

Staple Parish Council

Minutes of an Ordinary Council Meeting, Wednesday 8th July 2020

7.30pm via Zoom (due to Covid 19)

Present: Cllr T Bartlett (in the Chair)
Cllr Mrs Coulson
Cllr N McCollum
Cllr G McCollum
Cllr D Kirk
Cllr J Kirk
Cllr R Loukes
Cllr M Conolly
Cllr S Chandler
Parish Clerk: Lisa Acarnley

1. To receive and approve apologies for absence.

No apologies.

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests.

None

3. To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 9th June 2020 and to report any matters arising therefrom not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

- minutes were approved.
- It was confirmed that District/County Councillor reports would be put in the minutes for printing, but not for notice boards. Councillor reports will available for anyone wishing to read them in full.

4. Report from District Councillor – Mike Conolly

1. Post Covid Recovery: Previous reports have highlighted the financial pressures on the Council as a result of the pandemic. We have now identified five work streams covering financial and other areas. Those involved in these working groups, members and officers, will report the results of their reviews to Cabinet and Council in the autumn. The streams are:

Finance Recovery: this will cover budget predictions and remodelling for the current year and 2021/22, the revised capital programme, the asset disposal programme and income generation.

Business and Economic recovery: this will include the Back to Business Hub, the £2.5 million town centre regeneration fund and the further development of the tourism strategy

Community Recovery: this covers the continuation of the Community Hub at the lower level of demand now experienced and of the Community Fund which is administered on a cross party basis and makes grants to community organisations.

Organisational Recovery: this will include an accommodation review and will seek to develop more agile and flexible working practices.

Future Operating Model: linked to the stream above this will explore how the Council can operate in a leaner and more focussed way.

2. Dover Town Hall - Maison Dieu: We continue to work on the formal application to the Heritage Lottery Fund and hope and expect that this will be granted to allow major regeneration from October 2021 onwards. In the meantime we are committing £400K for essential immediate repairs, mainly prevention of water ingress.

3. Medway Medical School: The shortage of doctors in East Kent may be linked to the absence of a medical school in the county. A medical school is being established in Medway and DDC will commit £5K per annum for five years to support a student.

4. The Aspire project: We are committing to this project. It is a European Regional Development Fund scheme to assist and support (mainly young) people who are unemployed to reach a healthy weight and find employment, especially in areas of deprivation. This allows us to hold onto a £1.2 million grant within the district which was originally to be administered by Hadlow College before they hit financial problems. Our partners are Your Leisure and the Bechange Community Hub, based in Aylesham. There is no financial requirement from DDC but we will allocate one officer to the project.

5. Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning contract: Cabinet has decided on who the contractor will be from the New Year onwards but the name cannot be revealed until Folkestone and Hythe, our partners in the contract, ratify their decision at Council later this month. Assuming this goes through the current level of service will be maintained, though it will place further pressure on the General Fund budget from next year.

Cllr G McCollum asked how long the contract was for. Cllr Conolly advised it was for 5 years, possibly longer.

KCC Member Report by Cllr Sue Chandler – Sandwich Division - July 2020

The focus for the Council is very much on **moving forwards** and the work within the Council by both Councillors and Officers is continuing with speed and urgency. **The Business and Planning Bill** published by the Government on 25th June includes a range of measures designed to help businesses adjust to new ways of working as the country recovers from disruption caused by Covid-19. The measures should support businesses to implement safer ways of working to manage the ongoing risks from Covid-19, in particular the need for social distancing.

The welcomed changes will see more **pubs, restaurants and cafes** allowed to serve customers outside. Changes for the hospitality industry will:

- reduce the consultation period for applications for pavement licences from 28 calendar days to 5 working days, and grant consent after 10 working days if the council does not issue a decision
- set a lower application fee for a pavement and street cafe licence of up to £100
- provide more freedoms for areas to hold car-boot sales and summer fairs

Under the Town and Country Planning Regulations, councils will not be required to get planning permission to use land for the purpose of holding a **market**. The right is time-limited and will cease to have effect from 23rd March 2021.

The regulations will also give people greater freedom over how they use their land by doubling the length of time that temporary structures can be placed on land without needing an application for planning permission. This will allow land to be used for a broad range of purposes such as for car boot sales and summer fayres, as well as allowing pubs and restaurants to be able to use car parks and terraces as dining and drinking areas, using their existing seating licenses. The right is time-limited and will cease to have effect from 1 January 2021.

Councils have been asked to continue to ensure their communities are consulted on licensing applications, that waste is disposed of responsibly, and that access to pavements and pedestrianised areas is not compromised.

We continue to work with **schools** as they welcome back Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils as well and children of key workers and vulnerable children, the numbers of children in school continue to climb and the expected changes to the social distancing measures will make that easier for all schools. A decision of delay the **Kent Test** to October 2020 is being considered to allow Year 5 pupils time in school before taking the test, publicity is reminding parents that they need to register by 1st July if they wish their child to be entered for the Test. **Early Years Providers** are now able to open for all children and we have supported them through out the difficult lockdown period both financially and with guidance and advice.

The Department for Education published comprehensive guidance for schools and councils on providing **vouchers to support pupils eligible for free school meals** over the summer holiday period. The extension of the voucher scheme over the summer represents good news for a number of households. The guidance for schools and councils on free school meals arrangements has also been updated today to include further information on free meals in further education settings, final ordering timescales for the national voucher scheme and ordering vouchers in multiples of £5.

Work is ongoing towards the opening of **Libraries** which will happen as soon as practically possible, starting with a limited service at pilot sites. The re-opening of KCC offices is also being managed, however the benefits of increased use of virtual means of working is being evaluated carefully and will continue to provide environmental and financial benefits in some areas.

Highways work has continued throughout the lockdown period, taking advantage of the quieter roads, so far this year 2,298 potholes have been repaired and 8044 sq.m. of patching has been completed in our District, as always if there are repairs need in your road do make sure you report them, the online reporting tool usually works well. As the roads get busier and more people are cycling KCC has started a publicity campaign asking residents to share the roads safely with a reminder that speed limits are not 'targets'. Highways officers have worked with the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Dover District Council and the Town Team to very swiftly put in place **temporary road closures** for Sandwich to ensure that businesses can open safely utilising Government guidelines on safety.

Finally the financial implications of Covid 19 and the lockdown period on Council finances are being worked through, it is likely that an **interim budget** will be put to full Council in the autumn, the Cabinet Member for Finance is suggesting that the gap will be in the order of £50 - £110m, but there are still many unknowns to be included in the calculations.

There will a consultation to ask the public how they think the council should make up the deficit.

As local groups consider how best to resume their activities in due course a reminder from me that the **Members Grant Fund** can help provide any additional funding you may need to do that safely or help to close that gap there will undoubtedly be in funding for some projects. Applications for amounts up to £5,000 can be considered, do give me a call or email if you need further information.

The KCC website is a source of valuable up to date information on all aspects of the current situation and the changes as we move forward with links to service updates, NHS advice, frequently asked questions and answers and the latest news. As always I am contactable on 07989134576 or at Sue.Chandler@kent.gov.uk.

Sue Chandler
29.06.20

Cllr N McCollum queried how the public will give feedback on the consultation. Cllr Chandler advised it would mainly be online.

Cllr Chandler also confirmed that there are no current plans to remove the booking slots for the waste and recycling centres at present.

Cllr G McCollum mentioned that the government have requested that local councils have a local lockdown plan in place. Cllr Chandler confirmed that there is a final plan which is going to cabinet on 20th July.

Cllr R Loukes asked whether there was any progress on the Give Way sign – from The Street to School Lane. Clerk has already emailed this to KCC and awaiting a reply.

It was also queried whether there was an update on the possibility of putting the speed indicator up by Piglet Place. There is already a post up which was agreed by the landowners, however the property is now up for

sale, so new permission made need to be obtained if this is rectified soon. Cllr Chandler advised that the person who deals with this has been seconded elsewhere, but he will be coming back to this role. Cllr Bartlett asked whether the work being done by Durlock house were now complete. Cllr Chandler to find out.

5. To receive any updates on the Community Speedwatch and Speed Indicating Devices.

Report from Cllr Loukes

Community Speedwatch & SID Report

July 2020

Speedwatch

Since the lock-down due to the pandemic and at the request of Kent Police and Community Speedwatch we have not done any Speedwatch sessions.

Although Speedwatch has started (from June 15th) Staple group has been unable to start as the Police criteria does not allow anyone who is either 70 years or over or is living with someone who is also 70 years and over to participate.

This has ruled out almost all of our active members.

If you have any spare time and meet the above (current) rulings and are worried about speeding in Staple please, PLEASE, contact me. You only need to spare 1 – 2 hours in a month. If no-one comes forwards I have to assume that Staple villagers are happy with the traffic speeds through the village.

We will very happily accept any new volunteers who would like to see a reduction in speeds through the village.

Please contact me if you want further information:- roger43@gmail.com or 01304 812306

SID report (for June)

The Street - east bound

85th Percentile Speed = 33.6 MPH

85th Percentile Vehicles = 10,444 counts

Total Vehicles = 12,287 counts

Average Speed: 25.8 MPH

Lower Road Staple East

85th Percentile Speed = 33.1 MPH

85th Percentile Vehicles = 12,806 counts

Total Vehicles = 15,066 counts

Average Speed: 22.5 MPH

6. Update on Defibrillator and costs

British Heart Foundation are not currently giving the grants (due to Covid situation)

There are a couple of quotes and a £200 grant from London Hearts, which need consideration. It was agreed that Cllr R Loukes and the clerk will look at these and purchase a defibrillator. Cllr J Kirk advised he is happy to make the cabinet to house the defibrillator.

7. Update from Cllr D Kirk regarding Signs and gates.

Cllr D Kirk has removed some of the peeling letters from the signs entering and exiting the village to make them more presentable.

The white gates had a substantial amount of algae on them, so this has been cleaned off. The paint will need doing but doesn't need it just yet. Cllr Kirk has also cleaned off many of the signs around the village.

Cllr Bartlett extended his thanks to Cllr Kirk for his hard work and offered to pay for any cleaner/equipment used. Cllr Kirk suggested a £25 donation be made to the NHS, which was agreed by all.

8. To receive an update from the clerk on planning decisions

- (i) 20/00623 | Conversion of Kent barn and stable block to a residential dwellings (with associated works), erection of two semi-detached and one detached dwelling with associated parking (existing Dutch barn and side extension of Kent barn to be demolished) | Church Farm The Street Staple CT3 1LN – **All councillors agreed to support this application**
- (ii) 20/00678 | Prior approval for the change of use of 2no. agricultural buildings into 5no. residential dwellings | Great Pedding Farm Pedding Lane Shatterling Kent CT3 1JS - **All councillors agreed to support this application**

9. To receive an update on any financial matters, including:

- (i) **Cheques for approval**
 - £1200 – cheque agreed up to a maximum of £1200 for defibrillator
 - £25 - NHS
 - £190 – Clerk salary
 - All cheques approved

10. To receive any footpath updates

Cllr S Coulson reported that the council cleared some of the footpaths now. Enquiries have been made regarding the styles and this is being looked in to. Currently they are not really fit for purpose as they are tricky to climb and there is also no way of getting a dog past them without lifting them over!

Mervyn Laker has cleared the footpath next to the church and thanks were given for this.

11. To receive any highways and transport update

None – not covered elsewhere in minutes.

12. To receive a Village Hall & Recreation Ground report.

Cllr J Kirk advised that the playground is open again. He has put up the risk assessment adhering to the COVID regulations.

It was queried whether the village hall will be open from 1st September for hiring again. Cllr Bartlett will find out and report back.

When the hall opens up again, the taps will need to be run for a period of time to ensure the water is safe for use again.

13. Any confidential items to be discussed.

None

14. Any additional correspondence as permitted by the chairman

It was mentioned that there has been some loud music at the weekends, coming from the field on the right hand side as you go up Mill Lane.

There will be some money available for individual community grants – the amount will be decided at the next meeting.

15. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th September at 7.30pm at Staple Village Hall.

Cllr Bartlett closed the meeting at 9.11pm

Mrs L Acarnley
Clerk to the Council

DRAFT