**STAPLE PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of an Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13th June 2018

At Staple Village Hall

Present: Cllr Bartlett (in the Chair)

Cllr Mrs Bennett

Cllr Mrs Coulson

Cllr Facey

Cllr McCollum

Cllr Kirk

Cllr Brooman

District Councillor Conolly

Clerk to the Council Miss L Fidler

39 members of the public

1. **APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting, held on 9th May 2018, were received, approved and signed.

*Cllr Mrs Bennett joined the meeting.*

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

Cllr Conolly reported the following updates:

**(i)** Boundary Review: The Boundary Commission has published its initial recommendations which now go out for a further round of consultation before being finalised in the autumn. Ward boundaries of Little Stout & Ashstone and Sandwich are not changed from the DDC recommendations, though the reduction to two councillors in each is maintained. Some changes are recommended in Dover and Deal. Oneunexpectedrecommendation is to attach Sholden to Eastry rather than Deal. Other changes would see an enlarged Aylesham ward, to incorporate the new build and more of the surrounding villages and this would have three councillors.

**(ii)** Empty homes: Figures just released show that across the district the number of empty homes in 2017 was 101 lower than in 2016. The total number has fallen from 952 in 2009 to 523 last year. A major factor has been the KCC-sponsored No Use Empty scheme. This makes available loans of up to £40K, repayable after three years.

**(iii)** Homelessness: Because of new legislation, the Homelessness Reduction Act, there has been another spike in applications and these are taking time to process. However the latest figures show a substantial reduction in the number of those in B&B and nightly paid accommodation (down from 91 in November to 66 in February) and this has helped to mitigate the expected overspend. We are continuing to develop modular housing on three sites across the district and expect these to come on stream next year. We are also buying suitable properties when these come on the market at the right price.

**(iv)** Roadside litter clearance: There has been a major effort to clear roadside litter from the A2 and A20, where 15 tonnes of litter were collected, and also the A256 and A258 in collaboration with KCC. Litter clearance cost DDC £900, 000 last year.

**(v)** Deal Pier: Work on the restoration continues though the first laying of the new surface was unsatisfactory and will have to be re-done. This is holding up the replacement of the benches. An appointment of the company to run the café at the end of the pier has been made and details will be announced soon. This will offer mid-market food.

**(vi)** Dover District Leisure Centre: Work is continuing as the new Centre rises from the ground at Whitfield. A test filling of the pools was successful and a company, Places for People, has been appointed to manage the Centre and the existing Dover Leisure Centre until this closes. We are on target to open in the late winter and are within budget.

There were no questions for Cllr Conolly.

1. **PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK**

**(i)** It was agreed that matters relating to the bus service could be raised during the relevant agenda item.

**(ii)** A missing road sign outside Mr Kilby’s house was raised. Cllr Bartlett confirmed that the matter has already been reported to KCC.

**(iii)** An amendment to the location of one of the ‘unsuitable for HGV’ signs was proposed by the landowner and agreed by the Council.

**(iv)** It was confirmed that the off-peak closure of Durlock Road from (from 18th June for three days) will be to facilitate work by BT Open Reach. Any concerns can be directed to the KCC Highway Helpline at 03000 418 181.

**(v)** The next step to be taken with the data collected by speed indicating devices was queried. Cllr McCollum confirmed that he has recently spoken with the local Chief Inspector, who is sympathetic to the problem of speeding, but confirmed that the Police do not have the resources to assist. A community Speedwatch scheme is being investigated.

1. **POLICE REPORT**

No report was available.

1. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**(i)** The latest response from Cllr Carter, Leader of KCC, to the parish council’s appeal to re-instate the bus service due to safeguarding concerns was considered.

**RESOLUTION: Cllr Mrs Bennett will consult with the person who has offered the council legal advice on this correspondence before a response is drafted.**

**(ii)** An update from the *Bring Back Our Bus* campaign group, including information following the Dover Bus Quality Partnership Committee Meeting, was received from Cllr Mrs Bennett and Mrs S Facey. A demonstration from the BBOB campaign was held prior to the meeting at the DDC offices to highlight the concern and impact of the loss. There was a high turnout (over 40 attendees) which would have been greater as a number of people were not able to attend as the demonstration was during the working/school day. A response to the BBOB group has been obtained from the chair of the QBP Dan Bruce (Policy, Infrastructure and Community Team Leader at KCC) that was read out by Susan Facey, which in summary states Stagecoaches position remains the same and they are not be willing to make a small timetable change and provide a service to Staple. This response was not considered acceptable and the BBOB (with the full support of the parish council) will continue to lobby KCC to continue to apply pressure to Stagecoach to provide a service for Staple. In addition further lobbying of local and national government will be undertaken to ensure commercial companies such as Stagecoach provide a service to more rural communities such as Staple. The group will continue to highlight the safety concerns and the impact on our community. The group will be organising a petition and letters to key KCC and government members. They also plan to participate in the Big Conversation. A number of requests were made of the Parish Council and the three district councillors were asked to write individually to Cllr Paul Carter of KCC in support of the campaign requesting urgent re-instatement of the bus service.

**RESOLUTION: Concillor Bartlett and Councillor Conolly agreed to write a letter of support, a request will be sent to Councillor Chandler to do the same.**

**In response to the campaign group’s requests a letter will be written to KCC explaining that the parish council is not satisfied with the conclusion reached by Cllr Carter and the Quality Bus Partnership committee, KCC will be informed that the parish council is under pressure from local residents not to support any planning applications for new dwellings until the roads are made safe for residents and the Council is seriously considering this request. In the meantime, matters of road safety and public transport will be considered in relation to all planning applications. The Clerk will ask the Parish Council’s of Ash and Wingham to write to KCC expressing their concerns about the increased traffic and parking in the villages due to these parishes now being access points for public transport.**

**(iii)** A verbal update from Mr Barden was received following the questionnaire that has been distributed in the village to establish demand for a possibly community bus. So far there have been 30 responses that have indicated a need for 72 return journeys per week with a preference for a scheduled service. The questionnaire can be returned until the end of June. So far there is nothing to suggest that a community bus would not be viable. It seems likely that ‘feeder services’ provided by the local community linking small communities into the main routes will become increasingly necessary; not something that anyone present agrees with.

**RESOLUTION: An appeal for potential volunteer drivers of a community bus will be put in The Escallop.**

**(iv)** Councillors received an introduction document to KCC’s Big Conversation Programme and considered attendance at one of the public events; Mr Barden and Mr Loukes have already arranged to attend.

**RESOLUTION: Cllr Facey will attend the event for parish councillors, Cllr Mrs Bennett and Cllr McCollum will attend one of the public events.**

1. **PLANNING**

**(i)** 18/00360 | Erection of a single storey rear extension (part of existing extension to be demolished) | 4 The Oast, Durlock Road, Staple, CT3 1JX

**RESOLUTION: To raise no objections.**

**(ii)** 18/00576 | Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 17/00377 to allow amendments to the approved plans (section 73 application) | Barnsole Vineyard, Fleming Road, Barnsole, Staple, CT3 1LG.

**RESOLUTION: To positively support this amendment.**

**(iii)** Councillors considered whether a response was required to DDC’s consultation on a draft revision to the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that can be found at http://dover-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/sci; this document sets out how, when and where DDC involves people and groups during the creation of the local plan and during the planning process.

**RESOLUTION: This information was noted.**

1. **FINANCE**

**(i)** Councillors reviewed the Internal Audit controls system, currently the internal auditor carries out an assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the year, as per the “Annual internal audit report 2017/18” within the Local Councils in England Annual Return.

**RESOLUTION: The Internal Audit Controls System was approved.**

**(ii)** Councillors completed the Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18.

**RESOLUTION: All questions within the Annual Governance Statement were answered in the affirmative (where applicable).**

**(iii)** Councillors considered the finalised Accounting Statements for 2017/18. The Clerk explained that in error DDC had paid the 2018/19 precept at the end of the 2017/18 financial year, which is why the precept figure for last year is double the usual amount.

**RESOLUTION: The Accounting Statements for 2017/18 were approved.**

**(iv)** Councillors considered whether the Council wishes to complete the Certificate of Exemption, which allows smaller authorities to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

**RESOLUTION: The Council will not opt to undertake a limited assurance review (external audit) this year and so the Certificate of Exemption was completed.**

**(v)** A payment schedule totalling £586.80 was received for approval.

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

**(vi)** A quote to service the new mower and strimmer was received (these appliances are now one year old). As an aside it was noted that the strimmer and mower could be used elsewhere in the parish if required.

**RESOLUTION: That the quote from Trevor Laker Engineering for £125 be accepted.**

**(vii)** The Clerk provided an update on the quote to grind out the roots of the tree under the churchyard wall.

**RESOLUTION: The quote submitted at May’s meeting be accepted.**

1. **FOOTPATHS REPORT**

Cllr Mrs Coulson reported that she is going to speak with a landowner about cutting the vegetation back on one footpath. And the Clerk read out an email from KCC explaining that due to problems with contractor procurement the vegetation clearance on several footpaths in the district is running behind schedule, for which KCC apologises.

1. **HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**

**(i)** Information was received regarding the village gates and the bus shelter in Shatterling.

**RESOLUTION: That KCC be asked to re-instate the ‘ge’ letters from the village welcome signs. That Mr Kirk will be asked to provide a quote to clean the bus shelter in Shatterling.**

**(ii)** Councillors considered the “A257 Plan” as written by the A257 Traffic Group and the latest group minutes that explain how the plan will be introduced.

**RESOLUTION: The Council fully supports the A257 Plan.**

**(iii)** There have been two recent incidents of hardcore appearing on land off Mill Road.

**RESOLUTION: Cllr Bartlett will check whether this hardcore belongs to the landowner of whether it has been illegally dumped.**

2) MostcarsarespeedingandtheyspeedmostonDurlockRoad.

3) Durlockrecordeda90mphrecordat12:50onSaturday2

nd

DecemberbeatingeventhepreviousShatterling

best.

4) Statisticsmonthbymonthanddaybydayareprettyconsistent.Evenweek‐endsaresimilartoweek‐days

withoutthepeaksasmarked.

1. **VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND**

**(i)** A meeting of the committee has not taken place since the last Council meeting and so there is little to report, other than two week booking next year that is good news.

**(ii)** A request was received to close the Recreation Ground to the public during the Staple Country & Craft Fayre from midnight on Saturday 23rd June until midnight on Sunday 24th June (so that an admission fee can be charged to contribute to the cost of hosting the Fayre).

**RESOLUTION: The Recreation Ground should be designated a temporary non-public amenity for the duration of Staple Country Fayre.**

1. **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS**

Councillors considered a draft Data Protection Policy in response to the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations.

**RESOLUTION: That the Data Protection Policy be approved.**

1. **ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

The Council considered a suggestion from a local resident that the ‘Public Right to Speak’ be permanently moved down the Agenda and inserted after Highways and Transportation so that local residents do not have to wait a month before they can comment on the Council’s decisions.

**RESOLUTION: The Public Right to Speak section of the meeting will remain towards the beginning of the agenda as it allows for local residents to contribute to agenda items before the Council has made a decision.**

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no additional correspondence.

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

The next meeting of Staple Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 11th July 2018 at 7.30pm in Staple Village Hall.

The meeting was closed by Cllr Bartlett at 21.40hrs

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