

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 16 JULY 2015 AT 7.30 pm

Present: Mick Freeman (Chairman), Dorothy Kerry (Vice Chairman),
John Bell, Wendy Berriman, David Brannen, Martin Doyle, Ian Getley,
Karen Hurford, Bill Pryce, and Eileen Whittaker.
In attendance: Two Members of public, District Cllr Featherstone
Officers in attendance: Mrs J Pienaar (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Nicholas Tyndale.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS

There were no interests declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2015

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

4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Featherstone reported that at the Police Priority Setting meeting she had been promised speed checks for Bricket Wood. The Planning Policy Committee would be consulting with the parish councils on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment. It was noted that there was a higher concentration in the southern areas of St Albans. The 3 Hammers/Sainsbury appeal had been dismissed.

7. REPORTS: FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES

7.1 To approve the payments schedules

Members referred to the schedules for June/July.

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

Cllrs Freeman and Whittaker agreed to sign the cheques.

7.2 To consider the s106 agreements summary report

The Clerk circulated the most recent list of s106 agreements which were noted.

7.3 To consider the vacancy for Killigrew School Governor

Cllr Whittaker reported that she would be stepping down as School Governor after three years, adding that her involvement with the school had been a pleasure. The post was being changed to 'Co-Opted Governor' and with that came a four year term of office. The school was keen to have a parish representative on its governing body.

7.4 To review the waste removal contract

Members considered the confidential report. Taking into consideration the staff comments and the potential savings of £2047 that could be achieved by changing contract, it was agreed that the dog waste collection be brought back in-house.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Whittaker Motion Carried*
That a new contract be entered into with Amey as set out in the report.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.5 Review the allotment tenancy conditions and rental charges 2015/16

a) Review of Policy and Tenancy conditions

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Brannen Seconded: Cllr Bell Motion Carried*
That Clause 33 be approved: *'In the event that on termination of tenancy the site is not left clear of rubbish, the Council will reserve the right to charge the tenant for removal.'*
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce Seconded: Cllr Whittaker Motion Carried*
That Clause 12 be approved: *'No bonfires will be permitted. Barbeques are permitted. Gas canisters must be stored off site and hot coals disposed of safely. Fire pits are not permitted.'*
Votes in favour: 9 Votes against: 0 Abstentions: 1

b) 2015/16 rental charges

Members considered the comparison charges and noted that in 2014 the parish allotment rental charges were not increased. Some Members were of the view that the rental charges should be increased to keep abreast of inflation and others felt that, as a gesture, rental charges should be held at current rates.

COUNTER-PROPOSED: *Proposed: Cllr Kerry Seconded: Cllr Hurford Motion Unsuccessful*
That the rental charges be increased at a lower rate than that noted.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce Seconded: Cllr Getley Motion Carried*
That there be no increase in the allotment rental charges.
Votes in favour: 5 Votes against: 5 Abstentions: 1
The Chairman used his casting vote in favour.

Members requested that the number of vacancies be included in the 2016 review report.

7.6 To receive an update on the BPA legal agreement

The Council felt that it had been pressured into accepting the installation of an underground value on the BPA pipeline which ran underneath its land, however the BPA had not yet finalised its legal agreement with the Council nor paid the compensation which was part of the agreement. The District Solicitor was working on the Council's behalf to finalise the new legal agreement but this had been delayed whilst negotiations for a kiosk took place. The kiosk had reached a stalemate and Council was keen to see the legal transaction complete. There was now some doubt as to whether the District solicitor had the time to represent the Council's interests.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Freeman Motion Carried*
That the Clerk obtain advice from the District Solicitor as to the Council's intention to seek compensation through the small claims court and report back to the September meeting.
That advice from NALC be sought if the District Solicitor was unable to assist.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.7 To receive an update on the devolvement of assets

The Clerk reported that the draft Heads of Terms had been received that day although subject to

amendment by the Portfolio Holder at SADC. The proposal required careful consideration.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman Seconded: Cllr Getley Motion Carried*
That the Localism Working Party consider the draft Heads of Terms.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.8 To review replacement of the refreshment vending machine

The machine on trial was subject to review as it was not of a satisfactory standard. The machine served hirers of St Stephen Suite, visitors to the Council, Council use as well as staff and had been introduced as there were no suitable facilities or arrangements upstairs to provide a hot water urn.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce Seconded: Cllr Freeman Motion Carried*
That the quotation from LTT vending for outright purchase with a 5 year warranty be accepted.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Freeman Motion Carried*
That funding be drawn from the office furniture budget.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.9 To note the joint HCC/HAPTC 'Shared Statement of Partnership Principles'

Cllr Pryce reported that the document had started out as a charter but had evolved into an agreement between HCC and the Parish/Town Councils and set out how both authorities would work together and communicate more efficiently.

7.10 To consider awards of grants and discretionary discounts

There were none.

8. REPORTS: GENERAL

8.1 To receive an update on the retention of a How Wood Post Office facility

Cllrs Kerry and Getley reported that the Post Office had responded on 4 June confirming that it would re-evaluate whether an outreach service was viable. There was no further news as the local representative was currently on leave.

8.2 To receive a report on the Abfly AGM and draft Rail Strategy consultation

Members referred to the summary report circulated by Cllr Tyndale who had attended the meeting. Council accepted the offer from Cllr Tyndale to respond to the consultation on its behalf. Cllr Bell had also been in attendance at the meeting and reported that the proposal was to replace the tracks with concrete and replace the train with a busway service. Abfly wanted to retain the railway with a passing loop. There would be an opportunity to find out more at the CRP AGM on 21 July at the Parish Centre. There was concern that the government grant toward a busway service might sway opinion.

8.3 To note the current status of the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange application

Members referred to the summary report from Cllr Pryce who had attended the public meeting he had attended at Greenwood Park. It had been confirmed that only a government department could exercise compulsory purchase of the land. The decision to sell was for the County Council and the petition against the sale was still gathering momentum. The Council agreed that Cllr Pryce draft a letter for the Clerk to send thanking the District Council, Anne Main and Cathy Bolshaw for their work in opposing the scheme.

8.4 To consider the draft mural for Park Street public toilets

Members referred to the revised draft murals and thanked Cllr Pryce for the time he had spent on it. Members agreed that the cricketer be scaled back; the silhouettes be coloured in; one of the footballers be female and ethnic minority groups be represented.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman Seconded: Cllr Getley Motion Carried*
That the silhouette design be accepted with the amendments as agreed.
Votes in favour: unanimous

It was agreed that the amended mural design be circulated, after which the District Council and local residents would be consulted.

8.5 To receive the final recommendations of the County Council Electoral Review

It was noted that the recommendation for the St Stephen County division included Ragged Hall Lane and would affect 86 electors living with St Michael Parish. The parish boundary and wards remained the same.

8.6 To receive a brief report on the Parish Conference

Cllr Pryce reported that he had attended the Conference, along with Cllr Kerry who had delivered the Parish Priorities and the Clerk. The presentations had been interesting and included a briefing on the Community Infrastructure Levy and Libraries. The conference provided excellent networking opportunities but had suffered from low attendance. Members who did not attend were asked for their feedback and it was concluded that the conference should be held in September.

8.7 To receive an update on Inspiring Libraries and replacement of the mobile library

Cllr Pryce reported that the mobile library service had come to an end and in its place would be the Home Library Service and self-organised book swaps run by volunteers. There was concern as to where the volunteers would come from. It was agreed that closing the mobile facility would result in the loss of the social aspect and the ability to browse and it was suggested that the Parish investigate a Community Library.

8.8 To note recent and planned media communications

Cllr Tyndale, as Communications Portfolio holder, had requested a review of press coverage. The Council currently sent out 'quick comments', 'news bytes' and full 'press releases' to the media. Members referred to the summary which showed that press coverage had been fairly successful. The Clerk reported on the proposed forthcoming press release items.

8.9 To receive brief updates and recommendations from the:

a) *Neighbourhood Plan Working Party*

Cllr Pryce reported that the Working Groups had been set up and the first meeting was planned for 12 August. The consultant would be attending to provide guidance. Many people were keen and the aim was to keep the momentum.

b) *Annual Events Working Party*

Cllr Berriman reported that the Armed Forces Day event had gone well. Help was needed for Crafts in the Park on 27, 28 and 29 July from 11am to 12.30pm.

c) *Parish in Bloom Working Party*

Cllr Getley reported that there had been a poor response to the competitions and said that the Working Party would need to assess its future. Cllrs Getley and Whittaker were thanked for their work on the front entrance bed to Greenwood Park which looked lovely. It was noted that there was a need for improved communications from the Working Party.

d) *Licensed Refreshment Working Party*

Cllr Pryce reported that a meeting had been arranged with the Licensee for the bar at Greenwood Park Community Centre. It had been agreed that the bar area should not be considered for a tea room and the Buildings Committee had been asked to seriously consider a wooden-clad portable cabin sited near the children's play area.

9. DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

9.1 To receive invitations, training opportunities, notifications and consultations

a) *Consultations*

Recent consultations were noted.

b) *Invitations, training opportunities and notifications*

Cllr Pryce would be attending the HAPTC AGM.

10. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

10.1 To receive & approve minutes of the following committees

Planning Committee

25 June 2015

