

ST STEPHEN PARISH COUNCIL



Winter Newsletter Issue 31 - 2015

'Book swap' on the way?

The County Council decided to discontinue its mobile library service, despite your Parish Council making it clear that many residents relied on the service for their reading matter. However, all is not lost! The County Council has suggested that parish councils or other local groups may like to set up their own service in the shape of a 'book swap' facility. We are considering how we can get this project underway and make it easily accessible.

How Wood Post Office

Your Parish Council continues to work hard to secure Post Office services in How Wood. The Post Office initially rejected an outreach option in one of the How Wood retailers but, following further representation from Cllrs Kerry and Getley, have agreed to visit the area and reconsider their decision.



Christmas Carol Concert 2015

Join us at Greenwood Park Community Centre on Sunday, 6 December 2015, 4–5.30pm (doors open 3.30pm). There'll be tea and mince pies after the concert, and a bucket collection in aid of the Stroke Association. Music will be provided by the Watford Brass Band, a combined churches choir and contributions, including the nativity, by children from local schools and youth organisations.

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



Information boards and leaflets for local woods

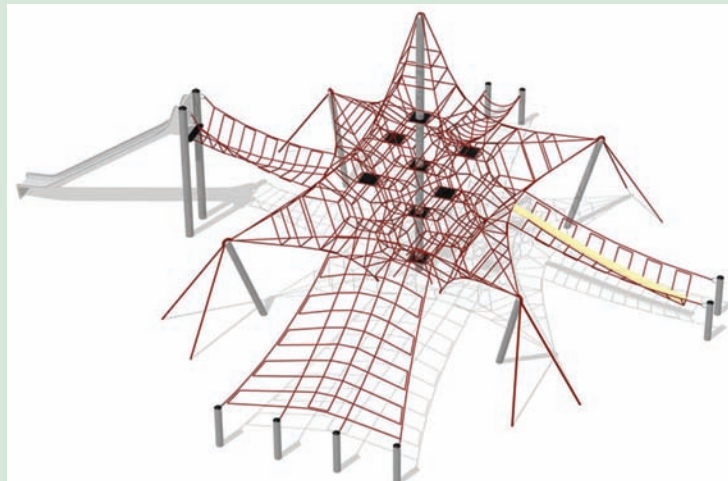
New information boards for Blackgreen Wood and St Julians Wood have been installed at their footpath entrances. Designed and purchased as part of the improvement works set out in the woodlands' management plans, the boards were funded through the English Woodlands Grant Scheme.

Each board includes a map of the wood and surrounding area, the public footpaths and permissive paths, and an indication of the flora and fauna you would be likely to see, all mounted in a craftsman-made English oak map case. Information leaflets are also being developed to provide more details about the woodlands, their history and the work being done to bring them back to their traditional form.

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

'Super Net' for Greenwood Park

Your Parish Council has embarked on an ambitious programme of replacing equipment in the children's play area of Greenwood Park. The plan is to replace the present 'witches hat' climbing frame and two other pieces of equipment with a 'Super Net' climbing frame with extension. This will provide an exciting and challenging piece of equipment for young people up to 14 years of age, with capacity for many more children than at present. We hope that the funding will come from a levy imposed on past developments in the Parish, to which we have not previously had access.



Rail franchise consultation

The West Midlands rail franchise is currently operated by London Midland and includes the St Albans to Watford Junction 'Abbey Flyer', running through the Parish. The franchise has been extended until April 2016, and may well be further extended until October 2017.

In the meantime, the Department for Transport will begin consultation on the next franchise – which could determine the future of the 'Flyer'. Your Parish Council will continue to provide robust responses to consultation, drawing on the expertise of Transport Focus (the independent transport users watchdog) and Abfly (the 'Flyer' users group).

Investing in play

In addition to Greenwood Park, your Parish Council provides five play areas: Cherry Hill, Mayflower Road, North Close, Park Street Recreation Ground and Woodbury Field. We have committed to spend £20k per year for the next five years to invest in their improvement. In works commencing over the winter, Woodbury Field will be the first to benefit, gaining a new slide and a 'play end', consisting of a 'snooker wall' for all ages.

Council comment on Traveller sites

As part of the consultation on the District Council's Strategic Local Plan, your Parish Council was asked to comment on the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Needs Assessment. We responded that there were four established Traveller sites within the Parish, that neither extensions nor new sites would be looked upon favourably and that the lack of sites within Harpenden must be rectified. Concern was raised relating to breaches of planning permission, adverse effects on the community and the openness of the site in Lye Lane.



Your Parish supports

We are delighted to support local events and charitable organisations by offering free use of our facilities for fundraising. We recently supported: the Park Street Residents' Association's Summer Craft & Boot Fayre held on Park Street Recreation Ground, which raised £350 toward their Christmas lights in Park Street; the Cream Tea & Doggy Fun Day at Greenwood Park, in aid of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (HDDP), which raised an incredible £1,085; and the Macmillan Coffee Morning (pictured) in Greenwood Park Community Centre, which raised £962. Liz Arendt, Chairman, Herts Branch of HDDP said, "Over the years St Stephen Parish Councillors have been very supportive of and generous to our charity and we are grateful for [their] interest in the work that we do."

Woodland work at Bricket Wood Common

Henry Holland-Hibbert, owner of Mutchetts Wood and Bricket Wood Common, has announced woodland maintenance work. See your Parish website for details of the work and updates.

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



Green fingers all around

Green-fingered residents were recognised at your Council's annual Parish in Bloom Awards Evening. Each category's winner received a trophy, while finalists received certificates and National Garden Vouchers.

The winners were: Children's Competition (Age 5–7), Amelia Basi; Inter-Schools Garden Competition (in association with St Stephen Gardening Club), How Wood School; Best Kept Front Garden, Mr & Mrs Gaunt, Bricket Wood; Best Kept Back Garden, Mr & Mrs Gledhill; Best Kept Allotment, Hayley McBride; Best Allotment Newcomer, Ian Cocker; and Best Business Floral Display, Anand Singh, Watford Road Post Office, and Jennifer Kaur, Bhaker House Café.

After the prize-giving, Mr Graham Wilson gave a very interesting talk on the history of the St Stephen Gardening Club (see right), the background behind some of its older trophies and the individuals who originally presented them. Rosemary Love and Steve Brooks of KC Brooks & Son, the family butchers on Oakwood Road, once again took on the planters outside the shops, resulting in a spectacular display all through the summer and autumn. Although not entered into the competition, their display certainly made a positive contribution to the Parish in Bloom and shows what a difference community involvement can make.



Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups formed

Five community-led working groups have been formed to progress the Neighbourhood Plan, following a series of public meetings held during the summer. The Plan will give the local community a strong voice on how the Parish area develops and ensure that we receive the maximum benefit possible from the new Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Working Groups – which include residents from Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green and Park Street – have been tasked with investigating and researching community views and developing draft policies on the key issues identified as a result of public meetings: Community, Transport, Housing, Business and Green Spaces. The Working Groups will feed into your Council's Steering Group, which will help put the Plan together.

Cllr Pryce described the Plan as a community-led project, "by the people, for the people, so it's vitally important that you have your say on how your local area should look and how its facilities and infrastructure can be improved to best serve its residents over the next few decades". Local residents are able to add comments and follow the progress of the development of the Plan via the Parish website.



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

Bag that poo, a dog bin will do

We know what an emotive issue dog fouling is and how much it matters to you. It creates an unpleasant experience for our park users – walkers, footballers, runners and children – who enjoy our green spaces. It is also inconvenient for your Parish Grounds Team, who work hard to care for and maintain our parks as clean, safe and attractive areas for you. Your Parish provides dedicated dog waste bins in all its parks to encourage dog walkers to be responsible and clear up. As Keep Britain Tidy asks, "9 out of 10 dog owners clean up after their dog. Are you the one that doesn't?"

St Stephen's Gardening Club

We are a friendly garden club actively promoting interest in all aspects of gardening to gardeners of all abilities. Our Trading Hut is in Drop Lane, Bricket Wood, and is open from February to October, every Saturday from 2–4pm. Composts, fertilizers, insecticides etc, including organic and seasonal products, are available at very competitive prices. We produce three newsletters per annum plus an annual programme of events which includes details of our very popular outings, guest speakers, demonstrations, open gardens and plant sales. A highlight of the year is the Annual Show in September. Membership is £3 per annum. For further information and a membership form contact Pat Holland on 01727 568057.



Children get crafty

Your Parish Council's free three-day Crafts in the Park, part of the national Love Parks Week, ran during the school holidays. More than 60 children of all ages tried out crafts in the sunshine, including clay modelling, decorating mini bird-houses, painting and colouring, and making bead bracelets, animal masks, butterfly and dinosaur shapes, as well as badges and keyrings.

The clay modelling was particularly popular, and not just with the children. One parent commented: "It's great to be able to bring them here where they can enjoy using the clay and doing all the other crafts too, and not have to worry about the mess."

The activities were run by Cllrs Berriman, Hurford, Whittaker and Bell, alongside other community volunteers. Cllr Berriman commented: "The children were able to try out all sorts of crafts that they might not have done before and have something to take away with them. Crafts in the Park provides local families with a free summer holiday activity and the opportunity to explore the wide range of park facilities available to the local community."

A collection in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital raised £107.



Blackgreen Wood winter work schedule

Your Parish Council will be carrying out further works on Blackgreen Wood this year, in line with the ten-year management plan agreed with the Forestry Commission.

On the advice of the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Management Service, the felling of a large number of trees and the coppicing of the old hornbeams will take place over this winter, in order to bring the most benefit to the wood. This may well appear to be a fairly drastic clearance, but we are only removing the same number of trees as we would have done if the work was spread over a five-year period. This will open up the woodland, allow light to penetrate and result in the wood regenerating much more effectively.

The cost of the works will be covered by the timber extracted, and we will retain sufficient timber for our own needs (e.g. for benches and signs).

At the end of the current five-year period another section of Blackgreen Wood will have been returned to its traditional form as ancient semi-natural woodland.



Saturday & Sunday 11 - 12 June 2016

- Arts and Crafts Fair with displays and performances
- Music and Dance Arena Performances
- Children's Funfair
- Sunday - Fete, Food Arena and Real Ale

Celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday

2016 location:
The Parish Centre, Station Road,
Bricket Wood, St Albans.

www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Dates for your diary

- 1 Dec: Park Street Christmas Lights 'Switch On'**, meet at the Village Sign, 6pm, 01727 768127
- 3–5 Dec: 'Last Tango in Little Grimley'**, Park Players, Park Street Village Hall, 8pm, £8 including meal, 01727 768977
- 10 Dec: Christingle Service**, Bricket Wood URC, 6.30pm, children and families welcome
- 12 Dec: Blackgreen Wood Volunteer Day**, meet at kissing gate opposite Woodbury Field, 10am, 01923 673169
- 9 Jan, 13 Feb, 12 Mar: Hanstead Wood Volunteer Day**, meet at car park entrance, 10am, 01923 673169
- 17 Jan, 20 Mar: Community Litter Clean-Up**, Park Street Pickers, meet at Park Street Recreation Ground car park, 10am–2pm, 01727 873365
- 23 Jan: Charity Jumble Sale**, St Bart's Church Hall, 10–11.15am, 01727 873672

Main Council Meetings:

21 Jan, 4 Feb, 17 Mar, St Stephen Parish Centre, 7.30pm

2015/2016 Parish Council events

- 6 Dec:** Christmas Carol Concert, Greenwood Park Community Centre
- 1 May:** Entries open for Parish in Bloom competition
- 12 May:** Annual Parish meeting
- 11 & 12 June:** 2016 Festival, St Stephen Parish Centre
- 26 Jun:** Armed Forces Day, St Stephen Parish Centre
- 25-27 Jul:** Crafts in the Park, Greenwood Park
- 22 Sep:** Parish in Bloom Awards, Greenwood Park Community Centre
- 13 Nov:** Remembrance Service, Park Street war memorial
- 4 Dec:** Christmas Carol Concert, Greenwood Park Community Centre

For more local activities please see our website:
www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Bar service available at Greenwood Park

Various halls and rooms are available to hire for private functions at your Parish facilities. Greenwood Park offers an additional attraction, in that there is a licensed bar available for the hirers, offering a range of beers (both bottled and draught), spirits, various wines and soft drinks, all sold at the normal prices. Kate Farmer, who provides the service, says: "I really love running the bar and being part of an enjoyable family event."

Salsa the night away at Greenwood Park

Salsa Mish is a friendly and welcoming dance community, running a variety of Latin dance classes (Fridays from 8pm) which are great fun and very popular both for absolute beginners and more experienced dancers. After lessons, we have freestyle dancing in the main hall on the fantastic wooden floor to the beats of some of the world's top Latin DJs. Come and join the Salsa Mish family where you will never feel alone.

Mish, Salsa Mish, 07832 359209

Many local groups use your Parish's facilities.
See '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

Open Daily from 9.00am to 5.00pm or by prior appointment.

23 Dec–4 Jan: Parish Office closed

Contact either: Juliet Pienaar, Clerk, or Carol Hardy, Assistant Clerk

Tel: 01923 681443 Fax: 01923 681338

Email: clerk@ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.ststephenparishcouncil.gov.uk

