

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 16th October 2017 at 7.40 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller, Lain-Rose, Manning, Riordan, Sharp, Silkin, Smith, Spearink and Burnham who was in the Chair.
Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillors Claridge, Gosling, Perry and Reardon. Absent: Councillor Whittle.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – none declared.

Requests for Dispensation – none requested.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Sharp, minute pages 1650-1653 of 2nd October 2017 were APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Chairman Burnham and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Accounts for payment - for approval. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Smith, Councillors RESOLVED nem con to APPROVE the list of accounts for payment. Expenditure for the period 12/09/17 to 10/10/17 was £35,128.44.
2. Summation of Accounts – as at 10th October 2017. NOTED by Councillors and published at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Maidstone Borough Local Plan – Letter from MBC Chief Executive 06/10/17 re Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan and Maidstone Borough Local Plan. Councillors NOTED the response to the Clerk's letter dated 20th September 2017 pursuant to Min 1646. They concluded that it did not satisfactorily address the lack of engagement by MBC to seek a resolution of the conflict arising from inclusion of land north of Henhurst Farm in the Local Plan. RESOLVED: (i) SPC to be represented at the MBC Council meeting of 25th October 2017 and to submit a question (Councillor Riordan volunteered); (ii) respond to the Chief Executive's letter.
2. 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' – Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on planning future housing growth (for response by 09/11/17). Report by Cllr Burnham (Min 1653). <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals>. Chairman Burnham discussed his review of the consultation. He reported that it focused on government proposals to change regulations to help increase the rate of building new homes, promote collaboration by local authorities and assist groups with specific needs. He highlighted that the application of a proposed simplified formula to calculate housing need in Maidstone would increase the proposed growth by 40% from 883 per year to 1,236 per year until 2026. Councillors discussed the role of government legislation and developer behaviour in the housing market. Councillors thanked Chairman Burnham for his report (published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/others.aspx>) and thanked Councillor Riordan who volunteered to respond to the consultation. Councillors Lain-Rose and Buller said they would contact a member of Cranbrook's Neighbourhood Plan Group to seek further information about community land trusts.
3. South East Water Drought Plan – Report by Councillor Silkin (Min 1646) <http://www.southeastwater.co.uk/about-us/our-plans/drought-plan>. Councillor Silkin commented that the

plan did not go down to individual parish level but it was clear that a lot of work had gone into it. In line with Councillor Silkin's recommendation Councillors NOTED the draft plan.

4. Technical Consultation on the 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement – Invitation from KALC Chief Executive to comment on question relating to extension of referendum principle to town and parish councils (deadline 26/10/17) <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-finance-settlement-2018-to-2019-technical-consultation>. Councillors NOTED that KALC encouraged member councils to respond to the consultation and oppose the subjecting of local council tax increases above 2% to referendum. RESOLVED: to respond to the consultation as recommended by KALC, highlighting the restraint local councils have adopted in setting precepts and the demands placed on them by the increasing responsibility they bear for delivery of local services.
5. Disqualification Criteria for Councillors and Mayors – DCLG consultation on proposals to strengthen rules to prevent anyone found guilty of serious crimes from serving on local councils (for response by 08/12/17) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rules-to-strengthen-standards-for-councillors-and-mayors>. Councillors NOTED that KALC would be responding to the consultation to highlight the high ethical standards it requires of its members.
6. Parish Council Surgeries – (i) Reports on key issues raised (TB/MA); subjects raised were: Jubilee Field, loose-running dogs, enforcement action in Clapper Lane, possible use of some of the former golf course in Clapper Lane for allotments (Councillor Manning to investigate). (ii) Appointment of representatives for future dates: in the light of lower resident attendance at surgeries Councillors agreed that Communications Group should consider the format and frequency prior to review by Full Council early in 2018. Appointments for forthcoming dates: 28th October – Councillor Buller or Councillor Burnham (to be confirmed); 4th November Councillor Smith; 11th November Councillor Sharp.
7. Kent Association of Local Councils AGM 18/11/17 – Invitation to nominate: (i) two voting representatives; (ii) two non-voting representatives (by 10/11/17). Councillors Sharp and Smith volunteered to attend as voting representatives.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORTS (from Committee/Groups/Office on specific issues or as regular update)

1. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported: a good number of applications for the Parish Support Officer and Caretaker roles were being received; additional furniture and new technology requirements for the office were being finalised; Surrenden Playing Field hedge was being cut; the first draft of the 2018-19 budget was being prepared for review by Finance and Strategy Group; the office had received enquiries about planning issues, neighbourhood planning and reports of road traffic incidents; the Parish Office was seeking confirmation of when the NatWest mobile branch would commence service.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
None received.
3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only
 - a) Community Enhancement Group - Councillor Lain-Rose reported that the Group had discussed the closed toilets at the Parade. He said he had contacted MBC with a view to arranging an inspection visit to ascertain their current condition.

REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNCILS, AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS for noting:-

None received

REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting):-

1. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team – Minutes of meeting 14/09/17. NOTED and posted at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/kcc_emergency_planning_group.aspx.

URGENT MATTERS (at Chairman's discretion, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting)
No items

Chairman.....