

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL  
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at 8 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Arger, Best, Buller, Burnham, Butcher, John Kelly, Paul Kelly, Munn, Reardon, Spearink and Chairman Perry.  
Assistant to Parish Clerk: Mrs. H Warmington

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Sankey whose reason for apology was accepted.

**CO-OPTIONS TO FILL COUNCILLOR VACANCIES:** The Chairman thanked everyone who had expressed an interest especially those who had allowed their names to go forward. He invited those present to speak. Jenny Fairfax explained her reasons for standing down previously and why now was an appropriate time to re-stand. Jim Frodsham spoke of his especial interest in the website and Forum. Following a vote Jenny Fairfax, Jim Frodsham and Rory Silkin were invited to join the Council and signed Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

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

1. Lobbying – Councillors Buller and Spearink on Emergency Planning, Councillor Buller on Toilets
2. Personal Interest – Councillor Butcher on Allotments
3. Prejudicial Interest (Councillor to leave meeting whilst such item under discussion) – None Declared

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting PAGES 979-983 of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2010, having been circulated, were approved and signed by Chairman Perry.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for review:**

- 5.1 Angley School – request for donation towards small loader tractor. Councillors showed strong support for the School Farm. Councillor Arger explained that financial support had been shown in the past. Councillor Spearink proposed a donation of £200 seconded by Councillor Buller and this was unanimously agreed.
- 5.2 Clapper Farm Lane – JTB Mtg 28 July. The Chairman temporarily closed the meeting to allow Paul Linaker to speak. When it reopened Councillors Butcher and Perry indicated their willingness to attend the meeting 28<sup>th</sup> July. Also requested that a request be sent to MBC/KCC to ask that the area be tidied up.
- 5.3 Hidden Histories in South East England – Heritage Lottery Fund details. Councillors expressed support of this scheme and felt that a partnership with the Staplehurst Society, Brattle Farm and Library be investigated and others if interest shown.

- 5.4 KALC Parish News No: 348 – the item regarding electricity suppliers was noted, and it was acknowledged Staplehurst ahead of the game. Also the “Gimme Shelter” article was highlighted by Councillor Butcher and Councillors thought this was something to be followed up.
- 5.5 KCC Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Call for sites. Noted by Councillors.
- 5.6 Kent Highway Services – Hertsfield Bridge Survey, closure on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July 0830-1700. Noted by Councillors
- 5.7 MBC zero-tolerance approach to litter – this was noted along with the additional letter from MBC concerning The Parade. Councillor Buller commented on the improvement to The Parade and explained that cleaning of the area now twice a week by the private contractors following complaints. MBC are actively reviewing the situation. Borough Councillor Hotson was thanked for his efforts and support.
- 5.8 Resident’s recommendation for Zebra Crossing on Station Approach. Councillor Spearink commented on the cost of such a crossing as advised by last liaison meeting. Councillor Burnham had looked at the location. Approximately half the pedestrians walk along Station Approach to its junction with the main road, the others cutting up through Lime Trees so no one obvious location. Councillor Best commented that in the last traffic review no need had been established but perhaps time for review. Councillor Butcher was asked to raise this at the liaison meeting and in addition the proposal sent on to Kent Highways.
- 5.9 Resident’s request re: Parking in Headcorn Road. Following discussion Councillors agreed that both PC Marc Pennicott and Speed watch be approached to discuss the speed of traffic along that road, and PC Marc Pennicott with regard to selling of cars from the street. In addition MBC to be approached with regard to disabled parking bays and the general concerns raised at the Liaison Meeting.
- 5.10 Rural Road Speed Limit Reduction Motion by Ashford Traffic Management Forum. There was discussion on the pros and cons of a fifty mile speed limit as some Councillors agreed with Councillor Best’s feeling that sometime even this is too high and it might encourage inexperienced drivers to drive at that speed. Drivers should be encouraged to become more proficient drivers. The questions of enforcement and general speed limits were considered. However, Councillors agreed that this was an initiative to support.
6. **COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUP REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- 6.1 Planning Committee (MA, JB, PB, JK, PK, PS, JP, TB) Verbal report of current issues for noting. Councillor Buller had acquired a copy of a petition being organised by some residents against increased traffic expected from planning application MA/10/0776. This was noted by Councillors who asked for copies to be circulated to them.
- 6.2 Amenities Committee (WB, PB, PK, RM, JR, MS, JP, TB) Approval of Minutes 568A-571A of 5<sup>th</sup> July 2010 and any recommendations/update therefrom. Councillor Best’s resignation as Chairman of Amenities was noted with regret by Councillor Perry. He proposed the suspension of the Amenities Committee until May 2011; instead there will be two Full Council Meetings per month but one will have an Amenities Focus. This has the advantage of all new Councillors having the opportunity to experience a broader range of issues. The situation would be reviewed next May and the Election of a new Council. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Fairfax and unanimously agreed. The Minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> July

were then agreed, after the deletion of the words after "primus inter pares" on page 568A/569A restarting with the sentence beginning "Chairman Best..."

The Chairman then closed the meeting to allow PC Marc Pennicott to give the Police report. Crime levels were down in the Village and seven people had been charged with the major burglary. There had been fewer gatherings in The Parade but an increase at the Park. Thanks were given to everyone who had assisted the emergency services during and after the fire in the High Street. In response Councillor Fairfax passed on the thanks of everyone to the Police. The meeting then re-opened.

The request from the Skaters regarding re-surfacing was discussed at some length. Some Councillors were concerned there might be a conflict between the needs of the BMX users and the Skaters as to type of surface and wanted time to find out more information. Councillors Paul Kelly and Reardon offered to undertake research and report back. In addition the terms of the Insurance Policy are to be checked, as well as costings; some councillors felt this could be an "in-house" activity but no decision could be made until more information gained. The report to go to 16<sup>th</sup> August meeting if possible. The opening of the Play Area was planned for Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> but Councillor Reardon asked that this be checked with Contractors who had still been working on the site. Councillor Fairfax volunteered to buy the green ribbon for the ceremony which is to be attended by the School Council as well as the Mayor. Several Councillors indicated they hoped to attend. Councillor Munn advised the tree branch damaged after the Fete had been removed. Councillors requested the Tree Warden be advised of the tree to the left of the gate off Surrenden Field.

- 6.3 Alcohol Control Zone (JP, JB, PB, PK) - This is progressing with useful contacts being made. Councillor Spearink suggested new Councillors might consider visiting the CCTV control centre as this provides valuable insight.
- 6.4 Allotments Project Group (JB, PB, JK) Report of meeting held on 07/07/10 – Councillor Buller gave an update. It was clarified that the meeting on 07/07/10 was merely an informal discussion and Councillor Butcher having declared an interest abstained from further discussion. Councillor John Kelly had now read the background files and Councillor Fairfax was asked to consider re-joining the group. Councillor Best offered to assist produce a plan to drive the project if this would be helpful. He also suggested a written report would be helpful in advance of the Council meeting. A discussion followed regarding ancillary issues that the Project Group are hoping to consider and that they are proposing to follow up.
- 6.5 Council Policy Group (JP, TB, MA, WB, PK, PS) The forthcoming meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> July was noted. Councillor Best suggested new Councillors might wish to attend in the future.
- 6.6 Finance Group (JP, TB, MA, WB, PK, JR) It was noted that the next meeting is in September and a report will follow.
- 6.7 Playscheme (WB, MS) Whilst alternative accommodation has been found and arrangements appeared to be satisfactory Councillors asked that contact be made to check on final details.
- 6.8 Publicity & Website Group (WB, JB, TB, JK, JR) Report of meeting held on 15/07/10. Unfortunately these had not been e-mailed to the Full Council despite Councillor Best having requested this but paper copies were available on the night. Councillor Arger proposed, seconded by Councillor Paul Kelly, the Night-Time Curfew which was unanimously agreed. A decision on the use of pseudonyms

was deferred to next meeting to allow Councillors time to consider in the round. Councillor Best encouraged all Councillors to report items or posts they were not happy with. Councillors expressed their thanks for the work of the Group, recognising they needed more time to progress but indicating they were working in the correct direction. Councillor Fairfax reminded Councillors items for the next Village Update required very shortly.

- 6.9 Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group (JP, MA, JB, JK, PK) Report of meeting held on 23/06/10 – Councillor John Kelly advised things have moved on from June. A further meeting planned for the following evening.
- 6.10 Staplehurst Toilet Team (MA, PK, MS) Review of first three month's operations & Clerk's report re: The Parade Toilets. Councillor Paul Kelly advised he had been monitoring the situation and there had been improvements. He proposed that the contract stays with the present company for the remainder of the year and Councillor Arger seconded this. This was unanimously accepted. Councillor Best proposed a formal vote of thanks to Councillor Paul Kelly for his dedication to duty in this area which was given along with a vote of thanks proposed by Councillor Perry to Councillor Buller for her diligence. Councillor Paul Kelly advised an electric hand-drier is to be installed in the Male Toilets along with a repair to a pipe. He will clarify regarding the electricity supply and report back at next meeting.

The meeting was temporarily closed to allow Councillor Hotson to speak. He referred He thanked everyone in emergency planning from KCC and MBC as well as local residents and organisations. The letter sent to him but copied to Councillors 6.11 was a pat on the back for all concerned. If the Parish Council were to write and thank anyone he suggested they note that the first fire engine on the scene was the retained service from Marden, the next from Cranbrook; indeed retained firemen came from as far as Chilham and Chartham. Without their actions the situation could have been much worse. The chairman then re-opened the meeting.

- 6.11 Emergency Planning Group (JB, PB, PS) Councillor Spearink spoke to his full report written before last week's emergency but updated subsequently. He advised there were many lessons to be learnt. The Police are to organise an internal review but there is a need for a meeting to review generally. He therefore proposed a meeting, open to the Village and representatives as well as the Parish Council, and this was agreed. Some volunteers to attend the meeting had already come forward from the community. A date is to be set and advertised shortly, after consulting with some key stakeholders.

## 7. **COUNCILLOR REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS**

- 7.1 Carnival & Fete (MS) Feedback re: letter of complaint and water connection issues. In Councillor Sankey's absence the assistant to the clerk advised no written reply had been received to the letter sent to the Carnival and Fete but verbally she had been advised the Thursday opening of the Fair simply a mis-communication with the C&F Committee for which an apology had been received. It was hoped the music could be turned down next year to minimise complaints. Councillor Reardon commented on the water pipe connection and asked that Councillor Sankey be approached to follow this up with the Carnival and Fete.
- 7.2 Churchyard Liaison (PB, RM) Report of meeting held on 28/06/10 Councillor Munn had walked the Churchyard and discussed areas that could be approved but generally everything was in good order.

- 7.3 Dawkins Trust & Diagrit Sports & Social Club (PB) Contact had previously been made but then nothing until earlier today. This would be followed up and a report to next meeting.
- 7.4 Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative committee (RM, JP) No meetings planned and nothing to add.
- 7.5 KALC Area Committee (PB, MS) Report of meeting held on 29/06/10. Councillor Butcher advised Councillor Sankey had been unwell and had not attended the meeting. Councillor Butcher had been elected. He noted a lack of communication especially with regard to a meeting in Lenham that no-one had been advised of, and expressed his hope this would be avoided in future.
- 7.6 Kent Fire & Rescue Service (PS) Councillor Spearink advised these are ad-hoc meetings so no next date. He has a report to file and upload to website.
- 7.7 Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, MA) The next meeting in August noted. Councillor Perry advised that a cut in Business Rate had been negotiated which Councillors welcomed.
- 7.8 Local Transport Forum (PB, PS) Transport Accessibility Meeting Report 03/07/10 Councillor Spearink advised he had written another report which could now go on the web-site.
- 7.9 Maidstone Disability Focus Group (PS) Councillor Spearink advised no meeting had been held recently and no future date been set.
- 7.10 McCabe Day Centre (MS) Report of meeting held on 19/07/10 at 7 p.m. This was deferred in Councillor Sankey's absence.
- 7.11 Neighbourhood Watch (JB) Councillor Buller advised of the Groups successful presence at the Fete. Everyone welcome at meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 5 pm, McCabe Centre.
- 7.12 Police/Parish Liaison (PB, MS, PS) Councillors noted the meeting on 07/07/10 postponed and no new meeting date yet advised.
- 7.13 Sobell Cheshire Home (JP, PS) The help of Sobell Lodge in providing lunches for those affected by the fire was noted and Councillors requested a letter of thanks be sent. Councillor Spearink advised the Access Group taken back in-hose. He cannot attend next meeting 17<sup>th</sup> August but Councillor Perry will attend along with Councillor Fairfax.
- 7.14 Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (PK) Councillor Paul Kelly advised a review of the building taking place the following day. Also a Clean-Up at 10am on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>.
- 7.15 Speed Watch (JB) Councillor Buller gave a verbal report highlighting the success of the All Out Day on 6<sup>th</sup> July. 34 speeding motorists were recorded through the village, with one travelling at 46 mph. They will receive a letter from the Police who were also out and about and issued 14 fixed penalties and 28 warnings in rural areas. The day reminded motorists of the importance of observing speed limits and it is hoped to be repeated.
- 7.16 TRAMP; South Maidstone Traffic Management Partnership (PB) Meeting Report of 30/06/10. Councillor Butcher advised TRAMP has money in the pot and several issues under consideration. They hope to write to parish Councils to get more informed view. Councillors noted there is no joined up cycle-route and KCC has no HGV route. Councillor Arger stressed the importance of Councillor Butcher attending these meetings and thanked him for doing so.
- 7.17 Youth Club (PK, MS) AGM 28th July at 7 pm noted by Councillors
- 7.18 Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (TB, JR, MS) Councillor Reardon gave a verbal report and looked for ways this could be built upon. Councillor Fairfax advised the Rural Settlement Outcome would be of interest to the school and asked

that they be kept informed. It was suggested that new Councillors might be introduced to Mrs Bolt in the Autumn.

**8. COUNCILLOR & CLERK'S REPORTS**

- 8.1 MBC Older Persons Forum 05/07/10 PS written report - circulated. This was noted by Councillors and Councillor Spearink requested the report be uploaded to the website shortly.
- 8.2 Black & minority ethnic groups meeting 18/06/10 PS written report - circulated. Again this was noted along with a request to upload to the website.
- 8.3 Other verbal reports for information only. Councillor Arger advised that the Village Centre Management had waived Mr Sergison's fee for the hire of the hall; the Parish Council had offered to pay for this. Councillor Spearink had attended the Partnership and Well being Meeting and advised the recently announced cuts would be making an impact; decisions where these cuts to fall currently being made.

**9. ACCOUNTS AND FINANCES**

- 9.1 Audit Commission – completion of audit for attention. Councillors noted this and thanked the clerk for her hard work in preparing these. Councillor Perry advised only a very minor condition brought to the Councils attention.
- 9.2 BTCV Tree and Pond Warden Scheme – Donation request. This was unanimously agreed by Councillors.
- 9.3 Detached Youth Work Staplehurst – request for funding. Councillor Butcher gave an update on the urgency of the need. Following the previous presentation and the re-circulation of funding request and job description Councillor Paul Kelly proposed that the request be granted and this was seconded by Councillor Arger. This was carried by a majority, with no votes against.
- 9.4 E.on – Confirmation of metered and unmetered electricity supplies (with 4% discount for Direct Debit instruction). Councillors noted.
- 9.5 Summation of Accounts to date. Was noted.
- 9.6 Accounts for payment. The list having been circulated and totalling £39,515.51 it was proposed by Councillor Best and seconded by Councillor Paul Kelly and agreed by Councillors that the accounts as listed be paid.

Chairman.....

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

Mr Piper expressed his thanks to everyone for their help after the fire, especially those who offered hospitality, and helped organise the support. Especial thanks to Councillor Buller, MBC, KCC, PCT who offered repeat prescriptions for medicines perished, Red Cross and others. It was very impressive, and this was echoed by others.

Mr Hawgood on behalf of Staplehurst Free Churches asked that they be advised how they might help in the future as well as now.

Mr David Ralph - Why were local village organisations not asked to help after the fire? There were plenty of willing and trained volunteers yet help was requested from without rather than within the community.

Graham Sturdy on behalf of Staplehurst Society – would encourage an approach re Hidden Heritage and look forward to hearing from Parish Council. Would welcome too a review of quiet lanes/urban limits.