

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 17th May 2010 at 8 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Best, Buller, Burnham, Butcher, Kelly, Knowlden, Munn, Perry, Reardon, Sankey, Spearink and Chairman Arger.

Parish Clerk: Mrs. J S Bassett

APOLOGIES: None as all present.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

1. Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied in respect of the Public Toilets.
2. Personal Interest – None.
3. Prejudicial Interest – None.

CO-OPTION TO FILL COUNCILLOR VACANCY – Mr John Kelly was proposed by Councillor Arger, seconded by Councillor Buller and agreed nem con. After signing his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, Councillor John Kelly then took his place amongst Councillors for the remainder of this meeting.

ANNUAL ELECTIONS – The following elections were made after nominations had been proposed, seconded and agreed in each case:-

1. Chairman – Councillor John Perry, who then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Chairman. On taking the Chair Councillor Perry paid tribute to Councillor Arger for her past seven years and described her as a most impressive Chairman that he had had the privilege to work under. Then he quoted Shakespeare (Henry IV) "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." Councillor Buller also added her appreciation and thanks to Councillor Arger
2. Vice-Chairman – Councillor Tom Burnham.

At this juncture Chairman Perry expressed his view that Planning and Amenities Committees should continue to work on plans and projects with small sub-groups to focus and manage projects in greater detail with clear objectives, plans and process. He would prefer Amenities Committee to be smaller than in the past year.

3. Planning Committee – Chairman Perry proposed Councillor Arger as Planning Chairman, seconded by Councillor Buller and agreed. In addition to Chairman and Vice-Chairman as ex-officio, other members of the planning committee were agreed as:- Councillors Buller, Butcher, John Kelly, Paul Kelly and Spearink.
4. Amenities Committee – It was agreed that the Chairman of this Committee would be agreed at its first meeting on 7th June. In addition to Chairman and Vice-Chairman as ex-officio, other members of the Amenities Committee were agreed as:- Councillors Best, Butcher, Paul Kelly, Knowlden, Munn, Reardon and Sankey.

NOMINATION OF FOCUS GROUPS – Chairman Perry expressed the view that in future he would wish to see “Action points arising” from focus groups on the Amenities and Full Council Agendas. The Clerk advised that Focus Groups (which may include invited electors) would not have decision-making powers, and would need to seek Full Council approval for any of their recommendations. It was agreed that the following Councillors would lead these focus groups:-

1. Allotments Project Group – Councillors Buller, Butcher and John Kelly.
2. Council Policy Group – Councillors Arger, Burnham, Paul Kelly, Perry, Spearink and Amenities Chairman (when elected).
3. Finance Group – Councillors Arger, Best, Burnham, Paul Kelly, Reardon and Perry.
4. Publicity & Website Group – Councillors Best, Buller, Burnham, John Kelly and Reardon with Jenny Fairfax (local elector) and David Henley (Zulogic).
5. Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group - Councillors Arger, Buller, John Kelly, Paul Kelly, Perry and Spearink with several local electors assisting.
6. Staplehurst Toilet Team – Councillors Arger, Paul Kelly and Sankey.
7. Emergency Planning Group – Councillors Buller, Butcher and Spearink.

NOMINATION OF COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES on local bodies:-

1. Carnival & Fete – Councillor Sankey.
2. Churchyard Liaison – Councillors Butcher and Munn.
3. Dawkins Trust & Diagrit Sports & Social Club – Councillor Butcher; if resident Don Wood did not wish to continue or was unavailable for any reason.
4. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee – Councillors Munn and Perry.
5. KALC Area Committee - Councillors Butcher and Sankey.
6. Kent Fire & Rescue Service – Councillor Spearink.
7. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group – Councillors Arger and Perry.
8. Local Transport Forum – Councillors Butcher and Spearink.
9. Maidstone Borough Older Person’s Forum – Councillors Buller and Spearink.
10. Maidstone Disability Focus Group – Councillor Spearink.
11. McCabe Day Centre – Councillor Sankey.
12. Neighbourhood Watch – Councillor Buller.
13. Police/Parish Liaison – Councillors Butcher, Sankey and Spearink.
14. Sobell Cheshire Home – Councillors Perry and Spearink.
15. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust – Councillor Paul Kelly.
16. Speedwatch – Councillor Buller.
17. TRAMP/South Maidstone Traffic Management Partnrshp – Councillor Butcher.
18. Youth Club – Councillors Paul Kelly and Sankey.
19. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison – Councillors Burnham, Reardon and Sankey.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: With one small amendment to Page 970 (change “to” for “who” the Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting PAGE 969-972, having been circulated, were approved and signed by Chairman Perry.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Emergency Planning Exercise – Councillors had noted the presentation given prior to the start of the meeting by MBC Emergency Planning Manager, David Harrison. Councillors Buller, Butcher and Spearink agreed to take this work forward.
2. Kent Highway Services; Clapper Farm Lane – The proposals of Andy Moreton were noted that KHS proposed to request that the gates at the western end of the land be removed, apply for a Traffic Regulation Order to prevent access by motorised vehicles (apart from maintenance), ensure physical obstructions are identified and removed, resolve any objections to the TRO, order materials (signs/bollards, etc.), engage with adjacent landowners to ensure private boundary maintenance, complete works by end August 2010. Chairman Perry considered these proposals were a reasonable approach and should be acted upon. Councillor Arger commented that it was a positive that the centre path was being pursued and should be supported. Councillors agreed that a formal letter of support for these proposals be sent to KHS.
3. Kent Police – The letter from the new Chief Superintendent, Matthew Nix, Area Commander Mid Kent was noted. Councillors agreed to write and confirm how happy this Council was with the current status quo regarding policing levels.
4. Bell Lane Toilets – Councillors noted that the Lease had been formally completed and that no Stamp Duty land tax would be payable. Chairman Perry signed the required self-certificate under Section 79(3) of Finance Act 2003. The Clerk reported that the existing locks had been refurbished by Poyntell but could require replacement soon. Councillors noted that a quote of £340.80 had been received to supply and fit 5 locks and 6 keys but agreed not to proceed at this time. It was noted that the automatic timer locks had been repaired but one had already been damaged at the weekend. Steel doors at £1,500 each may need to be considered at a future date. Councillor Paul Kelly advised that the Clerk and Councillors should, for the time being, continue to manually lock the toilets in the evenings. The cleaner would open them in the mornings. Councillors agreed to monitor the toilets daily.
5. The Parade Toilets – It was reported that these had been opened at the weekend and young people had strewn rubbish around. MBC would be asked to investigate the CCTV recordings, to help identify the perpetrators.
6. Station Approach – Councillors noted a request from a Boughton Monchelsea commuter for new road markings to provide for a dual lane at the junction with Station Road. This request had been passed onto Kent Highway Services.
7. Village Clean Up - Councillors noted the resident's suggestion to approach the Probation Service to see if this work could be undertaken through the Community Payback scheme. The "Red Book" Guidance had been received and noted that it was not appropriate for anyone to litter pick on roads over 40 mph without correct traffic management in place. No further action was requested.

COMMITTEE & SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Planning – Councillor Arger reported that whilst all was quiet at present, there were a number of applications expected soon.
2. Amenities – Amenities Minutes 563A-564A of 4th May were approved then signed by Councillor Burnham. The committee's recommendation to accept Simon Green's advice and open negotiations with Golding Homes to ensure this Council obtained control of the land was highlighted. Full Council formally agreed to proceed towards this outcome.
3. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group – Chairman Perry reported that the footballers continued to work up more detailed proposals for their projects and explore planning issues, but that finances were tight.
4. Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group – Councillor John Kelly reported that at the recent meeting he had been tasked to approach MBC Housing Enabling Officer regarding a Housing Needs Survey. It was understood that ACRK were commissioned by MBC to carry out three such surveys a year and would conduct, analyse and publish the work for and in partnership with this Council. Councillor Arger commented that this Council was not a current member of ACRK and it may be in its interest to join. Clerk to investigate.

COUNCILLOR REPORTS:

1. Kent Urban Search & Rescue Centre – Councillor Perry circulated a report of the visit to the KUS&RC organised by Councillor Spearink. Councillors commented that the skills were incredible for this important service. Report available at: <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
2. MBC Civic Parade and Service – Chairman Perry and Councillor Spearink agreed to attend on Sunday 23rd May 2010 to welcome the new Mayor, Borough Councillor Eric Hotson.
3. KALC Parish News – Issue 347 was circulated to all Councillors who agreed that two places should be booked on the "Progressive Council" Training Day on 19th June. Councillors Butcher and Spearink would like to attend unless proposed co-optees were available.

ACCOUNTS AND FINANCES:

1. Annual Statement of Accounts – The adoption of this statement was proposed by Councillor Arger, seconded by Councillor Butcher and agreed.
2. Revised Asset Register and Audit Commission Annual Return – Councillors noted the revised Asset Register in the sum of £664,437 and that this sum would be entered into Box 9 of the Annual Return. This was proposed by Councillor Arger, seconded by Councillor Knowlden and agreed nem con.
3. IT Improvement Quotes – Councillor Best spoke to the two quotes which would improve the office security software (and be supported by the Service Contract) and provision of regular hard-drive back ups for Council files to ensure the integrity of the Council's systems. Although the sum of £415

was not currently in the budget, it was agreed that Finance Group would consider virement from the General Fund or other budget. Proposed by Councillor Best, seconded by Councillor Arger and agreed nem con.

4. Jubilee Pavilion Snagging quotes – Three quotes for snagging works had been obtained. After a short discussion Councillors agreed to accept the quote from Martin Davis in the sum of £1,485.
5. Jubilee Pavilion Fire Alarm Maintenance – The Clerk had obtained a quote in the sum of £180 for the annual maintenance of the Fire Alarm system (with two visits per year) from a company recommended by the makers of the installed system. Councillors considered whether this expenditure was the responsibility of the Tenant or this Council as Landlord. Agreed that the terms of the Lease should be checked. In the meantime Councillor Arger proposed, seconded by Councillor Reardon and agreed to accept this quote.
6. Parish Council Insurance Renewal – Three quotes had been obtained for the renewal of the Parish Council Insurance Policy. Ex-Councillor Fairfax had investigated these in detail and provided Councillors with objective advice.

Temporary closure of meeting – With the agreement of Councillors, Chairman Perry closed the meeting to discuss the proposals with Jenny Fairfax.

Subject to clarification that the Speedwatch Equipment and Christmas Motifs were covered as external equipment, Councillor Arger proposed, seconded by Councillor Paul Kelly and agreed to accept the Aviva quote through Came & Company in the sum of £4,104.26 for one year only.

7. Staple Drive Play Area – Councillors considered the revised quote by PlayDale which had been accepted by MBC. Subject to the inclusion of a litter bin (at £300 approx), Councillor Reardon proposed, seconded by Councillor Knowlden to accept the quote in the sum of £17,320.
8. Street Light Repairs – Councillors accepted the SE Contracting quote for £593.02 to repair and replace two lamp column heads. Councillor Reardon requested that the police be approached to convert the lamp column for use with a CCTV camera due to vandalism in the area. Councillor Best requested that a running tally of vandalism repair costs for the year be kept. Councillor Butcher recommended that street lights be added to the insurance policy but Councillors agreed to monitor for a year then decide.
9. Youth Club Service Level Agreement – Details of the proposed SLA and project budget had been circulated to Councillors who discussed a number of issues. Concern was expressed as to whether the project would give value for money, actually provide a service and achieve its objectives. Councillors considered that more information was needed to support a joined-up approach and requested to meet with KCC Youth & Community Officers to discuss the project proposals and objectives. It was suggested that PlayPlace could be approached also to run the Youth Club Plan instead. Councillor Butcher, as Chairman of the Youth Club, reported that the building was in good order and grants had been received for rewiring and equipment purchases. Councillors were welcome to look around. The building was also used by the Police, PCSO, Rural Warden, Sobell Lodge and

Free Church Youth Club. Councillor Paul Kelly reported that the application for Tree Works in the Conservation Area had yet to be progressed.

10. Summation of Accounts - The Clerk apologised that the Summation was not yet available for this month and would be circulated shortly.
11. List of Accounts for Payment - The list had been circulated to Councillors, was read out by the Clerk and totalled £6,834.57. It was proposed by Councillor Arger, seconded by Councillor Burnham and agreed that the accounts as listed be paid.

Chairman.....

Meeting closed at 10.25 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM: MBC Officer and members of the public raised the following matters:-

Emergency Planning – David Harrison, MBC Emergency Planning Officer explained the roles of KCC and MBC as Category 1 responders in providing rest centres in an emergency. KCC was rolling out a generic plan for parishes to consider how they would respond as local assistance and knowledge would be useful. It was likely that KCC would advise on marketing and completion of the parish emergency plans, following which an exercise incident would be run to test the plan.

Bell Lane Garages and Allotment site - Mr Wallis reported that he was aware that Maidstone Housing Trust had now changed its name to Golding Homes and adopted a new constitution which excluded MBC representation. Having checked the website it was evident that Golding Homes and MBC were in pre-application discussions for the development of the Bell Lane Garage and former allotment site, although no information was forthcoming from MBC. Mr Wallis expressed concern at Golding Homes' description of the Bell Lane site as "former garages" which as untrue as many remained tenanted. Councillor Arger responded that she was aware that discussions were at a very early stage and SPC would monitor.

Building maintenance issues - Mrs Fairfax commented that Landlords had a duty under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to log inspections of Fire Alarms and have a written Fire Risk Assessment with a copy kept at the building.

Emergency Planning - Mr Oakley commented that no mention had been made of the WRVS being involved with Emergency Planning. Councillor Spearink confirmed that the WRVS were fully aware.

POLICE REPORT – PC Marc Pennicott had given his apologies as he was attending Court with someone he had caught speeding in Staplehurst. The crime figures since 19th April were a total of 12; Theft 4, Shoplifting 3, Burglary other than dwelling 2, Criminal damage 2, Theft of motor vehicle 1. Speed checks had been carried out on two occasions; Cranbrook Road one person was warned; Maidstone Road one person was warned, one issued with a fixed penalty notice and one person summoned to attend Court.