

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 19 JUNE 2014 AT 7.30 pm

Present: Michael Freeman, (Chairman), Jadwiga Baillie, John Bell, Oonah Jones,
Bill Pryce, Nicholas Tyndale and Eileen Whittaker.
In attendance: Three Members of public and Mr Gurd.
Officers in attendance: Mrs J Pienaar (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Berriman, Brannen, Getley, Kerry and Hurford.

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS

There were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2014

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**
That the minutes be approved as a true record.
Votes in favour: 5 *Votes against: 2* *Abstentions: 0*

4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were none.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were none.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Featherstone gave her apologies but reported that as a result of a site meeting with officers earlier in the year there was an agreement that the District Council would replace the cycle racks outside the Oakwood Road shops. Both the Parish and Residents' Association had been involved in agreeing the exact location and the two racks would be installed in the near future. There had been no more news from the District Council on the felling of the seven TPO trees in Oakwood Road almost a year ago.

7. REPORTS: FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES

7.1 To approve the payments schedules

Members referred to the schedule for May/June.

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

Cllrs Bell and Jones agreed to sign the cheques.

7.2 To approve the Annual Return for 2013/14

Members referred to the report. The Internal Auditor had carried out his independent assessment and checks and reported that internal controls were being met.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Jones* **Motion Carried**
That the Accounting Statement and Annual Governance Statements are agreed.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.3 To consider the allocation of funds to reserves and 2014/15 projects

Members referred to the report. It was noted that the working balance should be maintained at a level equivalent to three-twelve months expenditure. Assurance was given that the Council may resolve to re-allocate earmarked reserves or draw down from the working balance if needed.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Jones* **Motion Carried**
That the retained working balance be increased to four months.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That the sum of £35325 be earmarked toward a neighbourhood plan/funding future priority work identified in the FSP.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That the sum of £16683 be allocated to earmarked reserves for the remaining 2014/15 #1 priorities.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.4 To consider the BPA legal agreement

The Clerk reported that notes had only just arrived from the District Council and had not yet been read. A summary would be circulated to members to progress the agreement.

7.5 To consider repair/replacement of the parish bus shelters

Members referred to the report which identified five shelters in need of roof repairs/replacement and recommended that one, dating back to the 1960's, be considered for replacement if a grant could be obtained. The shelters near the Black Boy PH would soon be replaced by the County Council as a result of the petition and lobbying from the Parish and Bricket Wood Residents' Association. It was suggested that the Parish recover all of its shelters along the A405 and ask County to replace them.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That the roofs on the five shelters identified be repaired.
Votes in favour: unanimous

It was agreed that the repair of shelter #13 be held back pending further consideration on replacement. Cllrs Bell and Freeman agreed to inspect the shelter with the Head Groundsman.

7.6 To consider a proposal regarding BBQ's in the parish parks

A Member felt that it would be a shame if one incident in the last twenty years affected residents' enjoyment of the parks. Owing to concerns that it may get out of hand it was suggested that only authorised BBQ's be permitted.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Jones* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That a decision be delayed pending advice from the Council's insurers.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.7 To consider the Terms of Reference for the HR Committee

Members referred to the draft Terms of Reference. The Clerk reported that advice had been sought from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC, responsible for issuing legal guidance to larger parish councils and county associations). Members considered the number of members for the committee. A member pointed out that the existing HR Working Party, of which Cllr Jones had been a member, had spent considerable time in dealing with the review efficiently and had gained valuable experience in determining it and recommended that Cllr Jones be elected to the new committee as a sixth member.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**
That the draft Terms of Reference be approved.
Votes in favour: 5 *Votes against: 2* *Abstentions: 0*
In favour: Cllrs Pryce, Bell, Freeman, Jones and Tyndale
Against: Cllrs Baillie and Whittaker

Cllr Baillie requested a recorded vote.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**
That Cllr Jones be appointed as a member of the HR Committee
Votes in favour: 5 *Votes against: 0* *Abstentions: 2*

The Clerk confirmed both the National and County associations recommended that a staffing committee should be confidential as it would always be concerned with individual staff members and disclosure would breach the obligations of the Council under the Data Protection Act. NALC recommended that Standing Orders confirm the public has no advance notification or right to attend a staffing committee/sub-committee. The Clerk confirmed that, as embodied in the agreed ToR, where appropriate recommendations would be made to Council for ratification and the resolution would be included in the published minutes.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That Standing Orders be amended to include clause 39 (b):
The public shall not receive advance notification or have the right to attend meetings of the HR Committee or its sub-committees.
Votes in favour: 5 *Votes against: 2* *Abstentions: 0*

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Tyndale* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That references to the 'HR Working Party' in the Discipline & Grievance Policy are amended to read 'HR Committee/sub-committee'
Votes in favour: 5 *Votes against: 2* *Abstentions: 0*

7.8 To consider applications for grants and discretionary discounts

Cllr Freeman declared an interest as a member of Fella's Fitness and left the chamber whilst the item was considered. It was agreed that Cllr Bell take the chair in his absence.

Members considered the recommendation of the Festival Working Party that the Fella's Fitness group received free hire for ten sessions in recognition of the tremendous amount of assistance provided by the group with erecting and dismantling the fencing.

It was noted that Fella's Fitness was not a business.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Whittaker* *Seconded: Cllr Tyndale* **Motion Carried**
That a 100% discount be approved up to the value of £144.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.9 To receive a report on the Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and consider an application for partnership funding

Members referred to the report from the CRP. The Chairman invited Mr Gurd, the Council's representative on the CRP, to speak.

Mr Gurd reported that the steering group meetings were attended by senior representatives from its partners, namely London Midland, St Albans and Watford Councils, Network Rail and was chaired by Cllr Terry Douris, the Executive Member for Highways and Waste Management at the County Council. It was an ideal forum at which to put views to key officers and lobby larger authorities. The work of the CRP and its officer had been funded by London Midland and the County Council with the share from London Midland ring-fenced for enhancements on the line. Due to budget constraints the funding from the County Council would cease at March 2015. The CRP was asking each of the local authority partners for a contribution toward its core funding from April 2015.

CRP projects over the past year included the new signage and station projects with the project to replace the 'abbey gateway' in progress.

A Member pointed out that based on the precepts received, the share requested from the Parish Council of £2.5k was disproportionate to that being asked of the larger authorities of £10.5k each. Whilst County had indicated it would provide £10.5k of funding in 2015/16 it was envisaged that the funding would be withdrawn altogether in future years. Confirmation had not been received from Watford and District Councils regarding their contributions. It was noted that the Abfly user group had a distinctly separate role to that of the CRP and it was pointed out that CRP would be less effective without the excellent officer support provided by Janet Tyndale.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Jones* *Seconded: Cllr Whittaker* **Motion Carried**
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:

A contribution of £1250 (half of the sum requested) ring-fenced toward the 2015/16 CRP Officer salary.

Votes in favour: 6

Votes against: 1

Abstentions: 0

Members considered the suggestion from CRP that its meeting space at the Parish Centre is offered on a complimentary basis.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Freeman Motion Carried*
That the CRP meetings be granted a full discretionary discount.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Freeman Motion Carried*
That Mr Gurd remain as the Parish representative on the CRP.
Votes in favour: unanimous

8. REPORTS: GENERAL

8.1 To receive a report on Abfly

The Chairman invited Mr Gurd to update Members on the activities of Abfly. Mr Gurd reported that no progress had been made regarding the passing loop. The London Midland franchise ended in 2017 and the franchise would be put out to tender next year. This presented an opportunity to secure progress by getting a commitment written into the new franchise agreement. Abfly would be looking for support from local MP's, Parish, District and County Councillors to lobby Network Rail. The alignment of the track was due to be changed in the next few months which would allow the signalling to be updated. Buses were being provided during the works. The new cleaning regime had just started.

8.2 To receive a report on preliminary discussions concerning the Bricket Wood Station

Cllr Pryce reported that he and Cllr Kerry had met the Portfolio Surveyor for Network Rail on site. In principal the proposal to use the station building as a resource/learning centre was well received but there was no indication as yet whether Network Rail would donate, lease or sell the building.

8.3 To consider information concerning the maintenance of the grass verges

It was noted that improvements were expected after the end of June and agreed that it be monitored.

8.3 To consider a letter concerning additional parking at Greenwood Park

Members referred to the letter from a local resident. It was confirmed that whilst the woodchip did not affect the parking, the Head Groundsman would be moving it as soon as their schedule permitted.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce Seconded: Cllr Whittaker Motion Carried*
That a working party be formed to consider the possible parking solutions and ramifications and make recommendation to Council.
Votes in favour: unanimous

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce Seconded: Cllr Whittaker Motion Carried*
That Cllrs Pryce, Whittaker and Freeman be appointed to the Working Party.
Votes in favour: unanimous

8.5 To receive a report on the Highways Together project

The clerk reported that St Stephen Parish was one of a few selected parish/town councils taking part in a pilot project led by Herts Highways to seek ways in which both authorities could work together to enhance the standard of highways maintenance by enabling parish councils to carry out some tasks themselves or with volunteers that would not otherwise be done due to County budget limitations. The Clerk represented the Parish on the Environmental group where the focus was on working with volunteers. Members agreed to forward suggested project material to the Clerk by Monday 23rd June.

8.6 To receive a report on the parish Clerk's roundtable meeting

At the meeting between the Chief Executive of the District Council and the Parish Clerks it was reported that Tracey Harvey was now in post as the new Head of Planning. The District Council was planning a three year events programme to inform residents of its events in advance and aimed to create a community events planner in future. The District would be setting its budget in December and therefore able to let the Parish Council know earlier what its share of the Local Council Tax Scheme grant will be. Tony Marmo had been appointed interim Community Partnerships Manager.

8.7 To receive a brief update and the recommendations of the:

a) Parish in Bloom Working Party

The Clerk reported that Cllrs Berriman and Kerry had offered to step in and assist the Bricket Wood Residents' Association with its Best Kept Front Garden competition. Very few entries for the Parish in Bloom had been received to date. It was agreed a recommendation be made to the Working Party that the closing date to be extended until mid-July.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the guillotine procedure. It was agreed that the meeting continue until its completion.

b) Annual Events Working Party

Members considered the recommendations.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That the Fair at Park Street Recreation Ground be approved and the additional lights be purchased for the Carol Concert.
Votes in favour: unanimous

c) Festival Working Party

The Working Party had held its de-brief meeting. As soon as the event accounts were complete the Council would be in a position to consider a donation to the Peace Hospice.

9. DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

9.1 To receive invitations, training opportunities, notifications and consultations

It was noted that Cllrs Freeman, Pryce and Bell would be attending the Parish Conference and that Cllrs Jones and Pryce would be attending the meeting with the new CEO of NALC. Cllrs Bell and Freeman would be attending the Detailed Local Plan meeting on 7th July. The consultations received were noted. It was agreed that Cllr Bell read and comment on the Household Waste Recycling sites.

10. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

10.1 To receive & approve minutes of the following committees

The following minutes were formally received by Council:

Leisure Committee (3)	3 April 2014
Trees & Woodlands Committee (2)	1 May 2014
Planning Committee (1)	22 May 2014

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

The following notes were received:

Parish in Bloom Working Party	24 April 2014
Festival Working Party	13 May 2014

10.3 To note the minutes of the Joint Committees & Associations

The minutes received were noted.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.10pm.

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

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

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