

ST STEPHEN PARISH

IN THE DISTRICT OF ST.ALBANS, COUNTY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT GREENWOOD PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE, TIPPENDELL LANE, AL2 3HW ON THE 12 MAY 2016 AT 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Mick Freeman (Chair of the Parish Council) in the Chair
St Stephen Parish Residents
Supported by Parish Councillors

Minutes: Mrs J Pienaar (Clerk to the Parish Council)

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Cllr Freeman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Members of the Council.

### 1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2015

The minutes were approved by a show of hands and signed by the Chair as a true record.

### 2. School book presentations

The Chairman briefly outlined the Parish Council's Sponsored School Books scheme. Books were presented to the representatives and pupils from Mount Pleasant Lane JMI School, Killigrew Primary School, How Wood School and Park Street C of E School.

### 3. ANNUAL REPORTS

#### (a) Report from the Chairman

The Chairman said, *I have had the honour of being Chairman for the past two years and, as usual, it has been extremely busy.*

*In addition to your Parish Council's main committees, we have a number of working parties to coordinate specific activities and responsibilities, namely Annual Events, Car Park, Greenwood Park Pavilion, Income Generation, Festival, Licenced Refreshment, Localism, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Parish in Bloom and Park Street Rec Cricket. It is the function of these working parties to investigate specific issues and to report back to your Council with their findings and recommendations. We are also seeking to find an alternative location for the How Wood Post Office. This list will give you an indication of the breadth of activity in which we are engaged – highlights of committee activities appear overleaf.*

*Your Council has a lengthy wish-list of desired projects, although given budget constraints we have to prioritise among them. We are ever mindful of the need to provide services which deliver best value for money, making savings wherever possible. It has therefore been necessary to increase the Precept by 2.9% in order to go some way in achieving these goals. Alongside this, you will note that the Income Generation working party has been established to maximise the opportunities for raising funds through use of your Parish facilities.*

*As can be seen above your Councillors are kept extremely busy and, bearing in mind that they are all volunteers, they commit a lot of their time to maintain and improve Council services for the Parish residents. If you can bring experience or expertise to such matters, or can simply volunteer a few hours to help out at events, please let the Parish Clerk know.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr John Parker on his appointment as a Councillor, filling the vacancy for Bricket Wood East. I know that all the Councillors and our hard-working staff wish him all the very best while with the Council.'*

#### (b) Reports from the Committees

##### **Woodlands Committee**

Cllr Bell outlined the highlights of the past year.

- ◇ *Information boards at, and information leaflets for, St Julians and Blackgreen Woods, financed by grants from the Forestry Commission*
- ◇ *Tree safety audits on all Parish-owned property*
- ◇ *Completion of a major phase of the Woodland Management Scheme in Blackgreen Wood*
- ◇ *Improved access from Park Street Lane via the new bridge to Blackgreen Wood*
- ◇ *Installation of rustic seats in Blackgreen Wood*
- ◇ *Hedge-laying scheme in Greenwood Park*
- ◇ *Supporting volunteer groups on projects in St Julians and Blackgreen Woods*

### ***Buildings Committee***

Cllr Tyndale, in Cllr Brannen's absence, noted the achievements of the past year:

- ◇ *Defibrillators installed outside of the buildings at Greenwood Park Community Centre, the Parish Centre and Park Street Pavilion*
- ◇ *Ongoing discussion with Greenwood Park Lawn Tennis Club to push forward the approved plans to improve the facilities for all users. Largely grant funded, this long-awaited extension will enlarge the tennis club area and upgrade cricket and football facilities*
- ◇ *Continued investigation of ideas for a tea room within Greenwood Park*

### ***Leisure Committee***

Cllr Pryce spoke about the achievements of the Committee:

- ◇ *New gates and a reinforced concrete slab at Greenwood Park to facilitate the movement of heavy vehicles, e.g. Council tractors and fairground vehicles*
- ◇ *Problems exist universally with litter, and monitoring is underway at Woodbury Field*
- ◇ *Very popular children's 'Multi-Spinner' installed at Park Street Recreation Ground*
- ◇ *Third year of successful applications for the 'Green Flag' award for Greenwood Park*
- ◇ *'Snooker Wall' installed at Woodbury Field*
- ◇ *'Super-Net' in the children's play area at Greenwood Park being progressed using Section 106 monies from developments in the area*
- ◇ *Wi-Fi installed at Greenwood Park Pavilion*
- ◇ *'Portable Youth Shelter' to be trialled in one of our green spaces, Woodbury Field*
- ◇ *'Lighthouse net' installed in Cherry Hill play area.*

### ***Planning Committee***

Cllr Freeman gave a brief insight into the past year of the Planning Committee:

- ◇ *Planning objections raised over inappropriate developments, including: the Sainsbury/Three Hammers pub convenience store; the extension of the Chiswell Green dental surgery; the conversion of a bungalow in Oakwood Road into a private medical centre; and an infill garden development to the rear of 44-52 Bucknalls Drive*
- ◇ *Continued pressure on District Council for speedy enforcement of the illegal extensions of the Traveller site at Woodview Lodge Bricket Wood and Chiswell Green Lane*
- ◇ *Instrumental in saving some of the boundary trees at the St Lawrence Way flats when District Council was notified and acted quickly to place an interim Tree Preservation Order on the remaining trees; successfully argued that healthy replacement trees should be planted where protected diseased trees within Hornbeams were to be felled*
- ◇ *Ongoing attempts to meet with developers of proposed large projects; including with Iceni Projects regarding 16 large homes on the Lye Lane 'golf course' site, make good the land contamination and provide a community forest*
- ◇ *Awaiting a decision on the appeal to build homes on the HSBC Training Centre site in Smug Oak Lane*
- ◇ *Supported Harperbury Hospital development for housing with concerns regarding the capacity of Harper Lane Bridge. Unsuccessful bid submitted for s106 funds toward local parish sports facilities. Free*

- ◇ *School rejected by Minister for Education*
- ◇ *Petition regarding the proposed Rail Freight Terminal was heard by County Council, which is considering alternative uses*

#### **4. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS**

##### **a) Community Award presentation**

After giving a short resume of Mr Downs' contributions to the Parish, the Chairman presented him with the award for the Parish Community Award.

#### **5. ST STEPHEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Cllr Pryce gave an update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **5. FORTHCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Parish Councillors briefly informed those present about forthcoming events:

- ◇ *2016 Festival, 11 & 12 June—Cllr Bill Pryce*
- ◇ *Armed Forces Day, 25 June—Cllr Mick Freeman*
- ◇ *Parish in Bloom—Cllr Eileen Whittaker*
- ◇ *Crafts in the Park, 25-27 July,—Cllr Wendy Berriman*
- ◇ *Remembrance Day, 13 November—Cllr Mick Freeman*
- ◇ *Carol Concert, 4 December—Cllr Mick Freeman*

- ◇ Cllr Tyndale gave a brief overview of the Parish communications.

#### **6. OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman said that Members would endeavour to answer questions but where it wasn't possible an answer would be provided at a later date.

Subjects raised covered:

- ◇ Will the railings be replaced at the end of the footpath, near the bridge, Park Street Recreation Ground?  
Highways' safety audit had concluded that they were not required.
- ◇ Can the car park be extended as there was insufficient parking at Greenwood Park for Salsa and U3A meetings?  
Currently considering solutions but the land at Greenwood Park is Green Belt, Parish Council is working with all user groups to resolve. The Salsa group had started using the car park at Midway surgery to relieve pressure on neighbouring roads. Yellow lines in neighbouring roads was an option. Large groups, such as the U3A were encouraged to car share.
- ◇ What is the timeframe for the neighbourhood Plan?  
The Community Survey will go out in Autumn. It was hoped that the Plan would be almost complete by mid 2017.
- ◇ The Greenwood Pavilion extension was being progressed and a grant obtained from Inspired Facilities, Sport England.
- ◇ Heavy duty vehicles continued to use local roads, particularly Smug Oak Lane and Mount Pleasant Lane. Number of lorries using Park Street Lane increasing. What can be done?  
These matters will need to be pursued with Highways.

#### **6. MEETING CLOSED**

The Chairman thanked everyone for being an attentive audience.

He thanked the staff and members for all their support during the past year.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.