

January 2017

**Minutes of A Meeting of Staploe Parish Council held on
Tuesday 31st January 2017 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall at Duloe**

Present:

R. Squire (Chairman)
D. Smith

G. Meola
J. Ibbetts

L. Crawford (Clerk)
Five members of the public
Borough Councillor T. Wootton (first half of
meeting)

Apologies for absence: Cllr J. Thomson and Cllr V. Zwetsloot

309. Declarations of Interest.

Cllrs Squire, Meola and Smith have previously declared interests in the Football Club and dispensations have been granted for them to discuss and vote on matters relating to the Club in the interests of representing the community and to ensure there were sufficient Councillors to allow the Council to make decisions. There were no other declarations of interest.

310. Councillor / Vice Chairman vacancy

Cllr Squire nominated Cllr Ibbetts and Cllr Smith seconded the proposal. Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the appointment and she was duly elected.

The Clerk received an expression of interest in the Councillor vacancy before the meeting and will follow this up.

311. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th Nov 2016

Having been previously circulated these were signed as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Ibbetts, seconded by Cllr Smith.

312. Public Open Forum

A member of the public referred to the A1 East of England Study Stage 3 Report in which Package A involves building a new section of motorway through Staploe parish. He asked what the Parish Council were going to do to inform people about the new proposal, whether there were plans to form a protest group and whether we could find out about the other 50 schemes / routes which were dismissed and the reasons for their dismissal. The Clerk explained that information from the report would be printed in the next Hamlets Voice newsletter which is due out in the coming month and is delivered to every house in the parish. Information has been posted on the website and e-mailed to those in the Clerk's distribution list. The Parish Council will debate what action to take in the meeting and the Clerk will request further information about the alternative routes and why they were rejected.

A member of the public expressed concern about the volume and speed of traffic in Staploe between midday and 1am. He explained that speeding was a particular problem with taxis and night time traffic in Staploe. Cllr Smith recommended that any parishioners concerned should call the police on 101 to log speeding.

313. Ward Report

- Councillor Wootton's report

Borough Council Budget

Bedford Borough Council (Beds BC) have to bridge an estimated £21.3m savings gap by the end of the decade, caused to a large extent by increasing demand for social care. The plans include £9.6m of service efficiencies, £3.7m of which will be delivered in 2017/18. Some of the proposals have been and will be subject to public consultation, such as the proposed end to the school transport subsidy for Post 16 pupils, the cessation of the Council's Out of Hours Noise Service and the relocation of the Travel and Tourism Centre out of the Bus Station. A full list of the budget proposals is available on the Borough Council website. The Executive has commissioned consultants to help them save £10.3m a year by the end of the decade.

Health and Social Care Review

The Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) began at the behest of NHS England last year as a means of bringing NHS and social care commissioners and providers together to design the future delivery of services across the country.

The local STP, covering Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes, will include a review of how Bedford, Luton & Dunstable and Milton Keynes Hospitals can work more closely and share services. It is not clear at this stage whether a historic proposal to close Bedford Hospital's maternity unit will be taken forward. Further details on plans for hospital services will be provided in March.

The STP will also look at closer working between the NHS and local authority social care, as well as GP services.

Schools Funding

The Government has announced a new funding formula which will see an overall increase in the budget for schools in the Borough from 2018/19.

At present, the Borough's schools receive £100,585,808, but the new formula, should it be implemented following a consultation, will see the sum rise to £106,913,007.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2017 - 2022

The Council is consulting residents for their views on how to improve around 1000km of footpaths, bridleways and byways under its control. The online questionnaire can be accessed via <http://www.forms.bedford.gov.uk/row/>

Cllr Wootton suggested that savings could have been initiated earlier to prevent such sudden deep cuts in the Borough Council's budget and he also felt that the fortnightly bin collections should not have been introduced just before Christmas.

Cllr Meola advised the Council that new black bins are smaller than the old ones. Cllr Wootton explained that parishioners can buy extra orange recycling bins if they wish.

Cllr Wootton is the Speaker until May. He has suggested that the Borough Council devolve the money available for footpaths to Parish Council's for them to manage.

- Ward Fund – projector and screen. The Clerk thanked Cllr Wootton on behalf of the Parish Council for the Ward Fund grant which was used to purchase a projector and screen. These have been ordered and will be delivered shortly. It is hoped that these will be useful in any meetings with parishioners to discuss the A1. Cllr Wootton explained that the ward fund will be available again this year. Cllr Meola suggested that the Council apply for a boiler to go under the sink in the Village Hall kitchen for washing up.
- Meeting with Alistair Burt 4th February. Cllr Squire is due to attend and agreed to support the Chairman of Colmworth in his request for revenue from speed cameras to be diverted to Parish Councils to pay for the installation costs, to ask about the A1 and the Black Cat roundabout and plans for Hinchingbrook hospital (which is in Cambridgeshire but used by most residents of our parish).
- Bedford Borough Council Network Meeting 9th February. Cllr Ibbetts may attend.

314. Football Club

- 2017/18 agreement. The Football Club signed the agreement as proposed after the last meeting with one caveat. The following was not agreed:

3c At weekends the "away" team should park at the east end of Woodhouse Lane in the two signed car parks (opposite 44, Woodhouse Lane and in the Celect / HoF car park (but not blocking access to the industrial units or barns).

Colin (Chairman) had explained to the Clerk that the Football Club had never done this before and wanted to be sure that the residents and tenants on site had agreed to this.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour of signing the agreement with this caveat and it was duly signed by Cllr Squire.

315. Planning & development

Maye Cottage, Duloe. Listed Building Application Number: 16/02600/LBC. Proposal: Single storey side / rear extension and internal works. Demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of new garage / store. Location: Maye Cottage, 53, Woodhouse Lane, Duloe, St. Neots PE19 5HR. This application has been withdrawn.

Traveller Site, Upper Staploe.

On 6th December, The Borough Council took out another injunction against Mrs Rooney as she was proposing to move onto the field again. The Council received a planning application 16/03661/FUL on 19th December 2016 to bring mobile homes onto the site and live in them again. The Borough Council returned the planning application and advised the agent on 12th January 2017 that it would not be considered because it would constitute a breach of the pre-existing enforcement notice.

There will be a court hearing regarding the injunction on 20th February. The Parish Council agreed that the Clerk should write to the Council explaining that:

1. If, as explained in the planning application, Mrs Rooney needs an operation then a field with no sewerage, or electricity is not a suitable location for her recovery.
2. As Mrs Rooney and the children have been in a refuge for protection from domestic violence the field would not be a safe, secure or anonymous location for her or her children from those in her domestic circle who may present a risk to them. There were two arson attacks on the caravans / mobile homes when they were last on site.
3. There is an enforcement notice on the field and £50 000 debt has been incurred by the Borough Council in meeting the terms of the enforcement notice to remove hard standings, septic tanks etc and return it to its previous status as a field. The debt has not yet been settled. Mrs Rooney states that alternative accommodation is not affordable for her and therefore the Parish Council believe she is unlikely to be able to repay this debt.
4. The reasons previously given that this is not a suitable location for a traveller site still apply: ie. that it is classified as open countryside, there is no public transport, no pavements or 30mph zones to allow safe access to public services such as schools, shops, and doctors' surgeries and the access onto the main road has poor visibility.

316. A1, Highways and Rights of Way

- The A1 East of England Study Stage 3 Report was published at the end of November. However, the Clerk was not informed of the publication until she asked Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (BATPC) if there had been any progress on the A1 in January. The Clerk has made a complaint to BATPC about this as they are representing us on the Stakeholder Group and we are not permitted to be part of the group.
- The report proposed three packages. Package A proposes a new motorway section through our parish to bypass the non-motorway section of the A1 in Bedfordshire / Cambridgeshire. This would cost around £1.7 billion. Package B proposes improvements to the non-motorway section in situ, removal of the roundabouts and some bypasses in residential areas. This would cost around £1.1 billion. Package C proposes some improvements to some roundabouts near Hatfield and would cost £0.6 billion. Package C may be adopted in combination with Package A or B. The next step is to investigate the three options in more detail before consultation. However, Madeline Russell explained that Highways England were finding it difficult to progress without local plans in place from Bedfordshire (eg. the decision to build the large new housing development west of Wyboston will not be confirmed until 2018) and Cambridgeshire. Equally the A428 and A14 developments need to know what is happening with the A1 before they finalise plans for intersections. Cllr Squire explained that there will be further work to come up with a proposed route and submit it to the government to bid for a pool of money available for road schemes before 2020 and then start building in 2025.
- Councillors expressed some concern that we might be promised noise reduction surfacing and landscaping etc. but then find these are cut from the plan in order to save money. Cllr Wootton agreed that this is a risk – landscaping was never finished as requested on the A421 at Roxton.

- Cllr Meola explained that incidents on the A1 can lead to large volumes of traffic re-routing through our village and we should be mindful of this if there is any work on the A1 in future.
 - Councillors agreed that the Clerk should draft a letter to Alistair Burt (MP) and Madeline Russell (BATPC) in favour of Package B and asking when we will be consulted about the packages. She will circulate it to Councillors for their approval.
 - It was agreed to set up an A1 subcommittee / working group at the next meeting.
 - It was agreed that the Clerk should ask Roxton if they employed a road consultant when the A421 was built.
- Speeding. The Parish Council received a complaint from the local postman about speeding vehicles at the beginning of December and this was echoed by a resident in Duloe. This has been forwarded to the police with a request for further speed checks and to Beds BC Highways. It was agreed that:
 - The Clerk will ask A. Prigmore of Beds BC Highways to install a speed check cable across the road to gather speed data.
 - Parishioners should be reminded to report speeding to the police on 101
 - The Clerk should write to local taxi companies reminding them to observe local speed limits
 - Cllr Squire will ask the Wedding Venue managers to speak to their staff about observing speed limits in the village
 - The Clerk should request more Speedwatch volunteers in the next newsletter
- Vehicle Activated Sign repairs, Duloe. The sign has not been working properly for several months. It is a Dambach sign which are now managed by SWARCO. They offered to come and look at the sign for a minimum cost of £440 and later reduced this to £140. However, the Highways department and a company called Westcotec came to look at it and have said that they think the solar batteries may need replacing which could cost approximately £160 for parts plus labour – potentially around £300.
- It was unanimously agreed not to pay £50 to Westcotec for their visit to Duloe's sign as they had not quoted for the work and it had not been approved by the Parish Council. Adrian Woolley and Richard Squire agreed to look at the sign and see if they could source and replace the batteries more cheaply.
- Woodhouse Lane resurfacing. The Highways Department are planning to patch this rather than resurface and the Clerk has complained as we had been advised that it would be resurfaced. The Clerk will arrange a meeting with A. Prigmore and the local Highways representative to discuss this.
- Repairs and maintenance to signs and white lines. There is a log of highways issues on the Highways page of the parish website with reference numbers and progress reports. The broken Give Way sign at Bushmead Cross has been repaired, a number of potholes have been filled but there is no progress on the damaged bend signs. White lines will be repainted later in the year.
- Footpath consultation. Beds BC are consulting on a Rights of Way Improvement Plan which asks how Rights of Way are used and what we would like their priorities to be. Several Councillors have responded as individuals.

317. Playing field & Village Hall

- Trees needing attention around playing field. This was postponed to be discussed before the March meeting as it should be light enough to discuss it in detail by then.

318. Police, crime and antisocial behaviour

- Woodhouse Lane and CCTV data. Cllr Meola was unable to prepare a report due to computer problems but explained that a resident of Woodhouse Lane said they had seen someone in the lane approach someone on a bike and when the resident asked what they were doing they said they were “monitoring the area”. He did not find out who they were or why they were monitoring it.
- New point of contact for police. Charlotte Norris and Laura Hoggard.
- Cllr Squire reported that there had been break ins at College Farm, Falls Farm and Top Farm during the previous week.

319. Review internal audit arrangements

The Clerk presented a report reviewing the arrangements for the internal audit and these were unanimously approved. There will be an internal audit in November and April to a format which Councillors approved. Kim Webb (qualified accountant) of 20, Staploe will conduct the audit and the Councillors and Kim have each other's contact details so are able to communicate directly if they have any concerns.

320. Clerk's pension

- From 1st April 2017 the Parish Council's employer contributions to the Clerk's pension will increase from 20.8% to 21.8% for 2017/18, 22.8 for 2018/19 and 23.8 for 2019/20. (0.96% is deducted from these contribution rates because the PC pay into an insurance scheme).
 - The Clerk explained that she had spoken to Beds BC about what would happen if we came out of the pension scheme. Steve Harrison explained that the Parish Council would have to pay for the 27% deficit in the pension if we left. He could not give me a quote for this 27% but will ask the actuary during their next scheduled conversation (otherwise very high charges are incurred for additional questions).
 - The Clerk also asked whether contributions would continue to increase and whether there was anything to stop them increasing to eg. 40%. Steve explained that pension contributions would be capped at a maximum of 30%
 - In view of the lack of alternatives Councillors voted unanimously in favour of accepting the increases but will look at the exit quote from Bedfordshire Pension Fund when it becomes available.

321. Training

- Clerk (ILCA). The Clerk has passed two modules out of 5 and is finding the course helpful.

January 2017

322. Finance.

Receipts and payments.

Summary of Transactions for Staploe Parish Council for Approval at Meeting in:				Jan-17
Payments				
Date	Payee	Details	Cheque Number	Amount
13/12/2016	Eon Energy	Electricity for street lights 1/11/2016-30/11/2016	BACS payment	£45.69
09/01/2017	Eon Energy	Electricity for street lights 1/12/2016-29/12/2016	BACS payment	£44.16
09/01/2017	Andy Muskett Ltd	3rd Quarter street lighting	BACS payment	£90.00
31/01/2017	Printerland	Scanner / printer	100871	£239.98
31/01/2017	Viking Office Depot	Projector, screen and stand	100872	£671.93
31/01/2017	L. Crawford	Expenses for Nov & Dec 2017	100873	£103.31
31/01/2017	Duloe Village Hall	Hall hire for Christmas tea and Jan meeting	BACS payment	£53.00
22/01/2017	Opus Energy	Standing charge 30th Dec - 21st Jan	Direct Debit	£3.46
Total				£1,251.53
Receipts				
Date	Supplier	Details	Cheque # / Ref	Amount
25/11/2016	Bedford Association of Town and Parish	Transparency code grant funding	Credit	£227.20
01/12/2017	Barclays	Interest on base rate reward account	Credit	£3.28
05/12/2016	Bedford Borough Council	Ward funding for projector, screen and stand	Credit	£570.56
03/01/2017	Barclays	Interest on base rate reward account	Credit	£1.81
Total				£802.85
Transfers				
Total				£0.00
Posted balances after the above transactions clear				
Community Account 30833940				£6,233.69
Base Rate Savings 43461580				£7,991.26

Cllr Smith checked the invoices and proposed the payments and receipts be approved. Cllr Squire seconded.

January 2017

Bank reconciliation

STAPLOE PARISH COUNCIL BANK RECONCILIATION 1st APRIL 2016 TO 25th JANUARY 2017							
Prepared by Mrs. Lucy Crawford, Parish Clerk							
BARCLAYS							
Community Account 30833940							
DATE				Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance
1-Apr-16	Balance bf		£4,989.34				
25-Jan-17	Posted balance per accounts	£7,305.37		£11,542.70	£7,175.74	-£2,050.93	<u>£7,305.37</u>
Unpresented cheques / uncleared payments:							
	None				£0.00		
	Total				£0.00		
25-Jan-17	Balance as per bank statement	£7,305.37					
25-Jan-17	Posted balance - cleared balance	£-		Equal to unpresented cheques			
25-Jan-17	Balance cf	£7,305.37					
BARCLAYS							
Base Rate Savings 43461580							
				Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance
1-Apr-16	Balance bf		£5,913.97				
25-Jan-17	Balance as per accounts	£7,991.26		£26.36	£0.00	£2,050.93	<u>£7,991.26</u>
25-Jan-17	Balance as per bank statement	£7,991.26					
25-Jan-17	Balance cf	£7,991.26					
SUMMARY OF ALL ACCOUNTS							
				Receipts	Payments		Balance
1-Apr-16	Balance bf		£10,903.31				
25-Jan-17	Balance per accounts	£15,296.63		£11,569.06	£7,175.74	£-	<u>£15,296.63</u>
25-Jan-17	Balance per bank statements						<u>£15,296.63</u>
25-Jan-17	Balance cf	£15,296.63					
Reserves							
Fund Name			Funds Reserved 1/4/2016	Funds Added	Funds withdrawn		Total Reserves 25/1/2017
Street light replacement fund			£2,250	£750			£3,000
Football Club Deposit			£200				£200
Village Hall Rebuild Fund			£3,000	£1,500	£340		£4,160
Election fund			£550				£550
Literature fund			£60				£60
Total			6,060	£2,250	£340		£7,970

Cllr Meola checked the bank reconciliation against the bank balance and signed it to confirm that the balances agree.

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Staploe Parish Council Review of Budget January 2017

	Actual 2015/16	2016/17 budget	Income & Expenditure to 31/1/2017	Forecast to 31st March 2017	Variances vs budget £	Variances vs budget %
Income						
Interest	£18.31	£20.00	£26.36	£29.98	£9.98	50%
Precept	£8,024.76	£8,422.00	£8,422.00	£8,422.00	£-	0%
Council tax support grant	£423.00	£278.00	£278.00	£278.00	£-	0%
Grass cutting	£1,389.51	£1,389.51	£1,389.51	£1,389.51	£-	0%
VAT	£578.21		£630.43	£630.43		
Other	£1,201.42		£822.76	£822.76	£822.76	
Total excl VAT	£11,057.00	£10,109.51	£10,938.63	£10,942.25	£832.74	8%
Expenditure						
Audit Fees	£180.00	£190.00	£180.00	£180.00	-£10.00	-5%
Councillors Expenses	£35.00	£75.00	£-	£50.00	-£25.00	-33%
Clerk's Expenses	£384.89	£500.00	£266.14	£341.14	-£158.86	-32%
Clerk's PAYE	£-		£-		£-	
Clerk's Salary & pension	£2,702.52	£3,641.77	£2,541.37	£3,444.63	-£197.14	-5%
Training	£80.00	£100.00	£108.25	£108.25	£8.25	8%
Donations	£-		£-		£-	
Grass Cutting	£1,444.32	£1,522.50	£1,386.56	£1,386.56	-£135.94	-9%
Insurance	£435.23	£445.00	£467.04	£467.04	£22.04	5%
Power (street lights)	£490.00	£532.00	£435.54	£557.54	£25.54	5%
Maintenance (street lights, speed signs, field & play area)	£632.19	£570.00	£270.99	£590.99	£20.99	4%
Play Area Inspection	£65.00	£65.00	£66.50	£66.50	£1.50	2%
Play Area Works	£54.50	£150.00	£-	£150.00	£-	0%
Seen 137	£-	£100.00	£54.46	£54.46	-£45.54	-46%
Subs (SLCC / BATPC)	£165.00	£165.00	£167.00	£167.00	£2.00	1%
Admin	£109.84	£150.00	£61.76	£100.00	-£50.00	-33%
Literature & info	£-	£60.00	£-	£-	-£60.00	-100%
Assets Purchased (/750 street lights + street furniture)	£1,153.27	£900.00	£808.70	£1,558.70	£658.70	73%
Village Hall Hire	£210.00	£231.00	£153.00	£206.00	-£25.00	-11%
Village Hall Works	£150.00	£1,650.00	£150.00	£1,650.00	£-	0%
Newsletter	£221.50	£250.00	£141.75	£226.75	-£23.25	-9%
VAT	£630.43		£670.36	£692.36		
Contingency		£300.00		£300.00	£-	0%
Total excl VAT	£8,513.26	£11,597.27	£7,259.06	£11,605.56	£8.29	0%
Receipts - Payments	£2,491.52	-£1,487.76	£3,679.57	-£663.31		

More funds added to savings

Ward fund and transparency fund

Additional hours for transparency code & ILCA training,
no other additional hours needed (10% budgeted)
ILCA course no longer to be shared with Colmworth

Replacing batteries on solar powered 30mph sign approx (£320)

May still need to replace a part so leaving this in
Maps and overlays to assist discussions re A1 upgrade

Postpone purchase till 2017/18 share with Colmworth.

Hard drive for CCTV data (£50). Street light funds transferred to
reserves. Printer scanner (£200) & projector etc (£560). Add
£750 to street light reserve

One committee meeting held at Bassmead

Spent £340 on asbestos survey but this came out of reserves so not shown in budget

One more issue to come

In summary we were going to use approx £1500 of our reserves but will probably only need to use approx. £660 because expenses are low, maintenance costs are lower than expected and the Clerk has only claimed for 5 additional hours (for ILCA training). This assumes we use our £300 contingency before 31st March. If we don't need to use this then we will only need to use £360 of reserves.

323. Grass cutting and street lighting contracts

We began a three year contract for grass cutting with Andy Worboys in March last year and a three year contract for street light maintenance with Andy Muskett at the same time. Review contracts in January 2019.

Cllr Ibbetts reported that the grass cutting was very late in Honeydon last year. She will inform the Clerk if a cut is required this year.

324. Transparency code

The government have introduced a transparency code for small councils to ensure that certain documents are available on a parish website. They have made some grant funding available to meet the requirements of the code.

- A £212 grant has been received for a scanner and additional hours for the Clerk.
- £100 for the scanner has been put towards the purchase of a new scanner / printer to be owned by the Parish Council.
- £112 will be used to pay for the additional hours the Clerk has spent updating the website. This will be itemised in the Clerk's pay in March. The money saved by the Parish Council on the Clerk's salary will be used to pay for the rest of the printer.

325. Meeting dates for 2017/18

The Parish Council will continue to meet at 7.45pm on the third Tuesday of alternate months:

21st March 2017

16th May 2017

18th July 2017

19th September 2017

21st November 2017

16th January 2018

20th March 2018

326. Correspondence

- Bedfordshire Autism request for funding. Councillors agreed that this should be a matter for private donations not for the Parish Council.
- Suggestions for Beds BC Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillors proposed that they should examine how speed cameras can be funded for Parish Councils.
- Extending referendum principals to Parish Councils. This has been deferred.
- Invitation to Queen's Garden Party (Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils). Cllr Squire would like his name to be put forward.
- STP NHS consultation. Councillors asked the Clerk to respond to say that priorities should be prevention and education. The other key priority is coordination of hospital discharge so that no one stays in hospital longer than they have to and so that patients are well cared for when they leave. This will also require improvements in care provision for those leaving hospital.

327. Newsletter, website and Hamlets Exchange

- Councillors asked the Clerk to write a report about the A1 for the newsletter, to request extra speedwatch volunteers and remind parishioners to report speeding to the police on 101.

328. Community Event

- 3rd February curry night. Cllr Meola is working with Cllr Thomson on this and they are expecting around 25 people to attend.

Next meeting Tuesday 21st March at 7.45pm.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm