

## **MINUTES OF THE STAPLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Held on **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.30pm** in Staple Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Bartlett (Chairman), J Kirk(Vice-Chairman) Loukes, D Kirk, Davis-Marks, Martin (virtual attendant) and Ewart

**IN ATTENDANCE:** There were 8 members of the public in attendance and Hannah Biggs-Halles (clerk).

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None

### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING–**

**3.1.** The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12th July 2023 were agreed as a true record, proposed by Cllr Davis-Marks and seconded by Cllr D Kirk

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

3.2.1. The Clerk updated the Council as we now have access to the old Clerk's @yahoo email address and have received a memory stick with lots of old files. There are still documents missing.

3.2.2. Cllr Davis-Marks and the Clerk have not done so yet but will create uniform email signatures as agreed at July's meeting.

3.2.3. There has been some confusion over the Layham Planning Application discussed at July's meeting – it has now been withdrawn as it was a duplicate of a previously approved application.

3.2.4. The fly-tipping on Mill Road which was discussed at July's meeting has now been cleared, after a delay.

**The meeting was then adjourned at 19:42 for the following items;**

**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.

**4.1.** The owner of Layham Garden Centre provided us with an update on the business, since the extension was built; they have secured someone to run the café, which will be called The Potting Shed Café, and are hoping it will be open around October/November time. It will serve breakfasts, lunches and Sunday dinners.

They are currently waiting on BT to install the relevant wiring to enable Wi-Fi and phone lines. The intention is for the business to start small and grow slowly, with more polytunnels and greenhouses to be installed as soon as possible. There are ideas to make use of other outbuildings and 6.5 acres of their land has been entered into a call for sites for development but will only be developed if requested by the Parish Council.

**The meeting was reconvened at 19:53 to transact the remaining business.**

### **5. FINANCE**

**5.1.** Financial statements for June, July, August 2023 (Appendix a) to include income, expenditure and bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 are not currently available as the clerk has no access to online banking and the Council has no up to date bank statements. There will be produced for October's meeting.

**5.2.** It was discussed at July's meeting that we could switch to Monzo or Starling, to make banking processes less cumbersome but that isn't an option as you have to be registered with Companies House to open their business accounts. The Clerk noted that Unity is a popular option among other Parish Councils but the same problem still occurs with regards to changing signatories, adding

administrators etc. Cllr Davis-Marks suggests monitoring other options as Barclays isn't satisfactory.

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

5.3.1. Clerk's expenses and Salary

5.3.2. NALC Membership

Cllr J Kirk proposed to approve both and Cllr Davis-Marks seconded

**5.4. Bills to be ratified**

5.4.1. Mobile phone for clerk – included in expenses above and already agreed in July's meeting.

5.4.2. Padlock paid for by Cllr D Kirk – Bill for time – Cllr Davis-Marks proposed, Cllr Loukes seconded

5.4.3. Insurance – paid due to emergency nature

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

**6.1. District Councillor**

Cllr Bartlett provided an update from DDC, included in appendix a.

**6.2. County Councillor**

No report received

**6.3. Village Hall and Recreation Grounds**

Cllr J Kirk reported a change in personnel on the Village Hall Committee, following the resignation of the Treasurer. The Secretary has now taken over the role of Treasurer and there is now a new Secretary in post.

Staple Wildlife Friendly Village have planted the area around the front of the Village Hall and the VH Committee have provided more funds to complete the planting.

Bookings are slow and there is little money coming in without the Pre-School.

The Chairman requested a brief update from the Chairperson of the Pre-School.

The Pre-School is still seeking funds to reopen but very little progress is being made. The Chairperson asked that if anyone had experience in raising money or some time to spare it would be very much appreciated. Cllr Davis-Mark suggested Crowdfunding.

**6.4. Highways (SID, Speedwatch, HIP, worrying speeds on Lower Road)**

The full Speedwatch Report will be included in appendix b.

The designated Kent Speedwatch Police Officer attended the village's most recent Speedwatch session to check that the correct process is being followed. He was very happy and reported that the scheme coordinators are now talking about progress on a Kent-wide basis.

The scheme is all about prevention and education and no one was caught speeding on the most recent session. The Chairman thanked the whole Speedwatch team, who are all volunteers, for their hard work and commitment.

The SID was in place on Lower Road and recorded high speeds of 75mph and 70 mph, both in the early hours. The average speeds was 31mph. The vehicle count was low due to roadworks.

Correspondence has been received, querying the new 20mph speed limit in Wingham compared with our lack of speed control through the village and, particularly, on Lower Road.

Our HIP (which will be posted on the PC website) identified various solutions for the village, but they are very expensive and we have a small precept.

The 20mph speed limit in particular, has to be justified to the police and KCC and we were told it wasn't justifiable.

There are more repeaters coming but most of our requests are denied. We cannot have double white lines or double yellows on the junction of The Street and School Lane, despite the dangerous parking.

There are further concerns about parking on the bend by Layham Garden Centre and regarding the worn away verges on Mill Road and Mill Lane, particularly by the triangle field on front of Mill House, where there is nowhere for pedestrians to stand out of the road. The PC has no solution but will continue to discuss the issue.

There is money put aside from the precept for HIP but it doesn't cover the big projects.

A member of the public queried the Community Infrastructure Levy (funds from local developments) but it is a scheme that hasn't been adopted by DDC so DDC has complete control over s106 funds.

Minutes from the A257 Action Group meeting on the 9th of September will be available soon.

## **6.5. Footpaths**

A member of the public from Goodnestone joined us to discuss the footpath between Godnestone and Staple, which was last year proposed as a bridleway. There were a lot of objections for various reasons; a bridleway already runs parallel, the chalk would become incredibly muddy, it's not wide enough, it's not safe for horses in the winter.

There were over 600 signatures on a petition to stop the footpath being changed to a bridleway.

KCC agreed with the evidence of an independent assessor, so various members of the public compiled their own evidence, including old maps, the remain of an old pedestrian gate etc.

KCC had to send the matter to the Secretary of State to be decided. They have appointed an inspector to visit and assess all the evidence.

A recent letter received by all who objected, outlines a 12 week process of decision making (began on the 15th of August) KCC had 2 weeks to put in their case for the bridleway but have instead, decided to remain neutral and leave it to the inspectorate to decide.

Members of the public who objected before have until the 10th of October to submit further comments and can read the opposing parties comments from the 10th of October.

Staple and Goodnestone PCs haven't been consulted.

A number of people who protested have asked to be included in an inspection which is due to take place on the morning of the 12th of december, time tbc.

Footpath report;

The footpath from Staple to Crixhall Court is well maintained.

Hume Estate paths require attention, many haven't been reinstated.

Sally and Tony's footpath, which runs around their estate and ends on school lane is well maintained.

The footpath running to the church is dangerous and nowhere near the government's required width.

The footpath from Linton across from Durlock Road to Lower Road orchard is inaccessible.

KCC have cleared the path which runs along behind The Street but not others.

Cllr Loukes mentioned a system used in other parishes in which there are designated Path Walkers who report back to a single contact and wondered whether Staple could establish something similar.

It was suggested that Cllr Loukes contact KCC's Footpath Officer regarding the path at Linton and the Hume Estate's footpaths.

There is Public Rights Of Way Landowner Responsibilities Document available from gov.uk

Cllr Davis-Marks suggests cataloguing the footpaths but this is already done. The Chairman requests for Cllr Loukes to sort maps and the catalogue for all Cllrs and the Clerk.

## **6.6. Planning (Appendix b)**

### **6.7. Visit to Biomass Plant**

Report included in the Escallop and available on request.

## **7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **7.1. Staple Parish Council vacancy**

The vacancy has been filled by Cllr Lynne Ewart of Shatterling

### **7.2. Employment Committee**

As advised by KALC, the Council has established an Employment Committee, with both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman on the Committee. This was agreed by all Cllrs. The Employment Committee will contact KALC to put together the Clerk's contract.

7.2.1. HBH contract and PAYE etc.

As above.

### **7.3. Village Hall Grant**

The Village Hall has requested a £1000 grant from the Parish Council to help with running costs.

The Chairman queried why it is higher than usual and the Cllr J Kirk confirmed that running costs are considerably higher than they used to be. This was proposed by Cllr Davis-Marks and Seconded by Cllr Ewart - all Cllrs agreed to issue the grant of £1000. The Clerk will facilitate.

### **7.4. Traveller sites in the village**

The Chairman reported that there seems to have been no progress with DDC. Caris??? Has received an email from DDC's Planning Officer containing a comprehensive review of the situation opposite Sparrowhatch.

Cllr Davis-Marks has been told by the travellers on the triangle that they have routed water from the building site but it is suspected that this was without the site manager's permission. A member of the public was told at DDC's most recent meeting that Planning Enforcement will happen but there is a strong feeling in the Parish that DDC aren't taking adequate action. Cllr Davis-Marks has volunteered to the lead on the issue going forward. The Chairman will forward fall relevant details. Cllr Davis-Marks and the Chairman are going to speak to the builders this week regarding the water supply.

**7.5. Damage to hedges and verges on Mill Road and Mill Lane from large lorries**

Discussed briefly in highways – it is felt that there is a real risk to safety of pedestrians as there is nowhere to stand now the verges are wearing away. There doesn't seem to be a tangible solution and the builders are only contracted to return the road to its previous state at the end of the building process.

It has also been raised that the builders are driving too fast en route to site which is putting cyclists at risk. Cllr Davis-Marks and the Chairman will raise this concern when they speak to the builders.

**8. QUESTIONS, ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS** To include items raised and noted at the meeting.

- 8.1.** There has been correspondence from a member of the Parish regarding water leaks in the area - one outside Barnsole Vineyard and one on Durlock Road. The member of the Parish has reported the water leaks but had no acknowledgement. The Chairman noted that Southern Water have been in the area and have definitely worked on the Durlock Road leak.
- 8.2.** We have received paperwork from Barclays which must be returned ASAP to keep our account active. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will sign this evening and the Clerk will send it.
- 8.3.** The Chairman raised correspondence from June 26<sup>th</sup> in which all Cllrs were asked to fill in a DPI form. The Clerk is going to resend DPI forms to all and ensure they are filed with DDC.

**The public were asked to leave to address the below confidential items.**

**9. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED** All members of the public will be excluded at this point under Section 1 of the 1960 LGA Act

**9.1.** Discussions of Clerk's salary

Unanimous vote in favour of raising the Clerk's salary in line with SCP 11 on the SLCC pay scale and backdating to the start of her employment.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Staple Village Hall

**Meeting ended at 21:26**

## APPENDIX A – DDC September Update.

GARDEN WASTE will no longer be collecting green sacks instead from Monday 1st April they will be replaced with a 240-litre wheeled bin (same size as your recycling and waste bins), this is in line with all our neighbouring authorities and widely across England.

The collection crews are exposed to increased risk of musculoskeletal injuries when these sacks exceed the maximum permitted weight of 20kg and it is difficult to monitor and enforce (without a member of staff checking every sack presented).

There are currently approximately 9,300 subscribers to the garden waste collection service and letters explaining this in more detail will be sent.

The current DDC annual subscription fee is £58 and will remain unchanged, a second or further bins will be charged at £40 each, a £25 voucher for a free home composter will be offered to residents that cannot access the service.

Another change that has been made by DDC Cabinet is the COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME for 2023/2024.

In line with the Council's Cost of Living Plan, it is proposed that the existing community grant scheme is refocused, in line with the Council's pledge in supporting those most in need, while the rise in the cost of living will impact most households, the impact will be greatest on those living in poverty and those on low incomes, therefore following a review it has been approved that the scheme is rebranded as the Cost of Living Community Impact Fund.

Applicants can apply for between £100 & £2500, in order to spread the available funding more widely.

Funding will not be by area but instead available through the district, for more information contact Elliott Allen at DDC [Elliot.Allen@DOVER.GOV.UK](mailto:Elliot.Allen@DOVER.GOV.UK)

The Leader of DDC Cllr Kevin Mills has confirmed that doing nothing at TIDES in Deal is not an option and plans are being discussed to redevelop the ageing leisure centre.

## APPENDIX B – Speedwatch Report

### Community Speedwatch & SID Report

#### Speedwatch

During the period mid July to beginning of September we held 4 sessions and only recorded 4 vehicles exceeding the target speed limit of 35 mph or above.

One was not valid and the other 3 were first time offenders.

This was school holiday time so not so many vehicles were passing by at the times we held our sessions.

As of beginning of September Lower Road is open through to the Woodnesborough Road so I expect considerably more vehicles along this road now the pipes have been laid.

Lower Road is still a hot spot for speeding and I note we have received an email regarding measures seen to be necessary ~ if only we had the money and agreement from KCC.

#### SIDs

##### Piglet Place opposite Staple Farm

July

85th Percentile Speed = 38.2 MPH  
85th Percentile Vehicles = 6,410 counts  
Max Speed = 75.0 MPH on 28/07/2023  
Total Vehicles = 7,541 counts  
Average Speed: 31.0 MPH

August

85th Percentile Speed = 38.1 MPH  
85th Percentile Vehicles = 4,090 counts  
Max Speed = 70.0 MPH on 07/08/2023 04:17:09  
Total Vehicles = 4,812 counts  
Average Speed: 28.8 MPH

The SID is currently located on the "new pole" opposite Apollo along The Street.  
Stats for part of August and September will be available next month.  
The SID will be moved to Lower Road next month.

APPENDIX B - PLANNING

1. For discussion

REF. #	ADDRESS	PLANNING FOR	COMMENT S	DATE FOR SUBMISSION	STATUS
23/00923	Hambleton Lodge Lower Road Staple CT3 1LH	Erection of two storey side extension (existing side extension demolished)	Support proposed by Cllr J Kirk Seconded by Cllr Loukes	Extension requested to 14/9/23	AWAITING DECISION
23/00952	Holly Cottage Barnsole Road Staple CT3 1LD	Erection of detached carport with workshop above	Support Proposed by Cllr J Kirk Seconded by Cllr Davis-Marks	Extension requested to 14/9/23	AWAITING DECISION
23/01062	Rosedale Kennels Rusham Road Shatterling CT3 1JL	Creation of road entrance and car park	Require more information to make a representation. Clerk to request information and extension for further discussion	Extension requested to 12/10/23	AWAITING DECISION

2. Applications received after agenda was printed

REF. #	ADDRESS	PLANNING FOR	COMMENTS	DATE FOR SUBMISSION	STATUS
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3. Decisions received from Dover District Council

REF. #	ADDRESS	PLANNING FOR	COMMENTS	STATUS
23/00694	Layham Garden Centre, Lower Road Staple CT3 1LH	Erection of a dwelling with parking	Supported by SPC Comments submitted 13/7/2023	APPLICATION WITHDRAWN
23/0088 4	Black Pig Barnsole Road Staple CT3 1LE	Erection of illuminated sign. Handpainted signage to elevations.	Supported by SPC Comments submitted 13/7/2023	GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
23/0088 3	Black Pig Barnsole Road Staple CT3 1LE	Display of illuminated and non-illuminated fascia and pylon signs SIGN A - ONE X NEW PICTORIAL TO EXISTING GIBBET AND LINOLITES SIGN B - TWO X NEW AMENITY SIGN FIXED BACK TO BACK ON POST SIGN C - ONE X NEW SIGN WRITTEN HOUSENAME AND LOGO SIGN D - ONE X NEW SIGNWRITTEN HOUSENAME AND LOGO SIGN E - ONE X NEW AMENITY SIGN SIGN F - FOUR X EXISTING LANTERNS TO BE CLEANED AND RELAMPED	Supported by SPC Comments submitted 13/7/2023	GRANT CONSENT

Noted by Cllr Loukes that there are two longstanding applications; Warren House is still awaiting a decision and Crofters Lodge has been refused outline permission.