**STAPLE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of an Ordinary Council Meeting held onWednesday 10thOctober2018

At Staple Village Hall

Present: Cllr Bartlett (in the Chair)

Cllr Mrs Bennett

Cllr Mrs Coulson

Cllr Kirk

Cllr Conolly

Clerk to the Council Miss S Palgrave

12 members of the public

Chair introduced and welcomed new Clerk to the council which was received with thanks.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Brooman (work commitment), Cllr Facey (Annual Leave) and Cllr McCollum (Annual Leave).

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None declared

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting, held onWednesday 12th September2018, were received, approved as true and correct and signed.

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

District Cllr Conollyreported the following updates:

- **Dover Town Centre**:Although the St James Centre is doing very well, there are continuing problems in the Old Town, the traditional shopping centre. Dover is no different from many other towns where High Streets have been affected by the explosive growth in online shopping. We are undertaking three initiatives to support the Old Town: firstly, an upgrade to the pedestrian footwaywhich is uneven in places; secondly a grant scheme offering up to £10,000 to traders wanting to improve the presentation and range in their stores which will also apply to Deal and Sandwich.Thirdly, using the old Co-op store (which we bought earlier this year) as a ‘Meanwhile’ place, where traders can try out new ideas or new products at a low cost; a low risk environment with the hope that some may transfer into a permanent position in the Old Town.This scheme is expected to last for 12-18 months whilst Council plans are developed for the long-term use of the Co-op site.

-**Gridlock and Brexit**: Dover Town Centre was gridlocked on the last Saturday of July. This is always the busiest weekend for tourist ferry traffic, and the situation was exacerbated by problems at the Channel Tunnel as drivers tried to find alternate routes across the water. Residents of the Aycliffe Estate were effectively cut off for several hours and trade in the town suffered badly. This is before we see the Brexit impact and there are grave concerns about the passage of goods through the port, the implications for health clearance and the effect on the M2 and M20.For this reason, we have established a Brexit Task Force which will be chaired by Keith Morris and will have representatives from KCC, the Harbour Board, Kent Police, the Highways Agency and the Dover MP. This is a useful first step, but it is difficult to make any meaningful plans until we know the nature of Brexit and of course those decisions are outside the control of any of those agencies.

- **Deal Pier**: There have been numerous problems with the resurfacing of the pier, and work was held up while the gas supply to the café was upgraded. The pier is now open, and we have announced new tenants for the café. There are also plans to replace the benches in the near future.

- **Leisure Centre**: On track for the planned opening in late Winter/early Spring next year, and also on budget.

- **Homelessness**: We continue to wrestle with this intractable problem and new legislation has created a spike in the number of applications, but we have bought properties in the area and have significantly reduced the average number of days people are spending in B&B or overnight accommodation. We continue to develop plans for modular-type housing at two sites in the district which should deliver over 50 units by early 2020.

- **Boundary Commission**: The Commission has published its final recommendations. Our own ward will not be affected in terms of ward boundaries, but we know that the number of councillors will be reduced from three to two. There are significant changes in other areas of the District including Dover Town, North Deal and Aylesham.

- **Budget**: The first quarter figures show us on track to meet budget in 2018/19 and the following year looks reasonably secure. There are, however, major uncertainties relating to Government policy beyond 2020 (especially regarding business rates), making long-term planning difficult.

- It has just been announced that an archaeological dig will take place at **Kearsney Abbey** as part of preparations for the work on the new café.The public are invited to take part and the first week of the dig will be next week.

- **A257 Plan**: Aims to link all parishes; plan needs to go back to County for recommendations.

- Email received from Cllr Ms Chandler reporting KCC news on bus pilot scheme & that Staple has not signed up to Thanet Community Transport.

**RESOLUTION**: This information be noted for now; investigate authorisation of payment to allow access to Thanet Community Transport.

1. **PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK**

Member of the public asked Cllr Conolly if it were to possible for passengers to go through Customs before the main port at Dover to ease congestion; Cllr Conolly resolved to make enquiries.

*(Cllr Conolly leaves the meeting at this point)*

1. **POLICE REPORT**

No report was available.

**RESOLUTION**: it was proposed and approved that this item be removed from future agendas due to lack of reporting available.

1. **SPEEDWATCH MEETING**

Roger Loukes provided an update on the recent meeting with Alan Watson regarding the Speedwatch initiative. Speedwatch is a national incentive to support the police to bring vehicle speeds down to a safe level. Mr. Loukes reported that six volunteers had attended and were aiming to participate. Training is available for participants which is in three parts, including an online course which a co-ordinator will have to log in to, and use of any necessary equipment before starting. High visibility jackets will be provided, and participants will need to have a 75-100m view of the road each way, so suitable stretches of road need to be identified. The aim is to record information and participants are not permitted to stop or book drivers for speeding. The data recorded will be sent for analysis and repeat offenders will be visited by the police. Kent police will act on specific data and another area operating Speedwatch has been effective in bringing speeding cases down from 70% of drivers to just 1% (it is also up to the Parish how long this runs for). Wingham has also used this scheme.

It was discussed how it needs to be established who has overall responsibility for Speedwatch, and how it would be more beneficial to have a portable device rather than fixed. Suggestion made that Staple could share the cost of a device with Stourmouth if it were deemed necessary and appropriate to do so. There may also be grants available if necessary.

**RESOLUTION**: It was officially proposed, seconded and agreed that Roger Loukes be appointed as Speedwatch Co-ordinator. David Rothschild (in charge of SIDs) be contacted regarding the battery charger of the current device.

1. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

BBOB campaign update received from Cllr Mrs Bennett:

-An article was published in the Kentish Gazette on 13th September in which Stagecoach responded citing low passenger numbers, contradicting their previous rationale given at a public meeting where Philip Norwell attributed the loss of service to “time-tabling”. New head of Stagecoach Matthew Arnold responded by referring to low numbers of passengers outside of school times, re-iterating time-tabling, and implying the local authority’s financial position.

-The No. 10 campaign asking for Stagecoach monopoly to be addressed received a response from the Buses & Taxis Division of the Government which contained no acknowledgement of said monopoly. This response was felt to be inadequate and a request has been made for the petition to be considered by a more relevant government department.

Comment received that Stagecoach do not actually have a monopoly as such, but other providers (such as Regent) will not run another service as it is ‘not viable’. Cllr Mrs Bennett pointed out that the campaign purpose is not to force others to run a service,more to pressure KCC to change their thinking and act.

-The Big Conversation Summit is to be held on 30th October in Maidstone and is by invitation only. Unsure at this stage if an invitation will be extended to Staple’s PC. A Webcast of this event will be available, and a full report is due this month.

-The next BBOB meeting will be held following this when we have a clearer picture if a pilot scheme is proposed for Staple; Cllr McCollum has expressed interest in attending. Pilot schemes are expected June 2019.

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

1. **PLANNING MATTERS**

-Cllr Bartlett gave a brief update on outstanding planning applications in the village.

-Query raised about agreed footpath on the site of new properties being built on The Street (condition 10 of CON/17/00003). This does not appear to have been provided and Cllr Brooman sent a request that this be investigated.

**RESOLUTION**: Highways representative and relevant departments to be contacted to establish why this agreed condition of planning application has not been fulfilled.

-Cllr Bartlett asked if Staple Parish Council had been notified of an application for Layham Garden Centre. No notification was available.

**RESOLUTION**: Cllr Bartlett to follow up.

1. **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS MODEL STANDING ORDERS 2018**

Received and accepted with no amendments.

1. **FINANCE**
2. Cheques for approval:

Final salary proposed for previous clerk:

**RESOLVED**: A cheque for £153.80 authorised for Laura Fidler & a cheque for £36.20 authorised for HMRC

Payment to Malcolm Barden for Churchyard mowing:

**RESOLVED:** A cheque for £15.04 authorised for Malcolm Barden

1. Consider Financial Regulations:

**RESOLUTION:** Received & accepted with no amendments

1. Receive the receipts & payments Budget sheet:

Budget sheet prepared by previous clerk showed to the end of August 2018, to which there is no up to date bank statement available yet.

**RESOLUTION:** To apply for bank statements to be forwarded to new clerk address and delay this item to the next meeting.

1. **FOOTPATHS REPORT**

Cllr Mrs Coulson reported all were clear other than an obstruction of the footpath opposite the Church at Crickshall Lane due to land being ploughed.

1. **HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**
2. A257 Plan: (**Please see item 4 also) Yvonne Leach attends meetings on Staple’s behalf**
3. East Kent Highways offering Salt/Sand bags for forthcoming winter conditions. Discussed how local salt bins are filled up automatically and free of charge so it was not deemed necessary to purchase extra.

**RESOLUTION:** Not required. To check local bins in time for winter.

1. Mid Kent Highways Annual Parish Seminar: **No attendance required.**
2. Notifications of Road Closures:**None applicable**
3. **VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND**

Cllr Kirk reported that a ‘no ball games’ policy was now in place, due to lights being hit and damaged. Two LED lights have been purchased as replacements; and once these have been assessed as effective, a further eight will be obtained. (Comment noted that these are more environmentally friendly, using over 1 KW less in total). Cllr Kirk reported that a new larger, duel fuel twin oven unit has been purchased for the hall, which will provide better facilities for renting as a venue. This is currently being kept in the committee room until a conversion kit can be fitted. A further PIR security light has been fixed outside the entrance; and the streetlight at the bottom of the Village Hall has been reported. Discussed how regular border maintenance is required.

**RESOLUTION:** Clerk to obtain quotation for regular border maintenance work

1. **Offer from AMV Playgrounds to sell equipment for outdoor shared spaces noted but not required.**
2. **CORRESPONDENCE**
3. Information from Craig Mackinlay MP: **Received & noted (Awards relate to Thanet)**
4. KCC public health media release: **Received &noted.**
5. Rural Kent Chair of Wickham presentation: **Received & noted.**
6. AGM Wingham on Saturday 17th November: **Unfortunately, Councillors are unable to attend this year.**
7. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Staple Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 14thNovember 2018 at7.30pm in Staple Village Hall.

The meeting was declared closed by Cllr Bartlett at 20.37hrs

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