

# ST STEPHEN PARISH COUNCIL

Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green and Park Street



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE TREES & WOODLAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (3)  
HELD AT THE  
PARISH CENTRE, STATION ROAD, BRICKET WOOD, ST. ALBANS, HERTS  
ON 27 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 10.30 am**

**Present:** Cllr Bell (Chair), Cllr Hurford & Cllr Jones  
**In attendance:** Carol Hardy (Assistant Clerk) Dave Williams (Senior Groundsman)  
Mike Carter (Friends of Hanstead Wood)

**1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** Proposed: Cllr Jones      Seconded: Cllr Hurford      *Motion Carried*  
That Cllr Bell is elected as Chairman.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Getley and Cllr Whittaker.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were none.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 MAY 2014**

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

**5. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

**7. MANAGEMENT: REPORTS & PLANNING**

**7.1 Blackgreen Wood**

**a) Work Schedule for Autumn/Winter 2014/2015**

Mr Williams confirmed that the Woodland Improvement Grant had been agreed and that clearance of Holly had been undertaken along Lye Lane to the M25 bridge. He went on to say that the Hornbeam and Beech may be coppiced in year 2 along with the thinning of the Oaks. Mr Williams stated that he had been trying to engage a contractor to carry out work for payment in timber but two contractors had declined so far. The reason being that the value of timber is less than the cost of the contractor and the quality of Oak is not known until it has been milled. Members suggested that the sale of sawn timber or cut logs should be advertised prior to an open day event and that timber could be advertised for sale on the parish website and newsletter. The Chairman suggested that he make contact with English Heritage and the National Trust to investigate the sale of timber and report back to Members.

Mr Williams explained that the cost of tree felling would increase considerably due to the need for a person able to carry out aerial rescue to be present when the climber was working. This could be another tree climber who was qualified to take on this task. He went on to say that our current tree climber charged £160 per day but the cost from another company was for £500 per day. This was based on two tree climbers one of whom was trained in aerial rescue. Two climbers would be able to fell around 15 trees per day.

Mr Williams stated that improvements to the Lye Lane entrance were being pursued and technical drawings were underway which would be put forward to the Highway Authority once completed at which point grant funding could be applied for. The improvements involved

widening the Lye Lane entrance, culverting the ditch and the installation of supporting walls to the culverted area. This would ensure the parish vehicles were able to enter and exit the site safely.

Mr Carter questioned whether any part of the land at this location belonged to Bricket Wood Common. The Clerk agreed to make enquiries.

**b) Friends of Hanstead Wood in Blackgreen Wood way forward**

The Chairman stated that the next volunteer working day would take place on 13 December 2014 and volunteers had been asked to meet at the gate in Lye Lane. Members noted that two benches had been made by the ground staff and would be placed in the wood. The Chairman stated that even though CMS were no longer leading the volunteer days, that they may be able to provide some tools. Mike Carter commented that a grant may be available for the purchase of tools. Cllr Hurford was concerned about the lack of safety goggles and it was agreed that the Clerk would look into the purchase of these basic safety items. The Chairman stated that volunteers were asked to come along with appropriate footwear and gloves.

The Clerk explained that as the volunteer days would now be covered by the parish council insurance it was necessary to formalise the arrangement and nominate a leader.

**RESOLVED:** Proposed: Cllr Hurford Seconded: Cllr Jones *Motion Carried*  
That the volunteer working party be known as the Friends of Blackgreen Wood and that the nominated leader is agreed as Cllr Bell.

Mike Carter told Members that the Friends of Hanstead Wood had continued to clear Holly, transplant seedlings and litter pick in Blackgreen Wood.

**c) Park Street Lane bridge and footpath report**

The Chairman commented that the safety barrier had been installed and that the project to provide public access to this part of the wood was now complete. He thanked the Clerk, Mrs Hardy, for her perseverance over many years to enable this project to get to where it is now. Mike Carter commented that it was necessary to install additional signage as it was difficult to find the path that exited onto Park Street Lane. Mr Williams said that this was in hand.

**d) Woodland Open Day report**

Members were in agreement that the event had been a great success and noted that the Clerk had submitted the grant claim to Watling Chase Community Forest.

**7.2 St Julian's Wood**

**a) Work schedule for Autumn/Winter 2014/2015**

Mr Williams explained that the coppicing of the timber on the edge of the wood was to continue. He went on to say that due to the height of the Hornbeam some had been pollarded. Woodland improvement work had not been carried out as the time was taken clearing wind blown damage. He continued and stated that the clearance had been piled up and it had been noted that it was untidy but had been necessary due to the level and urgency of the work. Such brash would usually have been used to edge paths to guide users through the wood.

**b) Friends of St Julian's Wood report**

The Chairman reported that the Friends group had been looking after the brash paths and placing chippings along the paths. They were also keeping on top of the stinging nettles around the newly planted area of saplings. The Chairman also stated that around 50% of the saplings had either vanished or died. Although the Rowan, Hazel and Hawthorn had been successful, a lot of the Oak had died.

**7.3 Greenwood Park Meadow**

**a) Meadow cut 2015 harvest**

The Chairman stated that he was not fond of spraying chemicals on a wildflower meadow. Mr Williams explained that the Ragwort was a DEFRA notifiable weed which was toxic to horses and prevented the sale of the crop for horse consumption. He went on to say that if time allowed, large areas of Ragwort could be topped with the tractor to prevent seed setting and over a few years may provide a saleable crop. Cllr Hurford asked if the Ragwort could be pulled by hand and went on to say that as it was a notifiable weed that she felt very strongly that the Council should keep on top of it with a rolling programme of removal.

Cllr Jones suggested that advice was taken from Rothampstead Research as to the most environmentally friendly course of action to protect the wild flowers. Mr Williams was asked to contact Rothampstead Research and report back. In the meantime it was suggested that one of the volunteer days be set aside to pull Ragwort.

#### **7.4 Park Street Woodland Embankment**

##### **a) Work schedule for Autumn/Winter 2014/2015**

Mr Williams stated that the only work would be the removal of trees that were either dead or in a dangerous condition.

#### **7.5 Trees & Hedging on Parish Land**

##### **a) Tree survey**

Mr Williams explained that Mark Carter, formally of CMS had offered to carry out a tree survey at a cost of £120 per day. He went on to explain that it was necessary for a competent person to carry out a tree survey once a year and that it formed part of the Council's risk assessment. He confirmed that Mark Carter was a competent person. Mr Williams went on to say that St Julian's Wood and the park land trees would probably take two days to complete and then additional days would be required for Blackgreen Wood and the play areas. Mr Williams also stated that ground staff carried out the required visual checks either weekly or monthly and after a significant weather event.

**RESOLVED:** Proposed: Cllr Bell      Seconded: Cllr Jones      *Motion Carried*  
That the Council engage a competent person to carry out an annual safety survey of the parish owned trees

##### **b) Ash Die Back - the Parish Tool Kit**

The Clerk explained that St Albans District Council had provided a reference guide to Ash die back, known as the Parish Tool Kit. Mr Williams explained that when the tree survey was carried out, any Ash trees showing signs of decline would be monitored or action taken in line with the tool kit. Members asked that the Clerk forward an electronic copy of the document.

#### **8. BUDGET REQUIREMENTS 2015/2016**

The Clerk explained that in the 2014/2015 budget £2200 remained and that balances from completed projects amounted to £2150 making a total of £4350.

**RESOLVED:** Proposed: Cllr Hurford      Seconded: Cllr Bell      *Motion Carried*  
That £2000 is reallocated to pay for a tree survey  
That £2000 is reallocated towards work in Blackgreen Wood  
That £350 is reallocated towards the purchase of tools and safety equipment for the Friends of Blackgreen Wood  
That £1000 is requested from Main Council towards the 2015 meadow cut.

#### **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.10pm

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NOTE: These minutes are to be considered as 'draft' until the Committee has approved them.