



ST STEPHEN PARISH COUNCIL



Spring Newsletter Issue 36 - 2017

Remembrance Day, page 2 • Carol Concert, page 3 • Parish in Bloom, page 4

Setting the Precept and planning ahead

Setting the Precept for the coming year is a task your Parish Councillors take very seriously, with many factors being considered. A major problem this year is the fact that we will not receive the Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) grant of £26,637 through the District Council, which has previously provided about 4.5% of our income. (This is not the fault of the District Council, but has come from higher up.) Therefore your Parish Council has a shortfall in funding for its key priorities, described below.

At a recent meeting, and after much discussion, it was decided to raise the Precept. For a 'Band D' (average) household the increase will be 6 pence per week. This makes up for 75% of the shortfall resulting from the lack of LCTS funding; Parish Councillors intend to make up the remainder by redoubling our efforts to reduce costs, find new sources of income and increase efficiencies across the board, including through our working party on income generation and savings.

Key priorities 2017/2018

The following are the key priorities for the coming year.

- Progress the Neighbourhood Plan – see right
- Improve the Greenwood Park Pavilion – see page 3
- Complete negotiations to acquire Woodbury Field and Park Street Recreation Ground, which are owned by the District Council. If the talks already underway are successful, your Parish Council will be able to carry out improvements to both venues for the benefit of the residents
- Pursue Section 106 funding, which is paid to mitigate the impact of a development. Your Parish Council holds that any such money lodged that relates to developments within your Parish should be given to your Parish Council rather than viewed as a central pot for the District. A successful example of this is the Section 106 funding that allowed us to greatly improve the play area at Greenwood Park, including the new 'Supanet' climbing apparatus.

– Cllr Michael Freeman, Chair of Council

Prime location advertising opportunity

Local businesses or groups can advertise on the six new recycling bins which have been installed in prime positions in and around the newly refurbished play area at Greenwood Park. The bins feature a panel on each end which can take an A3 size laminated poster/advert. Advertising space is available at just £200 (+VAT) for a two-year period, during which time the advert can be renewed/changed up to four times. Contact Gill-Marie in the Parish Office (gill@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk or 01923 681443).



Community Survey

Thank you to all who completed and returned the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey.

Overall, respondents are happy with what is happening in their Parish and like the sense of community and friendliness, wishing to retain the 'village feel'. Major concerns include: the lack of youth facilities; the traffic levels, particularly heavy lorries coupled with air and noise pollution, and the use of local roads as 'rat runs'; and the maintenance of grass verges, gutters and drains by the County Council.

Two- to three-bedroom affordable properties are regarded as a much-needed resource, and there was some support for the use of small areas of green spaces to be developed for housing.

Support for the retention of existing green spaces and creation of new ones is paramount in all three villages, with a resounding rejection of the proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange. Transport arrangements fall short of people's expectations, more frequent and reliable public transport was a real need (see 'Abbey Flyer', page 2). High on most respondent's agendas is the need for traffic calming measures.

More detailed results will be published on the Parish Council website once the survey is closed.

What to build? Where to build?

In May your Parish Council will hold the following public meetings on the emotive subject of housing development. All residents are invited to attend and express their views, at:

- United Reformed Church, Bricket Wood, 9 May, 7–8.30pm
- How Wood School, Park Street, 10 May, 7.30 – 8.30pm
- United Reformed Church, Chiswell Green, 15 May, 7.30 – 8.30pm.

There's still time

If you didn't have a chance to complete the Community Survey the first time around there's still time to do it online – and it only takes a few minutes to 'have your say'. The majority of the responses received to date have been from those in the over-55 age bracket and your Parish Council would really like to hear the views of younger residents.

See www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ParishNPlan



Connect with us by Twitter

Your Parish Council's new Twitter account is helping to keep residents, businesses and visitors up to date on what's happening locally. It's simple for you to stay informed.

'Follow' us now: twitter.com/ststephenpc

Local volunteers needed for woodland management

Two of our local woodlands, St Julian's and Blackgreen Woods, are owned by your Parish Council. Management plans keep them healthy and sustainable for wildlife and public enjoyment. The day-to-day heavier work, such as felling, is carried out by your Parish Council's excellent Grounds Team but many smaller tasks are tackled by groups of local volunteers. Projects like clearing a patch of dark holly to let more light in, or opening up an overgrown footpath to give better access, can be very satisfying and give volunteers a genuine sense of a job well done!

The St Julian's Wood group meets at 10am on the last Saturday of the month, in the top car park of Greenwood Park. The next Blackgreen Wood Volunteer Day is Saturday 8 April, meeting at 10am by the small bridge entrance to the wood off Park Street Lane (just south of the M25 bridge near the two cottages).

Both woodlands could do with more local help, usually on a Saturday morning, so if you feel you would like to join one of these happy bands of volunteers contact the Parish Office (01923 681443) or Cllr John Bell (01727 831280).



See 'Woodlands': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Street art for the Rec

Visitors to Park Street Recreation Ground are now welcomed by a bright, colourful street art mural depicting the range of activities that can be enjoyed in the park. Your Parish Council received grant funding towards the mural from the District Council's 'Visible Street Scene' initiative.

Several designs were considered, after which there was consultation with Parish Councillors, the District Council and local residents, which resulted in the final design. Cllr Bill Pryce commented: "The mural has greatly improved the look of the area for the local community – where previously there was just a blank, grubby white wall we now have a colourful piece of art which reflects what goes on in the park."



Abbey Flyer running late – in a good way

The Abbey Line, which stops at Bricket Wood, How Wood and Park Street rail stations, has extended its running hours. The last departure from Watford Junction to St Albans Abbey is now 10.21pm on Monday to Saturday, and 11.04pm on Sunday, while the last departure from St Albans Abbey is now 10.42pm on Monday to Saturday, and 11.26pm on Sunday. Abfly, the Abbey Flyer Users' Group, urges people to 'use it or lose it'.

Also, a new bus service started in January, timed to connect with the Abbey Flyer's arrivals at and departures from St Albans Abbey railway station. Running from Monday to Saturday, the bus connects the station to central St Albans and St Albans City Railway Station.

See 'News': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk



More than 750 people mark Remembrance Day

A Parade of Standards along Park Street by more than 150 young people from the local Guiding and Scouting Units, 220 St Albans Squadron Air Training Corps and St Columba's Combined Cadet Force began the annual Remembrance Day Service at the St Stephen Parish War Memorial.

More than 750 people gathered for the service to pay tribute to the fallen of both World Wars and more recent conflicts, with more than 30 wreaths laid. Cllr Dorothy Kerry, Vice-Chairman, read the tribute, with Cllr Michael Freeman, Chairman, laying the wreath on behalf of your Parish Council and Cllr Ian Getley laying the wreath commemorating the centenary of the Battle of the Somme.

Those who were lost in recent conflicts were also remembered, with 1st Park Street Rainbows laying a posy in memory of Lieutenant James Barry (Falklands, 1982) and David Phillipson laying a wreath in memory of his brother, Captain James Phillipson (Afghanistan, 2006).

St Luke's Lunch Club

Your Parish Council provides small grants or discounts for local good causes, one of which is the St Luke's Lunch Club. It provides a hot lunch for any senior citizens within the Parish, every Monday during term time, for a small charge, as well as transport where required. It also offers a monthly trip by minibus to a local supermarket. Your Parish Council covered the cost of a special free Christmas Lunch plus a small gift for each of the volunteer staff, and made a similar grant to Holy Trinity Frogmore 'In Touch' Club for its Christmas lunch and annual outings.



Community Awards – celebrate exceptional contributions

Your Parish Council's 2017 Community Award and Community Youth Award recognise the outstanding performance and dedication shown by individuals living and working in the local community. The awards will be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on 11 May 2017, to which all residents are welcome.

See 'Parish Events': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Allotments available

Your Parish Council has a number of vacant allotment plots of varying sizes at the Midway Surgery site and Tippendell Lane site, both located within Greenwood Park. Did you know that 30 minutes of gardening on your allotment burns around the same number of calories as low impact aerobics? Plus, you can socialise with like-minded people, adopt a healthy lifestyle and grow your produce. Interested? Contact Carol at the Parish Office (carol@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk or 01923 681443).



Crafts in the Park 2017 – Volunteers needed

We are hoping to run our highly successful Crafts in the Park during the first week of the school holidays to give children of all ages the opportunity to get creative with clay modelling, painting, collage and lots of other crafts. We are in need of volunteers to help out so that we can continue to offer this free fun event. If you can spare a just few hours on Monday 24, Tuesday 25 or Wednesday 26 July, or could lend a hand at any of our other events, please contact the Parish Office (01923 681443).

Pavilion works underway until May

Improvement and extension works to Greenwood Park Pavilion, which started in January, are due to be completed by the middle of May.

While your Parish Council and its contractors are endeavouring to keep disruption to a minimum, public safety will necessitate closing the upper car park at times, for example during delivery of materials by lorries. Any vehicles parked on the driveway during these times may be removed by our approved contractor. Greenwood Park Community Centre, the public toilets in the Pavilion, and the sports grounds and play facilities will all remain open during this time. However, access near the Pavilion will be restricted, especially when heavy machinery is in use. We ask all users of the park to take extra care during this time and to ensure that dogs are kept under control near the building works.



Joy to the Parish

Children from the local junior schools once again gave outstanding performances to a full house of around 300 friends, families, local residents and invited guests at your Parish Council's Annual Community Carol Concert.

The Nativity was presented by children from Killigrew School, supported by Legolam, a Shetland lamb, who joined the children on stage for their performance, while songs and music were provided by the Park Street School Choir, the How Wood School Choir, a choir drawn from all the local churches and friends, and the Watford Band.

This was 17th Annual Community Carol Concert – it is a free event, run by volunteers including the 220 St Albans Squadron Air Training Corps, Salsa Mish, choirmaster Ian La Riviere, sound engineer Simon Whittle and Penny Farmer, Legolam's owner.

A collection raised more than £500 for this year's nominated charity, the Motor Neurone Disease Association.



Parish facilities' hirer profile

Swallows Badminton Club is a small, sociable, mixed group that meets year-round on Tuesday evenings, 8–10pm, at Greenwood Park Community Centre. We have use of both badminton courts, toilets, changing rooms, hot showers and ample free car parking. The club is keen to attract new members of a reasonable standard. If this appeals, please contact Rene/David on 07712 255304/01707 880083 or dandrl@ntlworld.com.

The Centre offers numerous facilities, with the Sports Hall also accommodating netball, volleyball, football, basketball and indoor bowls. A meeting room, complete with bar, and a second hall are available for hire, while kitchen facilities allow for a variety of functions. Support your local Centre and come along!

See 'Venue Hire': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Dates for your diary

Main Parish Council Meetings

16 Mar, 20 Apr and 18 May, 7.30pm: Parish Centre

Annual Parish Meeting

11 May, 7pm reception for 7.30pm start: Parish Centre



Parish Council Events

25 Mar, 29 Apr, 20 May and 24 Jun, 10am–noon: **St Julian's Wood Volunteer Working Morning** – meet at Greenwood Park top car park, 01727 831280 – see page 2

23 Apr, 10.30am: **Bluebell Walk** – meet at Parish Centre car park for 2 hour ramble

25 Jun, 3.30–6pm: **Armed Forces Day**, Parish Centre – see right

Other Local Events

Mondays (except Bank Holidays) 2–4pm, and Thursdays, 10am–noon: **Book Swap**, Bricket Wood URC Hall, free, 01923 673638

13 May and 10 Jun, 10am–noon: **Hanstead Wood Volunteer Morning** – meet at Hanstead Wood car park entrance, Hanstead Park, Bricket Wood, 01923 673169

15 Mar, 17 May and 21 Jun, 8pm: **Park Street Residents Association Committee Meeting**, Park Street Village Hall – all welcome

19 Mar and 21 May, 10am–noon: **Park Street Pickers Community Litter Clean-Up** – meet at Park Street Recreation Ground, free, 01727 873365

21 Mar, 8pm: **Bricket Wood Society AGM & Talk**, Bricket Wood URC Hall, £2, 01923 279870

21 Mar, 8.15pm: **Park Street & Frogmore Society Open Meeting & Talk**, *The Picture Postcard*, Park Street Village Hall, £2, 07792 588892

25 Mar and 24 Jun, 8pm: **Supper Quiz Evening**, Park Street Village Hall, 07551 643869

8 Apr, 10am–noon: **Black Green Wood Volunteer Day** – meet at Park Street Lane entrance by the bridge – see page 2

11 Apr, 7:45–9:45pm: **Park Street Neighbourhood Watch Public Meeting**, Park Street Baptist Church, 01727 874293

25 Apr, 8pm: **Park Street Residents Association AGM**, Park Street Village Hall – all welcome

13 May, 10–11am: **Charity Jumble Sale**, St Bart's Church Hall, 50p, 01727 873572

13 May, 1:30–3:30pm: **Greenwood Park Tennis Club Open Day** – free coaching, cardio tennis, prizes and membership deals, 07779 603757

16 May, 8.15pm: **Park Street & Frogmore Society AGM & Talk**, *Mills & Watermills*, Park Street Village Hall, £2, 07792 588892

8 Jun, 8pm: **Bricket Wood Residents' Association Open Meeting**, St Luke's Church Hall, Bricket Wood, 01923 661537

For a full list of local activities see
'Events': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mobile youth shelter gathering momentum

In response to a recognised lack of facilities for teenagers in Bricket Wood your Parish Council has secured permission from the land owner to trial a mobile youth shelter on Smug Oak Green for a period of six months. The shelter will be positioned so that users will be visible from the road whilst still enjoying a view over the green. If the trial proves unsuccessful the shelter will be removed.



Parish in Bloom

2017 Parish in Bloom competition categories

Parish in Bloom competition categories this year are Best-Kept Front Garden, Best Hanging Basket/Planter (Residential) – a new category for properties without front gardens – Best-Kept Allotment, Best Allotment Newcomer, Best Floral Business Display and Inter-Schools Competition. No formal entry is needed – judging will take place across the Parish during July.

See 'Parish Events': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Armed Forces Day

The next Armed Forces Day celebration will be on Sunday 25 June 2017, giving our community the chance to show their support for currently serving troops, service families, veterans and cadets. A Parade of Standards will leave Black Boy Wood Shops at approximately 3.30pm for the Parish Centre, where the Armed Forces Day flag will be raised at 4pm, followed by music from the Watford Band and a display of memorabilia. Proceeds from refreshments will go to our nominated charity.

See 'Parish Events': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

St Stephen Parish Council

Parish Council Meetings

Main Council and Committee meetings are held in the Council Chamber at the St Stephen Parish Centre in Station Road, Bricket Wood. Times and dates are displayed on the Parish Noticeboards. Residents are welcome to attend the meetings.

The Parish Office

First floor, St Stephen Parish Centre,
Station Road, Bricket Wood,
St Albans, AL2 3PJ

Tel: 01923 681443 Fax: 01923 681338

Email: clerk@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Open daily from 9.00am to 5.00pm or by prior appointment. Contact either:
Juliet Pienaar, Clerk, or Carol Hardy, Deputy Clerk