

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Virtual Meeting via Zoom video-conference
Monday 1st February 2021 at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Bowden, Buller, Castro, Forward, George, Perry, McNeill, Sharp, Spearink, Thomas and Riordan who was in the Chair and Parish Clerk Miss A Smith.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gartan gave apologies for the whole meeting due to personal reasons and Councillor Forward gave apologies for late arrival at the meeting due to a prior attendance at another meeting, these were accepted.

Councillor Lain-Rose was absent.

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS regarding items on the Agenda:

Changes to the Register of Interests – none declared.

Interests in Items on the Agenda – Councillors Riordan and Castro declared an interest in item 5.4, Councillor Perry declared an interest in item 4.5.

Requests for Dispensation – Councillors Riordan and Castro in respect of item 5.4 requested dispensation to be involved in the discussion only and not to from voting.

3. APPROVAL OF FULL COUNCIL MINUTES: Proposed by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Castro, minute pages 1884-1887 of 11th January 2021 were APPROVED, to be signed by Chairman Riordan and made available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/full-council/>.

4. FINANCE REPORTS & PROPOSALS

4.1 Accounts for Payment – for approval. Proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Thomas, the listed accounts for payment were APPROVED. Expenditure for the period 6th January to 26th January 2021 totalled £12,008.62; income for the period was £0.00.

Approved Payments 6th January 2021 - 26th January 2021	Amount
ClIr Reimbursement - Community Payback Refreshments	41.16
KCC - Stationery	37.78
KALC - Facebook Webinar	42.00
Bouygues Ltd -Chapel Lane Street Light Replacement x1	1,473.04
Arron Services Ltd - Annual Service Contract	714.00
HMRC - Tax & NI December	2,989.99
KCC - Licence re Xmas Motif Attachment to Street Lights	29.00
KCS - Photocopier Rental Jan-Mar	114.78
Polybags - Black Sacks x2 boxes	92.48
Payroll & Pension Costs January	5,581.54
ALCC - Annual Subscription	40.00
KALC - Communications Training Webinar	42.00
Choice Support - Planter Maintenance January	410.80
Google Nest Doorbell - Annual Subscription	50.00
Opus Energy - Parish Office Electricity Dec - Jan	199.27
E-on - Street Light Energy December	54.77
Countrystyle Recycling - Waste Collection December	81.00

Chairman's initials

Lloyds Bank Charges - January	7.00
TOTAL CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	12,000.61

TOTAL PETTY CASH EXPENDITURE 8.01

- 4.2. Summation of Accounts – NOTED by Councillors. Web page: <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/financial-info/>.
- 4.3. Parish Council Budget & Precept Requirement 2020-2021 – Councillor Riordan advised that it had been a difficult year but he was pleased to report that the Council had remained within budget. He acknowledged the efforts and contributions by Councillors who had raised funds and for the donations received from businesses within the community. Councillor Riordan advised that the F&SG had prepared the budget for the year 2021/22 and were able to do so without recommending a rise in the base rate, keeping it at £73.79 per Band D property. It was proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Thomas, and RESOLVED that the draft budget V6 for 2021/2022 be APPROVED and a precept of £194,191.00 be set.
- 4.4. Finance and Strategy Group Report – The report was NOTED by Councillors. It was proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Buller and RESOLVED to APPROVE the use of CIL funds of £9,133.67 towards funding the replacement of 3 CCTV cameras; It was proposed by Councillor George, seconded by Councillor Sharp and RESOLVED to APPROVE that future funding payments to the Youth Club be suspended for 2021/22 until the Club were able to open again, at which point it would be further reviewed; It was proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Spearink and RESOLVED to APPROVE that the monthly balance sheet be included in the public information pack moving forward.

The meeting was temporarily closed to allow Councillor Hotson to speak in connection with item 4.5.

- 4.5. Staplehurst Youth Club – Councillor Hotson, as a trustee of the Staplehurst Monarchs Youth FC, wanted to correct the statement made in the letter that the donation had been given to the Youth team, and confirmed that they had not received any monies. *The Meeting was then re-opened.*

It was confirmed that the donation had been given to the Men's team. Councillors NOTED the letter from the Youth Club and acknowledged that £2000 had been refunded to the Parish Council.

- 4.6. Staff Training – It was proposed by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Perry and RESOLVED to APPROVE expenditure of £70 in total for two KALC online seminars for the Parish Support Officer.

5. CORRESPONDENCE & PARISH ISSUES for decision or noting:

- 5.1. Easement on Council owned land for Puffin Crossing Marden Road – Councillors NOTED the legal position on easement.

The meeting was closed to allow Borough Councillor Louise Brice to speak about item 5.2.

- 5.2. KCC EV Charge-point funding – Councillor Brice introduced the item explaining KCC's EV vehicle charge point funding programme for Parish Councils and invited the Council to consider making an application. During the discussion the suggestion of siting further bicycle racks around the village was raised. Councillor Brice agreed to investigate whether funding from MBC was available.

Chairman's initials

The meeting was then re-opened.

It was proposed by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Castro and RESOLVED to APPROVE that the Council move forward to explore making an application to the EV Charge Point Funding scheme.

- 5.3. Councillor Casual Vacancy Policy – It was proposed by Councillor Castro, seconded by Councillor Sharp and RESOLVED to APPROVE the Policy. The Clerk was reminded to make the minor change of tense to the eligibility paragraph, previously noted.
- 5.4. KALC Awards – It was proposed by Councillor Spearink, seconded by Councillor Thomas and RESOLVED to APPROVE the nomination of the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team for the awards. Congratulations and thanks were expressed to the Team for their amazing work throughout the whole period of the pandemic.
- 5.5. Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan –

The meeting was closed for Margaret Arger, chair of the SNPRG to speak.
Mrs Arger gave a brief summary of her review of the Goudhurst proposed Neighbourhood Plan. [Goudhurst \(tunbridgewells.gov.uk\)](http://Goudhurst.tunbridgewells.gov.uk).
The meeting was then re-opened.

Councillor Riordan thanked Mrs Arger for her diligent work and summation of the situation. It was proposed by Councillor Riordan, seconded by Councillor Perry and RESOLVED to APPROVE the consultation response be devised and submitted by the SNRPG.

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

- 6.1 Clerk's Report: The Clerk updated Councillors on the progress regarding the Councillor vacancies following the resignations of Councillors Rawlinson and Miller. She advised that confirmation had been received from MBC that no by-election was necessary for Councillor Rawlinson's post, but that Councillor Miller's was still actively being advertised. She advised that she was waiting until the situation regarding the second post was established at which point she would advertise for co-option for both vacancies together, resulting in the likelihood of co-options taking place at one of the April Full Council Meetings. The Clerk also updated Councillors in relation to resolving issues with KCC with regard to the Christmas Motifs, and that a report would be brought to Council regarding the re-tendering process in due course. She confirmed that the Council's website was nearly fully accessible and had been tested and confirmed by the platform providers. The Support Officer was now resolving the final elements, which were pending the identification of suitable software to facilitate the documents accessibility. She also updated Councillors with regards to a complaint received from residents in The Bartons, regarding members of the public exiting Wimpey Fields via private land and not using PROW KM311. She confirmed she would update Councillors on the way forward, once further information regarding the footpath had been received.

6.2 Written Reports on Committee, Group and Project activities - for decision or noting.

- 6.2.1 Community Enhancement Group – The report of the meeting on the 20th January 2021 was NOTED by Councillors and published on the Council's website at [Community & Leisure Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](http://Community & Leisure Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge (staplehurst-pc.uk)). It was proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Thomas and RESOLVED to APPROVE the Community Events Group request to site a bench at the north perimeter of Surrenden Fields. Councillor Spearink advised Councillors of the proposed new street names on the new estates and their origination.

- 6.2.2. Communications Group – The Report of meeting on 14th January was NOTED by Councillors and published on the Parish Council’s website at <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/communications-group/>. Councillor Castro expressed his thanks to the Parish Office for all their support to the Group. Councillors discussed the options available to them regarding the publication of the Spring Edition of the Village Update. It was proposed by Councillor Buller, seconded by Councillor Spearink and RESOLVED by majority to APPROVE that the Village Update Spring Edition be kept as close to the original planned publication times as possible. It was also agreed to print 1000 copies of the Update and to make them available to the public at various locations within the Village, as well as distribution via electronic platforms, using the Council’s website and social media, with Councillors actively promoting it.
- 6.2.3. Neighbourhood Plan Review Group – The Report of the meeting on 13th January 2021 was NOTED by Councillors and published on the Council’s website at [Neighbourhood Plan Review Group - Staplehurst Parish Council - Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst, Tonbridge \(staplehurst-pc.uk\)](https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/Neighbourhood-Plan-Review-Group-Staplehurst-Parish-Council-Staplehurst-Parish-Council-Staplehurst-Tonbridge-staplehurst-pc.uk). Councillor Spearink highlighted the item regarding the potential bus service to be provided by Sainsbury’s once the new store is opened and confirmed that the original discussions had included the bus running from Frittenden in the South, Marden in the West, the Garden Centre to the North, and Hawkenbury to the East. Councillor Riordan confirmed that he would remind Sainsbury’s about this bus service.
- 6.3. Oral Reports from Committee/Groups/Councillors – for information only.
- 6.3.1. Chairman’s Report – Oral Report by Councillor Riordan. The Chair updated Councillors on the busy work of all the Council’s working groups. He confirmed he had written to the Kent Community Foundation to outline the work completed using their grant monies in respect of the Emergency Help Team. He advised that the hub was now liaising with schools following donations of old IT equipment/laptops to be issued to children with difficulties with home schooling. He confirmed that the Parish Council had been delighted to assist the Medical Centre with providing volunteers and organisation for transport for some of the elderly and vulnerable patients requiring their vaccinations. He interested Councillors by picking out some amusing articles from older previous minutes provided by the Historical Society. In addition, he updated Councillors in respect of the Surrenden Field Pavilion project; the draining issues in Marden Road; progress with the Community Hub; and thanked Councillors Perry and Castro for their respective engagement in the vaccination programme for the Weald and the co-ordination of the Emergency Help Team.

Proposed by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Spearink, it was RESOLVED to APPROVE the suspension of standing orders to enable the meeting to continue for a further 45 minutes.

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

- 7.1 Borough Councillor’s Report (1) (Standing Item): Oral report by Councillor Perry. Councillor Perry updated Councillors regarding the surge testing programme due to commence within 24 hours in the ME15 postcode as a result of the SA variant of COVID-19. He updated Councillors on the work he was undertaking with Helen Grant, MP, to try to resolve the drainage issues in Marden Road and drew Councillors attention to the planning application submitted regarding the removal of the hedge, due to be considered at the Parish Planning Committee the following night. He further updated Councillors on a potential judicial review for a development on the Sutton Road, and the progress being made reviewing the outcomes of the consultation phase of the Local Plan. He drew Councillors attention to the recent approach by the Planning Inspectorate to enforce the duty to co-operate regarding housing allocation, across boroughs. He advised that it

currently looked like local elections would take place in May, and that MBC were still determining the Council Tax increase for 2021/2022.

- 7.2 County Councillor’s Report (Standing item): Councillor Hotson also commented on the surge testing programme being launched. He also advised that he had been liaising with Councillor Perry following a complaint from a resident regarding the drainage issues at Marden Road. Due to time constraints, Council Hotson proposed that he send the remainder of his report to Council via the Clerk the following day.

8. REPORTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS (written reports for noting)

No items

- 9. **URGENT MATTERS** – The pre-consultation request for comments by Cornerstone and Telephonica UK Ltd regarding the upgrade of the mobile telephone mast at Henhurst Farm was accepted as an urgent matter. It was RESOLVED to APPROVE by majority to make NO OBJECTION.

PUBLIC FORUM:

The meeting was temporarily closed to allow the final public forum and for Councillor Louise Brice to submit an additional Borough Council Report

Oral Report from Councillor Louise Brice – Councillor Brice updated Councillors on the support she had been giving local residents in Newlyn Drive and Fishers Road, regarding patchy electricity supply. She advised that she believed the matter was now resolved. She requested that Councillors encourage residents to be patient with the Refuse Teams who had worked diligently throughout the pandemic and national lockdowns to carry on providing the service despite resources being hit with issues of illness and self-isolation. She also updated Council on the plan to save the Hazlitt Theatre in Maidstone and urged Councillors to support the Theatre as and when it was allowed to re-open. Councillor Brice also updated Council with the sad news of the death of a well-loved local bus driver, Peter Hart, and suggested Council may wish to send a letter of condolence to Arriva which was agreed. She further advised of the sad news of the death of one of the refuse team and Councillor Spearink proposed that the Council also send a letter of condolences, which was agreed.

A member of the public also addressed Council in respect of the Councillor Brice’s comments regarding the excellent service received by the refuse team and the proposed EV point funding application.

10. SPECIAL MOTION & REPORT

- 10.1. The chair moved to close the meeting to the press and public for the consideration of the confidential matter under consideration at item 10.2 on the agenda.
- 10.2. Employment Group - The full council reviewed the recommendations of the employment group and all items were approved.

Chairman.....

Proceedings finished at 9.30pm.