**STAPLE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of an Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 9th January 2019

at Staple Village Hall

Present: Cllr Bartlett (in the Chair)

Cllr Mrs Coulson

Cllr Kirk

Cllr Facey

Cllr McCollum

Cllr Mrs Bennett

Cllr Brooman

District Cllr Connolly

Clerk to the Council Miss S Palgrave

10 members of the public

1. **APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Bartlett declared *another significant interest* in matters relating to the site on which the Rural Housing Scheme is proposed, as this site is owned by a family member. This refers to item 9 on the agenda.

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14th November 2018, and Wednesday 12th December were received, approved and signed.

1. **DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL & KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

**District Cllr Connolly provided the following report**:

-Our MP, Craig Mackinlay has been acquitted of electoral fraud. However Conservative Party worker Marion Little, was convicted and given a suspended sentence.

-DDC’s perspective on the ‘convoy’ from Manston to Dover reflected that of most observers, in that it is seen as proving little. This scheme (which has always been resisted by the East Kent ‘lobby’), would see TAP filled up first and then a diversion off the M2; up Detling Hill onto the M2, and then along the A299 to Manston. Only 89 trucks took part, all with UK drivers familiar with the route and with no temptation to attempt short cuts through the villages. The 89 trucks in the convoy are not representative of a full ferry load of 240, with 40+ sailings per day at peak time. The ferry companies have said they will not sail half empty, and no reference was made to tourist traffic which has a major peak at Easter. The reality is that there is little more DDC can do as the final decisions will be made by central Government.

-The Deal Pier Kitchen has opened for business with hours between 9.00am to 4.00pm in the winter; longer in the summer. It will offer mid-market food and has already been well received.

-The Dover District Leisure Centre is due to open in February and has already had press coverage. It is expected that the opening date will be confirmed at a meeting of the Project Advisory Group on January 10th.

-In efforts to combat the growing tide of homelessness, DDC is planning to build circa 60 modular homes at three sites in Dover and Deal for use as interim accommodation which will keep people out of bed and breakfast accommodation. The largest site (in the St Radigunds area of Dover) is currently leased by DDC to a trust running a community centre. This is in very bad condition and the plan is for DDC to provide £150K for repairs and the trust to return the lease to allow building on other parts of the site. DDC hope to open these units in 2020, and although there may not be enough space to house every homeless person this will make a significant difference.

-A member of public enquired about The Timpson report published last week and asked DDC how they will respond to the issues highlighted in the report. Cllr Connolly reported that grants are available and that DDC is securing funds from different sources to help. Parking is an ongoing issue and free parking has not been effective in solving the problem in the past. Business rates are a complex issue and High Street shops pay the premium compared to the growing number of online retailers. Government set the rates anyway so DDC has no control over these.

**RESOLUTION**: **This information be noted for now**.

1. **PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK**

A member of public enquired about survey results for Durlock Road. Cllr Bartlett confirmed that these will go to DDC when the planning application is submitted. They will then be available to view on the Council website.

1. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

No information to note.

1. **THE BIG CONVERSATION WG/PILOT SCHEME**

**Cllr Mrs Bennett provided the following report:**

-The second Big conversation working group meeting was held on 21st Dec to discuss collective feedback on the pilot scheme to serve villages impacted by public bus changes (Staple, Northbourne, Great Mongeham). The initial proposal by KCC was a linear route running between Sholden-Great Mongeham-Ash. The villages had strongly recommended Sandwich should be included on the route as the best interchange point rather than Ash village centre, and an alternative was proposed by the villages which excluded Sholden. Sholden was excluded as Sholden Parish Council have expressed concern over traffic congestion and no real demand from Great Mongeham to access Deal via Sholden.

-The inclusion of Sandwich and removal of Sholden on the route was investigated by KCC and they proposed a route and timetable. The alternative route proposed by KCC representatives significantly reduced the number of buses from 6 down to 3. This was queried by the villages as a member of Great Mongeham Parish Council had previously driven the route in a minibus at a relevant speed had this not shown a large impact. It was proposed that a circular route should be examined which would negate the need for turning and would reduce times. In addition, making the Street in Staple the turning point and excluding the Three Tuns stop would reduce journey times. Further work needs to be undertaken to define the best route and timetable.
-KCC Big Conversation programme manager Robert Clark expressed concerns on the route incorporating Sandwich: “provision of the sandwich service as a scheduled bus service really dictates that the service becomes less of a pilot and essentially just another off peak bus service which is not going to be in accordance with the big conversation brief which is to provide new and more innovative solutions to provide rural transport”. They proposed that inclusion of Sandwich would require conversion from a frequent feeder service to a taxi bus service which unlike the feeder service potentially requires membership and would not accept concessionary bus passes. The respective Parish Councils all agreed that a taxi bus service was unacceptable, and a feeder service should be piloted with Sandwich as the hub. This was supported by Cllr Sue Chandler who flagged how changes planned around the Guildhall would easily accommodate such a feeder service. Sandwich is an ideal location to act as the main hub as it allows wider access to the local area by both bus and train. It was proposed that both the option including Sandwich alongside the Ash-Northbourne-Great Mongeham option, should be progressed to a full business case.

-The requirement for a later service (after 3pm) was briefly discussed, which still needs costing to understand external funds required from Parish Councils to enable support; this will not be undertaken until put out to tender with potential providers.

-Concern was also expressed regarding a proposed press article which suggested Stagecoach were being considered by KCC and that Stagecoach were bidding for the Big Conversation funding. The KCC Big Conversation programme manager reassured the group that they currently are in discussions with two providers neither of which are Stagecoach.

-The next meeting is proposed for January (awaiting confirmation of date).

-A member of the public pointed out that the bus will have to be well used to be successful. The fact that there hasn’t been a bus available for 2 years may be a hindrance to this and that the consequence of low use could be no funding for a second year. Cllr Facey reported that funding may or may not be down to the success of the first year and is currently a grey area.

**RESOLUTION**: **This information be noted for now.**

(*District Cllr Connolly leaves the meeting at this point)*

1. **SPEEDWATCH**

**Speedwatch Co-ordinator Roger Loukes provided the following report**:

Heading into the New Year Mr. Loukes has established a good understanding of the system for operating Speedwatch and is programming sessions ahead of time for volunteers to fill in their availability.

-To date 14 vehicles were logged exceeding the threshold speed limit and of those 2 were incorrectly reported ~ the make of vehicle was incorrect. The system picks up on vehicles without Tax and MOT and logs these with the Police. We had more vehicles exceeding the speed in Lower Road than on Durlock Road, and none in The Street.

There are at least six sessions planned for January.

-Mr Loukes contacted representatives at Stourmouth, (Cllr Nick Church will be the contact for their CSW) and they are willing to share the costs of a SID once we receive the cost package from KCC. Mr. Loukes attempted to obtain grant information and costs from the Speedwatch Manager Alan Watson without success. Intention to pursue this portable SID – possibly via Toby Butler - if we are to obtain a grant as the available grants may discontinue in the new financial year.

-Fixed SIDs: Mr. Loukes has temporarily solved the issue of the failed charger. A Lab. spec power supply has been purchased to charge the special LiFePO4 batteries and they are now charging successfully. A special charger from the US has been ordered to replace the failed charger. There are 4 batteries that operate the old SIDs. The newer SID in Lower Road had a problem ~ the (SLA) batteries are charged but the SID did not appear to be operating correctly ~ The settings inside have been changed after consultation with Westcotec. It is now working ~ battery life is still suspect.

-Latest correspondence with Toby Butler at KCC was discussed. Mr. Butler stated that the last purchase of SID equipment was unauthorised despite having been ordered from the same supplier as previous ones. Staple Parish Council were unaware that permission was needed to purchase a device or that there were rules and regulations surrounding this, especially as already in possession of a pole for the extra device. KCC have also removed a pole from Shatterling.

**RESOLUTION: Clerk to contact KCC Toby Butler and set up a meeting as a new site still needs to be approved, and to request return of the pole.**

**-Mr. Loukes would like to state that the Speedwatch campaign still needs volunteers to assist in our CSW; please contact Roger on 01304 812306 or email** **roger43@gmail.com** **if you would like to assist.**

 **-*Cllr Bartlett gave thanks to Mr Loukes for his hard work and organisation.***

1. **PLANNING MATTERS**
2. **English Rural planning application:**

(Cllr McCollum in the Chair due to previously declared interest).

Council considered plans provided and noted only that the height has come down and the style and layout is in keeping with design.

**RESOLUTION**: **This information be noted for now and Council await the formal application. Clerk will forward Parish comments to English Rural.**

1. **FINANCE**
2. **SPC Budget:** Bank balance of Staple Parish Council reported at a total of £6,322.55.
3. **Cheques for approval:**

Invoice for PAYE services:

**RESOLVED**: Cheque for £67.50 to Pat Heathfield authorised

Clerks Salary & HMRC:

**RESOLVED**: Cheque for £153.80 to Clerk & £36.20 to HMRC authorised

**RESOLUTION: All cheques to be approved**

1. **Precept forms:** Staple’s precept at £28.96 is low and has been kept low over the years compared to other villages. Request increase this year with a view to putting money into the bus service. (Staple may require at least £1,000 towards the bus although exact costing has not been worked out yet).

**RESOLUTION: Staple Parish Council unanimously agreed to contribute costs necessary for the required bus service and therefore ask for higher precept figure to cover contribution. Request increase in precept by £5 to £33.96. (approx..17%) with intention to allocate £1,200 towards the bus which would be the entire increase. Proposed by Cllr Brooman, seconded by Cllr Kirk and approved.**

1. **FOOTPATHS**

Nothing to report

1. **HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT**

No response or update has been received from DDC regarding recently reported flooding in Staple.

**RESOLUTION**: **Cllr Bartlett to chase up response from Stephanie Wadham at DDC**

1. **VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND**

-Cllr Kirk commented on the hall lights which have been replaced. A member of the public reported that the lights are not quite as bright for the bowling club who use the Hall. The new lighting has caused the ceiling to look a little neglected so a quote could be obtained to do the ceiling (to include the kitchen). Vinyl also may need replacing. Another 2 lights to be purchased. The new lighting produces a 1,224w saving.

-Streetlights (new LED lighting) at bottom of village hall driveway: the previously reported DDC project will be taking place in the Spring. Staple Parish Council are happy to wait until the Spring for the benefits of this.

1. **ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE**
2. **Defibrillator:**

Council considered purchase of a Defibrillator. It was discussed where this equipment would be kept as one central village hub is lacking. The Black Pig was suggested as a location as there have been reported cases of vandalism and theft from phone boxes. Questions were raised about an available power supply at any location, and whether this was a private company offering to sell equipment or legitimate NHS supplies.

**RESOLUTION**: Clerk to contact relevant company to obtain further information.

-Ongoing list:

Thanet Community Transport subscription discussed.

**RESOLUTION**: Clerk to establish the cost to the Council and how many individuals may use the service.

-*Cllr Bartlett reminded Council that the AGM is in April 2019 and that a guest speaker must be chosen. This marks the end of a four-year term of office with the elections taking place in May.*

1. The next meeting of Staple Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 13th February 2019 at 7.30pm in Staple Village Hall.

The meeting was declared closed by Cllr Bartlett at 21.01 hrs

Approved: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . (Chairman)