

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 MARCH 2015 AT 7.30 pm

Present: Mick Freeman (Chairman), Dorothy Kerry (Vice Chairman)
Jadwiga Baillie, John Bell, David Brannen,
Ian Getley, Karen Hurford, Bill Pryce and Nicholas Tyndale
In attendance: Five Members of public
Officers in attendance: Mrs J Pienaar (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Wendy Berriman and Eileen Whittaker .

2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS

Cllr Hurford declared an interest in items 7.3 and 7.4 as a member of the Greenwood Park Lawn Tennis Club. Cllr Getley declared an interest in item 7.15 (a) as a previous school governor and Cllr Freeman declared a pecuniary interest due to his involvement with the Waverley Carriage Driving Group charity.

The vacant seat for the Chiswell Green ward was noted.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2015

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **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

Two representatives of the Greenwood Park Lawn Tennis club offered to answer any queries regarding the club's proposal and the Chairman agreed that they speak under items 7.3 and 7.4.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

There was none.

The Chairman drew Members attention to item 8.12 and it was agreed that it be considered at the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Hurford* **Motion Carried**
That in view of the confidential nature of item 8.12, which relates to named members of the public, the public and accredited representatives of the press 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

7. REPORTS: FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES

7.1 To consider co-opting to fill the vacancy

The Clerk reported that the vacancy in the Chiswell Green ward had been advertised from 20 February to 11 March 2015. In accordance with the Local Elections (Parishes & Communities) Rules 2006 the Council could co-opt a Member after 12 March. There was an agreed procedure in place for the co-option process.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Getley* **Motion Carried**
That the Council seeks to co-opt a Member to fill the vacancy.

Votes in favour: unanimous

7.2 To approve the payments schedules

Members referred to the schedules for February/March.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Brannen* **Motion Carried**
That the payments schedules be approved.
Votes in favour: 8 *Votes against: 0* *Abstentions: 1*

Cllrs Hurford and Pryce agreed to sign the cheques.

7.3 To consider improvements to the Greenwood Park Pavilion clubhouse facilities

Members referred to the plans for the improved clubhouse facility as recommended by the Buildings Committee. Greenwood Park Lawn Tennis Club proposed to submit an application, on behalf of the Parish Council, for grant funding from Sport England 'Inspired Facilities' with assistance from the Herts Sports Partnership. The application deadline was 8 June. There was no cost implication for the Council. Members received the proposals with enthusiasm.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley* *Seconded: Cllr Freeman* **Motion Carried**
That the proposal be approved in principal.
Votes in favour: 8 *Votes against: 0* *Abstentions: 1*

7.4 To consider extending the Greenwood Park Tennis Club lease

The Buildings Committee recommended that the existing lease agreement with the Tennis Club be extended by a further 25 years to facilitate the grant application. The representatives from the Tennis Club said that the Club did not want to see an increase in the rental charges as a result of the increased facility size.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Getley* **Motion Carried**
That in principle it is agreed that the existing lease be extended by 25 years.
Votes in favour: 8 *Votes against: 0* *Abstentions: 1*

7.5 To consider the recommendations of the PSRG Cricket Working Party

The Working Party reported that it had met on three occasions to consider a solution to the problems experienced with the ball travelling beyond the park boundary. The grounds were leased from the District Council and cricket had been played at the Recreation Ground since 1929. Improvements in the equipment, wicket and game seemed to be the root cause of the problem. Over the past four years there had been a few near misses. The Council's insurer's had confirmed that cover was in place and Frogmore Cricket Club held sufficient insurance cover. An opinion was awaited from the Council's H&S Consultant. An enquiry was being made as to whether FCC could increase its insurance cover to £10m. Members expressed concern regarding the visual aesthetic of ball-stop net fencing and the risk of potential injury, albeit low. As there was still insufficient information with which to make a considered decision Cllrs Pryce and Freeman requested that a decision be deferred.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Kerry* **Motion Carried**
That a decision be held in abeyance whilst the Council works towards a solution and all facts and figures are available.
Votes in favour: 8 *Votes against: 1* *Abstentions: 0*

7.6 To review Special Expenses charges

The District Council's comparative figures from 2012-13, up to and including 2015-16, showed an overall difference of £28,813.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Bell* **Motion Carried**
That more information be obtained on how the figures were arrived at.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.7 To receive a report on s106 expenditure

The Clerk, together with Cllrs Freeman and Pryce met with District Council Officers concerning s106

funding from developments within the parish. The Clerk circulated the s106 summary from April 2014 and had requested an up-to-date list from District. A large sum of s106 funds had been received by the District in recent years toward 'leisure' facilities in the parish, although it was not known to which project the funds had been allocated. Officers advised that around £7k was available toward leisure and it was noted that a claim would be submitted for funding toward the new equipment for Greenwood Park play area. The allocation of s106 was approved by the District Ward Councillors. When considering planning applications the Council was reminded to identify potential projects. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was to be brought in shortly and through it the Parish stood to benefit directly from a 15% share arising out of developments within the parish. With a Neighbourhood Plan in place that share would increase to 25%. The s106 agreement had already been agreed between District and County for the Rail freight development.

7.8 To consider renewal of the photocopier lease agreement

Members considered the information.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley Seconded: Cllr Pryce **Motion Carried***
That the new lease agreement for the copier at Greenwood Park office be agreed as recommended.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.9 To consider a report regarding the Council's waste contract

The Clerk reported that dialogue had commenced with the District Council with regard to piggy-backing onto their waste contract to benefit from economies of scale. Currently prices were being compared. The current waste contractor had re-affirmed that the Council could not dispose of its dog waste in its general waste stream.

7.10 To consider a 2016 Festival event

Members felt that it was a difficult commitment to make in light of the pending elections.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce Seconded: Cllr Kerry **Motion Carried***
That in principle the current Members were willing to hold a 2016 Festival event.
Votes in favour: 8 Votes against: 1 Abstentions: 0

7.11 To consider the appointment of a Press Liaison Councillor and editorial assistance for the Parish newsletter

On the understanding that there would be no change to the current arrangement whereby the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair/Vice-Chair, had the ultimate authority regarding press material, it was agreed that the voluntary assistance offered by Cllr Tyndale, who was skilled in that field, be gratefully accepted.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Kerry **Motion Carried***
That Cllr Tyndale be appointed and that a protocol be developed for both roles.
Votes in favour: unanimous

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

Members referred to the draft document.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell Seconded: Cllr Freeman **Motion Carried***
That the 2015 Internal Audit and Risk Management document be approved.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.13 To adopt the 2015/16 scheme of Members' Allowances

The Independent Remuneration Panel had considered the Parish Council's proposals, which remained unchanged from the previous year.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce Seconded: Cllr Tyndale **Motion Carried***
That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 the 2015/16 scheme of Members' Allowances be adopted.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.14 To approve the allocation of funds to support the precept and a budget virement

In line with the resolution of the Precept meeting, funds were drawn from the Working Balance to support the 2015/16 budget.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Kerry* **Motion Carried**
That £19864 be drawn from the Working Balance to support the budget.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Members considered the request from the Buildings Committee.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Bell* *Seconded: Cllr Pryce* **Motion Carried**
That a virement of £1664 is approved from the 2014/15 Parish Centre Repairs & Maintenance budget to the Greenwood Park Community Centre Repairs & Maintenance budget.
Votes in favour: unanimous

7.15 To consider awards of grants and discretionary discounts

a) How Wood School

A Member pointed out that residents had already contributed toward the school funds through their rates to the County Council and that the School was responsible for prioritising how its funds were spent. It was suggested that the PTA might be able to raise the funds needed to purchase CCTV. There was no proposal to award a grant.

Cllr Freeman left the chamber and Cllr Kerry, as Vice-Chairman took the Chair for item (b).

b) Waverley Carriage Driving Group

It was noted that the applicant was a registered charity and that in line with policy ad-hoc applications would be considered on merit.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Baillie* **Motion Carried**
That a 100% discount be awarded for the fundraising event up to the value of £168.
Votes in favour: unanimous

Cllr Freeman returned to the chamber.

8. REPORTS: GENERAL

8.1 To consider the retention of a Post Office facility for How Wood

Cllr Kerry reported that she had represented the Parish Council at the District Council (Local Services) Scrutiny Committee meeting where it was noted that the Parish Council was disappointed with the both the Co-Op's decision and that the Co-Op had not informed the Parish Council directly. The Committee commended the efforts of local residents and resolved that investigation be made into whether the Rural Outreach Services could provide a Post Office in How Wood. Cllrs Kerry and Getley had also met with the Post Office representative. There was an onerous process to be followed to set up a post office. It was pointed out that whilst some people were encouraging the Co-Op to pick up the post office services, it provided an interim solution and that the more Co-Op picked up services, the less viable a post office became for a local business. The Post Office was due to close on 6 April. Whilst a new post office was being pursued with a local shop there would likely be a lengthy period where there would be no post office service at all.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley* *Seconded: Cllr Kerry* **Motion Carried**
That Cllrs Kerry and Getley meet with Moonlight to offer support with its application and that the Clerk write to the Co-Op and request an extension to the proposed closure.
Votes in favour: unanimous

8.2 To receive an update on Community Assets of Value (CAV) —Scrubbs & Park Woods

Cllr Bell reported that both woodlands on the outskirts of the parish had been well-used for many years by the local community for walking. The application to register the woodlands as CAV's would allow the parish to put in a bid at market price should the land be put up for sale. The District Council

had accepted the application to include the woods on the CAV register but the landowner had challenged it through a formal legal process. Although witnesses had come forward, CB Holdings had a legal advisor representing them at the hearing. The decision was delayed until 23 March. There was now a risk that the landowners would fence off the woodland.

8.3 To receive an update on the applications for the devolvement of assets

Applications had been submitted for both Woodbury Field and Park Street Recreation Ground. Both areas were managed by the Parish Council under a long term lease agreement with the District Council. An Asset Challenge was to be carried out by the District Council prior to consultation with District Ward Councillors, Chairs of Scrutiny and Portfolio Holders. The Clerk thanked Cllr Pryce for preparing the applications.

8.4 To receive an update on the bus shelter repairs

It was noted that the contractor commissioned to complete the shelter roof repairs had been delayed and that the revised estimated start date was mid April. The Parish Council provided bus shelters as a service to the community but was under no obligation to do so. The majority of shelters within the Parish had been provided by the Parish Council, particularly where a rural wooden shelter was desirable. However, the Parish had asked County to take on responsibility for the two shelters on the A405 opposite Oakwood Road and Lye Lane, where it could no longer maintain them. County had recently indicated that as the passenger numbers for both these stops were low it was unlikely that it would replace the shelters. A Member pointed out that the Hilton Hotel might increase passenger numbers.

8.5 To receive a recommendation regarding the Park Street Pavilion police room

The Parish Council spent £1019 in materials on converting the lawn mower store into a police room with the support of the Herts Constabulary. Members were disappointed that the room had never really been used for the purpose intended.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Pryce* *Seconded: Cllr Baillie* **Motion Carried**
That the Herts Constabulary be asked to reimburse the Parish Council.
Votes in favour: unanimous

8.6 To receive an update on the Park Street mural

Cllr Pryce reported that the artist's first sketch had been circulated and had generated a raft of suggestions. The artist had therefore been asked to come up with a new design incorporating all the smaller items suggested and that sketch would be circulated. The toilet wall had been repaired in readiness.

8.7 To receive brief updates and recommendations from the:

a) Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

Cllr Pryce reported that the Working Party had arranged an inaugural meeting on 31st March at 5pm for all residents who had expressed an interest. There would be a presentation by the Consultant and the opportunity for residents to contribute to the project. The consultation on the designated area would end on 30 March.

b) Annual Events Working Party

Cllr Freeman reported that the Working Party planned to have the brass band again at the Armed Forces Day event.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Freeman* *Seconded: Cllr Tyndale* **Motion Carried**
That the expenditure for the brass band be approved within budget.
Votes in favour: unanimous

c) Parish in Bloom Working Party

Cllr Getley reported that the Working Party recommended prizes for each competition category and an amendment to the overall adult entry criteria which restricted previous award winners for two years running from entry in the third year. Members agreed that those affected be invited to assist with judging in the third year in recognition of their skills.

RESOLVED: *Proposed: Cllr Getley* *Seconded: Cllr Baillie* **Motion Carried**
That the expenditure within budget be approved and that the entry criteria be agreed.
Votes in favour: unanimous

8.8 To receive a brief report from the Bricket Wood Management Committee

Cllr Bell, Chair of the Committee, reported that there had been an interesting presentation by the Rural Police team. Cattle would return to the Common in spring. There would either be more cattle or they would remain on site for longer. Concern had been raised regarding the landowner's management proposal about roads into the woodland, as well as the movement of large vehicles and proposed tree work along School Lane.

8.9 To receive an update on Inspiring Libraries consultation

Cllr Pryce reported that the outcome of the consultation was disappointing for the parish as it affected its mobile library service. A report was anticipated on 23 March on how it would be managed in future.

8.10 To receive an update on County funding of bus services, including the withdrawal of the 652 bus and the Bus Users Forum

Cllr Baillie reported that the second bus consultation proposed an amended Value for Money criteria where contracted services would be extended an extra hour until 7.30pm and bus services be withdrawn on Sundays except where they served hospitals.

The 652 commercial service ended on 1 April, although it would run to end of August using s106 funds and locality budget. The service from the end of August was out to tender.

8.11 To consider a report on Totally Locally

This item was withdrawn pending more information.

9. DOCUMENTS RECEIVED

9.1 To receive invitations, training opportunities, notifications and consultations

a) Consultations

Consultations noted.

b) Invitations, training opportunities and notifications

It was noted that Cllrs Bell and Freeman attended the Planning training and Cllr Kerry attended the Local Services Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Baillie would be attending the NHS chat and Cllr Bell the Emergency First Aid at Work course for volunteer group leaders. Cllr Kerry accepted the invitation to the launch of the Abbey Line Trail.

10. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

10.1 To receive & approve minutes of the following committees

The following minutes were received as approved:

Buildings Committee (3)	25 Feb 2015
Planning Committee (8)	15 Feb 2015

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

The following notes were received as approved:

Annual Events Working Party	20 Jan 2015
Parish in Bloom Working Party	29 Jan 2015
Parish Environmental Liaison Group	5 Feb 2015
Neighbourhood Plan Working Party	12 Feb 2015

10.3 To note the minutes of the Joint Committees & Associations

The following minutes were received:

Bricket Wood Common Management Committee	10 Feb 2015
Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership Steering Group	17 Feb 2015

The Chairman moved on to the confidential part of the meeting as agreed earlier and Members of the public left the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members of the guillotine procedure and it was agreed that the meeting continue until 10.15pm.

8.12 To consider nominations for Community Awards

Members considered the nominations for both awards and concluded that all candidates were stalwarts of the community making it an extremely difficult decision to choose just one.

RESOLVED: ***Motion Carried***
That Nikki Dunn be invited to receive the Community Award.
Votes in favour: unanimous

There were a number of very worthy nominations for the Youth Award making for a difficult decision.

RESOLVED: ***Motion Carried***
That Cameron O'Connor be invited to receive the Youth Community Award.
Votes in favour: unanimous

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.10 pm.

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.