

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
AMENITIES COMMITTEE

held at South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 5th July 2010 at 8 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Buller, Butcher, Paul Kelly, Munn, Reardon, Sankey and Best who was in the Chair. Chairman Perry and Vice Chairman Burnham (Ex Officio). (Councillors agreed to Councillor Buller's request to speak on the item about The Parade). Parish Clerk: Mrs JS Bassett

APOLOGIES: None as all present.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

1. Lobbying – Councillor Perry re: Clapper Farm Lane.
2. Personal Interest – Councillor Perry re: Clapper Farm Lane. Councillor Best re: Playscheme.
3. Prejudicial Interest – No declarations made.

CHAIRMAN'S DISCUSSION PAPER – Amenities Committee Chairman Best opened discussions by stating that he considered it healthy for this Committee to discuss how it wished to work. No other nominations for Chairman had been raised so there had not been an opportunity prior to election to express his views but some Councillors had since voiced concerns. Chairman Best stated that if his election had caused a schism then the committee would need to elect someone else. Chairman Best had circulated a paper setting out how he envisaged the running of the Amenities Committee and project work, which would need the right balance of skills to ensure success. There followed lengthy discussion about the need to elect a chair that the whole committee was happy with and various views were expressed; Councillors were volunteers not part of a business conglomerate, were in danger of being bogged down by red tape and paperwork; a good Chairman needed to feel comfortable with how the committee wanted to work (not about personalities) and engage in good & balanced team work to get the projects done with a responsibility towards the electorate; each Councillor had different talents and the committee would need to consider "the art of the possible", a more focussed approach is preferred but cannot force people to work in a particular way; some Councillors could not give time to do footwork & research so could not work to a business model; suggested that a trial run of this new approach be adopted for the remainder of this term as change was needed to bring this Council fully into the 21st century; the Council had limited administrative resources so needed to make the most efficient use of officer time, particularly if more responsibilities were to be

devolved down to parishes, this Council would need to change; there will be demands on Councils to produce business plans which all Councillors will need to engage with and a Chairman could adopt the principle of primus inter pares.

Chairman Best thanked Councillors for their input and commented that a Chairman needed to be proactive, responsible for the group and feel comfortable in the role. He agreed to contemplate and consider his position.

PARISH ENVIRONMENT & CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Parade – Councillor Buller reported that the Library had thanked PC Marc Pennicott for the much better situation around the Parade Toilets now that CCTV cameras had been installed and a higher police presence had taken place. This had stopped the intimidation of Library Staff and members of public by gangs of youths. Councillor Buller urged this Council to write to the police and to thank them for their recent high profile work. Chairman Perry commented that evidence to pursue the alcohol control zone was needed. Committee Chairman Best enquired what the outcome of the antisocial behaviour survey had been and recommended inviting the Trading Standards Officer to report back.

Councillor Buller reported that the Parade was in a disgusting state since the private owner had taken over the cleansing. She had spoke twice with the contractor who was working once a week only emptying the bins nearest the shops but did sweep behind the shops as well. The contractor was also bidding to care for the planters. The Mayor of Maidstone had spoken with the owners to encourage a better standard. Local shopkeepers (particularly Martins) were doing their best to keep the area clean but others needed more encouragement. After discussion Councillors agreed to raise concerns with MBC and ask them to investigate, review and advise under the Environmental

Health Act. Agreed that photographs would be taken each time the bins were

2.

Tree Warden's Report – Councillors noted that the Tree Warden had carried out his annual review of trees in the parish and Kent Highways and Maidstone Borough Council had been advised of any necessary work. The Parish Council would need to attend to some remaining dead branches in two oak trees at

Surrenden Playing Field. Councillors Paul Kelly and Reardon agreed to

1. Clapper Farm Lane – Councillors discussed what course of action to pursue next and agreed to encourage Kent Highways in the strongest possible terms to move forward in this matter and strongly supported the views of Mr Linaker expressed in the public forum. The Ombudsman process should not

stop the unblocking. The gates remained illegal and should be taken down,

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2. PRow KM296 Fishers Road – The Clerk reported that the problems

highlighted by a local resident had now been satisfactorily dealt with by the

3. Staplehurst Footpath member

Mr. Walton and the land owner.

3. Member Highway Fund – Councillors considered the two options put forward

for Marden Road improvements by Kent Highways to be funded by Councillor Hotson's Highway Fund. Councillors recommended Option 1 to be fully supported together with the coloured tarmac gateways if this could be

afforded. Councillors commented that parking on Marden Road caused

o needed together with better

enforcement of the speed limit.

CARETAKER'S INSPECTION REPORTS – The Caretaker's reports contained

no outstanding items requiring attention but reported on the usual large

n

particular.

CURRENT PARISH PROJECTS & GENERAL MAINTENANCE

1. Bus Stops & Parish Street furniture – Councillors considered whether these

would be asked to
estimate how long these jobs would take.

2. Jubilee Playing Field & Skatepark – The surface of the skatepark was

recommended to be repainted annually (depending upon usage).

ors Reardon and Kelly agreed to inspect and report back.

3. Surrenden Playing Field – Following problems with the water supply

(flooding from the basin tap) for the Fairground, Councillor Sankey agreed

the installation of a
proper hosepipe connection point.

4. Staple Drive Play Area Project – The contractors had begun work and were expected to complete in two weeks. Arrangements for the opening

ceremony were considered. Councillor Reardon agreed to liaise with the

1. needed.

UPDATES & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

1. Allotments Project Group (JB, PB, JK) – Councillor Butcher had set up a

to Full Council. No

specification had been drawn up.

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2. Publicity & Website Group (WB, JB, TB, JK, JR) – The special meeting at the

request of Full Council (to look at The Forum issues) had taken place but this was still a work in progress and a report would be made to next Full Council. Councillor Paul Kelly commented that he did not appreciate Councillors being called “Luddites”. Councillor Best commented that if this Council did not accept criticism of itself it could end up with more. The

monitoring process would need to consider carefully whether a Code for

ad

been circulated and showed a massive increase possibly due to the Forum issues which had stimulated interest.

3. Staplehurst Toilet Team (MA, PK, MS) – Councillor Kelly reported that the

ked and would need the attention of a plumber.

Further details of The Parade toilet running costs were awaited.

4. Emergency Planning Group (JB, PB, PS) – Councillor Butcher confirmed this

group would meet on 9th July and report back to next Full Council.

5. encies were doing could mean that parish outcomes would be very simple (list of phone numbers and guidelines).
5. Playscheme 2010 (WB, MS) – The Clerk reported that the Primary School venue was not available to Playscheme this year so arrangements had been made for weeks 1 & 2 at the Guide Centre with week 2 at the Scout Centre.

The Ofsted registration would be amended to take account of the revised

refer to use the school playing field but a

d to chase this aspect.

Chairman.....

Meeting closed at 22:00

PUBLIC FORUM

Clapper Farm Lane – Mr Linaker advised Councillors prior to the start of the

meeting that the Local Government Ombudsman could not comment on outcomes, only the administration, which would cause delay in this matter. He

had sought further information to challenge how KCC had come to their decision but there were no minutes of formal meetings. He had asked for

answers to questions about whether KCC had consulted its own legal

Joint Transportation Board? Would this

Council see fit to ask why and how this matter is being conducted?

The Parade – Miss Fairfax commented that a shop-keeper had drawn her

attention to the presence of asbestos on the parapet overhang and

