

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 15th February 2010 at 8 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Buller, Burnham, Butcher, Fairfax, Franks, Kelly, Munn, Perry, Reardon, Sankey, Smith, Spearink and Chairman Arger.
Parish Clerk: Mrs. J S Bassett

APOLOGIES: Councillors Best and Knowlden, whose reasons for apology were accepted.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

1. Lobbying – All Councillors declared they had been lobbied in respect of Clapper Farm Lane and Public Conveniences. In addition Councillor Fairfax declared she had been lobbied in respect of the proposed letter of support to Wootton Bassett Town Council.
2. Personal Interest – Councillor Perry declared a personal interest in Clapper Farm Lane.
3. Prejudicial Interest - None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 18th January 2010 PAGES 956-958 having been circulated, were approved and signed by Chairman Arger.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES:

1. Clapper Farm Lane – Kent Highways' response with residents' submissions for and against had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk read out two additional letters from the Women's Institute and Staplehurst Society. KHS Email offering further consultation was also noted. Councillors discussed all issues having listened to, prior to the start of the meeting, the views of all members of the public then present. During the temporary closure of the meeting which then followed, Councillors asked questions to clarify issues.

Temporary closure of meeting – With Councillors' agreement the Chairman temporarily closed the meeting to allow members of the public to comment and answer Councillor's questions.

After much discussion, Councillor Perry proposed, seconded by Councillor Spearink and agreed unanimously that Staplehurst Parish Council would object to Kent Highway's proposal for a stopping up order and encouraged further discussion with all parties concerned.

2. Letter of support - Councillor Spearink's proposal to send a letter of support to Wootton Bassett Town Council was read out. Councillors discussed their views.

Temporary closure of meeting – With Councillors' agreement the Chairman temporarily closed the meeting to allow members of the public to comment. A majority of those present were not in favour of a letter being sent as it was not considered a parish council matter.

After further discussion a vote was taken on Councillor Spearink's proposal to send a letter, seconded by Councillor Perry; Six Councillors approved, four against and two abstentions. It was subsequently agreed to omit the final proposed sentence to then read; Staplehurst Parish Council on behalf of the people of our parish wish to extend to you and your townsfolk our heartfelt support and gratitude for the way in which you pay respect to our fallen service personnel.

3. Emergency Plan and Community Resilience – Councillor Spearink's proposals were discussed. Much concern was expressed at the expense. Its need was questioned as higher authorities already filled this roll and health and safety issues would arise. Councillors Spearink, Butcher and Buller agreed to come back with a fully costed formal proposal for consideration. Clerk to check with KALC whether parishes usually take on this role.
4. Jubilee Project and Football Foundation Grant – The Clerk reported that the final drawdown of grant from the Football Foundation had not been possible due to the Contractor's Administrators not having yet agreed the final account. The footballers were working on reducing the business rates demand for the new building.
5. Playscheme 2010 – The Clerk outlined details of a quote received from PlayPlace for the contracting out of Playscheme. References from other parishes were being taken up. After discussion and clarification, Councillor Fairfax proposed that Playscheme 2010 be contracted out to PlayPlace with an autumn review to be carried out. The proposal was agreed nem con.

6. Public Conveniences:-

- 6.1 The Parade/Library - MBC letter giving Notice of Closure was noted.
- 6.2 Bell Lane - Full details were circulated to Councillors in advance and were discussed at length. A draft Lease from MBC and answers regarding cost implications and maintenance remained outstanding. Notwithstanding this, it was agreed unanimously to take over the Bell Lane Toilets from MBC subject to the Terms of the Lease being agreed.

COMMITTEE MINUTES & GROUP REPORTS:

1. Planning Committee – No report was made.

2. Amenities Committee – Minute Pages 556A-558A of 1st February 2010 were approved and signed by Councillor Burnham. With reference to Page 558A paragraph 9, Councillors agreed that up to 4 Land Registry Searches were required (at £12 approx. each) to progress this issue.
3. Publicity & Website Group – The meeting notes of 14th January 2010 had been circulated and Councillor Reardon spoke on issues arising from the meeting held on 11th February 2010. The Dashboard statistics for January did not include Forum activity but 36 topics had been raised, 111 replies had been posted and over 10,500 people had viewed the postings. It had been agreed that Simon Green (husband of former Parish Councillor) would check the website but not have access to the Councillor's Area. Questions had been raised regarding the legal situation and responsibility for forum postings and answers were being explored. An appeals procedure was being considered for complaints and reasonable endeavours would be used to deal with any liability issues. Councillor Fairfax reported that the Spring Issue of the Village Update would be finalised this week ready for distribution w/c 22nd February.

COUNCILLOR & CLERK'S REPORTS

1. Friends of Staplehurst Health Centre – Councillor Buller's report of the AGM held on 26th January 2010 was noted and the hard work, additional benefits, extra equipment purchased and Newsletters were much appreciated.
2. Kent Police Authority – Councillors Perry & Spearink's reports online at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liaison.aspx
3. KALC Maidstone Area Committee – Councillor Butcher copied to Councillors a copy of MBC's report on Neighbourhood Forums to which two representatives were required. Agreed to consider this at the May Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
4. Speedwatch News – Councillor Buller's full report was available online at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/councillors_reports.aspx Since speed the thresholds had been lowered, many more drivers had been reported.
5. Staplehurst Access Group – Meeting notes by Councillor Spearink were noted without comment.

ACCOUNTS AND FINANCES:

1. Gang mowing quotes – Quotes for 2010-2011 Gang mowing of Jubilee & Surrenden Playing Fields were considered. Councillors agreed (with one

abstention) to accept the JFMC quote in the sum of £850 to mow Jubilee Field and KCC's quote in the sum of £759.76 for Surrenden Playing field both for one year from April 2010.

2. Friends of Poyntell Pond – Councillors agreed nem con to ratify Amenities Committee recommendation to donate £155.63 to Friends of Poyntell Pond.
3. Summation of Accounts to date was noted without comment.
4. List of Accounts for Payment - The list had been circulated to Councillors and was read out by the Clerk and totalled £4,397.04. It was proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Smith and agreed that the accounts as listed be paid.

Chairman.....

Meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.

POLICE REPORT – PCSO Pete Gardner reported that 20 crimes had been reported in the past month with a spate of 14 shed break-ins (7 of these being in a row of cottages), 4 criminal damages, 1 burglary and 1 theft from a motor vehicle. PCSO Gardner reported that the Tactical CID team was working on these crimes as the perpetrators were likely to be the same person/group. Neighbourhood Watch had been alerted. Visits would be made to victims to discuss alarms and security measures which could be taken.

PUBLIC FORUM: Members of the public raised the following matters:-

Clapper Farm Lane – Prior to the start of the meeting, the following members of the public expressed their views both for and against the KHS proposal to stop up Clapper Farm Lane; Mrs Tunnicliffe, Richard Carpenter, Richard Adam, Paul Linaker, Peter Houston, Jo Campbell, Rambler's Association rep., Ivan Walton, Dermot Budd.

At the end of the meeting, Mr Linaker thanked the Councillors for their work.