

MAY 2024.

MINUTES OF THE STAPLE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 8th May 2024 at 7:30pm in Staple Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllrs Bartlett, Kirk, Loukes, Martin and Ewart.

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

2024-25.01.01 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies received from Cllr Davis-Marks and accepted by the Council.

2024-25.01.02 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None.

2024-25.01.03 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Bartlett stood down to vacate the Chair.

Cllr Kirk proposed Cllr Bartlett as Chairman for 2024-25. Cllr Ewart seconded and the Council agreed unanimously to re-elect Cllr Bartlett as Chairman.

2024-25.01.04 – ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllrs Kirk and Martin were both willing to stand for the role of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Loukes proposed Cllr Martin and Cllr Ewart seconded.

The Chairman called a vote by show of hands. Cllr Martin received 2 votes, Cllr Kirk received one vote. The Chairman and Cllr Martin abstained from voting. Cllr Martin was elected as the Vice-Chairman for 2024-25.

2024-25.01.05 - TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE the appointment of councillors in the relevant Lead roles.

The Council agreed to have the usual Highways and Footpaths Leads, as well as new Finance and Planning Leads. There will also be a Village Hall representative.

Cllr Martin proposed Cllr Davis-Marks as the Planning lead and Cllr Loukes seconded.

Cllr Kirk proposed Cllr Loukes as Highways and Footpaths Lead and Cllr Martin seconded.

The Chairman proposed Cllr Ewart as Finance Lead and Cllr Martin seconded.

The Chairman proposed Cllr Kirk as Village Hall Representative and Cllr Martin seconded.

The above appointments were all agreed unanimously by the Council.

2024-25.01.06 - TO RESOLVE to adopt the NALC Model Standing Order 2018 – revised 2022.

The Council discussed whether changes can be made to the Standing Orders. The Clerk confirmed that the bold items in the Standing Orders are Statutory but everything else can be amended.

Cllr Martin proposed to adopt the Standing Orders and Cllr Loukes seconded. The Council agreed unanimously to adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 – revised 2022.

2024-25.01.07 - TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE TO APPOINT A THIRD BANK SIGNATORY AND CHANGE BANK MANDATE TO REQUIRE 2 PERSON AUTHENTICATION

Cllr Kirk proposed the motion and Cllr Martin seconded. The Council resolved unanimously to appoint a third bank signatory and to update the mandate to require two-person authentication.

The Council agreed to instate the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Finance Lead as the three bank signatories.

ACTION: Clerk to correspond with Barclays to obtain the necessary documentation to action the changes.

Initial: TJB

2024-25.01.08 - MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (paper copy available to view)

2024-25.01.08.01 - To approve any amendments and sign minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th April 2024.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed unanimously by the Council and duly signed by the Chairman.

2024-25.01.08.02 - To report and discuss any completed actions/matters arising therefrom not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2024-25.01.08.02.01 – Planning Application – Land South East of Mill Road

The Notice of Planning Application that should legally be displayed at the site has been removed multiple times. DDC have been informed on each occasion and the Notice has been replaced each time. DDC have begun the consultation period again to reflect that the Notice kept being removed.

The Chairman reported that the frustration at lack of action has been expressed in the strongest terms to DDC but they won't give out information on the progress of the situation as there are legal processes being followed.

The Local Plan would exclude the possibility of planning application being granted but it won't go to Cabinet until October and then has to come back to full Council for approval.

The Council discussed inviting a Planning representative to attend a meeting.

The Council have submitted comments on the Planning Portal.

2024-25.01.08.02.02 – Cllr Vacancy

Following the resignation of Cllr D Kirk, a Notice of Vacancy was posted. The Council must wait until the 16th of May and, if no election is requested by the public, the Council can co-opt.

2024-25.01.08.02.02 – Harmer and Sons 2024/25 Proposal

The Clerk has confirmed with Harmer and Sons the details of the quote for the current year.

2024-25.01.09 – PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the footpath to Crixhall Farm and the fact that some horse riders have been chastised for using it. They felt that, considering the lack of bridleways in the area, it isn't unreasonable for riders to use footpaths responsibly.

They also raised frustration at the planning documents that are available on the Planning Portal and the fact that they are quite often a visual representation from the architect but aren't accurate.

Several local buildings aren't how they were presented in the documents. Cllr Martin acknowledged their point and agreed. This is part of the reason why a Planning Lead has been introduced. It will be their role to carefully look at all documents provided.

There were also concerns raised about loose dogs running out from the triangle. The Council believes they belong to a horse owner and are loose on the yard.

2024-25.01.10 – FINANCE

2024-25.01.10.01 - Financial Statements for April 2024 to include income, expenditure and bank reconciliation as at 30th April 2024.

The Council received the report and requested it be printed larger next time.

2024-25.01.10.02 – Bills to be approved

2024-25.01.10.02.01 - Clerk's expenses (£31) and overtime (£20.25)

2024-25.01.10.02.02 - The Black Pig APM Nibbles - £100

2024-25.01.10.02.03 - KALC 2024-25 Subscription - £296.68

2024-25.01.10.02.04 - Zurich - £396.80

Cllr Kirk proposed all and Cllr Ewart seconded. The Council agreed unanimously.

2024-25.01.10.03 - Bills to be noted

2024-25.01.10.03.01 - Clerk's salary

Initial: TUD

2024-25.01.11 – CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

2024-25.01.11.01 - 2/4/24 – Mazars – AGAR 2023/24 Guidance

2024-25.01.11.02 - 6/4/24 – Zurich – Renewal

2024-25.01.11.03 - 9/4/24 – KALC – Subscription Renewal

2024-25.01.11.04 - 24/4/24 – TfSE – Your Voice Survey

2024-25.01.12 - REPORTS

2024-25.01.12. 01 – District Councillor – appendix a

The above report was shared with Cllrs by email with the agenda.

2024-25.01.12.02 – County Councillor

Cllr Chandler apologised for missing our APM due to a conflict of dates.

Plan B are Supporting No Mow May and members of the public as well as bodies can sign up.

KCC are currently working with the port and Kent Resilience Forum around the Electronic Entry System to be introduced in October. There is still potential for it to cause considerable disruption on local roads. Operation Brock was in place over Easter and there was no congestion.

Cllr Chandler reminded the Council about CrowdFund Kent which is open until October for local projects with a focus on disadvantaged rural communities. Up to 50% of total funding available.

The Council queried the recent closure of The Street without notice. This was emergency works so KCC can't stop it. Unfortunately the signage is placed by a separate body, meaning that if the work is completed in 2 days but it was expected to take 5, the signs will remain present until the requested removal date.

The Council asked whether it is worth complaining to utility companies re works vehicles blocking the road, and unpredictable working hours. Cllr Chandler requested that KCC be copied in.

Cllr Chandler reports that there is an update on High View Oast available on her Facebook page and website.

2024-25.01.12.03 – Highways – appendix b

Cllr Loukes also reported that there is an A257 Group meeting coming up which he is unable to attend. The Chairman offered to attend if another representative isn't attending.

Cllr Loukes also reports that various footpaths around the Parish have still not been cleared, despite contact with the landowners. Cllr Loukes will contact them again and Cllr Chandler advised that this can be reported to KCC, who will contact the landowner. If the issue is repeatedly reported, KCC can carry out the work and charge the landowner. Cllr Loukes will contact KCC if necessary.

ACTION: Cllr Loukes to contact landowners again.

2024-25.01.12.04 – Kent Police appendix c

The above newsletter was shared with Cllrs by email on the 23rd of April.

PC Bowler has been provided with meeting dates for the year and will attend where possible.

Cllr Loukes also attended a local meet and greet with Kent Police, mostly regarding the recent Anti-Social Behaviour in Ash. Various actions have been taken and DDC will be installing CCTV in certain locations.

2024-25.01.12.05 – Village Hall – appendix d

2024-25.01.13 - TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE the appointment of an internal auditor for the purposes of the 2023/24 AGAR.

Mr Kilbee is willing to carry out an audit on both 2022-23 and 2023-24 finances, at a rough cost of £40 each.

Cllr Kirk proposed and Cllr Ewart seconded. The Council unanimously agreed to appoint Mr Kilbee as our Internal Auditor.

Initial:.....

TED



2024-25.01.14 - TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE the issuing of a certificate of exemption in relation to the 2023/24 AGAR.

As the Council's payments and receipts for the year are below £25,000, we can declare ourselves exempt from a full audit.

Cllr Ewart proposed and Cllr Kirk seconded. The Council agreed unanimously to issue a Certificate of Exemption.

2024-25.01.15 - TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE plans for D-Day 80.

The Council outlined the basic plans for the occasion – lighting of the beacon at 9:15pm, fly the flag and a short service by Rev. Michael Morris. Nibbles and refreshments will be served in the Village Hall from 8:00pm, to be paid for using the Parish Council Winter Support Scheme funds and supplied by The Black Pig. The Council agreed unanimously.

2024-25.01.16 - TO RESOLVE to formulate a comprehensive asset list.

The Council agreed to produce a list and provided suggestions of what should be included.

2024-25.01.17 - TO RESOLVE to accept Zurich Insurance renewal quote, with the view of updating the cover once the asset list is complete.

The Council agreed unanimously to accept the renewal quote and make payment of £396.80.

2024-25.01.18 - TO RESOLVE to advertise for the role of Clerk and RFO.

The Council agreed unanimously to advertise the role.

2024-25.01.19 - TO RESOLVE to have stapleparishcouncil.co.uk registered to the clerk's email address.

The Council agreed unanimously.

2024-25.01.20 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 11th June 2024

- The deadline for Agenda items is the end of the day on the 2nd of June 2024.

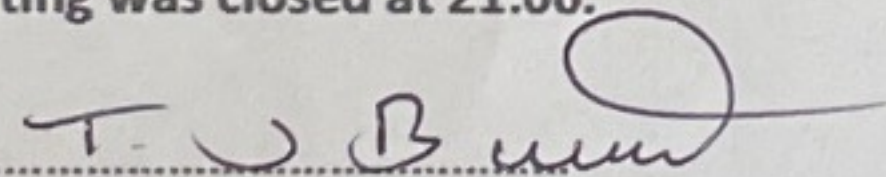
2024-25.01.21 –

Cllr Ewart queried whether there should be a planning application on the agenda this week. The clerk checked and confirmed that the Council haven't been consulted on any planning applications.

2024-25.01.22 -

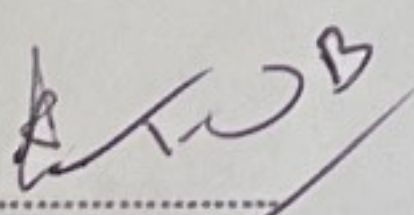
The Council presented the outgoing Clerk with a card and flowers and thanked her for her hard work over the last 11 months.

The meeting was closed at 21:06.

Signed: 
Chairman, Cllr T Bartlett

Date: 13 NOV 2024

Please note, these Minutes remain as draft Minutes until the Parish Council approves them at their next Parish Council Meeting.

Initial: 

Dover District Council Monthly Report for Little Stour and Ashstone



Parish Assemblies

We would like to thank everyone for the contributions and hospitality shown at the recent Parish Assemblies. Thank you so much for all who have worked to make our villages vibrant and active.

Anti-social behaviour

The issues of anti-social behaviour are still with us and centred around the village of Ash. We are working with the police and social services to address these issues. There has been a slight delay in putting up CCTV cameras due to availability, however we've had confirmation from DDC that they will be installed very soon. As a reminder, it's vitally important to contact the police to report any incident.

Removal of litter and debris

Recently, 14,260kgs of litter and debris was removed from the A2 between the Duke of York's roundabout and the Whitfield roundabout on both sides of the road (including the slip roads) and Jubilee Way leading up from the eastern docks. The annual cost of picking up litter in the district is over £1million. We're therefore incredibly grateful to those who organise picking up litter within our villages and rural areas.

The Big Fix

The Dover Repair Café is hosting the national 'Big Fix' from 6.30-8.30pm on 29th May at Biggin Hall.

The Roman Painted House

DDC are working with the Roman Painted House Trust to re-open this key site. It's hoped it will be open to the public by the end of July. Entrance will be free at weekends until the end of October.

Reporting potholes

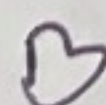
Potholes are the responsibility of KCC and the process of mending them has been accelerated through new funding. Please continue to report any potholes to KCC.

Annual General Meeting of DDC

This meeting will take place on 22nd May at 6pm at the Council Chambers. Everyone is warmly invited.

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

Trevor Bartlett and Martin Porter
District Councillors
May 2024

Initial: TW 

Appendix b –

Footpath Report
May 2024

Hopefully the paths will be drying out over the next week or so.

There has been no progress with the reinstatement of paths as requested in recent letters to landowners.

I attended a recent Footpaths Officers meeting ~ organised by the Ramblers Association ~ along with Mike Vaile from Wingham at Maidstone attended by Graham Rusling from Kent CC. He is head of PROW.

He was less than positive about clearing footpaths and reinstating paths. He was suggesting that stiles should be replaced by gates for easier access (especially for disabled users) and also since footpaths are no longer cleared by KCC that "we" should do it. This entails volunteers using their own equipment to clear existing footpaths but not to do reinstatement.

KCC will contribute 25% for material for stile replacement. Currently there are some free gates available and landowners would be required to fit them.

Dog poo is a continuing problem ~ some folk are bagging the poo but then dropping the bag on the footpath or throwing it into the bushes.

Community Speedwatch & SID Report
May 2024

Speedwatch

Over the last month we held 4 sessions and 15 vehicles were reported for travelling 35 mph or more on our village roads.

12 vehicles were reported for speeding.

One vehicle was on trade plates which I did not enter correctly into the Police system; this has now been corrected. This reflects on the garage which operates with these special plates.

Three letters were sent out ~ all for speeding twice in Kent.

On our last co-ordinators meeting in April there were 1435 volunteers in Kent. During the month 71141 vehicles passed the Speedwatch teams and 4108 vehicles were observed speeding and of those 78 were reported to the DVLA for Tax offences. In June we have a conference at the Police HQ in Maidstone and members of our team will be attending. In a long term analysis speeding has decreased. In 2023 it was 12.74% and so far this year it is 6%. 94.2% of vehicles do not offend again!

SID

The SID has been working close to Piglet Place for traffic travelling towards Staple.

85th Percentile Speed = 34.0 MPH

85th Percentile Vehicles = 21,854 counts

Max Speed = 60.0 MPH on 11 April 2024 at 16:35

Total Vehicles = 25,710 counts

50th Percentile Speed: 28.2 MPH

Average Speed: 27.6 MPH

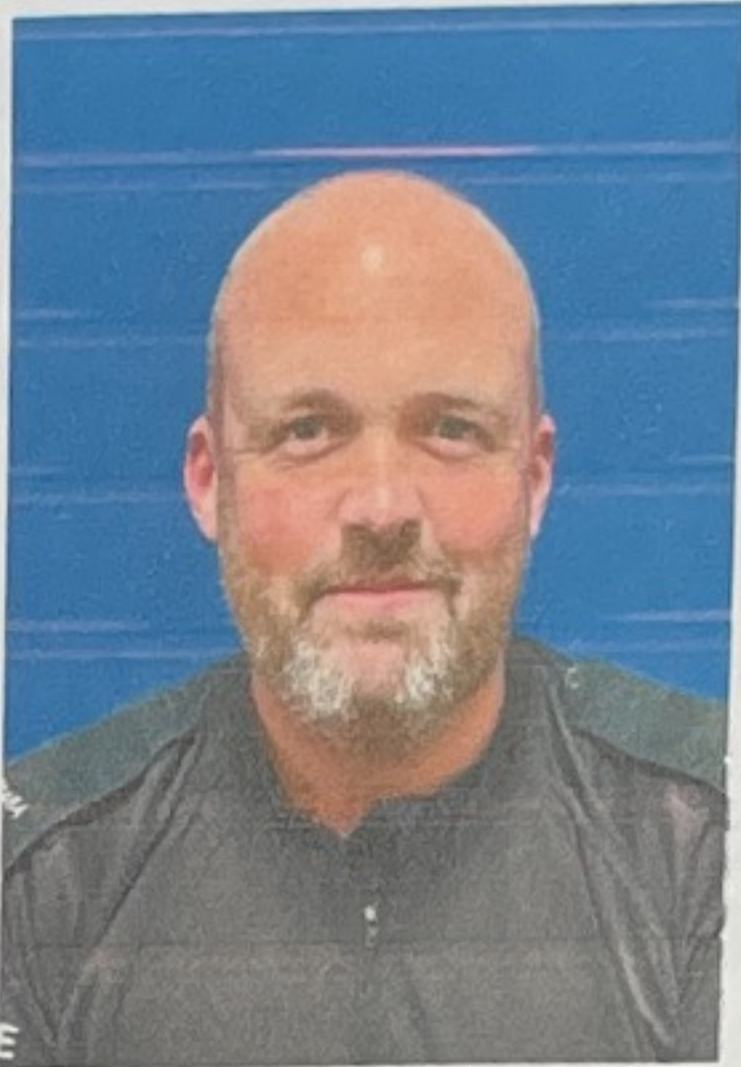
Initial:.....

Appendix c -

During February and March I attended Parish Council meetings at Staple and Stourmouth and introduced myself to attending residents and parish councillors. I also had the pleasure of attending Wingham Primary School to speak with students about policing and the role of a police officer. This was well received and a lovely opportunity to meet such happy and enthusiastic children.

I have completed a large amount of foot patrol in Wingham and Ash and engaged with members of the public.

I have just returned from a period of Annual Leave and therefore have not attended as many engagements as I would have liked during this period, but am back now and looking forward to meeting with as many of you as possible in the coming weeks.



Email – 11454@kent.police.uk	Your local beat officer: PC 11454 Bowler
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INCIDENTS OF NOTE

As many of you are aware, the past few weeks have seen an increase in Anti Social Behaviour within the village of Ash. This was primarily due to local youths causing disruption to residents and businesses. Kent Police imposed a 48 hour dispersal order to deal with those involved. As well as this two local youths were arrested. One of these youths, aged 16, has been charged with breaching the terms of a Community Protection Notice (CPN) and has been bailed to attend a youth court later this month. An increased police presence will have been visible within the community to deal with these issues robustly and effectively. As is always the case, Kent Police would encourage residents to report offences directly to Kent Police either by calling 101 or the online reporting tool on the Kent Police website.

As the community officer for Ash, I look forward to engaging with residents in the coming weeks during foot patrol and attending community events whenever possible. I will look to advertise this on My Community Voice and encourage all residents to sign up to this for future updates.

Following feedback from my attendance at Parish Council Meetings, I have completed numerous speed enforcement check and vehicle stops within the district. This has resulted in numerous Traffic Offence Reports (TOR) being issued for various offences including speeding, using a mobile phone whilst driving and driving without insurance. I have also issued several of these in Wingham High Street for vehicles parking/stopping on the zig zag lines by the pedestrian crossing. This causes a danger to persons using the crossing and I will continue to deal with those who choose to park/stop in this area.

Appendix d –

Initial: TUB

Village Hall Report - May 2024

Regular Inspections:

The Hall recently passed its Electrical Safety Inspection with flying colours.

A safety inspection of the Recreation Ground's play equipment was also very positive; with only a few minor observations/recommendations being made.

Maintenance:

With no Youth Club, no Short Matt Bowls Club, no Pre-School, and a low level of short-term hire; the amount of maintenance required is minimum.

The most recent maintenance visit was to replace a faulty tap in the Ladies' toilets.

Storage:

One of the containers on the Recreation Ground belongs Youth Club.

A meeting has been arranged with the leader of the (now defunct) Youth Club, to discuss the contents/future of their container.

The majority of items in the Hall's storage room belong to Pre-school.

They also store items in a container on the Recreation Ground.

This arrangement will need to be discussed in the near future.

Bookings:

The Concept Football Club continue to use the Recreation Ground/Hall for regular bookings during the football season.

Revelation Strings and Pilates also have regular bookings.

The level of short-term hire is still low, but is steadily improving.

Finances:

Much has recently been reported about the Village Hall's finances.

But a great deal of it has been based on pessimistic predictions / selective interpretation of recent expenditure.

e.g. We can't assume that unexpected, one-off expenses, such as the removal of storm-damaged trees will be repeated each year; or that an expensive electrical inspection is an annual occurrence. (It is a 5-yearly expense).

Similarly, the purchase of a steam cleaner and vacuum cleaner aren't regular expenses.

The cleaner's hours are linked to the number of bookings.

So when the bookings are down, then so are the cleaner's hours.

(And thus the amount of cleaning materials used.)

Similarly, when the hall's not being used, there's no significant usage of Calor Gas or electricity.

Short-term hire bookings are steadily coming in.

And hopefully the level of bookings will steadily rise.

The Hall also receives an annual grant from the Parish Council which greatly helps with the finances.

But the standing charge for electricity, the water bills, rates, insurance etc mean that the **Hall's expenses currently exceed its income by approx. £75 per month.**

This is eating away at the Hall's reserves; and the problem needs to be resolved.

The single, largest reason for the Hall's financial situation is the loss of Pre-school's income.

And until bookings reach a level equivalent to the Pre-school income; the Hall will remain financially fragile.

(In 2022 the Hall made a profit of £953. But in 2023 it made a £2,363 loss.)

As a short-term measure, and to provide a bit of a breathing space; the Village Hall Committee intends to request a donation from the 2024 Country Fayre.

Meanwhile, every effort is being made to increase bookings /find alternative sources of income.

Initial:.....