

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 19th September 2011 at 7.30 p.m.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor Davidson had tendered his resignation shortly before the meeting. Councillor Reardon and Sharp were absent. Councillor Reardon's email of apology was noted post-meeting. Councillor Lain gave apologies and left the meeting after the (brought forward) discussion on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Group Plans.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding Agenda items:

1. Lobbying – None declared.
2. Personal Interest – Councillor Green declared a personal interest in the salt bin project.
3. Prejudicial Interest – None declared.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Pages 1094-1096 of 5th September 2011 had been circulated, were approved, signed and then made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx

ACCOUNTS & FINANCES

1. Completion of Annual Audit 2010-2011 – The Chairman reported that a completely clear Audit had been confirmed by the Audit Commission and thanked the Clerk for her work towards this.
2. Summation of Accounts – Circulated and noted without comment.
3. Accounts for Payment – The list of even date had been circulated to Councillors at the meeting. Councillor Silkin proposed, seconded by Councillor Manning and approved. Agreed to withhold the cheque to Plane & Simple pending inspection of the work.

CORRESPONDENCE & CURRENT ISSUES for noting or decision:-

1. ACRK AGM 13/10/11 5.30 p.m. at Dunkirk Village Hall & Community Halls Conference at Teynham Village Hall on 15/10/11 0930-1400 – Confirmed that Councillor Green would attend the Community Halls Conference.
2. Issues for Kent Highways:- Resident's complaint re: speeding traffic and accidents on Church Hill and damaged bollards around Church Hill were noted by Councillors. Agreed to add the issue of speeding to the list for the next meeting with Kent Highways but meanwhile would report the latest crash to the police with copy to Borough Councillor Hotson. Agreed that Cleaner Staplehurst would be asked to clear vegetation from and clean speed limit signs on Church Hill to improve sight lines. Chairman agreed to write to the resident.
3. KALC meeting 08/09/11 - Chairman's report and recommendations were discussed at length together with a recent communication from Borough Councillor John Wilson. The Chairman had made it clear (and Councillors agreed) that a 30% cut in Concurrent Functions Grant was unreasonable. It was also considered unreasonable that individual parishes would have to negotiate with MBC for grants which could be at the expense of others. The KALC Maidstone Area committee meeting had been difficult and Councillor Wilson could not be replaced until the AGM as a lack of evidence existed to force his removal. After discussion Councillors concluded that option 3 should be adopted with modification to read "Indicate to KALC that if the motion of no confidence is followed through with an attempt to replace Councillor Wilson on KALC's County Executive then Staplehurst Parish Council would consider its position regarding KALC membership. This would involve sending a letter to the Secretary of KALC from the Chairman of Staplehurst Parish Council setting out clearly its

reasons for taking this action.” Chairman Perry agreed to draft a suitable response to Councillor Wilson for agreement by Councillors.

4. Maidstone’s 3rd Annual Voluntary & Community Sector Conference 14/10/11 – Councillor Spearink agreed to attend.
5. MBC Consultation on the Core Strategy and feedback form. Councillor John Kelly commented on the MBC consultation meeting and thanked those who had assisted with refreshments. He stressed the importance of every individual, residents as well as Councillors, to give written feedback to MBC by 14th October 2011. Councillors Green and John Kelly would draft the Council’s response for consideration by the Rural Settlement Group on 28th September then ratification by Full Council on 3rd October. (See also related issues under Rural Settlement Group)
6. MBC Review – Parish Independent Remuneration Panel – Members Allowances and Expenses were discussed at length with a variety of suggestions and comments made. Chairman Perry encouraged Councillors to respond to the questionnaire on an individual basis. The difference between allowances (paid whether or not work was actually done) and expenses (reimbursement of legitimate expenditure on Council work) were noted. Reasonable expenses were supported. Whilst a small Chairman’s Allowance had been budgeted for, this was always disbursed on Council expenditure rather than as a personal allowance. The Chairman recommended that the Finance Group should review the Council’s own rules regarding expenses.
7. McCabe Day Centre AGM 28/09/11 to be attended by Councillors Buller and Spearink. The Clerk was also to attend the extra meeting to discuss the constitution. Appointment of Councillor representative would be considered at next meeting.
8. Parish Clusters – Chairman had circulated a report of the meeting held on 12/09/11. Councillors discussed and commented on a variety of issues raised. It was considered that the Cluster group should take on MBC regarding its bias towards services delivered to town areas rather than equally to rural areas also.
9. Residents’ complaints re: dog mess and mud at Bathurst Road walkway & dog mess around Headcorn Road. Councillors discussed these issues in some detail. Noted that the Warden was on the case of the known individual in the Headcorn Road area. The Dog Warden’s response had put the onus on residents to collect evidence. Chairman agreed to write to Borough Councillors Hotson and Lusty to seek improved MBC assistance with these issues and a visit by the Dog Warden.
10. RoSPA Play Area Safety Report 2011 – Councillors Buller, Burnham and Paul Kelly agreed to check the defects reported and to recommend a course of action for the Council to consider, as soon as possible.
11. SLCC Conference 14th October 2011 – Noted without comment.
12. Switch Youth Café coming to Staplehurst – Details noted and to be advertised on the Council website Latest News page.

COMMITTEE & FOCUS GROUPS – Reports and recommendations:-

1. Planning Committee (PB, JK, PK, MA, JB, TB, SG, JP, PS) Next meeting 03/10/11. Councillor Butcher mentioned the consultation by Sainsbury’s on its supermarket proposals and emphasised the importance of Councillors to encourage individuals to attend the consultation event. Councillor Green recommended that this Council discussed its own response to the consultation at the next meeting. Agreed that ideas for Section 106 contributions should be put forward for open discussion. Councillor John Kelly advised that care would be needed regarding Councillor conduct at the Sainsbury’s consultation meeting. It was agreed that Councillors should wear their badges and were reminded that they may ask questions, but not make any comment on the proposals at this stage.
2. Alcohol Control Zone Group (JP, TB, PK JB, PB) Next meeting? Chairman’s report had been circulated, was noted and then uploaded at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/police_liason.aspx After much discussion regarding the anticipated benefits of the polecat CCTV system, Councillors first agreed to waive Financial Regulation 11.1(c) which required three quotes to

be obtained. Councillor John Kelly proposed, seconded by Councillor Spearink and agreed to purchase two Polecat Cameras with monitoring by MBC in the total cost of year 1 at £12,390. It was agreed also to meet with the supplier and MBC to confirm proposals and understandings. Chairman Perry emphasised the need for a new light column at the entrance to Jubilee Playing Field which was not part of the above amount. Clerk to check costs and whether Kent Highways would adopt the lamp column in future.

3. Allotments Project Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, PB, JK, BM) Next meeting? Councillor Manning reported that he was hopeful of a meeting with the owners of land at George Street very soon.
4. Council Policy Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, SG, JK, RS, PS) Next meeting?
5. Finance Group (JP, TB, PK, PB, JD, SG, JR) Next meeting 06/10/11 Chairman gave a verbal report on meeting held on 15/09/11 when the first draft budget for 2012-2013 had been drawn up. Allowed for in the budget would be the provision of salt bins, the siting of which were then discussed at length. Land owners' permissions for the siting of bins would also need to be agreed. Questions were asked and Councillor Spearink anticipated that local volunteers could position and fill the bins. Subject to agreements being reached and a robust plan for implementing the project, it was proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Ashby and agreed by majority that 8 bins would be purchased with two pallets of salt – total anticipated cost of £1,470. Noted that annual replacements of salt and/or bins could be needed in future. Councillor Green voted against as he saw no logic in putting them in the countryside or unadopted roads. The Chairman also reported that Maclin Pumps had removed one sewage pump at Jubilee Playing Field that was now beyond economic repair. A quote in the sum of £1,726 had been received and Councillors agreed in principle that this expenditure was necessary. The Clerk was requested to obtain full details of the pump and any warranty.
6. Playscheme (JP, TB, PK, JB, JD, SL) Next meeting? Playplace would send their financial report very soon and had agreed to meet for a debrief of Playscheme 2011.
7. Publicity & Website Group (JP, TB, PK, MA, JB, JK, SL, JR) Next meeting? Report on 13/09/11 meeting was circulated and uploaded at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/publicity_website.aspx Agreed to move the start date of the photo competition to 1st December 2010.
8. Rural Settlement Group (JP, TB, PK, JK, JB, SG) Next meeting 28/09/11 Referring to the MBC Core Strategy public consultation meeting 14/09/11, Councillor John Kelly explained that the work of the Rural Settlement Group to produce a Parish Plan could feed into the Core Strategy if it were enhanced and supported by a Referendum to enable its adoption as a Neighbourhood Plan. The existing work would need some restructuring and compliance with EU Regulations but the resulting Neighbourhood Plan would be more valuable to the Parish as it would then feed directly into the Core Strategy and become compliant with it. Some concerns were expressed but reasons given as to why this Council should go down this route. After discussion Councillors agreed unanimously to endorse the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. This would include the parish development proposal wishes but the Council would be obliged to prioritise the schemes that it wanted funds for. Councillors Green and John Kelly would be meeting with MBC to discuss how to prioritise these. Councillor John Kelly's notes of various recent RSG meetings had been circulated and uploaded at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx Chairman thanked the Rural Settlement Group for its work on this project.
9. Village Enhancement Group (JP, TB, PK, JB, PB, SL, PS) Next meeting? Feedback re: Planters/Growing concern; Land Registry Searches of Footway link Greenhill to Lodge Road and Health Centre/Library sites. Councillors discussed the difficulty of getting volunteers to lock the toilets and that the Council should consider paying a going rate to do the work. The contract for cleaning would be reviewed before January 2011 and it was suggested that cleaning and closing in the evening with a local resident to open in the morning should be specified. Clerk was requested to obtain three quotes for consideration including watering of the planters. Councillor Paul Kelly was obtaining quotes for installation and watering the proposed new planters and painting the toilets. The signage list to be sent to Borough

Councillor Hotson for consideration. A report back on land beside footway from Greenhill to Lodge Road was anticipated from Councillor Hotson.

REPORTS FOR NOTING from local community groups:-

1. Carnival & Fete (PB, SL, BM) Next meeting? Report of meeting held on 14/09/11 was awaited.
2. Churchyard Liaison (PB, PK) Next meeting TBA
3. Village Sports & Social Club (PB) Next meeting?
4. Headcorn Aerodrome Consultative Committee (JP, BM) Next meeting 11/10/11
5. Jubilee Field Management & Users Group (JP, TB, JK) Next meeting 06/10/11
6. KALC Area Committee (JP, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting?
7. Local Transport (PB, BM, PS) Next meeting AGM 23/09/11 PS & BM attending.
8. MBC Neighbourhood Forum (PB, PS) Next meeting?
9. McCabe Day Centre (??) Next meeting AGM 28/09/11 Appointment of Council representative to be considered at next meeting.
10. Neighbourhood Watch (JB) Next meeting 22/09/11
11. Police/Parish Liaison (PB, PS) Next meeting 25/10/11
12. Sobell Cheshire Home (JP) Next meeting 15/11/11
13. Speed Watch (JB) Next meeting? Mid Kent Police Special Update circulated and uploaded at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/speedwatch.aspx>
14. Staplehurst Community Hub (JB, PB, PS) Next meeting?
15. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (JB, PB, RS, PS) Next meeting 29/09/11 & Rest Centre Training Day 08/10/11 Councillor Spearink confirmed that routes around A229 in this parish had been considered with unsuitable diversionary routes marked on maps for notification to higher authorities.
16. Staplehurst Patients' Participation Group (JB, RS, PS) Next meeting AGM 27/10/11 Minutes of the meeting held on 28/07/11 were uploaded at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx
17. Staplehurst Primary School Liaison (JR) – No report made.
18. Staplehurst Village Centre Trust (PK, JD) Next meeting?
19. Youth Club (PK, JD) Next meeting?
20. Diamond Jubilee Plans – (JD, SL, PS) Next meeting 05/10/11 (With the Council's agreement this item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting prior to the departure of Councillor Lain.) Councillor Lain commented that the group proposed to hold a series of fund-raising events; Quiz nights November & March, Porcelain Auction February and a Fair on Surrenden Field (Thurs, Fri & Sat only) during May. The Clerk clarified the issue of Council insurance; Parish Council would need to be in overall charge of any event, carry out and document risk assessments, etc. Quotes could be obtained once specific detail was known. Councillors agreed to consider the proposals in more detail at their next meeting on 3rd October 2011.

Chairman.....

Meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM: Mr Sturdy commented; Salt bins will be used for all sorts of other things as well; there will be on-going costs such as monitoring and cleaning. These must be taken into consideration. Sainsbury's application; a lot of thought needs to be given to this – it will change the centre of this village in many areas such as traffic, shopping and parking. Same as Cranbrook, people go to shop at Co-op because the parking is free. People will come into the village from elsewhere.

POLICE REPORT – PCSO Pete Gardner reported that 15 crimes had been recorded this past month and half of those occurring in the outlying areas of the village where policing work was continuing around these. Anti-social behaviour calls remained low within the village; 4 burglaries other than dwelling, 4 thefts, 2 burglaries, 2 thefts from motor vehicle, 1 attempted theft and 2 criminal damage.