



ST STEPHEN PARISH COUNCIL

Summer Newsletter Issue 37 - 2017

Chair of Council's Annual Report 2017

This is my third year as Chair of Council and, although it has been very hard work, it has been a privilege and an honour. As I have stated in the past it has been extremely busy and the past year has been no exception. It is the aim of all Councillors to work on behalf of the residents and whatever project the Parish Council embarks on it must always be in the interests of the residents and provide good value for money. You'll see on the following pages highlights of the work done by our main committees this year. Personally, I would like to emphasise the following:

- We are, I hope, in the final stages of taking over ownership of Woodbury Field and Park Street Recreation Ground from the District Council. This will enable us to further develop the improvements we have made as the leaseholder – see page 3.
- Improvements to the play areas at Greenwood Park were only made possible by your Parish Council vigorously pursuing with the District Council Section 106 money (from major developments that had taken place within the Parish) – see page 2.
- We have worked closely with Greenwood Park Lawn Tennis Club and others to extend and improve the Sports Pavilion at Greenwood Park. We were successful in securing £75,000 of Inspired Facilities grant funding from Sport England, with remaining funding coming from the tennis club and our reserves – see page 2.
- The Parish Festival was held in June at the Parish Centre last year. Displays included various local acts, an Elvis impersonator, falconry, a children's fun fair, dog display, and crafts and arts. The theme was Her Majesty's 90th Birthday and several mannequins were scattered round the ground depicting the Queen in various costumes. This proved very popular, judging by the number of people who posed by them for photos. As in previous years CAMRA supplied the beer and cider, which again proved very popular. Your Parish Council's Grounds Team did a splendid job decorating the bollards and the lawn in red, white and blue roundels. Plans are already underway for a Parish Fête at the Parish Centre on 20 May 2018. *(Continued on page 2)*



The Chair of Council with Maj. R. P. Grenfell, Royal Anglian Benevolent Fund, receiving donations made at our Armed Forces Day.



Don't miss these summer events

Armed Forces Day – 25 June, 3.30–6pm, Parish Centre

To give our community the chance to show their support for currently serving troops, service families, veterans and cadets. At 3.30pm there will be the Parade of Standards march from Black Boy Wood Shops to the Parish Centre, where the Armed Forces Day Flag will be raised at 4pm, followed by light refreshments, music from the Watford Band and a display of memorabilia, with proceeds going to our nominated charity.

St Julians Wood and Meadows Visitor Day – 8 July, 11am–4pm, St Julians Wood, Greenwood Park

To introduce residents and visitors to this semi-ancient woodland and the adjacent wildflower meadows, with demonstrations of traditional crafts such as wood turning with a pole lathe, besom broom-making and a demonstration of hay cutting with a scythe! There will be guided walks around the wood and a ramble through the adjacent meadows, full of wildflowers and butterflies. Meet at the information marquee positioned in the top field just beyond the football pitch.

Crafts in the Park – 24–26 July, 11am–12.30pm, Greenwood Park
Popular free annual event, to kick off the summer holidays with a seaside theme. Children of all ages will get creative with clay modelling, painting, collage and lots of other crafts outside the Community Centre.

Parish events throughout the year are run with help from volunteers, so if you can spare just a few hours, please contact Judith in the Parish Office
(judith@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk or 01923 681443).

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

Neighbourhood Plan update

At the time of writing, we have received 19 submissions in response to a 'call for sites', which asked land owners and their agents to suggest suitable sites for housing development. Many of the areas suggested are on the Green Belt – you will know that your Parish Council is opposed to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. We know that green spaces are precious, but it is preferable that we decide which areas to lose than have someone else impose their views on us. All suggestions will be closely scrutinised by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and were examined by residents at three Neighbourhood Plan public meetings during May.

See: 'Neighbourhood Plan': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

- (Continued from page 1) At Armed Forces Day the weather could not have been worse, with everybody soaked to the skin. However, it was well attended, with the Armed Forces flag being hoisted by a member of the Air Training Corps. Cream teas, cakes and teas were provided by the Guides and Brownies. This year it will be held at the Parish Centre on Sunday 25 June – see page 1.
- The Parish in Bloom programme continues to flourish and awards were deservedly presented to residents for best-kept gardens – see page 3.
- The Remembrance Day parade was held at the Parish War Memorial and once again the numbers of attendees increased. Apart from the Air Cadets, Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Cubs and Beavers, we were pleased to welcome a contingent of cadets from St Columba School. The road was closed for the duration of the service which proved a great asset as there had been serious concerns over road safety in previous years. A special wreath was laid to acknowledge the centennial of the Battle of Somme.
- The Annual Carol Concert is another event that increases in popularity every year. This year's event will be featured in the next Parish newsletter.

To keep up to date with Parish news please visit the Parish website and also follow us on Twitter – see page 4.

In conclusion I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the staff at your Parish Council. Thanks, too, to those of you who volunteer a few hours of your time to make our stunning series of Parish events possible.

Cllr Mick Freeman

Trees & Woodlands Committee highlights

Chair: Cllr John Bell



- Woodland Work in Blackgreen and St Julians Wood, with the help of staff and volunteers: continuation of holly reduction to increase more light into the wood to promote new tree and shrub growth; reinforcing muddled path with wood chippings; tree safety surveys and removal of unsafe trees/branches; improving access from Park Street Lane into Blackgreen Wood via the new bridge; reducing damage to bluebells in St Julians Wood by laying brash (branches) along main pathways through the wood; clearing weed growth from around previously planted saplings in St Julians Wood; litter picking; installing bird and bat boxes; applying for grants to help with reducing costs of woodland management; and running an advertising campaign to encourage more volunteers.
- Greenwood Park: hedge laying along the cycle route; and reduction of overgrown hedge lines on the boundaries.
- Park Street Recreation Ground: management of tree and shrub growth along the embankment; and pollarding of lime trees adjacent to fitness equipment.



Leisure Committee highlights

Chair: Cllr Bill Pryce

- Installation of exciting new play equipment: Greenwood Park ('Super-Net' sited on play sand, triple rope trail, turning bars, zip wire, leap frog poles, wacky spinner); Woodbury Field (street snooker wall, slide); Mayflower Road (Galaxy Saturn Carousel); Cherry Hill (lighthouse net and double tower climbing frame with fireman's pole); and Park Street Recreation Ground (single miram slide). Other improvements to the play areas, including: replacement of self-closing gate at Mayflower Road; benches made in-house from timber recycled from our own woodland, in Greenwood Park play area.
- Mobile Youth Shelter: to be installed for a trial period on Smug Oak Green.
- Park Street Lane Public Toilets: mural on the wall has had good reviews.
- Greenwood Park: Green Flag application accepted and will be judged by way of 'mystery shopper'.
- Dog waste bins: many of the old metal ones have now been replaced with more robust and hygienic plastic bins.
- Waste material bins: replaced in Greenwood Park with waste and recycling bins including space on them for advertisements.

Building Committee highlights

Chair: Cllr David Brannen

- Greenwood Park Sports Pavilion: the extension should be complete by the time you read this, providing a larger clubhouse, improvements to the shower and toilet facilities, and some new exterior doors. The work will benefit all users, including the tennis and cricket clubs.
- Greenwood Park Tea Room: mains services are being installed at the same time as work to provide an independent three-phase supply to the Sports Pavilion, bringing us a step closer to provision of a tea room.
- Parish Centre Barn: the new hirers' storage area is almost complete. New entrance doors require fitting and a new access path is under construction. Planned work includes the replacement of the Smug Oak Lane vehicular doors with a matt black roller shutter door, which will make exiting the Barn with the tractor much safer for the staff.
- Parish Council Maintenance Man: doing a great job with a rolling programme of decoration, repairs and maintenance of your Parish Council buildings.



Planning Committee highlights

Chair: Cllr Mick Freeman

- Planning objections raised, including: the Co-op beside the Three Hammers Public House (now well underway); the Harperbury hospital site (permission granted), at which we judged the Harper Lane bridge to be too narrow to accommodate simultaneous vehicle and pedestrian movement, as proposed; the Medical Centre in Oakwood Road (pending a further appeal, having been refused once); and a new application for dwellings in Cherry Hill, which will be decided by a committee rather than a planning officer following our objection.
- The former HSBC site in Smug Oak Lane: despite planning permission being granted, this remains undeveloped.
- Enforcement: we constantly chase up enforcement, particularly the many developments that have taken place over a long period of time without or outside of planning permission. It remains a priority of your Parish Council to keep the pressure on the District Council to satisfactorily resolve these unlawful acts.

Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

Your Parish Council is vehemently opposed to inappropriate development on Green Belt land. While we have consistently argued since 2006 that the proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) is inappropriate, the government of the day gave the development the green light.

The largest portion of the land is owned by Hertfordshire County Council; they, too, would like it to stay Green Belt, but face legal obligations which mean that they may have to sell it, whether to the organisation seeking to develop it for an SRFI or to another organisation for a different purpose. So far no offer has been made.

Do not give up hope; we will continue to fight the development of an SRFI. We encourage you to make your own views clear to your County Councillors.

New floral displays for Parish facilities

As part of the Parish in Bloom initiative this year, your Parish Council will install railing planters at Park Street Recreation Ground as well as hanging baskets at the Parish Centre and Greenwood Park Community Centre. Burston Garden Centre have sponsored the planters and baskets, providing all the plants and caring for them until they are ready to be installed.

The competition will be judged during July. There is no need to make a formal entry, as all front gardens, floral displays (residential and business) and Parish Council allotments will be assessed. Results will be announced at the Presentation Evening on 21 September.



See 'Parish in Bloom': www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

CCTV at Greenwood Park

Visitors to Greenwood Park will be pleased to learn that, following an appeal by your Parish Council, the CCTV cameras (which are jointly owned by your Parish Council and St Albans District Council) will remain in operation. The cameras overlook areas of the car park, driveway and buildings as a deterrent against crime. There are plans to replace the existing cameras this year with smaller HD digital systems.



Annual Parish Bluebell Walk

The mid-April timing of this year's Bluebell Walk through Jack Williams Wood and Bricket Wood Common turned out to be ideal, with mild weather and the bluebells showing off to perfection for the enjoyment of an enthusiastic band of 42 residents.

Devolvement of PSRG and Woodbury Field

Hopefully, your Parish Council's negotiations with the District Council to take over ownership of Woodbury Field and Park Street Recreation Ground (which we currently lease) will soon be complete.

In the meantime, at Woodbury Field a play wall has been installed which caters for all ages and encourages team activities. We have plans to install new equipment in the play area.

Vast improvements have been made to Park Street Recreation Ground cricket square and outfield, thanks to the excellent work carried out by your Parish Council Grounds Team. District Council requires assurances that the revenue they would have received as a consideration will be spent on further improvements. Our plans are to spend that money on improvements to the Pavilion – for example on bi-fold front doors – and elsewhere in the ground, including the children's play area.



Trees and hedges at Greenwood Park

Visitors may have noticed your Parish Council's Grounds Team taking out the mixed hedge alongside Greenwood Park's main entrance earlier in the year. This work followed the removal of the conifers a few years ago, and has allowed a beech hedge to be planted to provide year-round colour and interest.

The mixed trees along the boundary with Tippendell Lane are in need of management. Some have a heavy overhang above the road, while a few are leaning and are likely to become a hazard. At this stage the poplars will be removed, followed by those that our tree consultants deem to be unstable. Specimen trees will be replanted within the play area to provide some shade.

Parish Fête: 20 May 2018

Our next Parish Fête will be held at the Parish Centre on 20 May 2018. If you (or your local organisation or company) wish to find out more about getting involved – for example, hiring space for a stall or running an activity for kids or adults – then please email us (fete@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk).

Dates for your diary

Parish Council Events

15 Jun, 20 Jul and 21 Sep, 7.30pm: **Main Council meetings**, Parish Centre
 24 Jun, 29 Jul and 26 Aug, 10am–1pm: **St Julians Wood Volunteer Working Morning**; meet at Greenwood Park top car park, 01727 831280
 25 Jun, 3.30–6pm: **Armed Forces Day** – see page 1
 8 Jul, 11am–4pm: **St Julians Wood and Meadows Visitor Day**, Greenwood Park – see page 1
 24–26 July, 11am–12.30pm: **Crafts in the Park**, Greenwood Park – see page 1
 21 September, 7pm: **Parish in Bloom Presentation Evening**, Greenwood Park

Other Local Events

Mondays (except Bank Holidays), 2–4pm, and Thursdays, 10am–noon: **Book Swap**, Bricket Wood URC Hall, free, 01923 673638
 18 Jun, 10am–2pm: **Park Street Residents Association Summer Boot Fayre**, Park Street Recreation Ground, pitch £15, 01727 768127
 20 Jun, 8pm: **'Butterflies of Bricket Wood Common'**, Bricket Wood Society, Bricket Wood URC Hall, visitors £2, 01923 279870
 24 Jun, 8pm: **Supper Quiz Evening**, Park Street Village Hall, 07551 643869
 29 Jun–1 Jul, 8pm, **Park Players new show**, Park Street Village Hall, £10 with three-course supper, 01727 768977
 1 Jul: **Bricket Wood Society 40th Anniversary Exhibition**, Bricket Wood URC Hall, 01923 279870
 8 Jul and 12 Aug, 10am–noon: **Hanstead Wood Volunteer Morning**; meet at car park entrance, Hanstead Wood, Hanstead Park, Bricket Wood, 01923 673169
 16 Jul and 17 Sep, 10am–noon: **Park Street Pickers Community Litter Clean-Up**; meet at Park Street Recreation Ground, free, 01727 873365
 18 Jul, 8.15pm: **'Joys of Beekeeping'**, Park Street & Frogmore Society, Park Street Village Hall, £2, 07792 588892
 9 Sep, 10am: **Charity Jumble Sale**, St Bart's Church Hall, 50p (children free), 01727 873672
 17 Sep: **Dog Show, Doggie Fun Day and Cream Tea**, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Greenwood Park, free entry to the park, Jack@alvarez.force9.co.uk
 19 Sep, 8.15pm: **'Going Wild in the Hebrides'**, Park Street & Frogmore Society, Park Street Village Hall, £2, 07792 588892
 26 Sep, 8pm: **'Treasures from the Archive'**, Bricket Wood Society, Bricket Wood URC Hall, £2, 01923 279870

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



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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

St Stephen Parish Councillors



Cllr John Bell
 Chiswell Green Councillor
 01727 831280



Cllr Wendy Berriman
 Bricket Wood Councillor
 01923 673355



Cllr David Brannen
 Bricket Wood Councillor
 01923 662423



Cllr Michael Freeman
 Park Street Councillor
 01727 873543



Cllr Ian Getley
 Park Street Councillor
 01727 872507



Cllr Karen Hurford
 Chiswell Green Councillor
 07710 860337



Cllr Martin Doyle
 Chiswell Green Councillor
 01727 859676



Cllr Dorothy Kerry
 Bricket Wood Councillor
 01923 663352



Cllr John Parker
 Bricket Wood Councillor
 01923 677054



Cllr Bill Pryce
 Park Street Councillor
 01727 873181



Cllr Nicholas Tyndale
 Park Street Councillor
 01727 872647



Cllr Eileen Whittaker
 Park Street Councillor
 01727 873710

A summary of the 2016/17 accounts will be available on our website from 30 June:

www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

A hard copy is available from the Parish Council Office.

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

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

