

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on  
Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 7.30 p.m.

Prior to the opening of the meeting, Chairman Perry announced that Ron Hegarty was retiring from his role as the Staplehurst Village Correspondent at the Kent Messenger after 38 years' service. Mr Hegarty's contribution to parish life (also as a Parish Councillor) were very much appreciated. Chairman Perry to write accordingly.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ashby, Buller, Burnham, Butcher, Green, John Kelly, Paul Kelly, Manning, Sharp, Silkin, Spearink and Chairman Perry.  
Parish Clerk: Mrs. J S Bassett

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Lain and Reardon whose reasons for apology were accepted.

**COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS** regarding items on the Agenda:

1. Lobbying – Councillor Buller declared she had been lobbied in respect of the Village Spring Clean event issue.
2. Personal Interest – None declared.
3. Prejudicial Interest – None declared.

**APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES** Pages 1101-1103 of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 were approved subject to the deletion of "awaited" at the end of paragraph 19 on page 1103. Available at [http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_meetings.aspx](http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx)

**ACCOUNTS & FINANCES**

1. Summation of Accounts to date was noted.
2. Accounts for payment and balance sheet were noted and approved nem con. The Clerk commented that staff salaries would be added when the upgrade of Sage Payroll had been completed.

**CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-**

1. ACRK Community Halls Conference 15/10/11 – Report by Cllr Simon Green was noted and uploaded at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
2. BTCV Tree & Pond Warden Scheme donation request was considered. Agreed to donate £100 towards the Pond Warden Scheme. Councillors requested that BTCV promote their work and knowledge more widely in the parish. The Parish Caretaker, Les Reeve, had offered to take up the role of Tree Warden but was unable to undertake training until next year. Councillor Buller offered to undertake the training and liaise with BTCV and Tree Warden.
3. Concurrent Functions Update – Chairman Perry reported that he remained nervous that MBC intended going ahead with the 30% cut in Concurrent Functions grant. In the response to the Parish Services Scheme consultation, it would need to be made clear that until agreement over the reduction in grant had been reached and

actual funds available for the new Parish Services Scheme made clear, this Council could not take discussions forward. Arrangements for a transitional year were also unclear and needed resolution prior to acceptance of the Parish Services Scheme. Chairman Perry agreed to draft letters (for Councillors' approval) to Councillor John A Wilson and MBC Officer, Ryan O'Connell.

4. Disability Forum 30/09/11 – Cllr Peter Spearink had been unable to attend but commented on the Community & Voluntary Sector Conference he had attended.
5. Grafty Green fire – Letters of concern regarding response by emergency services at Grafty Green were noted. Councillor Spearink commented that a problem had occurred due to the change-over from retained to paid fire-fighters. Councillor Paul Kelly commented that additional building in the village may put more pressure on the infrastructure and emergency services. Concern was raised that fire hydrants were no longer being checked and staff reductions would reduce response times. Chairman Perry agreed to draft a letter to the Fire Chief for approval by Councillors.
6. Health Centre & KCC Winter Service Policy – Request for support was noted and agreed to push Kent Highways for action.
7. KALC Finance Conference 07/10/11 – Report by Chairman Perry was noted and uploaded at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent\\_association\\_of\\_local\\_councils.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kent_association_of_local_councils.aspx) Chairman commented that he was pleased to report that this Council's accounts and internal controls were maintained in accordance with statutory guidelines.
8. KALC reply re: Quality Parish Scheme confirmed that this Council would be able to apply for Quality Status after all. Considered that the benefits of QPS can be advantageous to Public Bodies. The Clerk was requested to make an assessment of time and fees the accreditation process would take to enable Councillors to reach a decision at next meeting, whether or not to aspire to QPS.
9. MBC "Love Where you Live" event/Village Spring Clean event – Councillor Buller reported that she had been asked (whilst out voluntary litter-picking) if she were part of the Community Pay-Back Scheme! Councillors Burnham and Buller agreed to look into the possibility of organising a Spring Clean Up in the built up areas.
10. Queen's Diamond Jubilee Beacons – The Guide to taking part was noted. Councillor Spearink agreed to investigate the detail and report back.
11. Royal British Legion – Remembrance Day Parade and Service details were noted. Councillors agreed to make a donation of £100 to the Poppy Appeal.
12. Surrenden Playing Field – The first draft of a development plan by Councillor Burnham had been circulated and was received with thanks. After much discussion Councillors Burnham, Manning and Sharp agreed (with Councillor Reardon if available) to set up a working group to review the plan and assess the phasing of works. Councillor Reardon had reported awaiting one more tree works quote and hoped to circulate these for consideration at next meeting.
13. Councillor Vacancy – MBC had confirmed the Council could now co-opt. Councillors agreed to submit their own views about being a Councillor to be used by the Clerk to advertise this vacancy and encourage people to come forward. Agreed that details should be put on the Website Forum, Latest News and Home Page.

#### **COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS** – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Planning Committee (PB, JK, PK, MA, JB, TB, SG, JP, PS) Councillor Butcher commented that the responses by Staplehurst Society were now being received after the Council had made recommendation to MBC. Clerk to ask the Society to submit its comments earlier in future. The Clerk was also asked to chase MBC for an update on Huntsman's Stables.

2. Alcohol Control Zone Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, PB) Next meeting? Report of meeting held on 06/10/11 was considered together with revised recommendations and uploaded at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx) After much discussion it was proposed by Councillor Butcher, seconded by Councillor Paul Kelly and agreed nem con to approve the revised recommendations as set out in the report. It was understood that this would require a virement from General Funds.
3. Allotments Project Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, PB, JK, BM) Next meeting 18/10/11
4. Council Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, JK, RS, PS) Next meeting? Councillor Green had drafted a response to the Boundary Commission Consultation which had been noted by colleagues. Councillor Green offered to attend the Public Consultation Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November.
5. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, JR) Next meeting TBA - Minutes 120F of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011 were noted and uploaded at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_meetings.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx) Councillors agreed to accept the quotes for Gang mowing and hedge cutting in the sums of £900 and £525 respectively. Councillors agreed that the hedge cutting should be carried out in February to conserve the hedgerow food for wildlife. Chairman Perry commented that work on the draft budget, despite virements from the General Fund, was indicating a significant increase in precept for 2012/2013. Councillors discussed this and the letter received from VCMC regarding the contingency sum held and the terms on which it is held. Several suggestions were made but no decision reached.
6. Playscheme (JP, TB, PK, JB, SL) Next meeting?
7. Publicity & Website Group (JP, TB, PK, MA, JB, JK, SL, JR) Next meeting 20/10/11 Articles deadline for Winter Update 31/10/11 Councillor Buller commented that QPS would require the continued production of the Update and elderly people found it useful. Other Councillors supported this publication and agreed to do a Forward Plan for 2012.
8. Rural Settlement Group (JP, TB, PK, JK, JB, SG) Next meeting 6/11/11 As the RSG's October meeting had been postponed to November, a response to the letter from Golding Homes had not been prepared. Councillors suggested a reply with thanks and err on the side of caution in any pre-application dialogue. Councillors considered they could still meet informally if in the presence of an officer. Councillor John Kelly reported that the outcome of the Core Strategy was awaited, with the next draft due March 2012 with adoption in 2013. In addition Neighbourhood Plan Legislation was out for consultation and feedback on the Community Infrastructure Levy will be needed. Agreed the RSG would draft responses for consideration by Full Council.
9. Village Enhancement Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, PB, SL, PS) Next meeting? Councillor Paul Kelly commented that he was still waiting for quotes for consideration. The list of new local signs would be sent to County Councillor Hotson.

**REPORTS FOR NOTING** from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (PB, SL, BM, AS) Next meeting? As this group was now combined with the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations, this heading would be removed from the Agenda.
2. Churchyard Liaison (PB, PK) Next meeting? Minutes of the meeting held on 12/10/11 were uploaded at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub\\_groups\\_2.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/sub_groups_2.aspx) It was noted that increased costs may be incurred in bringing the new burial area into use earlier than expected. It was confirmed that the stability of gravestones was checked regularly.
3. Village Sports & Social Club (PB) Next meeting?
4. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting? Report of 11/10/11 meeting was uploaded at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn\\_aerodrome.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/headcorn_aerodrome.aspx)

5. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, TB, JK) Next meeting? Report of 06/10/11 meeting was uploaded at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee\\_fields\\_users\\_group.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/jubilee_fields_users_group.aspx)
6. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting?
7. Local Transport (PB, BM, PS) Next meeting? Report of meeting held on 23/09/11 was uploaded at [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst\\_transport.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/hawkhurst_transport.aspx)
8. MBC Neighbourhood Forum (PB, PS) Next meeting?
9. McCabe Day Centre (JB) Next meeting? Report of meeting held on 28/09/11 awaited.
10. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) Next meeting?
11. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting 25/10/11 Agenda received.
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP) Next meeting 15/11/11
13. Speed Watch (JB) Next meeting?
14. Staplehurst Community Hub (JB, PB, PS) Next meeting?
15. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting? Report of 29/09/11 awaited.
16. Staplehurst Patients' Participation Group (JB, RS, PS) Next meeting 27/10/11.
17. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (JR) – Reports on school gates meeting held on 4/10/11 were uploaded at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>
18. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (PK) Next meeting? Report of 02/08/11 meeting awaited.
19. Youth Club (PK) Next meeting?
20. Diamond Jubilee Plans – (BM, SL, AD, PS) Next meeting? Report of meeting on 05/10/11 awaited.

Chairman.....

**POLICE REPORT** – Seven crimes had been recorded since the previous meeting; three criminal damage and four thefts.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** No members of the public raised any matters.