

MINUTES OF THE STAPLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on **Wednesday 14th February 2024 at 7.30pm** in Staple Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllrs Bartlett (Chairman), J Kirk(Vice-Chairman) Loukes, Martin and Ewart.

IN ATTENDANCE: There were 2 member of the public in attendance, Cllr S Chandler (KCC), PC Bowler and Hannah Biggs-Halles (clerk).

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly our new Neighbourhood Beat Officer, Jon Bowler.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs D Kirk and Davis-Marks, both accepted by the Council unanimously.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

none

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (paper copy available to view) –

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th January 2024 were unanimously agreed as a true record.

3.1. To report and discuss any completed actions/matters arising therefrom not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

3.1.1.Mr Hulme has invited Cllrs to attend a walkthrough of his land and footpaths, date TBC.

Cllr Loukes and Cllr Bartlett will propose Monday 19th.

3.1.2.Cllr Loukes to provide the clerk with support in hopefully speeding up the existing laptop or shopping for options for a replacement.

3.1.3.Updating the HIP is on the clerk's action list but hasn't begun yet.

3.1.4.On behalf of the Council, the clerk objected to DDC's proposal to charge for parking in Ash, and the Ash Level Solar Farm, on the 12th of January, as agreed. The proposal to charge for parking has been delayed in order for a full consultation to take place.

3.1.5.The consultation regarding the footpath between Staple and Goodnestone has now been resolved by the Planning Inspectorate and it will remain a footpath.

Cllrs noted that the path is still being used by horses and motorbikes but gates are not plausible at the Staple end of the path.

4. PUBLIC SESSION (Max. 15 minutes) Opportunity for members of public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 4 minutes and should direct comments to the chairman. Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wishes to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking. A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.

PC Bowler introduced himself to the public and the Council as the Neighbourhood Beat Officer covering Aylesham and all surrounding rural villages, which is a large area. He took the role in October but is hoping to have colleagues recruited to the role soon, to be able to each cover a smaller area.

PC Bowler reports having a keen traffic background so he has been out on the roads doing speed checks. There have been lots of offenses so hopefully this will act as a deterrent. PC Bowler would be happy to receive information about areas that members of the public are concerned about, in order to attend and monitor or use his speed camera.

PC Bowler acknowledged earlier comments about the misuse of footpaths by motorbikes and quadbikes, often without plates. He notes that the police are aware but it poses a particular problem as the riders often won't stop and it would be unsafe to pursue. PC Bowler asks that members of the public still report incidents as there are ways for the police to deter the offenders.

PC Bowler is happy for members of the public to contact him via his email. PC Bowler is also happy to join our Speedwatch team whenever he's available.

The Council thanked PC Bowler for attending.

ACTION: The clerk will request for PC Bowler's email address to be published in The Escallop.

A member of the public commented again on the motorbikes on footpaths.

They also raised concerns regarding footpath E191, which is currently impassable so most people are forced to walk on the wrong side of the fence. This is unfair to the farmer whose land is being used instead of the designated footpath.

ACTION: Council to visit the path and assess. Item to be added to March's agenda.

A member of the public voiced frustration at the awful mess opposite the church, with bins, broken glass and rubbish everywhere. The Council noted the house responsible.

ACTION: Clerk to write to residents regarding the rubbish.

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the drain on Buckland Lane, outside The Forge, which is full of silt, causing the water to run down School Lane.

ACTION: Clerk to report on KCC's online portal, members of the public can do the same.

A member of the public also commented on the junction between Buckland Lane and Mill Road, as the lines are very faded making it unsafe as people aren't stopping.

ACTION: Cllr Loukes to report on KCC's online portal, members of the public can do the same

5. FINANCE

5.1. Financial Statements for January 2024 to include income, expenditure and bank reconciliation as at 31st January 2024.

The Council agreed unanimously to transfer the budgeted £1000 to our reserve account.

Cllr Martin queried what grant process is currently in place. The clerk was unaware of any process currently. Cllr J Kirk reports that there used to be an application form but it is not available on the website. Cllrs agreed that rethinking the grant process to make it open to Staple organisations would be sensible.

ACTION: Clerk to transfer £1000 to reserves account.

ACTION: Clerk to look into grant processes and make a proposal to the Council.

5.2. Bills to be approved (to include those received after the agenda was printed)

5.2.1. Clerk's expenses (£31)

Unanimously agreed.

5.3. Bills to be noted

5.3.1. Clerk's salary

6. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED To review correspondence received since the previous meeting which has not been included in the agenda

6.1. 11/1/24 – A257 Traffic Group Presentation to Cllr Baker

6.2. 12/1/24 – KALC Area Committee – Agenda 24/1

6.3. 22/1/24 – Parishioner contact regarding the blocked drain on Barnsole Road

Highways contractors attended the site and examined the drain and surrounding area. The resident has since had no response from KCC regarding the issue.

ACTION: Cllr T Bartlett to follow up with KCC.

While on the matter, various other highways issues were discussed, including;

Potholes on Mill Road have been filled and road has been reopened, but it is still heavily flooded. ACTION: Updated HIP to include flooding.

Properties in Lower Road still have no access to the front of their properties due to flooding. ACTION: Clerk to email Cllr Chandler again.

Durlock Road still flooding terribly. ACTION: Clerk to email Cllr Chandler again.

Various potholes have been marked out on Durlock Road, but only to a certain point on the road. ACTION: Clerk to email Cllr Chandler detailing where they are and aren't marked.

The Shatterling signs on the A257 towards Sandwich are too low but cannot be raised any further due to highways signs above them. Cllr Chandler suggested bright flowers to draw motorists' eyes to the signs.

ACTION: Cllr Bartlett to liaise with landowner.

6.4. 24/1/24 – DDC Consultation on Dour Street Conservation Area

6.5. 24/1/24 - Openreach - Temporary Road Closure - Staple Road, Wingham - 18th March 2024

6.6. 28/1/24 - Mua Electricity Limited - Temporary Road Closure - Barnsole Road, Staple - 2nd April 2024

6.7. 29/1/24 – KALC Area Committee – Minutes and Draft Parish Charter

6.8. 7/2/24 – Correspondence from a parishioner requesting a grant application form from the Parish Council.

6.9. 7/2/24 – correspondence from a parishioner raising concerns about a tree near their land. ACTION: Clerk to check that this has been forwarded and seek clarification on the location.

7. REPORTS (to be provided in advance in writing where possible please)

7.1. District Councillor – Report circulated with Agenda
(appendix a)

7.2. County Councillor

Cllr Chandler reports that next Monday is budget day. KCC have a net requirement of £1.4 billion for the year ahead, with £577 million budgeted for adult social care. Cllr Chandler reports that it is a balanced budget and all details are available on KCC's website. The budget includes the additional funding from central government.

Cllr Chandler drew to the Council's attention the Kent Parish Council Winter Support Scheme which is open to applications until the 1st of March and can be used for new or existing initiatives to help people in financial hardship.

Cllr Chandler also shared information about the Kent Film Office, which was established in 2016 and aims to promote Kent and sites in Kent for filming, and to make sure that, if filming does take place, that its legal and doesn't cause unnecessary disruption to residents. Filming in Kent brings in £5million in direct spending to Kent economies per year.

Cllr Chandler acknowledged that she has had communication from 1 or 2 parishioners regarding High View Oast on Poulton Lane. The old nursing home has been purchased by KCC to be refurbished and used as a Children's Home for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors. It will house a maximum of 22 under 16s at any time, before the children are transferred to permanent accommodation under the National Transfer Scheme. The children will be supervised 24 hours per day and the other two Reception Centres in Kent have almost no issues with their residents, since they were established in 2016.

KCC are still awaiting a plan from the Home Office, around how they plan to make the National Transfer Scheme effective (asylum seekers transferred within 10 days, as opposed to the current average of 20 days).

Cllr Martin queried the age verification process and Cllr Chandler reassured the Council that there is a 3-stage process, between Border Force, Kent Intake Units and highly knowledgeable Social Workers. It is even now possible to use dental records and bone scans.

There have been concerns voiced regarding the safety of the children in the home, when venturing outside of the home, so PC Bowler has been informed. Most residents have very little or no funds to venture out and are often traumatised and exhausted so won't go out. They will receive language and cultural education in the home.

Cllr Bartlett asked, on behalf of a resident, if it would be ok for them to maintain a verge opposite their property. Cllr Chandler confirmed that, if it is owned by Highways, KCC would actively encourage the growing of wildflowers, it would just need to be included in yearly mowing, usually from May onwards. Cllr Chandler suggested putting the member of the public in touch with her.

ACTION: Cllr Bartlett to pass Cllr Chandler's email address to the member of public.

7.3. Village Hall and Recreation Grounds

Nothing to report.

Cllr Loukes raised concerns regarding the quantity of dog mess on the recreation grounds. The Council discussed whether an additional dog waste bin or a poo bag dispenser could help. Cllr Ewart commented that Wingham have put in place some effective measures.

ACTION: Cllr T Bartlett will seek advice from DDC and the clerk will seek advice from Wingham.

Cllr Ewart noted that the 2-page spread in the Escallop, providing information about the hall, was great.

7.4. Highways (SID, Speedwatch, HIP)

Please see appendix b and item 6.3.

Cllr Bartlett raised that the village finger posts are in need of a clean. Cllr Loukes has volunteered to clean them.

Cllr J Kirk reported a bad leak at the end Barnsole Road which has washed lots of mud onto driveways nearby.

7.5. Footpaths

See item 3.1.1 and discussion in Public Session.

7.6. Planning (Appendix c)

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8.1. To resolve a date for the SPC Annual Parish Meeting

The Council voted unanimously to hold our APM on the 10th of April at 7:30pm, following our APCM which will take place at 7:00pm.

The Council agreed that Barnsole Vineyard would be a great speaker if they would join us. The Council also felt that asking the Vineyard and The Black Pig to provide food and beverages would be a great way to support the local community.

The Chairman noted that we would usually advertise in The Escallop and hand deliver leaflets around the parish.

A member of the public suggested that a short presentation from the Council, about what we do and how parishioners can support and utilise the Council would be helpful.

The Council discussed a budget but noted that, as this will be different from previous years, it would be sensible to ask for quotes and then use them to set a budget, which will help to set budgets for future APMs.

ACTION: Cllr Martin to liaise with Barnsole Vineyard and the Black Pig. The Clerk will start working on ads and leaflets. Clerk will add item to March agenda for agreement.

8.2. To resolve meeting dates for the financial year 2024/25

Agreed unanimously to keep 11 meetings per year. 2nd Wednesday of each month, except August.

8.3. To resolve to seek a quote for ongoing IT support.

Council agreed unanimously that IT support is not necessary.

ACTION: Clerk to contact current website provider to reissue invoice with relevant Council details.

8.4. To resolve to send two representatives to KALC Area Committee meetings (next meeting on 24th April 2024).

The Council agreed unanimously to await the agenda and then decide whether to send representatives to April's meeting.

8.5. To resolve to include an item from the Parish Council in the Village Welcome Pack being compiled by the Escallop team.

The Council agreed unanimously to submit an item for the Welcome Pack

ACTION: The Clerk will draft an item to be agreed at March's meeting.

8.6. To resolve to set up signatories on the bank account with online banking, to enable online payments.

The Council agreed unanimously to have our two existing signatories set up with online banking.

ACTION: The Clerk will liaise with Barclays to start the process.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 13th March 2024

- The deadline for Agenda items to be included is the end of the day on the 5th of March 2024.

The meeting was closed at 21:01pm.

Dover District Council Monthly Report for Little Stour and Ashstone



Dover District Lotto celebrates 5th Birthday

The Dover District Lotto has raised £205,581 for over 140 local charities and community groups. Players can choose from 140 registered good causes to support in the district. For every £1 spent on the Lotto, 50p goes directly to the chosen good cause and a further 10p to DDC Community Grants fund. Has your organisation/group signed up for this?

Housing Needs Survey

Thank you to those who took part in the survey. The released findings in the survey are vital for how we provide housing and policies for the future.

Car Parking charges

A reminder to residents that car parking charges will increase by 20p per hour in the coming months in all DDC car parks. A decision concerning rural car parks has been delayed whilst a car parking review takes place.

Kearsney Abbey

Kearsney Abbey has become a Wedding venue.

Solar Farm at Ash levels

There is a planning application by Statkraft for a very large solar farm at Ash levels. If anyone would like to comment on the planning application the opportunity to comment has been extended to 15th February on the DDC planning website page. A decision on the application is expected to be made by DDC's planning committee in March.

Garden Waste bags

A polite reminder to please renew your subscription to ensure your new garden waste bin is supplied by 1st April.

Dover Beacon

This is progressing to the next stage and it's hoped the archaeological dig will commence soon.

Do remember we are here for you and please do get in touch with any concerns.

*Trevor Bartlett and Martin Porter
District Councillors*

Community Speedwatch & SID Report

February 2024

Speedwatch

We have requested Speedwatch locations in Durlock Road to replace the site lost last year.

Kent Police have now approved two locations near to the Staple Farm Mews and their management committee has also approved Speedwatch to use those locations. We have had a session with traffic travelling towards Wingham in February and 3 drivers were reported for speeding ~ one doing 40 mph travelling towards Ash.

Tuesday we had a session with drivers driving into Staple and one driver was reported for doing 42 mph.

We now have sessions booked to the end of March.

Be aware that Ash has started Speedwatch.

SID

The SID has been working along The Street for traffic travelling towards Wingham.

Appendix c – Planning

1. For discussion

REF. #	ADDRESS	PLANNING FOR	COMMENT S	DATE FOR SUBMISSIO N	STATUS
23/00094	1 Bartlett Close, Staple, CT3 1SR	Formation of a vehicular access and associated parking	The Council noted that noth DDC and highways have recommended refusal due to sightlines on the highway and the quantity of parking in the area. The Council agreed unanimously to oppose the application. Comments submitted 16/2/24	28/2/2024	AWAITING DECISION

2. Applications received after agenda was printed

REF. #	ADDRESS	PLANNING FOR	COMMENTS	DATE FOR SUBMISSION	STATUS
24/00106			To be added to March's agenda.		

3. Decisions received from Dover District Council

REF. #	ADDRESS	PLANNING FOR	COMMENTS	STATUS
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