

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
held at Staplehurst Village Centre on
Monday 21st August 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ashby, Buller (until the point indicated in the minutes), Claridge, Gosling, Manning, Perry, Reardon, Sharp, Smith, Spearink and Lain-Rose who was in the Chair.

Parish Clerk: Mr M J Westwood

APOLOGIES: Councillor Burnham, Riordan, Silkin and Whittle (and Councillor Buller for anticipated early departure).

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:-

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – Councillor Sharp (Village Centre trustee) declared an interest in the item relating to the Village Centre content of Finance Group's recommendations.

Requests for Dispensation – Councillor Sharp requested and was granted a dispensation to speak on the item of declared interest in accordance with section 33(2)(e) of the Localism Act 2011.

APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Minute pages 1633-1636 of 17th July 2017 were proposed for approval by Councillor Ashby, seconded by Councillor Manning, APPROVED by Councillors, signed by Councillor Lain-Rose and made available at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx. Councillors Reardon and Smith abstained.

FINANCE REPORTS:-

1. Accounts for payment - for approval. Proposed by Councillor Ashby, seconded by Councillor Smith, Councillors RESOLVED nem con to APPROVE the list of accounts for payment. Income for the period 06/07/17 to 10/08/17 was £8,310.84 (Parish Council) and £0.10 (Village Centre Contingency). Parish Council expenditure for the same period was £22,547.22.
2. Summation of Accounts – as at 10th August 2017 (for noting). NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx.
3. Finance Group – Reports (for noting) and recommendations (for approval) arising from meetings 19/07/17 & 01/08/17, including correspondence from Village Centre trustees re Contingency Fund. Councillors NOTED the reports which were published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/finance_group.aspx. Councillor Spearink asked that the entry for Wimpey Field in Appendix B to the Finance Group report 19/07/17 be amended to clarify that there was a three year cutting cycle in the management plan rather than a three year maintenance contract in place. Councillors RESOLVED to APPROVE the following recommendations in the reports: (a) continuation of contracts for skate park painting, rental of Parish Office rooms, electricity supply for street lights and planters maintenance as set out in Section 13 and Appendix A of Finance Group meeting report 19/07/17 (proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Sharp, no vote by Councillor Claridge); (b) transfers of reserves as set out in section 14 of Finance Group meeting report 19/07/17 (i) the balance of the Village Centre Feasibility Fund (£8,505.00) be moved to the General Fund (following discontinuation of Village Centre Redevelopment Group Min 1635); (ii) the balance of the Village Centre Contingency Fund (£12,239.53) be moved to the General Fund, further to letter from Village Centre trustees relinquishing all claims on the fund; (iii) a new 'office equipment' budget line be created in the 'office support' expenditure category, with an amount of £7,500

transferred from the General Fund, pursuant to paragraph 9.2 of Employment Group report dated 05/06/17 approved 17/07/17 Min 1636 (proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Gosling, abstention Councillor Sharp, no vote by Councillor Claridge); (c) accept quotation from Contrast Garden Maintenance as set out in section 6 of the Finance Group meeting report 01/08/17 to mow footpaths on Wimpey Field fortnightly during the growing season in accordance with the management plan at a cost of £20 per hour (proposed by Councillor Sharp, seconded by Councillor Spearink, no vote by Councillor Claridge). Councillors also RESOLVED in respect of recommendation 3(b)(ii) to respond to the letter from the Village Centre trustees received 10/07/17 to acknowledge that the trustees would not be redepositing £10,000 paid from the Contingency Fund in April 2016 (Min1522-23) and that the trustees relinquished all claims on the remaining balance of the Contingency Fund; the response would further confirm that the 'Staplehurst Village Centre Joint Statement' signed by the Chairs of the Parish Council and the Trustees was now lapsed. Councillors also RESOLVED to record that should the need arise they would consider with an open mind future requests for support from the trustees.

4. Parish Council Insurance Policy Annual Renewal – Quotation from Came & Co for 2017-18 (for approval). Councillors RESOLVED to APPROVE the payment of the renewal premium of £4,572.01 including Insurance Premium Tax (proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Buller, no vote by Councillor Claridge).
5. Surrenden Playing Field – Updated quotation for new footpath and land drain (further to Min1623) (for approval). Councillor Reardon explained that a meeting with MBC had generated a suggested slight realignment of the proposed footpath across the southern end of the field, which would cost up to an additional £400 although some of the cost could be recouped from reduced expenditure elsewhere. Noting that the new total cost would be up to £16,290 plus VAT Councillors RESOLVED to APPROVE the additional expenditure in case of need (proposed by Councillor Reardon, seconded by Councillor Buller, no vote by Councillor Claridge).

CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

1. Mayor's Charity Visit – Invitation to attend tour and tasting at Hush Heath Winery and lunch at The Goudhurst Inn on 19/09/17 (for decision). Councillor Perry said he would be attending the event. Interested councillors were asked to notify the Clerk.
2. Parish Council Surgery – (i) Report on key issues raised 22/29 July (PR/PS) and 5/12/19 August (TB/JB/MA); subjects raised at the surgeries were the Railway Tavern, the clearance of vegetation at the Parade (still work in progress), access to Wimpey Field, the lack of toilet facilities at The Parade (to be discussed at a future meeting), the Jubilee Field car park; (ii) Appointment of representatives for future surgeries: 2nd September Councillor Sharp, 9th September Councillor Gosling, 16th September to be confirmed.
3. Parish Services Scheme Survey – Request for information and opinion from MBC. Councillors NOTED that MBC was asking parish councils about their use of Parish Services Scheme funding and that the Chair of KALC Maidstone Area Committee was encouraging parish councils to submit full responses including claiming for a percentage of parish office time. Councillor Perry endorsed the importance of responding in this full way. The Clerk undertook to complete the response.
4. Railway Tavern – Correspondence requesting challenge to MBC ruling on asset of community value nomination (SPC had NOTED MBC's decision that there was insufficient evidence to support – Min 1630). Although noting that legislation did not offer a formal right of appeal against a refusal of an application to list an asset, Councillors RESOLVED to write to MBC about its decision and to reference the decision by MBC Planning

Committee to refuse planning application 16/505966 on grounds that included insufficient evidence of non-viability.

5. Rural Service Centre Status (RSC) – Correspondence from MBC in response to Parish Council's request for declassification of Staplehurst as RSC and objection to Policy H1(50) of Local Plan (Land North of Henhurst Farm). Councillor Perry said he had taken up the letter with MBC. He stated that he felt the manner in which Policy H1(50) Land North of Henhurst Farm had been reintroduced at a late stage into the Local Plan undermined the planning process. He submitted that at its next meeting the Parish Council should discuss the taking of formal legal advice and in the meantime seek planning consultant advice. He said that a residents' petition is likely to be presented to MBC Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 12th September and he planned to speak as a visiting member. Proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Buller, Councillors RESOLVED to seek an opinion on the situation from Feria Urbanism (Neighbourhood Plan consultants) and in the light of the advice draw up a further letter to MBC.

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

1. Clerk's Report – the Clerk reported: a clean sign-off of the annual return had been received from the external auditor (published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/statement_of_accounts.aspx) and thanks were expressed to the office staff and internal auditor; he had taken forward Finance Group's work on the Surrenden Field freehold and SPC's exit from the Local Government Pension Scheme and hoped to have more news on the LGPS issue shortly; he had issued a survey to residents of Chestnut Avenue seeking views about widening the A229 carriageway and diverting the footpath adjacent to the chestnut trees; he had submitted to MBC a road closure application for Remembrance Day; a number of enquiries had been received from other parishes about neighbourhood planning; a wide range of issues had been raised by residents via e-mails, telephone and visits to the office.
2. Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting
 - a) Finance & Strategy Group – Proposal to merge Finance and Strategy & Policy Groups into Finance & Strategy Group and to agree its Terms of Reference (SL-R) (for decision). Councillor Lain-Rose discussed his report and explained that the reason for proposing the merger of the two groups was primarily that experience had shown that there was often overlap between them and a secondary reason was that the groups' membership therefore had usually been similar and was at present identical. Councillor Perry requested an amendment to section 5 of the proposed terms of reference: the Lead Councillor of the Group should be the Chairman of the Council. Subject to the amendment requested by Councillor Perry Councillors RESOLVED to AGREE the terms of reference as set out in Appendix A to the report (proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Manning, no vote by Councillor Claridge). The terms of reference were published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/policies_information.aspx.
 - b) Community Enhancement Group – Proposal to establish and agree terms of reference for a new Community Enhancement Group to replace the following groups: Allotments; Local Transport; Playscheme; Staplehurst Merit Award; Surrenden Playing Field Group (SL-R) (for decision). Councillor Lain-Rose explained that the proposal was a result of the review of terms of reference for Parish Council groups that he had been undertaking (Min1592). Councillors Claridge, Perry, Sharp and Spearink raised questions and concerns about the proposal and specifically: the proposed dissolution of some groups; the composition of the new group members (listed in section 2.2 of the report although not tabled for decision) should be a decision for council; the

Group would be an additional governance layer; more time was needed to consider the proposal's implications. Further discussion was DEFERRED.

3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors
 - a) Play Scheme – Initial end of scheme report (JB). Councillor Buller provided a written report which was published at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/playscheme.aspx>. She said the attendance levels for the morning sessions were very good but were lower on some afternoons. *Councillor Buller left the meeting.*
 - b) Dawkins Trust – Update (LW). The Clerk reported that Councillor Whittle had notified him that he was happy to serve as trustee. Councillors RESOLVED to confirm their agreement to the appointment (proposed by Councillor Lain-Rose, seconded by Councillor Sharp).

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

1. Borough Councillor's Oral Report – Councillor Perry reported: he had attended the Mayor's charity event at Headcorn Aerodrome; MBC Planning Committee had refused the application 15/510210 Three Sons Park Wood Lane and approved application 16/505598 Cricket and Tennis Club; there was much discussion and activity relating to proposals for a Leeds-Langley relief road.
2. PCSO Report – Councillors NOTED the notification from PCSO Alan Hunter about changes to the Kent Policing Model and message from PCSO Pete Gardner relating to the extension of the area he will cover and the cessation of PCSO provision of monthly crime figures from September. They NOTED that crime figures were published on the police website. PCSO's figures for the five weeks to 18th August showed fourteen crimes: five burglaries, four thefts, two thefts from motor vehicles, three criminal damage.

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

1. Patient Participation Group – Minutes of meeting 26/07/17. NOTED by Councillors and published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/patient_participation_group_at_health_centre.aspx.

URGENT MATTERS (at Chairman's discretion, information only items for noting or for decision at a future meeting)

Councillor Spearink said: the Bioblitz event would take place at Wimpey Field on 23rd August; a representative of Carillion was due to visit Staplehurst on 24th August to discuss works on footpath KM312; fly-tipping appeared to be increasing and merited a further discussion. Councillor Lain-Rose reported that the village caretaker had notified his intention to retire later in the year.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Chairman.....

PUBLIC FORUM: After the meeting a resident thanked the Parish Council for its efforts to oppose additional land allocation policy H1(50) in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.