



# Staplehurst Parish<sup>2329</sup> Council

## 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### Minutes

#### **Public Forum**

No residents spoke

#### **Maidstone Borough Councillor's Report**

Cllr Perry raised a number of points;

- Devolution – draft to merge Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks and Maidstone, consultation after KCC elections and aiming for final proposal to Government in November 2025, Devolution likely 2028.
- Also drafting proposal for a "Maidstone Town Council" for the urban (Un-Parished) area. Again consultation after KCC elections
- MBC Council AGM 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025
- Cllr Hotson asked about withdrawal of Sustainable Development Policy – Cllr Perry to clarify
- Cllr Ash asked what about MBC reserves? Good question, to be decided?

Cllr Riordan raised a number of points;

- KALC meeting on "Maidstone Town Council" – really positive
- MBC Budget – issues on Town Centre car parking fees increasing and Moat Park leisure centre.
- The MBC funding towards Leeds / Langley relief road cancelled – project on hold

**Present:** Cllrs Riordan, Rhodes, Hotson, Pett, Farragher, Sharp McLaughlin, Alesi., Martin, Ash, and Perry

**1. APOLOGIES:** Cllrs Arger, Castro and Wakeford

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

**2.1.** Declarations of Lobbying - NA

**2.2.** Changes to the Register of Interests - NA

**2.3.** Interests in Items on the Agenda - NA

**2.4.** Requests for Dispensation - NA

Signed by Chairman.....Date.....

### **3. Co-option application**

Mr Melville spoke about his desire to put something back into the community. Following a debate Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to approve Mr Melville's application to be co-opted on to the Parish Council, agreed unanimously

Cllr Melville joined the meeting. As it was his first meeting and not fully aware of all the issues, he abstained from each vote

### **4. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES: (5 minutes)**

Pages 2323 – 2328 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 available at [Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](http://Full Council - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge (staplehurst-pc.uk)) to be signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to approve the minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025, agreed majority; 11 for, 0 against, 1 abstained

### **5. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS**

#### **5.1 Parish Office Digital Broadband connection, telephone line and phones**

Following a debate which highlighted the importance of keeping the Parish Office phone number and the need for good customer service Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; 11 for, 0 against, 1 abstained

**Resolution** – To appoint BT Local Business on a 3 year contract as the Parish Office digital broadband connection, telephone line at a monthly cost of £89.95 plus set up cost of £40.00

**Budget Code** Administration

### **6 CLERKS REPORT ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS**

#### **Girl Guides lease**

- Land Registry – Jubilee Field – Staplehurst Parish Council registered as land owner – no trustees mentioned. Request a copy.
- At last some movement by Kingsford our solicitors. They have been in contact with Girl Guide Solicitor's – seeking approval for the following

#### **Deed of Variation of existing Lease**

Rent – To be agreed

New clause in Deed –

*"Management of JUBILEE SPORTS FIELD*

*1.1 The Tenant shall observe all regulations made by the Landlord from time to time in accordance with the principles of good estate management of the Jubilee Sports Field and notified to the Tenant relating to the use of any Common Parts and to the management of the said Jubilee Sports Field.*

*1.2 Nothing in this lease shall impose or be deemed to impose any restriction by the Landlord on the use of any other part of the Jubilee Sports Field or any neighbouring property."*

Rights Granted – Use of car parking spaces plus the priority use of 6 car parking spaces marked in hatched red on plan to be provided

Each party pays their own legal costs – due to the Trustees surrendering their lease.

Signed by Chairman.....Date.....

**Licence Deed/short term Lease**

Nominal annual fee - To be agreed

The Tenant is requesting priority use of the grass area on the north side from the Kathie Lamb Guide Centre which will be fenced by the tenant. This is agreed in principle. The tenant will

- provide a 6ft high boundary, close boarded fencing on the edge of the area hatched blue on plan to match the existing SMFC fencing –
- provide 12ft wide gates for fire evacuation, maintenance vehicles, emergency access etc. and public access
- the gates will remain open/unlocked to allow public use, when the area is not in use by the tenant.

The tenant will be responsible for

- (i) planning permission, if required
- (ii) installation / erection of fencing / gates
- (iii) maintenance of the fencing and gates
- (iv) removing fencing/gates at the termination of the Licence/Lease

Agreed exempt from Landlord and Tenants Act 1954

As this is a request for a new lease Girl Guides pays Parish Council legal costs.

Agreed to formally proceed and report back with a draft document and need to agree a rental fee.

**3G pitch additional information** submitted to MBC planning waiting for verification  
Clerk will circulate when online

**Chilmington Water Treatment Plant – River Beult**

- Ashford – treated sewage into River Stour, but River Stour is now polluted so seeking to use River Beult
- New development 6,700 new homes Ashford will generate over 1,000,000 cubic litres per day into River Beult, initial 3,000 homes being built.
- Ashford BC objected to discharge into River Beult but the applicant won on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate – cannot appeal against the decision.
- However limited, or no, consultation with MBC or neighbouring authorities down stream
- Everyone complaining to MP and Environment Agency who issue the “discharge notice”

Cllr Perry emphasised the need to drive this forward as it is a major concern in the long term and the impact SSSI River Beult and our residents.

Cllr Pett noted Environment Agency subsidising farmers “not to put phosphates” into the River Beult – but then agree to discharge treated sewage?  
Potential for River Beult Catchment Impact Group to reform.

Agreed to focus on lobbying MP, Environment Agency and work with neighbours – Clerk liaise with Cllr Perry and report back.

**Jubilee Field – pavilion.****Hot water tanks**

- Initial quote £210 – but due to extra time £537
- Then set aside £2,500 – first visit £1,073.27, second visit £335.23

Signed by Chairman.....Date.....

- Ormandy supplied and fitted elements – one was single phase (should have been three phase) and second element three phase – therefore tripped.
- Can be resolved and Clerk has asked if Ormandy can cover electricians fees -
- to identify problem and
- to fix.
- Still waiting for electrical fees
- Total agreed is £2,710 – fees £1,945.50

### **Heating ventilation**

- Located in alcove in corner of loft – confined space - therefore two people required.
- Obtained one quote seek two further quotes for next meeting

**Dr Gildeh concerns regarding Footpath KM293A** – does anyone wish to meet up with him to walk through the issues? Cllr Riordan, Perry and Lottie Parfit-Reid already met him – very much a KCC PROW issue, who seem to have failed. Cllr Rhodes aware that KCC already cut budget. A potential issue for the Ombudsman? Cllr Riordan to feedback

**Temporary Directional Signage Request (SL665809474) Churchill Homes** – moved signage away from junction as requested, noted.

Note MBC Mayors litter Picking Event Saturday 12th April 11:00 - 13:00 invited 8 Volunteers Litter pickers from Staplehurst.

Note Playscheme dates Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2025 – half day first week, and full day second week – report back to Council.

## **7 PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION and DECISION**

### **7.1 Staplehurst Parish Council Strategic Action Plan 2025 – 2028**

Following a debate which highlighted the work that has gone into the document, Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr McLaughlin seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; 11 for, 0 against, 1 abstained

**Resolution:** To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategic Working Group to adopt the Council's Strategic Action Plan 2025 – 2028 as attached in appendix A of this report.

### **7.2 Donations Policy**

Following a debate which highlighted minor tweak to current Policy Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; 11 for, 0 against, 1 abstained

**Resolution:** To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategic Working Group to adopt the Donations Policy attached in appendix A of this report.

### **7.3 VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Celebrations update**

Following a debate which highlighted which highlighted the fund for some funding for the event and also recognise VJ day – 15<sup>th</sup> August – should be recognised. Cllr McLaughlin proposed and Cllr Ash seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; 10 for, 0 against, 2 abstained

**Resolution:** to note the update report and approve potential costs up to £500.

### **7.4 S137 Grants Policy – Terms and Conditions**

Following a debate which highlighted some minor tweaks Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr

Signed by Chairman.....Date.....

Riordan seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; 11 for, 0 against, 1 abstained

**Resolution;** To approve the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategic Working Group to amended the S137 Grant Policy Terms and Conditions from a) to b) as shown below;

- a) The Council require that applicants provide written feedback explaining how has benefited their group/organisation
- b) The Council require that applicants provide written feedback explaining how has benefited their group/organisation or attend the Annual Parish Meeting to help promote the Parish Councils S137 grant's scheme.

Meeting closed to allow a local resident to speak and answer questions

### **7.5 Staplehurst Railway Station**

Following a debate which highlighted

Desire for major transformation – maximise this opportunity

Planning permission would be required to access S106 funding

Potential addition items – solar panels, general tidy up / decoration / fencing along the line

Invite MBC to the meeting with Network Rail and report back

Agreed to report back to Council after the meeting with Network Rail and Southeastern Trains.

Meeting reopened.

### **7.6 Merit Awards**

Following a debate which highlighted that all Cllrs should take part in helping out on the evening as this is an important event Cllr Riordan proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to approve the resolution below, agreed majority; 11 for, 0 against, 1 abstained

**Resolution:** To consider the recommendation of the Employment, Finance and Strategic Working Group to

- i. Seek nominations for the Staplehurst Merit Awards
- ii. Finalise a Councillor rota for the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### **7.7 To consider the draft Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Review**

Following a debate which highlighted this is a vital document – major document considered in any planning application in Staplehurst.

Clerk to cross reference approved Parish Council Strategic Action Plan 2025 /28

Cllrs to focus on a section they are interested in and feed back by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 – to Cllr Arger.

### **8 CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:**

Letters from Mote Medical and NHS letters, note increasing boundaries means they create a PCN – which makes it easier to purchase services. Already some improvements in booking appointments / collecting prescriptions.

### **9 Chairman's Report**

HR Group working on appraisal report for next Council meeting.

Signed by Chairman.....Date.....

Hope that a focused approach will help with changing behaviour regarding School Parking issue.

Still chasing Community Payback

Note response from Cranbrook FC regarding use of Jubilee Field.

9.1 Committee and working group minutes - noted

9.1.1 Planning Committee minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025

9.1.2 Road Safety Group minutes 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025

9.1.3 Jubilee Field Working Group minutes 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025

9.1.4 SCEnic next meeting 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025, minutes to follow

9.1.5 3G Multi-Sports pitch working group meeting – to be arranged

9.1.6 Employment, Finance and Strategy Group meeting minutes 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025

9.1.7 NDP Review Group meeting 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025

9.1.8 Communications Group meeting - to be arranged.

9.1.9 Greener Staplehurst Group meeting - to be arranged

**10 REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS**

NA

**11 Confidential**

11.1 HR verbal update

Signed by Chairman.....Date.....