

Staplehurst Parish Council

Committee, Group or Sub Group

**Rural Settlement Group (RSG) - Minutes**

Meeting Date & Venue

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 – 8 pm at Village Centre**

Report Author - **John Kelly**

### **1. Introductions**

Attending were Margaret Arger (MA), Margaret Ashby (MA2), Joan Buller (JB), John Kelly (JK), Robin Kenworthy (RK), Steve Lenham (SL), Colin Love (CL), Robin Oakley (RO), John Perry (JP), Adele Sharp (AS),

**2. Apologies** - received from Tom Burnham (TB), Mike Pounds-Longhurst (MP-L) and David Staunton Lambert (DSL).

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting**

#### **Actions arising:-**

**List of Assets** – still waiting to see whether this was a fundamental part of Neighbourhood Planning or another work stream - *ongoing*.

**Engagement with Parade Owners** – following the 3 day forum new ideas had been suggested with regards to the future of the Parade – *ongoing*.

**JK to recommend to SPC that all future public meetings are meaningful rather than fishing expeditions and that a proper PA system together with projector and screen is utilised – equipment had been borrowed for the 3 day forum but**

**JK to place explanatory note on the RSG website page to cover the nature of the RSG and its working structure** – *ongoing*.

Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

### **4. Membership of Group**

JB was still liaising with local resident Louise Breece reference joining the RSG.

The RSG acknowledged that residents Catherine Abbott, Mike Birchall and Mike Stephens had expressed interest in joining the Rural Settlement Group or assisting with the work. This interest was to be followed up.

### **5. MBC Local Plan – update re land call sites and 5 year housing supply**

JP and JK had attended the initial Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Scrutiny Meeting which examined whether MBC should have taken into account windfall projections etc...After 4 hours the decision was deferred due to a lack of information and the fact that a document containing legal opinion had not been released.

At a subsequent MBC Scrutiny Meeting the recommendation was to agree with the advice of Rob Jarman, MBC Head of Planning and not take windfall figures into account when projecting the 5 year housing supply. This meant that MBC still had a shortfall in the 5 year housing supply which could be a charter for developers to exploit.

JK stated he had sent emails to Chris Garland, Leader of MBC Borough Council asking for information on the release date of preferred land call sites and housing numbers. The latest email from Michael Murphy, MBC indicated the 17th December 2013. However it was not clear whether this was a definite date and there was a risk of the 'release' date going over into 2014.

The RSG as a group expressed their dismay at the continued delays at MBC.

## 6. Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

The **3 day Design Forum** had been an overwhelming success and to date only positive feedback had been received all round. The process had facilitated individuals to look again at the Parish in a different light. Genuine new ideas and approaches were brought to the fore. The energy levels had been high on all three days. Local residents had been impressed by the FERIA teams knowledge and understanding of the locality. A cross section of the community of all ages had participated.

RK suggested the Parish Council should send a letter of thanks to those schools that had enabled children/young persons to attend.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council that letters are sent to schools where appropriate.

JK asked whether there were lessons to be learnt from the process.

SL questioned the publicity around the 3 day forum timetable and why it had not been generally published. JK stated that had it been published we could have sessions with nobody in attendance and other sessions where the hall was packed.

SL questioned whether enough had been done to publicise the event and whether we were reaching the right people? The RSG acknowledged that the fact the event had been publicised in

- The Village Update
- The Parish Council Website
- The other Village Forum
- Local Newspapers
- Letters sent to all key stakeholders, groups and businesses
- Poster Campaign
- Leaflets handed out
- Facebook and Twitter
- Hurst Road Action Group – Residents

Whilst it was accepted there was always more that could be done it was considered that the Parish Council/RSG had done its best in the time allowed. We had been put under pressure to respond to an MBC Timeline which had not materialised.

A general discussion took place about what to do next. Momentum was the key. Ideas that were suggested were:-

- Timeline to be worked out re NP getting to Referendum
- Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting re NP
- Consultation Event to look at the findings of the 3 day design forum
- Sub Groups to look at individual aspects of the findings
- A Rolling Slide Show Presentation in the Library
- Consultation Questionnaire/Survey on various aspects of the NP

RK suggested a leaflet drop into key areas affected with a moving Exhibition base in each area. JK stated he foresaw security/health and safety issues coming to the fore. It was better to have any exhibition in the Village Hall where everyone could attend.

It was clear that all residents had to have the opportunity to respond either on line or through various documents channels.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council to decide on what process to be used re checking local support for findings so far.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council to decide on what process to be used on focusing on key aspects of the findings so far.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council that NP Project Team meet at the earliest opportunity.

**Action** – Recommendation that Parish Council seek further guidance as to the 'what next' through FERIA Urbanism.

JP commented that the issue of one large housing development versus a number of smaller ones had not been fully discussed. CL stated that it had been looked at within the 3 day design forum. It was felt a balance was needed and that any one large one site would create an imbalance and exacerbate the traffic problems at the cross roads.

SL commented that the consensus he observed was that the Village Centre (Building) should stay put, the frontage kept and the building be redeveloped rather than moved elsewhere. This was borne out by other observations. There was a need to have all facilities in the village working together for the benefit of the community as no one facility could provide everything.

JK commented that a key decision for the Parish Council was the publication of the Slide Show and 3 day drawn image indicating development north of the railway line and connection routes via bridges etc...

A general discussion took place where concerns were expressed that Tesco and other developers might take it as a green light to go north of the railway line. However the other view expressed was that findings from the 3 day design forum should be publicised just as FERIA had presented on the final presentation. To do otherwise would be to undermine the work to date and send out a message that the prevailing Parish Council view was the only view. A vote was taken within those attending:

- For publicising the Slide Show and concept image intact – 7
- For deleting development north of the railway line – 3
- Abstention – 1

**Action** – Recommendation that Parish Council publish Slide Show & 3 day concept image intact.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council to advise FERIA to remove the word Plan from the 3 day concept image.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council to advise FERIA to continue with existing caveat.

**Action** – JK to discuss copyright with FERIA.

A general discussion took place about reporting on the 3 day design forum within the Village Update and how the 3 day concept image might be shown. It was agreed that the first two pages should be taken up with text and photos. The 3 day concept image could be printed in A3 colour and folded within the Village Update.

This all depended on the decisions taken by the Parish Council re publication. The Village Update was initially a matter for the Publicity and Website Group.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council that the 3 day concept image be printed in A3 format and published within the Village Update.

## **7. Supermarket Update**

Sainsbury – unfortunately there was no further news regarding Sainsbury at this stage. The RSG expressed concern that no work had started on either the Petrol Station site or the DK Holdings Factory site.

There was also concern about 'confusion' as to whether any section 106 payment were meant for the Village Centre (Building) or the Village Centre (Parade)

**Action** – JK to clarify Sainsbury Section 106 position with Parish Council.

Tesco – it now appeared that Tesco were submitting a new planning application and this had come to light on the second day of the 3 day design forum. As far as the RSG were aware Tesco had not formally notified the Parish Council at this stage and their absence throughout the 3 day design forum was noted. Three days of detailed work had taken place without a single mention of Tesco.

The current Tesco website at <http://www.tescostaplehurst.co.uk/default.asp> was poor and the animation considered to be inaccurate regarding road layout, lack of traffic lights, car park lighting, existence of the Lime Trees estate, bus stops and more importantly the position of the new Sainsbury's. Worse still it indicated housing that does not exist.

The RSG felt that once again Tesco had shown contempt for the Staplehurst community at large by publicising inaccurate information.

It was also clear that certain individual(s) maybe counter briefing against the community at large, and the Staplehurst Parish Council and MBC Councils original decision to refuse planning permission.

**Action** – Recommendation to Parish Council to address issues re any Parish Councillors attending meetings with any developers without the full knowledge/permission of the Parish Council.

JK advised that individuals commenting on the Tesco website at:-

<http://www.tescostaplehurst.co.uk/have-your-say.asp>

should record what they had written in case the comments were not published at a later date.

## **8. Any other business**

There being no other business the meeting ended at 10.20 pm.

## **Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group**

**Meeting – 8pm on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

**Committee Room, Village Centre, Staplehurst**

### **Agenda**

1. Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the last meeting
4. Membership of Group
5. MBC Local Plan
  - Update re land call sites and 5 year housing supply
  - Report of MBC Scrutiny Meeting
6. Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan:-
  - Initial Debrief on Design Forum – 3 day event
  - Use of 3 day drawing plan
  - Village Update Article – content and layout re 3 day event
7. Supermarket Update:-
  - DK Holdings/Sainsbury's Planning Applications
  - Tesco Planning Application – new application and RSG Response
8. Any other business

## **Appendix A**

## **Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group - 2013**

Meetings are normally held on a monthly basis, between Parish Council Meetings

Meetings start at 8pm at the Village Centre, unless otherwise informed.

Additional meetings may be arranged pending activity re Neighbourhood Plan.

Existing members of RSG as at 15<sup>TH</sup> May 2013 – in alphabetical order on surname:

- Margaret Arger – Resident
- Margaret Ashby - Councillor
- Tom Burnham - Councillor
- Joan Buller - Councillor
- John Kelly – Resident (Chair)
- Robin Kenworthy – Resident
- Roy Laming – Resident
- Steve Lenham - Resident
- Colin Love - Resident
- Robin Oakley – Resident
- Glen Pearce - Retailer
- John Perry – Councillor
- Mike Pounds-Loughton - Resident
- Bill Piper – Resident
- Adele Sharp - Councillor
- David Staunton Lambert – Resident

Circulations would continue to be forwarded to Councillor Simon Green.

### **Dates for 2013**

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2113

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 – cancelled.

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Wednesday 15<sup>TH</sup> May 2013

Wednesday 12<sup>TH</sup> June 2013

Wednesday 10<sup>TH</sup> July 2013

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Wednesday 11<sup>TH</sup> September 2013

Wednesday 16<sup>TH</sup> October 2013

Wednesday 13<sup>TH</sup> November 2013

Wednesday 11<sup>TH</sup> December 2013