

Staple Parish Council

Minutes of a virtual, on-line meeting held on Wednesday 9th December 2020, at
7.30pm via Zoom

Councillors present

Cllr S Coulson

Cllr N McCollum (Vice Chair)

Cllr G McCollum

Cllr J Kirk

Cllr R Loukes

Cllr S Chandler

Parish Clerk: J Mount

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies from Cllr. T Bartlett. Cllr N McCollum will Chair the meeting.
Apologies from Cllr. M Conolly

2 Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest

3 Minutes of previous meeting

3.1 Approval of Minutes: Proposed: John Kirk
Seconded: Roger Loukes
Passed unanimously

3.2 Matters Arising: There were none

4 Public Session

4.1 Village Wildlife Proposal

Mrs Shelley Morris...Thanks to those that have shown support. Positive inaugural meeting. Many would like to contribute in some way to the project. Who oversees and is responsible for the recreation ground? Cllr. J. Kirk...The Village Hall & Recreation Ground Management Committee oversees and is responsible for the Recreation Ground. The Parish Council arranges the regular mowing and border trimming. Cllr G McCollum...what would the Wildlife proposal want to do in the area, and how could the Parish Council help? Maybe planting on some verges. Discussion about which areas of the village could be developed and ways of funding. Cllr. R Loukes will represent the Parish Council on the working group. Mrs Shelley Morris ... Who has control of the verges? Cllr J Kirk...surprisingly, KCC have control of the verges. Cllr S. Chandler... KCC do control the verges and maintenance, sub-contracted to DCC and local contractors. There can be some collaboration between everyone. Start in a small way, identify suitable areas and then go forward from there. Mrs Morris...sites have been identified and can be indicated to the Parish Council as well as KCC and DDC. Information to be sent to Cllr S Chandler and she will then forward it to the relevant people. Also looking at other private areas that could be utilised. 2 articles have been written in The Escallop. J. Kirk...There are some small areas that apparently don't belong to anyone...could they be incorporated? There is an area near Cllr S Coulson's land that could be used near the chalk pit, but no one seems to know who actually owns it. Cllr J Kirk...Is it common ground, so

could we use it, how do we stand legally? It already has some natural growth and local wildlife is already using the site, the site is very boggy. Cllr G McCollum proposed that the council recognises the group and is willing to support the project and the group?

Seconded: Sue Coulson

Carried unanimously.

Paul Wells...The Community wild orchard (in a small area behind the container) will be going ahead and they will be doing some work at the far end of the recreation ground, this will not interfere with events happening on the rec. ground. Discussion about whether the Village Wildlife Group could use the area as well...yes.

Caroline Mason...has received information from the Tree Council "branching out fund" that there is the possibility of an offer of trees/fruit trees and plants. Mrs Morris will write an article to be put on to the Staple website by Cllr J Kirk.

Jacqui Brook...could pass contact number of Elliot to R. Loukes ref. grants etc.

5 District Councillor's Report

- 5.1 1. Brexit: A huge amount of work has been going on (rather belatedly in the view of some observers) to prepare the county, district and Dover Town for the end of the transition period on Jan 1st. The process has been complicated by the large number of stakeholders and the continuing uncertainty on whether or not there will be a deal. The Dover MP. Natalie Elphicke, has led a group called 'Keep Dover Clear,' which aims to prevent the town being gridlocked by lorries trying to find back ways to the port. A presentation by KCC and Highways England to an all-member meeting of the Council was given last week. This illustrated the complexity of the documentation which will be required by goods vehicles but also showed the plans for holding vehicles waiting to enter the port if and when a backlog develops. The use of Manston as a last resort remains on the table despite DDC's long expressed concerns about the ability of the A256 (single lane in places and with tight roundabouts) to handle port bound traffic. The overall impression left was that the plans are reasonably sensible, but highly vulnerable to unexpected problems (eg a blockade of Calais by French fisherman if they don't like any 'fishing deal' between the UK and the EU.) A further all-member presentation will be given later this month

As part of longer term arrangements, the Government is planning to open a Border Control Point at a site near Whitfield on July 1st. This has caused great concern among local residents, especially those in the hamlet of Guston. Local DDC councillors are working to mitigate the impact on residents.

2. Budget: The normal timetable for producing the 21/22 Budget is compromised by the large numbers of uncertainties, both in costs and income, where judgements have to be made. It is clear that we will have to draw on some of the reserves which have been accumulated over recent years, and that a number of planned investments, such as the replacement or revamp of Tides, will have to go on the back burner. A skeleton Budget has been agreed but will be subject to a lot of 'tweaks' over the next three months as more information becomes available.

3. Covid: When the second lockdown was introduced we reactivated the Community Hub which had worked very effectively first time round. Demand for support has been much lower than earlier but we have made hundreds of outbound communications, by phone, e-mail and letter, to those identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. The effect of Tier 3 remains to be seen, but cases of infection in Dover are still rising.

4. Formal consultation on the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan has started.

The KCC Plan Bee can be found here:

- <https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/nature-and-biodiversity/kents-plan-bee-pollinator-action-plan>

Report received by the Parish Council

5.2 Cllr. Sue Chandler KCC

Report has been circulated to councillors.

Discussion about the “Plan Bee” document.

Anything Brexit related of which we should aware? There is a cascade management for vehicles at Manston. KCC are looking to enforce traffic management (lorries illegal parking). The roundabouts at Dover will be manned 24 hours to ensure local traffic can get through them. Local haulage firms have received permits to travel directly to the port of Dover. Plans are in place for a “worst case” scenario. The M2 is not an HGV designated route, traffic will be directed down the M20. M2 is designated as a tourist route for cars, not lorries. In the long term, pressure is on to finish the part of the route through Lydden etc. There are no plans to turn the M2 into a smart motorway.

5.3 PCSO (Jacqui Brook)

Has been PCSO for 11.5 years. Monthly PC report is sent each month.

Cllr R Loukes...We would like to see more Police cars in the area, could you attend when the speed watchers are operating? Problems with locations. R. Loukes to send an email to PCSO saying where the PC would like to position speed watchers. Speeders are recorded on sheets. These are forwarded to the Police, they usually answer within minutes. There are 2 SIDs that record speeds through the village. Speeding is one of the main problems with the village and this is the subject that residents are most concerned about. R Loukes to forward to PCSO the most affected roads by speeding. Cllr G McCollum...there have been many accidents, but no action has been taken to make the roads safer. With reference to the pursuit of hare coursing...not surprised to read that it is a problem in rural areas. Rural task team have been doing a lot of work to tackle this problem. There is a lot of it going on, also in other areas. Important to gather the information and pass it on to the Police. PCSO to raise the possibility of using a drone to identify those responsible.

Thanks to PCSO for attending the meeting.

6 Finance

6.1 Financial statement

Proposal to adopt the Bank reconciliation:

Proposer: J Kirk

Seconder: D Kirk

Passed unanimously.

Approval of AGAR (not possible since not ready)

6.2 Cheques to be approved

Cheque No. 200361 Clerk's salary

Proposer: J Kirk

Secunder: R Loukes

6.3 Other financial Items

Appointment of new accountant.

The Clerk advised the meeting that he had explored the possibility of Karen Wright taking on the accounts, but she said she was unable to do it since she was not an accountant. He then approached another accountant at Bachelor Coop, but they said they would be too expensive and not worth paying for. In view of the computer program that is currently being used, it may be unnecessary to employ an actual accountant to do an internal audit (as required). Tony Kilby has offered his services for a modest sum, the Clerk recommended that this arrangement should go ahead.

Passed unanimously

Report on progress of Barclays Bank details

Word has been received from the bank that the new mandate has been set up, however they forgot to include online banking and got the Clerk's details wrong. This has now been rectified and we should hear soon that the new arrangements are in place.

7 **Correspondence Received**

7.1 Staple and Barnsole Parish facilities

7.2 Email from Dover.gov.uk ref. locking the bins at the Village Hall to prevent flytippers using them.

7.3 J Kirk approached by P Wells, could they be adapted to recycling? There are no bins that the DC could empty. They would need to be hired which is very expensive.

8 **Reports**

8.1 Village Hall and Recreation Ground updates

Village Hall opened once but has now been closed again owing to Covid so no pre-school has taken place.

No report on maintenance.

8.2 SID/Speedwatch

Report from R Loukes...more sessions have taken place, some cancelled owing to the weather. Speed information will be reported in The Escallop. The Parish owned SID does not work. R Loukes will try and get an estimate to get it repaired. J Kirk to have a look at it and see if it is repairable. R Loukes to get a new containment bag.

8.3 Highways and Transport Update

Various emails and letters read out to the Councillors and discussed. They will be further discussed at a later meeting when the Highways Improvement Plan is put forward. Yvonne Leach represents the A257 group. The A257 plan was submitted last year to KCC. Discussion about a speed limit possibly being imposed through Shatterling area. KCC cannot do this without significant cost. R Loukes...the figures given do not really make any sense at all. Not sure what the management reasons are for not reducing the speed. Wingham Wildlife Park is a really dangerous spot with children etc. Cllr G McCollum...where does the group's influence end? It stops at the last part before Sandwich. Cllr D Kirk, what is the next move, what would you like the Parish Council to contribute? Possibly funding. We as a Parish Council would be supportive of trying to find a solution. An article concerning the Highway improvement Plan was written by Cllr G McCollum and posted in the Escallop. The Highway Improvement plan will reference the A257 group findings.

Proposed: Cllr G McCollum

Seconded: Cllr J Kirk

Passed unanimously

8.4 Planning Applications/decisions

8.4a 20/00623 Conversion of Kent Barn

Looked at in July and fully supported then. Support again.

Proposed: J Kirk

Seconded: S Coulson

8.4b 20/01338 Extension of single storey rear extension

8.4c 20/001340 Change of use of land to equestrian

8.4d 20/00339 Single storey extension

All supported: Proposed: D Kirk

Seconded R Loukes

Passed unanimously

8.4e 20/00406 Appeal decision, just for information. No need for discussion

8.4e Discussion about email sent by Mr Burrige to Councillors...it does not actually come under Staple jurisdiction. Cllr J Kirk...it does not comply with biodiversity requirements. Proposal for 2 substantial houses on the land is not compatible with the rural neighbourhood. The Parish Council can still provide a comment since the Parish borders the land. Clerk to make representation to the planning portal and to use the phrases, "over development in a rural location" and "unsustainable and inappropriate development in the countryside".

Motion: That the Clerk should comment to the planning portal on behalf of the Parish Council.

Proposed:Cllr G McCollum

Seconded:Cllr S. Coulson

Clerk to let Mr Burrige know the council's position.

8.5 Footpaths

Cllr. S Coulson... query last time about broken stile opposite Little Shatterling Farm; it is on Jeremy Smith's land. Messages have been left asking for him to make contact about the stile.

Horses using a footpath that goes towards Crixhall...the footpath starts at the Church and then veers off to the right. Horses have allegedly been using the footpath. Contact with Julian Plumptre to see who has been given permission to use the footpath. He is not actually allowed to give permission to use the footpath. No further action can be taken at the moment. Discussion about trying to persuade the horse riders not to use the footpaths in wet weather. Should also not be used by cyclists. Cllr S. Coulson has some signs that can be put up to remind people that it is a footpath, not a bridleway. Some footpaths have been blocked off in the past owing to sheep in the fields, but they are now accessible since the sheep have been moved.

9 **Items for discussion**

9.1 Wildlife Village Proposal

Dealt with under item 4

9.2 CCTV for Village Hall Area

R Loukes presented information on commercially available CCTV devices that could be used. Parish Council considered various alternatives and decided to go with the one recommended by Cllr Loukes. Cllr G McCollum...will it be installed high up? Yes, the higher the better. The Village Hall committee to be contacted to see if they would finance a second one for their area. Get the biggest memory card available.

Proposed: N McCollum

Seconded: J. Kirk

9.3 Insurance for Defibrillator...J Kirk contacted treasurer of village Hall committee, anything fixed to the village hall is covered up to £5000 it can be added to their insurance. Cost implications? Wait for D Facey to get back to J Kirk.

9.4 Proposed visit to Kent Renewable Energy Plant 7th/8th/9th December...this is not happening. Postponed to January at the earliest.

9.5 Report on salt bin at Shatterling...It is broken, there was one there, possibly been run over by a tractor. T Bartlett to find out who is going to replace it and the cost of a new one. They were originally bought by the Parish Council.

9.6 Progress on repair of water meter cover...The water Company have been contacted by the Parish Clerk, but have so far not responded.

9.7 Community Grants...amount to be given to local causes...to be deferred to January meeting. Agenda item on its own for January meeting.

10 **Other items to be discussed**

Posts still at the "welcome to Staple" signs...should the posts not be removed? D Kirk to look into chopping them down. Ask KCC to move them to behind the Staple signs. Added to Highway improvement plan.

D Kirk...salt bins can be made from recycled material...approx... £109

The next meeting's Zoom link will be from the Parish Clerk.

Happy Christmas to all members of the Parish Council.

11 **Additional correspondence as permitted by the Chair**

None

12 **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 13th January 2021

DRAFT