

ST STEPHEN PARISH COUNCIL

In the District of St. Albans, County of Hertfordshire



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE PARISH CENTRE, STATION ROAD
BRICKET WOOD, ST ALBANS, HERTS
ON 21 JULY 2016 AT 7.30 pm**

Present: Mick Freeman (Chairman), John Bell, Wendy Berriman, David Brannen, Ian Getley, John Parker, Bill Pryce, Nicholas Tyndale and Eileen Whittaker
In attendance: Two Members of public
Officers in attendance: Mrs J Pienaar (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Karen Hurford, Martin Doyle, and Dorothy Kerry.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS

Cllr Freeman expressed an interest in item 7.12 (a) as a member of the Fellas Fitness group.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2016

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That the minutes be approved as a true record.
Votes in favour: unanimous

4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were none.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

In her absence Cllr Featherstone stated that the yellow lines would be painted near the coffee shop/garage in Chiswell Green and that the damaged section of the Network Rail fence and overgrown vegetation along Station Road had been reported.

7. REPORTS: FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES

7.1 To approve the payments schedules

Members referred to the schedule for June and part July.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**
That the payments schedule be approved.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Cllrs Getley and Bell agreed to sign the cheques.

7.2 To consider information on the 2016/17 Special Expenses

Members referred to the appendices which showed a broad breakdown of the costs for both the management of Bricket Wood Common at £27,448 and the Park Street toilets at £20,190. It was noted that since 2014 the 'asset management' fund for the toilets had grown to around £38k and that, following a recent meeting with the Head of Finance, it seemed that there was a possibility that the Parish could influence how those funds were spent. Clarification had yet to be given on whether the 'asset management' fund would be passed on with the devolvement of the asset .
Members queried the management costs for the Common.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Berriman* **Motion Carried**
That Cllrs Bell, Parker/Freeman (depending on availability) meet with the Head of Community Services to discuss the management of the Common.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.3 To receive the Internal Auditor's report

Members received the Internal Auditor's management letter and the report.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Brannen* *Seconded: Cllr Berriman* **Motion Carried**
That the Fidelity Guarantee cover be increased to £884k until November 2016.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell* *Seconded: Cllr Berriman* **Motion Carried**
That the Internal Auditor's report and recommended actions be accepted.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.4 To allocate funds to Reserves and 2016/17 projects

Members referred to the report.

Guidance for Council's recommended a Working Balance be maintained equivalent to 3-12 months' expenditure.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That the Working Balance be increased to 4 months.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Members were asked to allocate funding to the 16/17 Rolling Replacement programme.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Brannen* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That £32440 be allocated to the Rolling Replacement Programme.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Members reviewed the allocation of funds toward priority projects. It was agreed that funding toward replacement of the Greenwood Park entrance gates be deferred pending further investigation. The Clerk explained that not all projects would receive funding requested but should still have sufficient with which to progress.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Getley* **Motion Carried**
That £14611 be allocated to projects listed excepting the entrance gates.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Members considered the potential loss of the Parish Council share of the Local Council Tax Scheme in 2017/18. It was noted that to recoup the loss of income through the precept would result in a 6.5% increase. Members discussed the most prudent way to plan for the future.

PROPOSED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell* **Motion unsuccessful**
That the funds be allocated toward projects.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Tyndale* **Motion Carried**
That sufficient funds be set aside to cushion against the impact of losing the share of LCTS and that the Council continued to seriously look at where savings could be made.
Votes in favour: 8 *Votes against: 1* *Abstentions: 0*

Members considered the re-allocation of funds within Earmarked Reserves.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Whittaker* **Motion Carried**
That £2907 be re-allocated solely to progress the Neighbourhood Plan.
Votes in favour: 8 *Votes against: 0* *Abstentions: 1*

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley* *Seconded: Cllr Brannen* **Motion Carried**
That the loan of £5k to the Festival be re-allocated to new doors for the cricket side of Greenwood Park Pavilion.
Votes in favour: 8 *Votes against: 0* *Abstentions: 1*

Members considered the recommendation from the Leisure Committee that a budget be set aside to replace the tables in St Stephen Suite with more versatile tables, to increase the income-generating potential of the meeting room.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Getley* **Motion Carried**
That £1500 be re-allocated from the 'Parish Centre & Barn Security' toward new tables for St Stephen Suite.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Parker* **Motion Carried**
That £1k be drawn from the Working Balance toward tables for St Stephen Suite.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Members considered the recommendation from the Buildings Committee that income arising from the hire of the Parish Centre car park to Network Rail be directed toward repair of the parish car park.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Brannen* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**
That Murphy's be approached for a quotation to re-surface the parish car park and that the income generated from the hire to Network Rail be allocated toward repair of the car park.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.5 To review the allotment tenancy conditions and rental charges for 2016/17

There were no amendments required to tenancy conditions. There were several vacant allotments at the Chiswell Green sites and a waiting list for Park Street.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That the 2016/17 fees be agreed, as proposed, with the introduction of a 'new tenancy' fee of £12.50 and the minimum clearance charge clearly itemised.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.6 To note expenditure for the Landrover repairs

Recent repairs costs were noted, as was the likelihood that it would result in exceeding the budget.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Whittaker* **Motion Carried**
That funds be drawn from the Working Balance to increase the vehicle repairs/maintenance budget to £2k.
That the current trade-in value of the Landrover be investigated for comparison against previously reported purchase options.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.7 To consider a request from the Community Rail Partnership regarding its financial arrangements

Members considered the suggestion that the Parish enter into the 'host' contract, receive funding and manage the associated financial matters. It was agreed that the Parish did not have the resources to take on further commitments.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Berriman* **Motion Carried**
That the Council does not accept the offer.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.8 To consider the draft BPA Supplemental valve site lease agreement

The Clerk reported that the agreement was in its final stages and would require approval of the final minor amendments.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Whittaker* **Motion Carried**
That Cllr Pryce be delegated authority to approve the final lease agreement and that Cllrs Pryce and Freeman be authorised to seal the document.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.9 To consider the future prospects for Hanstead Wood

It was reported that Hanstead Wood was currently managed by the Friends of Hanstead Wood group and that discussions were underway as to the future of the community woodland should the land be sold. Members were keen to explore proposals to preserve the area for community access.

7.10 To consider a parish Twitter account

Cllr Tyndale reported that 24% of the UK population had a Twitter account and suggested that it was a reasonably useful tool with which to draw attention to upcoming events, such as the

Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey. There was real concern as to resources required to manage a Twitter account. It was estimated that approximately 5 minutes twice a day would suffice. It was agreed that the Clerk be responsible for the account.

PROPOSED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce*
That a Twitter account be started, explored and the time monitored for 3 months.

COUNTER-PROPOSED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Unsuccessful**
That the Parish does not open a Twitter account.
Votes in favour: 3 *Votes against: 6* *Abstentions: 0*

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That a Twitter account be started, explored and the time monitored for 3 months.
Votes in favour: 6 *Votes against: 3* *Abstentions: 0*

7.11 To review the Council's priority actions and projects

The Clerk gave a verbal report that progress had been made on the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey, Supernet project and special expenses enquiry.

7.12 To consider awards of grants and discretionary discounts

The Chairman left the chamber for item 7.12 (a).

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That Cllr Brannen chair the meeting in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
Votes in favour: unanimous

a) Application for a Discretionary Discount from Fella's Fitness

It was noted that the group had provided valuable assistance at parish-led community events.

PROPOSED: *Proposed: Cllr Berriman* *Seconded: Cllr Bell*
That a Discretionary Discount isn't granted in the current financial year and that the group be invited to re-apply in 2016/17.

COUNTER-PROPOSED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Parker* **Motion Unsuccessful**
That two hours of free use be granted each week for six months.
Votes in favour: 2 *Votes against: 6* *Abstentions: 0*

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Berriman* *Seconded: Cllr Bell*
That a Discretionary Discount isn't granted in the current financial year and that the group be invited to re-apply in 2016/17.
Votes in favour: 6 *Votes against: 2* *Abstentions: 0*

The Clerk was asked to pass on the Council's debt of gratitude to the group.

The Chairman returned to the chamber and resumed the Chair.

b) Application for a Grant toward the Bricket Wood Station project from the Community Rail Partnership

Members considered a grant toward match-funding which would enable the project to secure a grant of £3,333. The project had already received pledged funding leaving a shortfall of £718.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Brannen*
That the Council in accordance with its powers under section 137 & 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure:
Award a grant of £500 toward the Bricket Wood Station project.
Votes in favour: unanimous

c) Application for a Grant from Park Street Primary School

Members considered the application for a grant toward the creation of a peace garden for pupils and

9. DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

9.1 To receive invitations, training opportunities, notifications and consultations

a) Consultations

Members were alerted to the Bricket Wood Common Greenspace Action Plan consultation.

b) Invitations, training opportunities and notifications

Noted. Cllr Freeman attended the Battle of the Somme Anniversary; Cllrs Pryce, Bell and Whittaker attended the HAPTC AGM; Cllrs Bell, Pryce and Freeman attended the Neighbourhood Planning Workshop; Cllr Pryce attended the HCC's Resources and Performance Cabinet Panel meeting and Cabinet meeting and Cllr Bell would be attending the second tranche of Neighbourhood Planning training on 26 July.

10. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

10.1 To receive & approve minutes of the following committees

The following minutes were received and approved:

Planning Committee	23 June 2016
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10.2 To receive notes taken at the Council's Working Parties and Forums

The following notes were received:

Parish in Bloom Working Party	14 Apr 2016
Annual Events Working Party	6 May 2016
Annual Events Working Party	14 Jun 2016
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	16 Jun 2016

10.3 To note the minutes of the Joint Committees & Associations

The following minutes were noted:

Bricket Wood Common Management Committee	5 Jul 2016
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11. OTHER URGENT AND IMPORTANT BUSINESS

There was none.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10pm.

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact the Parish Office to discuss your requirements.

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Note: These minutes are to be considered as 'draft' until the Council has resolved to approve them.