Frittenden Road. Councillors recommended that the police be advised of the resident's concerns and for the CCTV to be checked around that time. Councillors agreed that Southern Water should be written to with copies to MBC Planning and Environmental Health Departments.
6. Staple Drive Play Area – The Clerk reported that a Play Equipment Manufacturer would be giving a free design and quote for consideration. Clerk to check whether MBC had agreed to fund 50% of this proposed project. Councillor Reardon agreed to liaise with young people and residents when an outline plan was available for public comment.

HIGHWAYS & FOOTPATHS

1. Clapper Farm Lane – A number of Councillors considered that this was a public right of way that needed to be reopened. Councillors considered it was wrong of KHS to go for a stopping up order as the illegal stopping up was then condoned. Chairman Arger spoke of the meetings that she had attended with all interested parties and understood the difficult issues on all sides. Councillors agreed to write to Kent Highways to clarify what action is now proposed and to clarify what the Lane is classified as.
2. Department for Transport Speed Limit Circular – Councillors commented on the disgraceful waste of paper and resources to produce this revision. Councillors considered that enforcement of existing speed limits to be more important.
3. MBC Road Safety Review – Councillors considered that the spirit of Sir Humphrey lived on. Being asked to refer to accidents as crashes in future would not make a huge difference but considered this a "jobsworth" review.

CARETAKER'S INSPECTION REPORTS – The Clerk reported that no major faults or repairs had been necessary to play equipment recently but the usual large amounts of litter and broken bottles had been collected. The Caretaker had also reported that the CCTV at Surrenden Playing Field was no longer working and this had been switched off. Councillor Reardon agreed to investigate.

CURRENT PARISH PROJECTS – Revision 28. The following issues were discussed;

- Jubilee Project – Councillor Best recommended that a review of the project be carried out to establish what had gone well and what not. It was suggested that Councillors Best, Perry and Franks with specific interested parties be assigned to carry out this review.
- Playscheme 2010 – Clerk to check available dates with the school. Councillors Fairfax and Knowlden agreed to meet with the Clerk shortly to begin preparations for this year's scheme.

- Surrenden Playing Field – The proposed renewal of pathways across the field would not be progressed until funding was available. Councillor Munn commented that drainage issues would need to be dealt with first.
- Christmas Lights – Councillors recommended that lamps are tested and replaced before the motifs are put up again next Christmas. Few complaints had been received about the lack of Christmas Trees above shop canopies.
- CCTV at Jubilee – No funds were yet available.
- Public Toilets – Councillor Kelly was discussing a number of issues with MBC including legal and logistical issues. He had spoken with the Council’s insurers and it was likely that risks assessments and training would be required if a Cleaner was employed or an outside Contractor would need to have £2M public liability cover. A report would be submitted to Full Council shortly.
- Allotments – As no progress was being achieved, agreed not to renew the subscription to the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Limited.

SUB-COMMITTEE & COUNCILLOR REPORTS for noting. Councillor Butcher reported that he would represent the parish on HGV issues through the KCC Transportation Board.

RESIGNATION OF AMENITIES CHAIRMAN – Councillor Knowlden explained her reasons for wishing to stand down as Chairman of Amenities Committee but would remain on the Council for the time being. Councillor Best proposed a vote of thanks which was supported and appreciated.

Chairman.....

Meeting closed at 21.45

PUBLIC FORUM – A resident commented prior to the commencement of the meeting that he had carried out a litter pick of his usual area during the cancelled Clean Up Week in 2009 and wouldn’t wish it to be cancelled again. The resident also lobbied Councillors verbally and in writing regarding Clapper Farm Lane. He summarised the recent history and various changes of view by Kent Highways. He was concerned at the latest decision to stop it up when work parties would help to ensure it was unblocked.