

Staple Parish Council

Minutes of an Ordinary Council Meeting, Wednesday 10th June 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
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 13th May 2020 and to report any matters arising therefrom not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

- minutes were approved.

4. Report from District Councillor – Mike Conolly

District Councillor's Report

1. Covid 19: As with every other institution Covid 19 has had a profound effect on DDC. On the plus side the Community Hub has worked very well in responding to individual residents' problems, thanks to a Herculean effort by the Community Affairs department and the secondment of other staff. With fast diminishing demand the hub is gradually being wound down and some staff are returning to their substantive roles. The cross party grants group has met every Thursday to decide on requests for help from a variety of local organisations and there is still a significant amount of money left in the pot. Staff have adapted well to home working and Veolia have done an excellent job in maintaining refuse collection and street cleaning services. The Planning Committee has held a virtual meeting and the Cabinet has also met via Teams. We plan to hold the delayed Council AGM remotely on July 22nd.

The biggest issue now is the financial impact. Each month we are in lockdown we are losing not far short of £1 million in lost revenue and increased costs. As our Finance Director has put it, the only thing we have plenty of is unknowns, primarily the length and nature of lockdown and the shape of the recovery – V, U, L or W if there is a second spike. We have taken the view that we should assume a total of six months of some kind of lockdown, and that we must continue to progress two projects, the town centre regeneration fund and the restoration of Maison Dieu, as external funding is dependent on our funding. So the budget pressure this year is:

Six months lockdown	£5.3 million
Town Centre Fund	£2.5 million
Maison Dieu	£1.5 million

Transition costs	£0.5 million
Total	£9.8 million

To fund this we will:

Reduce General Fund Reserve by £1 million to £1.5 million	£1.0 million
Apply Government support	£1.2million
Cancel budgeted contributions from the General Fund to Earmarked reserves	£2.0 million
Develop an asset disposal programme	£1.0 million
Pause most Capital projects and resubmit to Cabinet with Risk assessments	£4.6 million
Total	£9.8 million

We will review these plans in September when we should have a better idea of true costs and savings.

Parking charges were re-introduced on May 25th.

2. Local Plan: While work has continued our inability to consult properly will push the timetable back
3. Waste contract: Tenders have been received for the new contract to start in January. This is likely to create further budget pressures.
4. Manston: The Government has again delayed the decision on the Development Consent Order, this time until July.
6. The application to build houses on Gobery Hill, Wingham, has been rejected by Planning under delegated authority on Highways grounds as the associated problems at the bottom of Preston Hill have proved insuperable. An appeal is likely.
7. Transfer of housing staff from East Kent Housing to the individual councils is scheduled for October 1st.
8. Discretionary Grant Scheme: This government funded scheme aims to provide support, administered by local councils, to SMEs that have not been able to access other funds. The scheme is currently open and applications close on June 15th.
9. Business Hub support: As the need for staff on the Community Hub winds down we have today launched a Back to Business Hub to provide a one stop shop to support over 4000 local businesses as high streets and commercial centres re-open. The Hub will help them to interpret and understand the latest Government guidance and advice so that they can operate safely and enjoy the confidence of residents.

Cllr G McCollum asked for clarification as to which assets the Council would be selling. Cllr Connolly couldn't give any further details as yet.

5. Report from County Councillor Cllr Sue Chandler

County Council Report – Sandwich Division June 2020

My report this month continues to reflect the extraordinary time we are all living through, whilst there is much talk of recovery plans we should reflect that those who are particularly at risk have at least another month of staying home and need our support. It is important that we continue to support those in need and the District Hub and Kent Together helpline will continue to operate to ensure that.

But the rate of infection is now low enough to allow us to see more people outdoors, the scientists telling us that warmth and sunshine make transmission less likely, part of the 'limited and cautious' changes announced recently. I have included with my report the latest edition of the KCC compilation of updates and advice which includes the details of most recent guidance on this.

KCC is now beginning the task of revising **strategic plans** to take account of the Covid 19 crisis, both in financial terms and in looking at how we go forwards making sure that we take the learning from the past 3 months with us, much of which is positive.

There has been an extension of KCC's responsibilities with regard to **Care Homes** during last week as a response to the pandemic, there is now a requirement for upper tier local authorities to produce and publish Care Homes Support Plans, working alongside Clinical Commissioning Groups. The required letter and completed template on the Kent Local Care Homes Support Plan have been published on kent.gov, as requested by government. The timescales for response were incredibly tight and senior KCC officers, providers and partners in the CCG have worked hard collectively to collate the necessary information. You can read the final documents here <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/coronavirus/support-for-kent-care-homes>.

The first of June is here and we are expecting that the majority of our **primary schools** will be open for **Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children**. Last week, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson confirmed that as the government's five tests had been met "based on all the evidence we will now move forward with our plan for a phased and cautious return of a limited number of pupils to primary schools and early year settings from Monday." Of course, school leaders in Kent have been planning this for some weeks, supported by officers in KCC. Many schools have already been open for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers, but primary schools will now be welcoming back larger cohorts. Some of our smaller schools will not be able to accommodate all their children in these year groups safely because social distancing will not be possible in their premises. These schools will be prioritising a return for Reception and Year 1 children.

The Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate at KCC have continued to provide advice, guidance and support to school leaders as they deal with the many practical issues of reopening or expanding their cohort of children in the safest possible way. KCC has helped many schools secure the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and has organised the reinstatement of transport for those children who require it. All children who go to special schools are eligible to attend. Because of the complexities involved for these children, special schools have been cautious about whether they could open safely, but many will be opening their doors, supported in reaching their decision by the advice and guidance from KCC

Our foster carers have welcomed the clear advice from KCC that our Looked After Children in the relevant year groups are expected to be in school from Monday. For many parents, this is a difficult decision and returning a child to school remains voluntary. The Department of Education has provided useful guidance for parents and carers <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>.

The Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) are now open, operating on a booking system (through the KCC website) which is working well after a few technical glitches on the first day. New slots are released on a daily basis and the sites are being managed to ensure social distancing and make sure there is no traffic build up.

Our Community Wardens have been doing crucial work since the beginning of the lockdown period, supporting the vulnerable, collecting and delivering medication, their knowledge of their local patch has proved invaluable, I am pleased to report that an additional £1m is to be invested in the Community Warden Service.

On the 27th May, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced via a press release that £8million of funding for **emergency active travel works** was being allocated to Kent County Council. KCC have had very little information at present about the governance, timescales and 'rules' around this funding. However, DfT have now confirmed that the 1st tranche, due imminently, will be £1.6million. Once Local Highway Authorities have completed a DfT pro-forma with deliverable schemes and programmes of work, the 1st tranche of funding be released. This proforma has to be submitted by 5th June.

The 2nd tranche (the remaining £6.4million) is expected to be awarded in the summer, but will be dependent upon KCC delivering schemes in tranche 1 in very tight timescales. Once tranche 1 of funding is received

the works must have started within 4 weeks and must be completed within 8 weeks. Failure to achieve this will result in the Department clawing back monies by reducing the funding in tranche 2. Clearly this will initially limit our intervention scope and suggests the Department is looking for quick wins and temporary measures in the short term.

We do not yet know if any specific criteria is to be applied to later tranches of funding - but we do know it is intended for:

1. Installing 'pop-up' cycle facilities with a minimum level of physical separation from volume traffic, using light segregation features such as flexible plastic wands.
2. Quickly converting traffic lanes into temporary cycle lanes. Widening existing cycle lanes to enable cyclists to maintain distancing.
3. Using cones and barriers to widen footways along lengths of road, particularly outside shops and transport hubs. Providing more space at bus stops to allow people to queue and socially distance and to widen pedestrian refuges and crossings to enable people to cross roads safely and at a distance.
4. Encouraging walking and cycling to school.
5. Reducing speed limits
6. Introducing pedestrian and cycle zones and restricting access for motor vehicles at certain times (or at all times) to specific streets, or networks of streets, particularly town centres and high streets.
7. Closing roads to motor traffic by using planters or large barriers.
8. Providing additional cycle parking facilities at key locations, such as outside stations and in high streets, to accommodate an increase in cycling, for example by repurposing parking bays to accommodate cycle racks.
9. Changes to junction design to accommodate more cyclists, extending advanced stop lines at traffic lights.
10. Taking 'Whole-route' approaches to create corridors for buses, cycles and access only on key routes into town and city centres.

From the timescales it is apparent that for the first tranche of funding the ability for Districts, towns and parishes to have an input is limited but in development of plans for the second tranche there will certainly be that opportunity and I will let Councils know the details when they are available.

Finally the **KCC website provides up to date information** and links to the government advice pages and I can be reached by email Sue.Chandler@kent.gov.uk or by phone on 07989134576.

Sue Chandler

KCC Member for Sandwich

1.6.2020

It was queried whether there was any update on the A257 as there has been talks of reducing the speed limit for the whole road. Cllr Bartlett will ask Cllr Chandler about this.

Cllr Barlett advised that there are community grants available for groups that require some funding for a project which benefits the local community. Groups can apply for amounts between £100-£1000.

Cllr G McCollum queried whether there was a current database of local groups as this would be helpful. They could then be contacted and advised about the grant scheme. There does not seem to be a list, although this is something which should be looked at.

Cllr J Kirk asked whether the application process was lengthy, as this can deter people from applying. Cllr Bartlett to look in to this.

6. To discuss finger post signs, litter and dog waste bins

Some of the dog waste bins and litter bins look unsightly, which is not in keeping with the clean and tidy village.

The Barnsole Road sign is covered by an overgrown hedge.

The enter and exit signs to the village were reported to KCC back in February and logged, but they are not a priority highways issue and therefore could take some time to replace.

Clerk to email Stephanie Wadhams at KCC and get a price, as this may be something the Parish council could pay for.

The White gates are in need of tidying up – unsure if they need replacing or whether they can be sanded down and repainted. Cllr D Kirk to look at these and report back.

A resident has sent an email regarding the Give Way sign at Buckland Lane. This does need replacing, however it is unclear whether a new post is needed too. Clerk to contact KCC regarding this.

Cllr Loukes asked about the situation with the bend signs where The Street joins School Lane which have been discussed before. Clerk to Contact KCC for an update.

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

Report from Cllr Loukes

Community Speedwatch & SID Report

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.

However I am pleased to report that we will re commence Speedwatch on 15th June at one designated site approved by the Police with the ability to meet their specific distancing and safety regulations. Once we commence sessions again 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 May)

The Speed indicator devices are still in operation during the lock-down!

This month I have compared the statistics with those from last November and January

Durlock Road North direction.

During May there were 10,088 vehicles

During January there were 21,474 vehicles

85th Percentile Speed = 36.5 MPH

Max Speed = 70.0 MPH on 06/05/2020 21:50:0

The Street West direction

During May there were 11,222 vehicles

During April there were 7,800 vehicles

During November there were 16,200 vehicles

85th Percentile Speed = 35.3 MPH

Max Speed = 75.0 MPH on 19/05/2020 17:30:00

I would just like to add that the Police have issued a “Reporting nuisance motorcycling “ sheet which was in the Escallop and is on our Parish Council web site. We do urge you to make notes on any motorcycle that is driven recklessly and report it to me or the Police.

8. Update on Defibrillator

No updates on defibrillator grants. Assuming the delay is down to COVID. However, clerk to chase these up and if not luck, we should confirm best prices at next meeting with a view to purchasing one.

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

20/00216 | Change of use of land for the siting of a static caravans for residential use (retrospective) | Land To The South Of Summerfield House Barnsole Road Staple CT3 1LD
Staple Parish Council has already objected to this before and comments forwarded to DDC. Cllr N McCollum will collate responses and email planning department at DDC.

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

(i) Update on Barclays bank balance

Report was distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no questions. It was discussed that a plan should be made as to what some of the Parish money should be spent on. This could be some of the highway issues, for example the signs.

Depending on the defibrillator situation, it was unanimously agreed that the Parish council should invest in one of these.

Due to there being no Country Fayre this year, it was suggested that the Council set aside an amount of money, which could then be helped to assist local community groups. An amount will be decided upon at the next meeting, once we have received quotes for the signs and defibrillator.

(ii) Cheques for approval

£396.80 - Zurich Annual Insurance is due for renewal.

£150 – Finger post signs. Cllr D Kirk to pay this, so cheque made payable to him.

£190 – Clerk salary

All cheques approved

11. To receive any footpath updates

Cllr S Coulson advised that there has been complaints of dog fouling, which is very difficult to rectify. Cllr Loukes suggested that more signs be put.

Cllr S Coulson queried why there was styles at both ends of a footpath, despite there being no livestock in the fields. Cllr S Coulson will follow this up.

Cllr G McCollum mentioned that some of the footpaths were very overgrown. We are currently waiting for KCC to come and trim the foliage as advised by Cllr Chandler at the last meeting. They operate from May – September so it will depend on where Staple is in their rounds.

12. To receive any highways and transport update

None which have not been covered elsewhere in the meeting.

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

Cllr J Kirk explained that there is a detailed plan in place for current guidelines for village halls (due to COVID 19)

The rules state that the hall is unable to be hired to anyone else, while the playschool are using it. Any time it is not being used by the playschool, it must remain closed.

This is the responsibility of the trustees to ensure that the guidelines are put in place and adhered to.

The hall has been given a grant to help to cover loss of income, due to the inability to hire it out.

14. Any confidential items to be discussed.

None

15. Any additional correspondence as permitted by the chairman

16. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th July at 7.30pm via Zoom, unless otherwise stated.

Cllr Bartlett closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Mrs L Acarnley
Clerk to the Council