**STAPLE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of an Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 12th September 2018

At Staple Village Hall

Present: Cllr Bartlett (in the Chair)

Cllr Mrs Bennett

Cllr Facey

Cllr McCollum

Cllr Kirk

Clerk to the Council Miss L Fidler

12 members of the public

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Brooman (work) and Cllr Mrs Coulson (personal commitment).

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 close family member. This does not refer to a specific agenda item.

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting, held on Thursday 19th July 2018, were received, approved and signed.

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

Cllr Ms Coulson reported the following updates:

- KCC is seeking the views of the public and other interested parties, on a proposal to charge for the disposal of non-household waste at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (the “tip”). Non-household waste included in this consultation is soil, rubble, hardcore and plasterboard. Details of the consultation can be found at <https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/wasteconsultation/consultationHome> and the closing date is 1st November 2018. Cllr Ms Chandler was asked if charging to dispose of rubbish will result in increased illegal dumping. Cllr Ms Chandler responded that this is a question that KCC are aware of and are considering how to address, as the origin of rubble can’t be identified.

- The A257 Traffic Group will be launching the “*The A257 Plan: Working towards a safer A257”* on Friday 28th September, when the plan will be presented to various elected members and officials.

- Works to upgrade essential plant and machinery at Tides Leisure Centre in Deal start on 17th September to ensure the popular local facility continues to make a splash as a valuable asset to the community. The £600K works have been planned so that Tides can stay open during the upgrades.

- A document setting out how the Council will carry out planning enforcement work which will help support regeneration and protect the district from harmful effects of unauthorised development has been given the go ahead by DDC Cabinet this week.

- The DDC Cabinet has also approved a pilot scheme for business rates to help re-invigorate town centres.

1. **PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK**

**(i)** Matters relating to planning application 18/00929 are recorded under Minute 8(1).

**(ii)** The owner of the Black Pig Ph reported that a village shop will be opening at the pub; it was stressed that the stock can be amended to whatever local people want; feedback was positively encouraged. The shop will be open from 8am until the pub closes. Breakfast, cream tea, lunch and dinner will also now be available.

**(iii)** It was proposed that the Council’s work stream (to check what has and hasn’t been done) could be included on the village website.

**(iv)** A resident unhappy with the planning decision to approve 18/00212 | Creation of hardstanding | Barn at Staple Farm, Durlock Road, Staple, CT3 1JX has been in contact with the case officer at DDC about the matter. Cllr Ms Chandler ask the resident to share this correspondence with her, because once an application has been determined only a judicial review can change it and Sue is not sure what the case officer might be suggesting. The local resident also queried why the planning authority is not adhering to national policy on housing sites and allocation, Cllr Mrs Chandler explained that everything is a balance and currently the need for housing sometimes outweighs the authority of some policies.

**(v)** The authority of the new ‘Unsuitable for HGV’ signs was questioned and it was confirmed that these are not enforceable signs, these signs would need to be issued by KCC who were not prepared to do so. The signage has been provided by the Parish Council. Cllr Ms Chandler asked that correspondence relating to traffic problems be copied to her.

1. **POLICE REPORT**

No report was available.

1. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**(i)** Attendance at a seminar at DDC to find out more about the new community transport service in the district, to take place at 10.30am on Thursday 13th September 2018, was considered.

**RESOLUTION: Regrettably no councillors are available to attend this meeting. Cllr Mrs Chandler will ensure that any notes from this seminar will be shared with the Council.**

**(ii)** The following updates were provided by Cllr Mrs Bennett on behalf of the *Bring Back Our Bus* campaign group:

On the 20th July Philip Lightowler (KCC Head of Public transport) visited Staple and met with the Bring Back Our Bus (BBOB) campaign group. He walked some of the bus route, enabling him to understand the unacceptable walking distances involved and safety issues.  He understood safety concerns and at one point handed his high visibility jacket to one resident walking along Durlock Road to catch the bus in Ash.  He was well aware of Staple concerns and confirmed that Staple was being considered along with other rural villages for potential pilot schemes being considered as part of the Big Conversation.  He encouraged the group to continue raising awareness of the loss of the bus in Staple.

The campaign group has written a number of letters to key government ministers including the Prime Minister, ministers for transport, environment, health and work and pensions highlighting the issues with the loss of service in our rural community.

A new commercial director is now in place at Stagecoach and the campaign group has requested a meeting to make him aware of the issues and further understand conflicting arguments being given for removal of the bus service.  No response has been received and the campaign group plan to follow up.

The petition requesting the government to ask the competition and marketing authority to investigate Stagecoaches excessive domination, in the provision of the bus services in East Kent, was delivered to 10 Downing Street on 1st September by BBOB members and Parish Councillors.  The petition contained over 1000 signatures.

In the last week a letter has been sent to Cllr Paul Carter (Chairman of KCC) giving a current update on the concerns with the bus service loss (as we move into winter) and activities of the campaign group.  A copy of the petition was enclosed.  The letter continues to flag the loss of service and highlights the inadequacy of the limited shopper.  The letter flags that in the last week a 97 year old resident was denied access to the shopper service due to insufficient room.  In addition the letter highlights a KentLive news article where Folkestone residents have been successful in persuading Stagecoach to make changes to the modified service.  In the article Stagecoach are quoted as acknowledging “ its clear that in some locations the changes we have made haven’t worked out so well for some local people”.  This is encouraging and the group continues to ask Paul Carter /KCC to continue to pressurise Stagecoach to reconsider and restore the service to Staple.

The group is continuing to highlight the unacceptable loss of the bus service in the local press, with a press release written.  The Kent Gazette is following up on the story and visited Staple this week to take photographs of the bus stop and dissatisfied residents.  The campaign continues to be really well supported with over 20 residents turning up during the day to the bus stop with very short notice.

Cllr Bartlett thanked the group for their continued hard work.

**(iii)** Cllr McCollum provided the following information from a meeting that he attended with Mr Barden, Mr Loukes and Phil Lightower a few weeks ago regarding the Community Bus Scheme.

Overall it was a very positive meeting and Mr Lightower was very keen to work with us, and other neighbouring villages, to try and secure a community bus service for Staple. From his perspective we have two two routes to go down in order to secure a bus or at least the funding to set one up.

Firstly, as a follow up from the Big Conversation, they are looking to directly set up (and fund) a small number of pilot schemes around Kent. The funding has already been allocated in the KCC budget, and whilst it would ultimately be a political decision as to which pilots are established, Phil is confident that the Staple scheme will be considered favourably as the preferred pilot in East Kent. The scheme would have to take in other neighbouring villages such as Northbourne, who are are also without a bus, but he believes they can create a regular service linking 2/3 villages withe the established services offered by Stagecoach. The service is likely to be a mini-bus sized service similar to those being operated in Thanet. The pilots will be announced in Sep / Oct this year, we don’t need to formally apply, but if selected the Parish Council would need to work with KCC to help set up and oversee the service.

Secondly, as a full back option, there will be a further round of grant funding available from KCC in Oct, to which the Parish Council can bid, should it not be selected as one of the pilots mentioned above. If successful here the funding would be made available in the new year. The Parish Council could then enter into a contract with any provider, Regent Coaches for example, agree a contract price and then use the grant to pay for that contract for he first couple of years.

In both cases the Parish Council will need to take a leading role, either as a partner in the pilot scheme or as the bidder (accountable body) for the grant scheme.

I also asked Phil about whether he felt a Parish Council was legally allowed to procure a transport service such as this and he felt that we were, on the basis that they already had partnerships in place with other Parish Council around Kent.

It is likely that the council will need to make a decision in October as to whether we want to work with KCC on the pilot service, should we be selected, or to apply for funding from the grant scheme to set up our own scheme. I don’t think we can delay it in either case otherwise we will miss out on any funding for the current financial year, and potentially longer as there is no guarantee further funding will be available this year. I don’t think this should necessarily stop or divert the BBOB campaign but I do think we need to be decisive in taking up this opportunity to bring a bus back into Staple.

**RESOLUTION: That this information be noted for now**.

1. **PLANNING**

**(i)** 18/00929 | Erection of 5no. detached houses with associated parking and driveways | Land at Barnsole Road, Barnsole Road, Staple CT3 1LE. A local resident raised an objection to the type of housing proposed; young people and families need starter homes and smaller dwellings. The planned houses are not accessible for the young people of the parish.

**RESOLUTIONS: To strongly object to this application for the following material reasons:**

**Highways Safety: entrance to all the dwellings is directly onto single track road with visibility problems;**

**Layout & density of buildings: the number of dwellings is too much for this parcel of land;**

**Design, appearance & materials: these dwellings are not in keeping with the village;**

**Capacity of the physical infrastructure: being familiar with problems at neighbouring properties the council is concerned about drainage and surface water problems.**

**The Council also has concerns about any new developments whilst the village is not served by a bus service.**

**(ii)** 18/00949 | Change of use from holiday cottage to residential, alterations to existing field access and formation of parking and turning area | Part of Piglet Place, Fleming Road, Barnsole, Staple, CT3 1LG

**RESOLUTION: To support the proposed change; the village needs smaller more accessible homes.**

1. **FINANCE**

**(i)** The annual grant towards printing of The Escallop (£50 in the budget).

**RESOLVED: That £50 be awarded to Staple PCC for The Escallop.**

**(ii)** The annual grant towards maintenance of the Village Hall (£700 in the budget)

**RESOLVED: That £700 be awarded to the Village Hall Committee.**

**(iii)** The annual purchase of a wreath for Remembrance Sunday and a grant towards the RBL Poppy Appeal (£25 in the budget)

**RESOLVED: That £40 be awarded to the RBL Poppy Appeal; the cost of a wreath (£25) plus a donation.**

**(iv)** Membership of Kent Association of Local Councils £141.88 (£118.23 excl. VAT) for Sept – March 2019

**RESOLVED: That membership of KALC should commence.**

**(v)** A payment schedule totalling £939.47 was received for approval.

**RESOLUTION: That all cheques be authorised.**

1. **FOOTPATHS REPORT**

Cllr Mrs Bennett reported that the farmer has cut back the vegetation around the footpath to Hammill making this route more accessible.

In the absence of Cllr Mrs Coulson no further updates were available.

1. **HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**

Councillors received an SID Report for April to August 2018. It was confirmed that a quote for replacement batteries has been sought from the original supplier.

1. **VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND**

Cllr Kirk confirmed that minor maintenance continues.

1. **RECRUITMENT OF A CLERK**

Councillors considered the recruitment of a new Clerk, including:

**(i)** Who will take responsibility for the email address in the event of an interim period.

**RESOLUTION: Cllr McCollum will manage the email account.**

**(ii)** Who will take receipt of the electronic file and hardcopy paperwork in the event of an interim period.

**RESOLUTION: Cllr McCollum will take the electronic and hard copy paperwork.**

**(iii)** How should the recruitment process progress.

**RESOLUTION: Interviews will be arranged by Cllr Bartlett, with Cllrs Mrs Bennett and McCollum joining him on the interview panel.**

**(iv)** To confirm what actions Miss L Fidler will undertake before ceasing to be an employee.

**RESOLUTION: Miss Fidler will type & distribute the minutes from this meeting, balance the accounts, submit consultee comments to planning applications and arrange the Speed Watch meeting. Miss Fidler will also be available to assist the new clerk once recruited.**

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**

**(i)** Cllr Bartlett reports that the addition of Sydney Vickers’ name to the War Memorial has been approved by the church and the Clerk has instructed the stone mason to undertake this work.

**(ii)** The Clerk reported on a letter received from the RSPB regarding the need to protect turtle doves and concerns about nesting activity on the site proposed for the Rural Housing Scheme. The Clerk confirmed that this correspondence has been passed to the Rural Housing Association and DDC for information.

1. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Staple Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 10th October 2018 at 7.30pm in Staple Village Hall.

The meeting was closed by Cllr Bartlett at 21.42hrs

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