

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 17 MARCH 2016 AT 7.30 pm

Present: Mick Freeman (Chairman), John Bell, David Brannen, Martin Doyle,
John Parker, Bill Pryce and Nicholas Tyndale
In attendance: Four Members of public
Officers in attendance: Mrs J Pienaar (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Wendy Berriman, Ian Getley, Dorothy Kerry, Karen Hurford, and Eileen Whittaker. The Chairman wished Cllr Getley a speedy recovery.

2. TO CONSIDER FILLING THE VACANCY FOR BRICKET WOOD AND RECEIVE DECLARATIONS

Cllrs Freeman, Kerry and Berriman had carried out informal interviews of the two candidates. Both candidates chose to step out of the chamber whilst the vote was taken.

RESOLVED: **Motion Carried**
That John Parker be co-opted onto the Council.

The Chairman thanked all the candidates and said that it had been a difficult task. The Chairman welcomed Cllr John Parker to the Council and invited him to sign the Declaration of Office.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2016

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

4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman accepted an item from Cllr Pryce on the Cavalier Hall timbers and an item from the Clerk regarding the Councillor Allowances for 2016/17.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The Clerk read out Cllr Featherstone's report. In addition to usual casework, Cllr Featherstone had requested that residents in a particular area be written to regarding fly-tipping. She reminded residents having work done that they should make sure the person removing the waste holds a relevant waste transfer licence as they could face prosecution if dumped waste was traced back.

7. REPORTS: FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES

7.1 To approve the payments schedules

Members referred to the schedule for February. Cllrs Bell and Freeman had signed the cheques.

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

7.2 To consider detailed information for the 2016/17 Special Expenses

The District Council had been asked to provide detailed information on the budget and the past two years actual expenditure.

7.3 To review the School Book Awards

The Annual Events Working Party had asked that the award be reviewed. The Award commenced in 2011 with £200 being allocated toward school books for the four primary schools within the Parish. In

2015 three of the four schools attended the presentation to receive the books. Members felt that the books were appreciated by the schools.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Doyle* **Motion Carried**
That the School Book Award scheme remain unchanged.
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:
That £200 remain allocated to this scheme.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.4 To ratify the cycle way improvements, Greenwood Park

Members referred to the notes. Improvements to the cycle way had commenced. All work had been funded by the County. The cycle path remained permissive until County formally adopted it, despite it being part of National Cycle Route 6. Dedication of the route had again been followed up with the County's Local Area Highway Team.

7.5 To consider assisting UK Power Networks with its Priority Services Register.

Members referred to the notes and letter from UKPN. The Clerk reported that the current trial was full due to high demand, although it may be available again at a future date.

7.6 To consider whether to opt out of the Sector Led Body audit procurement

Members referred to the notes. Following the discontinuance of the Audit Commission in 2015 the SLB was created to simplify and reduce the burden on Parish Councils to appoint External Auditors with the added benefit of collective procurement.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**
That St Stephen remain 'opted in' to the SLB procurement.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.7 To review the Council's system of internal controls and risk management

Members referred to the report prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, regulation 4 (2).

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That the Internal Controls and Risk Management be approved.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.8 To approve renewal of the annual Health & Safety contract

It was noted that the contract provided an essential service for the effective management of the Council's Health & Safety responsibilities. The contract price had not increased.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That the H&S contract be renewed for a further year.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.9 To approve the temporary licence agreement with Network Rail

Members considered the key information and terms of the proposed licence. The hire fees had been based on the grounds hire rates. Members felt that for exceptional hire agreements the Clerk should be delegated the authority to negotiate the rates as appropriate.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That the licence agreement be approved for Network Rail.
That it is incumbent on Network Rail to notify neighbouring properties and provide the Council with information to distribute to hirers.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Parker* **Motion Carried**
That exceptional applications be considered on merit and the hire fees negotiated by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.10 To approve the Annual Report 2015/16

The Annual Report would be circulated to Members prior to presentation at the April meeting and publication within the summer newsletter.

7.11 To review the Council's priorities

The Clerk presented a summary of the current 'projects' with priorities. The Clerk pointed out that as the report provided a brief summary of key stages for each item, the amount of time and work required to complete some of the larger projects were not obvious. It was suggested that the list be numbered and that the Clerk provide a regular progress report. The Chairman reiterated the view that the Council was stretched to its limits in terms of time, finances and resources as a result of taking on a number of large projects.

7.12 To prepare a list of s106 prioritised projects

It was recommended that the Council prepares a detailed list of potential future projects to ensure that s106 funds from developments within the parish are used to directly benefit Parish residents. It was suggested that the draft list be listed in priority order. Committees and Working Parties were asked to feed into what would become a living document. The Planning Committee would use the list as an 'aide memoire' to ensure that s106 requests are submitted with planning comments.

7.13 To consider awards of grants and discretionary discounts

The application from Friends of Hanstead Wood would be presented at the April meeting.

8. REPORTS: GENERAL

8.1 To receive a progress report from the Greenwood Park Pavilion Working Party

Cllr Freeman reported that the Working Party would be meeting with the football and cricket clubs to get their feedback on the revised plans, after which a meeting would be held with the Tennis club and their architect to progress the project.

8.2 To receive a progress report on the Greenwood Park 'super net' project

An invitation to attend a presentation on 6 April had been sent out to the Head of Community Services at District Council, the District Councillors and Chairmen of the Residents' Associations.

8.3 To receive an update on the local Post Office services for How Wood

The Clerk reported that Cllr Getley was still actively pursuing a service for How Wood.

8.4 To receive an update on Asset of Community Value—Park Wood & Scrubbs Wood

Cllr Bell reported that the woodland located off Ragged Hall Lane had been well-used by local residents. The Parish had therefore submitted an application to register it as an ACV. The application was approved by the District Council despite objections from the land owner. Registration enabled the Council to have first option to buy the land at market value should it ever be put up for sale. Since then, local residents had submitted an application for a Definitive Right of Way crossing the wood supported by approximately 30 residents. The application had been formally accepted by the County Council for consideration. As a result, the landowner fenced the woodland with barbed wire preventing access. Cllr Bell explained that this action by the landowner would not affect the claim.

8.5 To note the final sketch of the Park Street mural

Members received the final sketch which encapsulated the activities on the park. Cllr Pryce explained that the non-traditional design was by the same people responsible for the mural on the St Albans' railway bridge. Cllr Pryce had prepared a letter with which to consult District Council and residents.

8.6 To receive a brief report on the Bricket Wood Common Management meeting

Cllrs Brannen and Bell reported that a report on the expenditure would be forthcoming. There were two management plans. One managed by the land owner and the other by the BWCM Committee. Although it had been queried why residents were paying towards the management of the common without hope of future access to grant funding, the Committee did allow local residents to have input.

8.7 To receive an update on the telephone kiosk, Stanley Avenue

Cllr Bell reported that the kiosk was damaged and empty. His involvement had been to assist a resident who had been communicating with BT for its removal over a long period of time. Their perseverance had resulted in recent confirmation that the kiosk would soon be removed.

8.8 To receive brief progress reports and recommendations from the:

a) Annual Events Working Party

Cllr Freeman reported that the beacon would be lit at Greenwood Park on 21st April for the Queen's

90th birthday. Invitations had been sent out to local youth organisations. The Main Council meeting had been moved to 28 April. Armed Forces Day would be held on 26 June.

b) Festival Working Party

Cllr Pryce reported that there had been a good response from performers for both dates. Tots Nursery would be involved with the children's art. All costs were as recorded in the notes.

c) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Cllr Bell reported that the Steering Group and the Working Group volunteers had put in a lot of research. There was still a lot of work to be done. A meeting had been arranged to sustain the motivation of the volunteers on 22 March.

d) Generating Income Working Party

Advertising the Centres further afield in the Garston area had been progressed. Investigations had commenced into an astroturf pitch for Greenwood Park.

e) Parish in Bloom Working Party

It was noted that the Parish in Bloom entries were due in by 24 June.

f) Licensed Refreshment Working Party

The existing bar agreement was due to terminate in May. Various local people had been approached with a view to continuing the service. The bar served an average of 6 events p/a, sometimes more.

g) Car Parking Working Party

The Chairman reported that no further complaints had been received. The actions taken were being monitored. Representatives from Killigrew School, its PTA and Governing Body were to be invited to meet with Council to help resolve issues arising from the use of the parish car park by parents.

8.9 To note recent and planned media communications

Cllr Tyndale referred to the summary which showed that the parish activities were getting more attention than previously enjoyed.

With the agreement of Members it was agreed that items 8.10 and 8.11 would be discussed at the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Tyndale Motion Carried*
In view of the confidential nature of item 8.10, which relates to individuals, the public and accredited representatives of the press shall be excluded while they are discussed, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1982.
Votes in favour: unanimous

9. DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

9.1 To receive invitations, training opportunities, notifications and consultations

a) Consultations

Recent consultations were noted.

Cllr Tyndale offered to respond to the West Midlands Franchise consultation to voice support for the Abbey Line.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman Seconded: Cllr Bell Motion Carried*
That Cllr Tyndale respond to the West Midlands Franchise Consultation on behalf of Council.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Cllrs Bell and Pryce had commented on the How Wood Greenspace Action Plan 2016 to 2021. It was felt that the pond would benefit from careful management and that the hard surfacing on footpaths would detract from the natural habitat. There was concern that the amount of timber to be extracted would have a big impact on such a small woodland.

Cllr Berriman had submitted a response on behalf of Council to the Bricket Wood Post Office consultation.

b) Invitations, training opportunities and notifications

Noted. Cllr Freeman would be officially opening the Park Street Village Hall Open Day on 19 March. Members commented that the Village Hall was quite an achievement by a group of volunteers.

10. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

10.1 To receive & approve minutes of the following committees

Planning Committee	14 January 2016
Planning Committee	11 February 2016

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

Parish in Bloom Working Party	7 January 2016
Annual Events Working Party	21 January 2016
Car Park Working Party	29 January 2016
Festival Working Party	9 February 2016
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	18 February 2016
Licensed Refreshment Working Party	24 February 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes and notes are received.

Motion Carried

10.3 To note the minutes of the Joint Committees & Associations

The following minutes were noted:

Bricket Wood Common Management Committee	9 February 2016
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The Chairman moved on to the confidential part of the meeting and members of the public left the chamber.

Members agreed that item 8.11 be discussed first.

8.11 To review the judging criteria for the Community Awards

The Clerk reported that residents and the Park Street Residents Association had enquired whether there might be some form of further recognition for people who had already received the Community Award but continued to make sustained and multiple contributions to the community. Members considered whether conferring 'Freedom of the Parish' might be appropriate but decided against this.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Freeman Motion Carried*

That only one Community Award be awarded to an individual.

That the nomination form be amended to clarify nominations would be invited from candidates who had not previously received the award.

That Cllrs Freeman and Tyndale would review the wording of the criteria.

Votes in favour: unanimous

8.10 To consider nominations for the Community Awards

Members considered the nominations. After consideration and in light of an amendment to the judging criteria in 2012, Members confirmed that only individuals could be considered for the award.

RESOLVED:

That Dick Downs be invited to receive the Community Award.

Votes in favour: unanimous

Motion Carried

11. OTHER IMPORTANT URGENT BUSINESS

11.1 Councillor Allowances

The Chairman referred to recent email correspondence from the Clerk regarding the Allowances for 2016/17 and asked that Members respond to the Clerk as soon as possible.

11.2 Cavalier Hall timbers

It was reported that the Chiltern Open Air museum could not take the timbers as it already had another 15 similar buildings, no funding and insufficient storage space. It was agreed that this would be considered at a future meeting.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

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.