

# 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 4 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 7.30 pm

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

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman presented Mr George Burrow, the Community and Fundraising Manager for the East of England branch of the Stroke Association with £464 which was raised by the Annual Carol Concert.

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Martin Doyle, Dorothy Kerry, Karen Hurford, Bill Pryce and Eileen Whittaker.

### 2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS

Cllr Freeman declared a personal interest in item 7.9 regarding the 1st Park Street Brownies group.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2016

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

### 4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Brannen reported that he had discussed the contaminated land in Lye Lane with the Clerk and it would be included on the next Planning agenda.

With the agreement of the Council, the Chairman proposed to bring item 8.1 forward on the agenda to follow item 5.

### 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman accepted a request from Barbara Nowell, Heather Darvill and David Choppin to speak about item 8.1.

Mrs Nowell congratulated the Council on its success of Greenwood Park but was concerned that at times overflow parking was affecting the residents of local roads. The parking issues occurred on Friday evenings, twice a month when the U3A met, at the weekends when there was football and in the summer. She called for the provision of more parking places within the park to meet the capacity of the hall, adding that increasing the parish precept to fund parking would be unlikely to worry residents. She pointed out that grasscrete was an option. Mrs Nowell encouraged the Council to employ the services of a professional planning consultant to look at sufficient parking for all users of the park, at all times, every day of the year.

Mrs Darvill re-iterated the concerns regarding parking and implored the Council to consider extra parking for participants attending the Community Centre. Residents were affected by cars arriving, blocked roads, as well as the noise at 1.30am in the early hours of Saturday morning. It was appreciated that the Council was working with the Police and Salsa Mish to find solutions. She estimated that at least 400 parking places were needed in the park and asked why the Salsa had to go on until 1.30am.

Mr Choppin said the local residents were greatly affected by the parking on Friday evenings. He felt that the Community Centre should be for local residents and suggested that the rooms are not hired out to business that attracted people from far and wide and that he would prefer to see it hired out on Friday evenings for parties.

With the approval of Members, the Chairman brought item 8.1 forward.

### **8.1 To receive a report and recommendations from the Car Parking Working Party**

The Chairman reported on the recommendations of the Car Parking Working Party. The creation of additional parking with the park had been looked at and all potential areas within the park considered, including replacing the allotments. The park was in the Green Belt and there was nowhere suitable to create another car park. Letters had gone out to local residents explaining the Council's proposal to open up its Watford Road car park at the rear of Greenwood Park on Friday evenings to make an additional 60 parking places available. The Salsa group had also made arrangements with the Midway Surgery to make use of their 40 parking places on a Friday evening. There would therefore be an additional 100 parking places on Friday evenings, in addition to the 135 currently available. The Council would be monitoring the success of the arrangements and would continue to work with the Community Police and Salsa Mish, who would continue to provide cones for residents to use.

The Chairman pointed out that the gravel chippings in the car park were for the repair and maintenance of the car park surface and that anyone could attend activities within the Community Centre. Parents using the car park to attend school events and drop off/collect children often filled the car park to capacity leaving no parking for users of the Centre and park.

A Member pointed out that Friday evenings were the 'crunch' and that it was worth trying the actions proposed and suggested that consideration could be given to staggering meetings.

Another Member added that inconsiderate parking was a problem in the car park and suggested that additional parking be created by surfacing the top car park and lining the middle of the car park.

It was asked whether the Salsa group had outgrown the premises and whether the income generated from the hire covered the cost of wear and tear. The Clerk confirmed that the Salsa Club generated income in excess of £13.5k.

A Member who worked at the Community Centre re-iterated that Killigrew parents continued to park inconsiderately and use the car park on Thursdays when the Centre was busy.

It was noted that sometimes groups, not using the Centre or park facilities, used the car park as a meeting point. Reminders had been sent out to all hirers.

The Salsa group was an excellent hirer and had provided voluntary help at Council events on numerous occasions. The local residents were asked to please bear with the Council whilst it actively worked with all parties to resolve the situation.

The Car Parking Working Party had also looked at solutions to the problems created by continued use of Killigrew School's parents. The Council had been in touch with the School on many occasions requesting that school events are not arranged where they clash with busy days in the Centre, to no avail. The Council was trying to engage with all school groups.

## **6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

There were none.

## **7. REPORTS: FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES**

### **7.1 To approve the payments schedules**

Members referred to the schedules for December/January and for the end of January. Cllrs Hurford and Pryce had agreed to sign the cheques.

RESOLVED:            *Proposed: Cllr Brannen*            *Seconded: Cllr Berriman*            **Motion Carried**  
That the payments schedules be approved.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

### **7.2 To review the level of fidelity guarantee insurance**

Members considered whether to increase insurance levels to cover the maximum amount as per the guidelines, however it was noted that the maximum would gradually reduce over the financial year.

RESOLVED:            *Proposed: Cllr Brannen*            *Seconded: Cllr Freeman*            **Motion Carried**  
That insurance be taken to cover the maximum held for a period of two months.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

### 7.3 To note rolling direct debits

Members noted the listed direct debits.

### 7.4 To consider the 2016/17 special expenses

Members referred to the report which detailed the charges made by the District Council to parish residents for concurrent services. Of particular interest was the budget of £27,448 for the Bricket Wood Common management and £20,190 for the Park Street public toilets. It was agreed that the figures be explored with regard to the public toilets and that the Commons Committee would be asked to investigate future management costs.

### 7.5 To consider the 2016/17 grounds maintenance rolling replacements programme

Members referred to the report. The Grounds team proposed that the replacement of the 'pedestrian box rotary mower' and the 'brush & rake' be put on hold and that the replacement of the 'sprayer' be removed from the Rolling Replacement programme. Comparative quotations had been obtained for the replacement of the 'tractor-mounted roller mower' and 'pedestrian non-collection lightweight rotary mower', together with trade-in values.

RESOLVED:        *Proposed: Cllr Bell*        *Seconded: Cllr Freeman*        **Motion Carried**  
That the quotation of £3250 after trade-in be accepted for the roller mower.  
*Votes in favour: 5*        *Votes against: 0*        *Abstentions: 1*

RESOLVED:        *Proposed: Cllr Bell*        *Seconded: Cllr Freeman*        **Motion Carried**  
That the quotation of £1350 be accepted for the AS Motor mower.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

### 7.6 To receive a progress report on the council vacancy

It was reported that applications had been received and informal interviews were due shortly.

### 7.7 To receive an update on the Parish Community Book Swap initiative and the ex-mobile library vehicles

Cllr Bell explained that the Community Book Swap had come about as a result of the County Council terminating the mobile library service. An application had been made to take advantage of the free books on offer to start up a Community Book Swap. The idea proposed had been to take ownership, at little or no cost, of one or two of the redundant mobile library vehicles to use as static libraries in the council's car parks. Unfortunately, despite attempts to obtain the ex-mobile library vehicles, they had gone to auction and were too expensive at between £8k to £12k each. Receipt had been taken of the free book 'start-up' collection. Storing the books in the ex-Police room in Park Street Pavilion was suggested as a temporary measure, although progress of the Community Book Swap needed further consideration. The Clerk added that she had tried to obtain S106 funding from County toward a new library facility for the parish without success.

RESOLVED:        *Proposed: Cllr Freeman*        *Seconded: Cllr Bell*        **Motion Carried**  
That a Task & Finish group, comprising Cllrs Bell, Pryce and Berriman, be formed to progress the Community Book Swap initiative.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

### 7.8 To adopt the 2016/17 scheme of Member's Allowances

It had previously been resolved that the allowance of £250 pa would remain the same for 2016/17. However, the Independent Remuneration Panel had concluded that it would be reasonable for both Redbourn Parish and Harpenden Town Council to set a basic allowance of £360pa for 2016/17 as it considered this to be a 'fair contribution toward the costs of being a Parish or Town Councillor' as it represented 6.5% of the current basic allowance payable to St Albans District Councillors. It was noted that the Parish had not increased its basic allowance since 2004.

PROPOSED:        *Proposed: Cllr Getley*        *Seconded: Cllr Berriman*  
That a revised allowance of £360pa be put forward to the IRP.

COUNTER-  
PROPOSED:        *Proposed: Cllr Bell*        *Seconded: Cllr Brannen*        **Motion Unsuccessful**  
That the allowance remain at £250.  
*Votes in favour: 3*        *Votes against: 3*        *Abstentions: 0*

RESOLVED:        *Proposed: Cllr Getley*                      *Seconded: Cllr Berriman*                      **Motion Carried**  
That a revised allowance of £360pa be put forward to the IRP.  
*Votes in favour: 3*                      *Votes against: 3*                      *Abstentions: 0*  
*The Chairman used his casting vote in favour.*

#### **7.9 To consider awards of grants and discretionary discounts**

Cllr Freeman stepped out of the chamber whilst this item was considered and, with the agreement of Members, Cllr Ian Getley took the Chair.

##### **a) Application from the 1st Park Street Brownies for a Discretionary Discount**

It was agreed that the Brownies offered a service to local residents. Members considered whether, in light of recent discussions at the precept meeting, subsidies to groups should be reduced.

RESOLVED:        *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale*                      *Seconded: Cllr Berriman*                      **Motion Carried**  
That a 75% discount be approved, up to the value of £896, for the Brownies to hold their meetings at the Parish Centre.  
*Votes in favour: 4*                      *Votes against: 1*                      *Abstentions: 0*

Cllr Freeman returned to the chamber and took the Chair.

#### **8. REPORTS: GENERAL**

Item 8.1 had been discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

##### **8.2 To receive a progress report from the Greenwood Park Pavilion Working Party**

Cllr Freeman reported that the Working Party had met with the Tennis Club and the architect. The proposed plans had been considered and several alterations had been put forward to benefit all users of the Pavilion.

##### **8.3 To receive an update on the local Post Office services**

###### **a) How Wood, Park Street**

Cllr Getley reported that he was still in negotiations with the Post Office to secure an Outreach Post Office service in Park Street. He was hopeful that there would be news within the month.

###### **b) Chiswell Green**

Cllr Bell reported that the Post Mistress had been very concerned by the proposed new hours, however, it had come to light that the hours as fixed by a recent contract meant the current service would remain unchanged.

###### **c) Bricket Wood**

A consultation was currently out on proposed modernisation of the Post Office.

RESOLVED:        *Proposed: Cllr Freeman*                      *Seconded: Cllr Tyndale*                      **Motion Carried**  
That Cllr Berriman respond to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

##### **8.4 To receive a progress report on the Greenwood Park 'supernet' project**

Cllrs Pryce and Kerry were currently preparing a presentation that would soon be delivered to District Councillors, District Council Officers and representatives of the Residents' Associations. The Council's request for s106 funding had been publicly acknowledged in recent press coverage.

##### **8.5 To receive a brief report on the Police priority-setting meeting**

Cllr Getley reported that there would be police checks in Mount Pleasant Lane, Oakwood Road, Tippendell Lane and Park Street Lane. It was agreed that Members should advise Cllr Getley of any items they would like raised at future meetings.

##### **8.6 To receive a brief report on the SADALC meeting**

Cllr Bell reported that the District Council had published an Event Booking & Management protocol. Events on Council land must liaise with the St Albans Advisory Group. Precept levels set by other Parish Councils in the district ranged from 0% to 5%. London Colney was planning a Music Festival in March.

## **8.7 To receive brief progress reports and recommendations from the:**

### **a) Annual Events Working Party**

Cllr Berriman reported on the proposed fairground bookings, the Park Street Residents Association's Craft Fair, the brass band for the Armed Forces Day and Carol Concert, as well as the proposal to light the beacon in Greenwood Park as part of the Queen's birthday celebrations.

Members agreed that the Books for Schools initiative be reviewed at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell                      Seconded: Cllr Berriman                      Motion Carried*  
That £400 be spent on booking the brass band.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman                      Seconded: Cllr Tyndale                      Motion Carried*  
That the beacon be lit on the evening of 21 April.  
That the fair dates be approved.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman                      Seconded: Cllr Getley                      Motion Carried*  
That the Main Council meeting in April be moved to 28th.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

### **b) Festival Working Party**

Cllr Freeman reported that activities were being booked and entry charges were proposed.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman                      Seconded: Cllr Berriman                      Motion Carried*  
That an entry fee be charged of £2 per adult, with children under 16 free.  
That activities be booked as noted.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

### **c) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Cllr Bell reported that the Steering Group was currently working on the community survey which would include questions to help formulate the detail within the Neighbourhood Plan. The survey would be published in Autumn 2016.

### **d) Income Generating Working Party**

Suggestions put forward by Members and staff had been prioritised for further investigation.

### **e) Parish in Bloom Working Party**

Cllr Getley expressed disappointment that the licence to add planters/flower beds on the Highway had not progressed. The Clerk explained that Council events and other projects had taken priority and offered to prepare a list of current projects for Council to review.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley                      Seconded: Cllr Freeman                      Motion Carried*  
That the categories and awards be approved.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

## **8.8 To note recent and planned media communications**

Cllr Tyndale referred to the summary which showed a steady stream of press releases.

## **9. DOCUMENTS RECEIVED**

### **9.1 To receive invitations, training opportunities, notifications and consultations**

#### **a) Consultations**

Recent consultations were noted. Cllr Berriman had agreed to respond to the Bricket Wood Post Office consultation.

#### **b) Invitations, training opportunities and notifications**

Noted. Cllr Bell would be attending the advanced planning training session.

## **10. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

### **10.1 To receive & approve minutes of the following committees**

Buildings Committee

12 November 2015

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Planning Committee                                     | 26 November 2015 |
| Leisure Committee (re-convened due to being inquorate) | 3 December 2015  |
| Trees & Woodlands Committee (extra)                    | 10 December 2015 |
| Planning Committee                                     | 17 December 2015 |

**10.2 To receive notes taken at the Council's Working Parties and Forums**

|                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Annual Events Working Party       | 13 November 2015 |
| Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group | 3 December 2015  |
| Festival Working Party            | 8 December 2015  |
| Festival Working Party            | 12 January 2016  |

RESOLVED:      *Proposed: Cllr Freeman*      *Seconded: Cllr Brannen*      **Motion Carried**  
That the minutes and notes are received.  
*Votes in favour: unanimous*

**10.3 To note the minutes of the Joint Committees & Associations**

The following minutes were noted:

|                                       |                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership | 16 October 2015 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.25pm.

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Telephone: 01923 681443

Fax: 01923 681338

Email: [clerk@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Post: St Stephen Parish Council, The Parish Centre, Station Road,  
Bricket Wood, St Albans, Herts, AL2 3JP.