

St Stephen Parish Council

Winter Newsletter Issue 27 - 2014



Woodland Crafts Day

Down in the woods on Saturday 13 September we had a large gathering of - not teddy bears - but local residents enjoying the Blackgreen Wood Craft Day. The main attraction was of course the heavy horses in action. They were seen effortlessly pulling long lengths of timber through the wood and up to the mobile sawmill, where the wood was sawn into useful lengths for use around the Parish. Visitors were encouraged to try their hands at the double-ended saw and the pole lathe, both of which would have been the customary tools used by woodsmen many years ago. Besom broom-making was also demonstrated, to show how a practical broom could be made from materials found just around the wood. The day also provided a chance for residents to gain access to this Parish-owned wood from the new entrance-bridge in Park Street Lane. If you are interested in helping to look after this wood there will be a volunteer day on Saturday 13 Dec, meeting at the double gate in Lye Lane, Bricket Wood 10am till noon.

Frogmore Lakes and footpath

Urgent tree management by Lafarge is underway in this popular recreational area, to ensure public safety. Many of the trees, mainly poplars, that were planted to act as screens when the sand and gravel was originally being extracted many years ago, have become unsafe. Matters were brought to a head when it was proposed to open up permanently a path between the River Ver and the westernmost fishing lake. The poplar trees along this section were reaching the end of their natural life and many had already started to lose heavy branches onto the path and into the river. Lafarge hope to complete the work before the weather sets in for the winter. Some safety restrictions will be in place, and Lafarge have asked that the public take heed of the warning signs and directions given by their staff during these operations. For further information Lafarge have set up an answer phone for the public : **01992 512 764**.



Carol Concert 2014

We would like to invite our residents to join us for our annual Carol Concert, to be held at

Greenwood Park Community Centre on Sunday 7 December at 4pm.

After their success last year, this will include the Watford Brass Band, along with children from local schools performing various nativity pieces, and well known carols for you to join in. We look forward to seeing you on the day.





Crafts in the Parks

This summer we were able to host a session of the Crafts in the Parks event at Greenwood Park. Over the three days of the scheme we welcomed over 200 children, and they tried out a variety of crafts. It was time-consuming for the organisers, but as it was so popular we have hopes of repeating the event in 2015. A well-deserved 'Thank-you' to all who were able to give their time to the event.

Green Flag Congratulations

We welcome recent awards of Green Flag status for two sites in Bricket Wood, one being Hanstead Wood in Smug Oak Lane, and the other being Bricket Wood Common.

Hanstead Wood is managed and maintained by the Friends of Hanstead Wood, led by their chairman, Mike Carter. Their award recognises the high standard of work and preservation of a quality site, by a voluntary and community group. For more information on this valuable work by the Friends group, contact Mike Carter on 01923 673169 or via the website: www.bricketwood.org

For Bricket Wood Common there is a Joint Management Committee chaired by Parish Councillor John Bell and its award was in recognition of the biodiversity, conservation and protection of important habitats. These awards are not easily earned, and are cherished by those who receive them. For further information about the Common and how it is managed contact the St Albans District Council on greenspaces@stalbans.gov.uk or see: www.stalbans.gov.uk

Bricket Wood Common

Visitors to the common may have caught sight of the small herd of cattle that have been steadily munching their way through the young birch saplings across the heath section of this local beauty spot. The cattle, which were there till the end of October, tend to be a bit elusive so not everyone sees them, but rest assured they have been doing a great job - hopefully to return next Spring. You may have also noticed the increase in butterflies now appearing, particularly on the heathland and along the rides. This is due to the way the common is now managed, so a wider variety of these beautiful insects find the habitat more to their liking, and tend to stay and breed.

A recent survey by the Butterfly Conservation Society has recorded a pronounced increase in butterfly species occurring on the common, which can only be a good thing for us and the natural environment.



Bricket Wood bus shelters on A405

After our very positive meeting with the County Council the upgrade of the 2 shelters on this busy road looks like going ahead at last. The new shelters and waiting areas should be a vast improvement on the existing arrangement, making it much easier for passengers to get on and off buses. Hopefully we will see this project well under way early in the new financial year.

Planning

Two applications have been received recently regarding retrospective permission to extend existing travellers' sites. One application relates to the site in Chiswell Green Lane, and the other site is in Lye Lane - known as Woodview Lodge. The reason that these two applications are retrospective is that work has already commenced on the sites by the applicants.

Another planning matter that may be of interest to residents is the possible future development of the area of land situated at the bottom of Lye Lane at the junction with the A405. This is commonly referred to as 'the golf course'. Your Council and other interested parties are in consultation with the developers, Icen Projects, and at this stage its future is undecided.

Late news: We have just been notified that the Secretary of State has granted the appeal that will allow the residential development of up to 100 houses on the BRE site with access from Bucknalls Drive.

Conserving the War Memorial

The Parish War Memorial in Park Street on the A5183 was last cleaned some years ago, and as you might imagine over the years it has become covered in grime and verdigris. This memorial is unusual, in that the main stone plaque bears the names of residents who volunteered to serve their country, as well as those who fell in the cause of freedom. The council decided to have the memorial cleaned this year - 100 years since the start of the Great War - as a mark of respect. Those who have looked at the memorial recently will see a great improvement. Although the Parish Council has always been involved in the Parish Annual Remembrance Service, this year will be the first time we have taken on the full organisation of it, and we thank the Park Street Residents' Association for all their organisational work in past years.



Rail Freight battle

On 27 July 2006, a developer made an application to build a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) on Green Belt land in Park Street on the old Handley Page Aerodrome site. The battle has raged ever since with campaigns against it, public enquiries, court hearings, delayed decisions by government ministers. St. Albans City and District Council, STRiFE, the Parish Council, the three Residents' Associations and individuals all find it abhorrent that this piece of 'Green Belt' land and the historic City of St. Albans might be marred by the presence of a monstrous SRFI when it is unnecessary. There are other sites that want the development and are more suitable. The case comes before the High Court in February 2015 for a decision to be made on whether the minister for Communities and Local Government has dotted all the 'i's' and crossed all the 't's'. Once again we wait with bated breath. Cllr Pryce was asked by Three Counties Radio whether he thought the development would eventually go ahead. His response was 'NO', and we agree.

Art in Park Street

We have been granted a match-funded award from the District Council to paint a mural on the blank wall of the toilets in Park Street Lane, and we have found an artist who will paint it. The design will depict the activities in the recreation ground: cricket, football, children's play, adult exercise, dog walkers and leisure takers. The final design is being worked on at present and will be the subject of consultation before it is painted. It will be coated with a graffiti-retardant finish which can be cleaned easily. We hope the mural will brighten up this part of the village.

Hirers' Open Forum

This annual event held at the Parish Centre was attended by several members of the public as well as members of the Parish Council. The chairman outlined the various works that had been carried out at Parish facilities affecting the hirers, and the aspirations of the council for future work and building projects. An open forum then followed, after which we were delighted to hear that many of the hirers present praised the Council for the facilities that were provided; one well-known resident even claimed that the Parish precept was one part of his rates that he did not mind paying.

Parish in Bloom

After a very successful event this year, we have decided to repeat it in 2015, to encourage residents, schools and businesses to plant up and make our villages brighter places. We held an enjoyable presentation evening at Greenwood Park for our winners this year, and heard a very interesting talk on allotments by Peter Judd. Watch out for information in our newsletters for the event and entry forms. Good luck to you all and we hope to see many entries. In the meantime, we applaud the efforts of all those who have entered into the spirit of the Parish In Bloom venture, brightening up the parish with their plantings this year.

Children's category: age 5 - 7 Amelia Basi; age 8 - 11 James Latto; Best overall: Amelia Basi
Best School Garden (in association with St Stephen Gardening Club): Mount Pleasant Lane JMI
Best Kept Front Garden: Mr Crook **Best Kept Back Garden:** Mr & Mrs Court
Best Kept Allotment: Mr Tofts **Best Business Hanging Basket:** The Gate PH



Community Events Diary

- 1 Dec: Park Street Christmas Lights 'switch on',**
opposite Overdraught PH 6pm, 01727 872507
- 7 Dec: St Stephen Parish Community Carol Concert,**
Greenwood Park Community Centre, 4pm, 01923 681443
- 13 Dec: Inaugural Blackgreen Wood Volunteer Day,**
10am -12noon, double gate Lye Lane, Bricket Wood,
01727 831280
- 24 Jan: Charity Jumble Sale,**
St Bart's Church Hall, 10am, 50p, 01727 873672
- 31 Jan: Friends of St Julian's Wood Volunteer Day,**
Greenwood Park top car park, 10am - 1pm, 01727 831280
- 7 Feb: St Stephen's Gardening Club Trading Hut re-opens,**
2 - 4pm (every Sat Feb - Oct) annual membership £3
01727 872718
- 18-20 Feb: The Wizard of Oz,**
Park Players 20th Anniversary, Park Street Village Hall
01727 768977
- 14 Mar: Park Street Village Hall Open Day,**
12 noon - 4pm 01727 768977
- 24 Mar: Parish in Bloom Volunteer Planting Day,**
Greenwood Park, outside Community Centre, 10am,
01923 681443
- 24 Mar: AGM and Magician demonstration,**
Bricket Wood Society, 8pm, Bricket Wood URC, £1,
01923 279870
- 28 Mar: Auction, Bric-a-brac, Book & Toy sale,**
Scout Hut, Watford Rd from 10am, 07775 544344
- Main Council Meetings:**
22 January, 5 February, 19 March
- Police Surgeries:**
6 January 5 - 6pm, 10 February 6 - 7pm at Starbucks,
Chiswell Green
- 2015 Parish Council events:**
30 Apr: Annual Parish meeting
1 May: Entries open for Parish in Bloom 2015
27 Jun: Armed Forces Day
27, 28, 29 July: Love Parks event
10 Sep: Parish in Bloom Awards Evening

For a full list of local activities please see our website

Special occasion?

Need more space for that special party to celebrate a birthday, anniversary or wedding? Check out your local community centres where we can offer various rooms depending on your requirements: from a room at the Parish Centre which accommodates 80 people, to various rooms at Greenwood Park (accommodating 10 - 100) up to our sports hall which can also be opened up into another function room to provide a very large venue capable of seating in excess of 250 people.



At Greenwood Park there is a professional bar, and both centres provide plenty of free parking space and are situated in pleasant surroundings. At the Parish Centre there is an attractive garden whilst Greenwood Park has views across parkland with a patio area for summer use, and a lounge for guests wanting a quieter room. The centres are also ideal for post-funeral gatherings.

Please contact the Centres Manager, Gill Rix, for further information: **01727 874867** or email

bookings@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Happy to be of help

Many hirers and users of our facilities – halls, rooms, play areas etc – get in touch after their events to express thanks for the help received from staff, and their enjoyment at using our venues. We are always grateful for such contact, and we welcome feedback which can help us to maintain our high standards of service.

Almost a Christmas present

Cllr Nicholas Tyndale has been working with our office staff and a local internet expert to improve the Parish Council website (www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk). We expect Phase 1 to be 'live' by Christmas, making it much simpler for you to access useful local information, to find out about Parish services and facilities, and to offer feedback and comment on local consultations. Please let us know what you think in the New Year.



St Stephen Parish Councillors

Bricket Wood

Cllr Jay Baillie 01923 404770 • Cllr Wendy Berriman 01923 673355
Cllr David Brannen 01923 662423 • Cllr Dorothy Kerry 01923 663352

Chiswell Green

Cllr John Bell 01727 831280 • Cllr Karen Hurford 07710 860337 • Cllr Oonah Jones 01727 865333

Park Street

Cllr Michael Freeman 01727 873543 • Cllr Ian Getley 01727 872507
Cllr Bill Pryce 01727 873181 • Cllr Nicholas Tyndale 01727 872647 • Cllr Eileen Whittaker 01727 873710

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.

Parish Office

First floor, The 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, Assistant Clerk.

Centres Hire: Email: bookings@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel: **01727 874867**

