

## **STAPLEFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

### **VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021 AND COMMENCED AT 7.00PM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87442115558?pwd=Y0xNMk81N2plV2NCZy8zcmEyV0kxQT09>

**PRESENT:** Cllr Howard Kettel (Chairman), Cllr Jenny Flynn, Cllr Michael Gatward, Cllr Colin Greenhalgh, Cllr Barbara Kettel, Cllr Paul McPhater, Cllr David Pepperell, Cllr Gillian Pett, Cllr Jez Raphael.  
Stapleford Parish Council Clerk: Belinda Irons - Minutes  
South Cambs District Cllr Nick Sample

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were 11 members of the public on line

**APOLOGIES:** SCDC Cllr Peter Fane

1. Chairman's Welcome and Report  
Stapleford Parish Council: Report & Plans for 2021/22  
The first virtual meeting was held on the 13th of May 2020 and the Zoom platform has enabled us to function and engage.

#### Finance & Audit

The Council has faced some significant costs over the last year and will, by carefully cultivating revenue generating activities, seek to move to a balanced budget by 2022. It will also aim to ensure future precept increases are in line with inflation. We will look to rebuild our reserve to 100% of the precept value by the end of 2022.

#### Highways & Footpaths

There has been an encouraging response from the County Council with the resurfacing of the Bury road / Bar Lane junction to a good standard.

Building on this success by April 2022, we intend to inspect all main roads & pavements in the village and as many subsidiary routes as possible and to request remedial work where appropriate.

It has finally been established that the street light opposite Chalk Hill on Gog Magog Way was never connected up when installed by the developers in 2009. The Council will continue to press for this to be rectified.

#### Planning

At its meetings each month the Parish Council gives careful consideration to a number of submitted planning applications and makes recommendations to South Cambs District Council.

In addition the Parish Council has engaged in a Local plan consultation 'Call for Sites' and commented on proposed changes to the Conservation Area and to the concept of the Cambridge Great Park. Perhaps the most significant planning matter considered was for the Retirement Village on the eastern boundary of Stapleford, with access off Haverhill Road,

Chairman's signature..... 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021

vigorously opposed by your Council, and unanimously rejected by South Cambs District Council Planning Committee. This was based on the grounds of insufficient special circumstances to merit removing the land from the greenbelt and that a high-end retirement village would not meet local need for affordable accommodation for elderly people. Also recognised was the local significance of the open views from Stapleford to Magog Down and the surrounding landscape.

A vigorous defence of the greenbelt will be maintained by the Parish council against any speculative threats to the valuable land that surrounds the Parish in accordance with the previously drafted policy.

The Council will seek to evaluate all planning requests within its boundaries on a monthly basis and help co-ordinate necessary opposition where any proposals are seen as overly detrimental to neighbours, the village-scape or designated conservation areas.

#### Neighbourhood Planning

Over the coming year the Council will look to have created a 'Neighbourhood Plan' that will be put out for consultation and review across the Parish. The Parish Council accepts that this is a necessary part of our arsenal in fighting unwelcome encroachments and speculative development harmful to village life.

#### Transport Infrastructure

Whilst the proposed southern approach route for East West Rail is being actively opposed by Cambridge Approaches, this is not going to impact our Parish, unlike the GCP's CSET busway. Jointly with Gt Shelford Parish Council and match funded with contributions from a crowdfunder organised by Cambridge Past Present & Future, an independent report has now been published setting out the GCPs failures to adequately consult and to establish a firm business case. We will continue to make representations to the GCP, and engage with all statutory procedures until a proper review of this poorly conceived scheme is agreed to.

#### Asset Management

Amongst a number of initiatives, the grounds maintenance contract has been retendered, as has the electricity contracts for the Pavilion and Slaughterhouse.

The Pavilion has been maintained and redecorated, and a temporary container located on the field for storage.

With Covid protocols applied to the use of the Pavilion at the outbreak of the pandemic, the Council now welcomes the return of people to safely use the facilities of the Pavilion. We will actively work with other authorities to ensure we stay in strict compliance with all safety protocols whilst also exploring ways to expand usage of the facility to the benefit of all in the village. Transparent utilisation reports for the Pavilion will be accessible to the community.

The Council is looking to add outdoor toilet facilities along with improvements to its storage capabilities for sports equipment. This will all be completed by the end of 2021.

Potential enhancements to the Pavilion itself will be proposed by the Council and put to the public for feedback during 2021.

A public consultation on the best use of the Slaughterhouse will also be constructed. Various options exist for this site of historical merit but direct feedback from villagers will be essential in ensuring we align as closely as possible with their desires. Redevelopment plans should be sustainable and not place an undue financial burden on the council.

In order to secure the long term management of the Parish Pit for conservation and biodiversity the ownership of the Parish Pit (off the Haverhill Road and close to Magog Down) will be transferred to the Magog Trust subject to the current public consultation.

#### Play Areas and School Liaison

Over the next year the Parish Council aims to improve the children's play facilities to the best of its abilities. We will continue to encourage others to give to the fund raising activities and will support initiatives aimed at fund raising in this regard. We understand the final overhaul may take a little longer than 12 months but we are committed to a safe and pleasant facility for the village children to enjoy.

#### Cemeteries Management

New cemetery regulations have been introduced and the new cemetery brought into use with the installation of the pathway, gates, and laying out of plots.

By the end of 2021 the intention is to have all the health and safety issues around unsafe grave stones etc resolved. We also intend for the creation of a remembrance area within the new graveyard site along with some suitable meadow style planting in appropriate areas. The Council will have introduced a memorials policy by then and applicants are welcome to take advantage of this with regards to loved ones interred in the cemetery.

#### Police Liaison and Neighbourhood Watch

If we can see volunteers coming through to support appropriate initiatives then this will be helpful.

#### Communications

A new regime has been introduced with regular postings on Facebook and Twitter and updates on the website coupled with regular articles in the Messenger.

The Parish Council have understood the importance of regular, multi-channel communication both to explain what it is doing but also to seek feedback and advice on what it should do best going forward. This 2-way communication is vital and the village can expect several consultations on how we best invest in our village going forward and help the Parish Council to get its priorities correctly aligned with residents.

#### Tech & Technology

The Parish Council website was installed at the start of last year and by the end of 2021 the website will have been realigned to further improve accessibility.

It will be easier for residents to find the things that interest them most, providing a record, with links via regular Messenger, Facebook and other social media channels so people can be notified on interesting content in a way that best suits them.

#### Policy & Scrutiny

A number of administrative policies have been reviewed and policies will be introduced or revised as appropriate in line with government legislation.

#### Human Resources

A thorough HR review was undertaken resulting in useful savings in cost and good use of our two Clerk's time.

The village is dependent on volunteers for much of its work, whether this in the organisation of projects or litter picking or maintenance and support to give some examples. This will need to be reviewed as we go forward in order to provide the resource for all we would like to do in the village.

#### Environment, Biodiversity & Ecology

Environmental improvements can come in various guises, large and small. Already a Zero Carbon Grant has been obtained which will enable a survey of the Pavilion. Earlier this year the Sawston cycle route was flooded and volunteers and the Parish Council urged the County Council to rectify, achieving an elevated new section of cycleway.

Over the course of this year the Parish Council will look to develop a plan including large and small initiatives and also seeking to secure access to funding that is increasingly becoming available for such initiatives.

Sustainability will also be a key watch-word for our activities and we will look to evaluate all new initiatives and policies in that light, ensuring that we have done things that will lower our carbon foot print, to recycle or re-use wherever possible. The approach of the Council will be put out for public consultation to ensure we get priorities understood.

#### Sports Development and Management

The Multi Space Games Area (MUGA) is now under construction and will provide an excellent facility for a range of sports.

#### Licenses for the sports clubs

With increased used of the grass based sporting facilities and the launch of the new MUGA in June 2021, the council is cognisant of ensuring that access remains fair to all, and Sports Club licences have been signed.

There is a need to ensure that overuse does not occur potentially damaging surfaces and that new sports like Netball or 5-aside football will need to be nurtured to encourage a wide array of activities with something for everyone at any age.

Good facilities management is highly correlated with good financial management. The council will therefore ensure it keeps reserves dedicated to the replacement costs of facilities at their expected end-of life. It is essential that we do not let recent investments degrade over time. For a small village we have a set of facilities that many might envy and it is

important we continue to nurture and invest accordingly. Part of that is active liaison with organised clubs and associations to ensure they understand the standards we are expecting and also so we can partner with them to help grow their sporting activities. The council is committed to the sporting facilities being accessible to all users regardless of ability or income.

Thanks

My thanks go to all Councillors who are making all this happen. It wouldn't be appropriate to single out Councillors but great work has been achieved.

And finally a tribute to Charlie Nightingale who has resigned from the Parish Council having served for many years and also as a District Councillor. Charlie brought knowledge and wisdom to all our deliberations. His period of service to the two Councils is impressive and an example to us all and he will be missed. We wish him well.

Howard Kettel 4/5/21  
Chair Stapleford Parish Council

2. South Cambs District Councillors reports:  
**Report for Stapleford Annual Meeting**

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council – May 2021**

This report covers the last 12 months of activity by your District Council and local Councillors; a year dominated (of course) by the coronavirus pandemic. SCDC has been active in the local government response to the pandemic. Significant numbers of Council officers have been redeployed from their usual duties to those dealing directly and urgently with the Covid response, such as the Business Recovery team.

Although this has meant some disruption to normal council services, most have been delivered in a timely way and hopefully local residents have not been too severely affected.

#### **1. Covid related grants to businesses and discretionary/hardship grants**

The Business Support Team at SCDC has been supporting all local businesses, big and small, through our website, our business newsletter and by direct contact by our expert business support team; we have advised a staggering 2000 businesses over the past 12 months. We have paid out a total of £10,570,066 in Government business grants to 4,447 local businesses since last November and £3,550,204 in discretionary/hardship grants. We are awaiting details of what further monies we can expect and hence what activities and businesses we will be able to help going forward.

## **2. Community Volunteers**

One of the most heartening things that has come out of the pandemic has been the terrific volunteer community response. It was estimated that, at the height of the Covid emergency, over 4,500 people were engaged across South Cambridgeshire in helping their fellow citizens get through the worst of the crisis. Stapleford was fortunate to have an excellent group, well organised and effective. This organisation was led by Cllr Gillian Pett and Carol Davies, and we would like to record our thanks to them for their work.

Now that there appears to be an end to the lockdown and the vaccination programme is reducing the infection risk to us all, SCDC is looking forward at how the community response might be continued into the recovery period. In the coming weeks, council officers will be contacting volunteers to ask them for their views on this. It is appreciated that many will be very tired and looking forward to a break and this is understandable. It may be that a different set of residents step up and continue the work. Whatever the volunteers decide, SCDC will support them in whatever way it can.

## **3. Mobile/Community Wardens**

In the last 12 months SCDC has increased the number of district Mobile/Community Wardens schemes by 7 and 20 are now operating across the district. This includes the scheme in Stapleford, facilitated through Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. By supporting people in their homes, the wardens help people to live in their own homes for longer.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-development/mobile-warden-scheme/>

## **4. Flooding**

Although the Covid response has played a huge part of all our lives in the last 12 months, there have also been other very notable events, as well as the 'normal' casework. One of these notable events was the flooding that we experienced over the Christmas period and early part of 2021. The exceptional amount of rain that fell during this period tested the drainage systems of our villages to the limit and beyond. Whilst the local authority response to the emergency worked as planned, as one of the category 1 responders SCDC is in talks with Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, the County Council and Internal Drainage Boards and parish councils to see how our joint response can be improved. There will also be a review of riparian watercourses to make sure that they are not obstructed and an impediment to drainage. SCDC will seek to facilitate local emergency plans that tap into local knowledge including that of Parish Councils.

## **5. Construction of new council housing**

We have a policy of increasing the number of council properties available for people on lower incomes and, we have built 66 new council homes in the last 12 months (the target was 50). These are built to a high specification and some of the properties have solar panels and air-source heat-pumps.

## **6. SCDC 5 Year Housing Land Supply**

Local planning authorities, like SCDC, must demonstrate that they are on track to deliver the minimum number of new homes (in the projected five-year period) that the national government has set. Widely known as the 5-year housing land supply (5YHLS) the failure of the previous Conservative administration to demonstrate one led to developers bombarding the council with speculative applications, many of which got approved at appeal. We are delighted to be able to report that the 5YHLS figure for Greater Cambridge (South Cambs and Cambridge City) has recently been reassessed and it now stands at 6.1 years. This means that we can apply our Local Plan policies for affordable housing, standards, sustainable locations, green belt and place-making without the fear of speculative and unsustainable development. Good news indeed!

## **7. Being 'Green to our core'**

One of the priorities for the present administration at SCDC is a commitment to being 'Green to our core'. In early 2021 we released details of our 'Doubling Nature' strategy in which we seek to increase wildlife-rich habitats and the tree canopy and improving access to green spaces. Some of the other projects that we have in the pipeline have, inevitably, been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic but we have still delivered on most of our commitments, such as:

All SCDC street lighting is to be replaced by low energy LED lights. This is nearing completion and should give a reduction of 60% of energy usage and a commensurate saving in parish councils' street-lighting energy bills.

We have completed an audit of the energy efficiency of existing council housing stock and will soon begin a campaign of improvement, beginning with enhanced insulation for the poorest performing properties. This will have the dual benefit of reducing carbon emissions and helping council tenants with their fuel bills. Where possible, Council House refurbishment will include air or ground-source heat pump systems, accompanied by better glazing.

The 'greening' of South Cambs Hall is the main project that has been delayed by Covid, but it should be completed in the coming year. This will retrofit renewable energy generation and energy-saving measures with the objective of reducing by up to 50% the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> used to

heat and light the council's home (with commensurate cost-savings too).

We have purchased an electric bin lorry – one of the first local authorities to do so – and with an option to purchase others. The performance of the vehicle is still being evaluated but, so far, it has exceeded expectations. These vehicles have a much higher upfront cost but running costs are considerably lower and should be cost neutral over the vehicles' lifespan. We shall be considering other greener vehicle options including hydrogen fuel-cell, and there are plans to install a solar generation park (planned 2021-22) as a renewable source of electricity to charge the vehicles, which will add to the financial case as well as the considerable environmental one. Our Zero-Carbon Communities Grant scheme has been very successful. In the last year, almost £100,000 of grant funding has been made available to 17 parish council and community group projects to help them with carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures. The scheme for 2021-22 opens on 10 May 2021 and funding will be available for community buildings, tree Planting and other initiatives to reduce carbon emissions. <https://www.scams.gov.uk/nature-and-climate-change/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant/>

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Cllr Pepperell commented that Stapleford Parish Council fought to achieve 40% affordable housing on the Welch's site, which was negotiated down to 20%. Now, the restriction on affordable housing has been removed from conditions.

The Chairman commented that East West Rail and CSET were hugely opposed by the community, and yet all three main parties were complicit in supporting these projects. All manifestos say candidates are following a green agenda. How can people have confidence in their elected representative when their views are ignored? Cllr Sample responded that his influence is limited but he endeavours to work with the local community whenever he can including in spheres not in his influence such as Government and Cambs County Council. A case in point is the Chalk Hill street light, which is not an SCDC issue.

Cllr Greenhalgh commented that senior County and District Councillors supported the unelected GCP progressing CSET, but have not reviewed the evidence. Local Councillors should represent local interests. Cllr Sample responded that he and Cllr Fane try to do their

best for the local community. CSET will not come to the District Council for planning consideration for some time yet. Cllr Sample is keen to resolve local issues.

Cllr Pepperell commented that a Unitary Authority would be more effective as a result of changes in hierarchy.

The Chairman offered a vote of thanks to Cllrs Sample and Fane for their loyalty and support, demonstrating a high level of accountability and integrity. Parishioners will need to exercise their judgement at the ballot box.

3. SPC Annual Accounts Report

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council accounts were in good order and the account breakdown is shown:

Lloyds Bank Current account:	£7,917.65
Unity Trust Account:	£33,433.15
Building Society 1	£236,257.88
Building Society 2	£12,116.67
TOTAL	£289,725.35
Less S106 Ring Fenced sum	£215,552.00
<b>Year End Total</b>	<b>£74,173.35</b>

4. CSET Busway update and public discussion: It is anticipated that the three new GCP Board Members will undertake a walk of the proposed route. A demonstration is planned for 3<sup>rd</sup> June as the GCP will have published its documents by this date. The BBC is invited to attend to ensure full publicity of the situation. The Joint Assembly will meet on the 10<sup>th</sup> June and it is this group which needs to be influenced. A final decision by the GCP Board will be made on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. Whilst some support the busway through the Green Belt, the majority do not. Emails of support are very useful evidence of public views. The cumulative effect of the busway with its associated development, water and flood, and sustainability need to be considered.

Cllr Greenhalgh commented that politicians in the GCP are unable to challenge the consultants and officers pressing forward with this devastating scheme. A Cambridge congestion charge would change traffic movement and create far less impact.

A resident commented that he was not in favour of either scheme, as both involved a 2,000 Park and Ride which would encourage car use which will exceed the carbon budget for the build. The issue is that capital expenditure is available which cannot be used on non-capital schemes.

5. Public consultation: The Public Stone, Chalk, Gravel and Clay Pit The Chairman offered a vote of thanks to Cllr Jenny Flynn for her work on

this, including communications and collation. This project would transfer ownership of the land to the Magog Trust to secure its long term future and ongoing maintenance. Cllr Flynn commented that a good response has already been achieved, with the consultation due to continue to the 31<sup>st</sup> May. It is important that individuals need to respond. All responses count as evidence of public comment which will be assessed by the Charity Commission.

6. Stapleford MUGA: update: Cllr Paul McPhater reported work has commenced with site preparation, drainage, boundary, fencing post and root barriers being installed. The next phase is installation of asphalt, electricity for lighting and the new gate. Payment for the 1st phase is approved and awaiting authorisation on the bank account. Cllr McPhater checks progress on a virtually daily basis. It is hoped the site will be opened by early June. A user guide for booking will be loaded to the Parish Council website, and links to Stapleford Tennis Club membership. Other sports such as football and netball are signing up to use the site.
7. Parish Organisation reports: (available on the SPC website) Questions and public discussion  
11 reports have been received which are loaded to the PC website.
8. Public Discussion: any other matters: no other matters were raised.

*Meeting closed at 8.06pm*