

# St. Stephen Parish Neighbourhood Plan

## Report of the Community Working Group.

The terms of reference for the Community Working Group are: To look at those areas that provided assets for the community as a whole; churches, schools, medical centres, youth clubs, groups for elderly persons, sporting organisations, hobby groups, Community venues e. g. community centres, public houses, clubs and Quangos.

### SCHOOLS

The Parish has four state schools all of which are Junior Mixed Infants (JMI) schools with a nursery facility. There are no Secondary Schools in the Parish.

Schools in St. Stephen Civil Parish			Year Groups							
Name	NOR	School Type	NUR	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
Killigrew Primary & Nursery School, Chiswell Green.	338	Primary	29	53	60	59	59	59	58	60
Park Street C of E Primary School, Park Street.	208	Primary	21	19	30	29	28	28	24	29
How Wood Primary School and Nursery, Park Street	218	Primary	22	25	30	30	26	29	30	26
Mount Pleasant Lane, JMI School, Bricket Wood.	338	Primary	28	43	45	42	44	47	44	45

#### NOR = Numbers on Roll

Evidence supplied by the Education Department of Hertfordshire County Council suggest that there will in most cases be a slight decrease in the number of school places, at this level, required in the future. However, all four schools at present suffer from a lack of space, with cramped classrooms and facilities. The community survey said that 38% of the respondents found the current facilities were adequate whereas 14% felt that they needed expansion/improvement; 42% felt that the schools were easy to get to.

The forecasts for Primary schools seems to indicate that there is a decline in the number of place required by 2021.

One after school club, for children up to 11 years of age, is run by a commercial organisation at Greenwood Park Community Centre, during term time. However, this caters mainly for the children from the nearby Killigrew Junior and Nursery school.

There are no plans to build a Secondary School in the Parish at this stage. There are several Secondary Schools in and around the St. Albans area which can accommodate the present volume of pupil intake.

All the above schools are prepared to let out certain rooms for activities unconnected with the school and outside school hours, thus providing additional meeting rooms.

Haberdashers Aske, Independent school, has a pre-prep school in Hazel Road Park Street. To the best of our knowledge there are no pupils from Parish attending this school.

It is surprising that the information from the Education authority says that there will not be an increase in the need for junior school places during the time of this plan. However, with the increase in the volume of residents in the parish this might contradict that and there might well be a need for further school places, overall.

## **MEDICAL CENTRES (SURGERIES).**

Each of the three wards has a medical centre/surgery, each one treats NHS patients and is governed by a local group the Verulam Medical Group which in turn comes under the West Herts Area health Authority.

Park Street Surgery, Withy Place, Park Street.

- Number of Doctors in the practice = 4
- Number of Nurses in the practice = 2 plus a Nurse Practitioner
- Number of Patients on record = 3,208
- Number of adults – over 18 – on record = 2,475
- Expected increase in the number of patients over the next 5 years, this matter was under review at the time of asking.
- Plans to increase the size of the surgery – number of doctors - in the next five years, again this was under review.

St. Lukes Surgery (St. Luke Church). Bricket Wood.

- Number of Doctors in the practice = 2
- Number of Nurses in the practice = 2
- Number of Patients on record = unknown
- Number of adults – over 18 – no record
- Expected increase in the number of patients over the next 5 years = unknown.
- Plans to increase the size of the surgery – number of doctors - in the next five years = not at this stage.

I have not had any response from this surgery as yet but I am attempting to get the figures from the local group.

Midway Surgery, Watford Road, Chiswell Green.

- Number of Doctors in the practice = 7
- Number of Nurses in the practice = 6
- Number of Patients on record = 12,466
- Number of adults – over 18 – on record = 9681
- Expected increase in the number of patients over the next 5 years the practice was not sure, but the increase over the past 5 years has been steady so they would expect that to continue.
- Plans to increase the size of the surgery – number of doctors - in the next five years, there are no plans at present to increase the size of the surgery, which would to a large extent be dictated to by an increase.

There are no NHS dentist in the Parish but there are two Private Dental Practices who were reluctant to part with any figures.

With the proposed additional houses required by the Government and St. Albans District Council proposals there will be a need for additional school places and an increase in the size of the medical facilities.

Together with Health Care and Schooling the necessary infrastructure is an essential ingredient to any development.

## CHURCHES

There are five churches in the Parish all Anglican by denomination:

Name of the Church	Point of contact	Rooms Available	Capacity	Availability/usage
Holy Trinity Frogmore	Rev. Dr. Nick Weir Nick.w@hotfrog.info;	1 Large 2 smaller	80 20	
Baptist, Park Street	Ian and Vi La Riviere ainaandvi@uwclub.net;	2	Church 75 Meeting room 12	
St. Lukes, Bricket Wood	Rev Kylie Hodgins	3	65 20 10	
URC West Riding Bricket Wood	Peripatetic	1	60	
URC , Chiswell Green	Peripatetic	1	60	

To the best of our knowledge we do not have any other places of religious worship in the Parish.

All of the churches run clubs and activities for the elderly for mothers, and nursery groups. None have youth clubs or activities suitable for the 10 – 18 year age group. This range is sadly lacking in the parish and although attempts have been made in the past they have been short lived.

## **COMMUNITY HALLS**

The Parish council owns, maintains and administers two community halls; The Parish Centre, Station Road, Bricket Wood and Greenwood Park Community Centre, Chiswell Green, a third premises The Pavilion, Park Street Recreation Ground is leased from the District Council, but there are moves afoot to acquire the Recreation Ground, including the Pavilion via the Devolvement of Assets Scheme, the pavilion will then be brought up to an acceptable standard and will be available for hire.

The Council lets out these premises to hirers on an hourly, daily/part daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis for a variety of activities from Line Dancing to Marquetry, indoor bowls to Bridge, kid's after-school club to Martial Arts. The three centres are situated, one in each of the three wards of the Parish and although they are each very different in size, type, suitability of use they provide the necessary meeting/activity space for persons of all ages.

Park Street Village Hall, in Park Street is a very old hall and over the past 10 years has been completely renovated, refurbished mainly by volunteer labour and funded by Sport England, The Heritage Lottery Fund, voluntary donations, quiz nights and performances by the Park Players. It is now fully booked for most of the week from the morning until the evening.

The only ward that does not benefit from any form of community facility is Bricket Wood and the Parish Council are trying to adjust that position.

## **PUBLIC HOUSES**

Like many other areas the demise of the public house is a concern to many and one might argue that the situation is down to the legislation on Drink Driving and the proliferation of cheap alcoholic drinks sold at supermarkets and other outlets. Be that as it may there is still a need for this community facility in the villages of this Parish. Park Street at one time had nine public houses it now has two, 'The Overdraught' and 'The Falcon'; Chiswell Green has only one public house 'The Three Hammers' – a listed building, and a hotel 'The Noke'; Bricket Wood had four public houses and now only has two, 'The Black Boy' and 'The Gate'. Of those Public Houses that no longer operate, as such, all have been sold off for housing and/or commercial use. The protection of Public Houses is resisted vigorously by 'CAMRA', the St. Albans based 'Campaign for Real Ale, however, once a public hose becomes an unviable business exercise there is little point, commercially, in retaining it as such.

## **MEMBERS CLUBS**

Park Street Village Sports Club is a member's only club and is situated on the Park Street Recreation Ground. Over the past five years the membership has grown, although it must be said that its clientele are mainly men. It is unlikely that it would or could be used for any other community purpose there is only one room, the bar, and the manager has said that if the room was used for a meeting the bar would still have to operate. It has no facilities for youth involvement and membership is restricted to over 18's.

Bricket Wood Social Club is a social club run under the auspices of the CIU and is a members club. The club has a large room on the first floor which can be hired for special events, party's wedding etc. There are a number of activities run at the club some require participants to be member other do not. There is ample car parking which makes it attractive. Again membership is restricted to over 18's. The club has a healthy membership.

## **YOUTH CLUBS**

Although there are plenty of facilities for youth within the Parish there are no youth clubs as such. This has been a bone of contention for many years but the principle difficulty would appear to be attracting the right type of leaders. There are however, several sports clubs in the Parish together with Scouts Groups and Guide Groups, including the full range of age groups within those organisations, see the following paragraph. .

## **SCOUTING/GUIDING**

There are active Scout and Guide Groups in all three wards of the Parish with active Brownies, Beavers and Cub Packs in Park Street. Once again the feeling is that the difficulty in recruiting volunteers is the main obstacle to creating more Groups. These groups play an active part in the life of the Parish, particularly at organised events such as Armed Forces Day and the Annual Remembrance Day Parade.

## **The Elderly**

All the churches, mentioned above have Elderly Folks Clubs attached to them and cater very well for that group of people.

The Community Survey highlighted the need for retirement homes and Warden assisted Care homes. There is an application for such premises to be built on the, now unused, ground at Burston Nurseries, Chiswell Green. However, the size of the development takes it outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan, but having said that it was highlighted in the Community Survey as a necessary requirement for the Parish..

## **Sporting Venues and Clubs.**

St. Stephen Parish Council owns and manages 7 areas and premises:

**Greenwood Park;** is a large park with community centre, tennis courts football and cricket pitches, children's play area and two areas of meadow land - used mainly for dogs walkers runners, and leisure walker.

The Community Centre has a sports hall a lounge with facilities for a bar which is opened on an as-and-when basis, and a smaller hall use for meetings, Bridge Club, functions, exercise sessions, art groups etc. All the rooms are fully booked all week and throughout the year by a wide variety of leisure organisations and businesses.

**Park Street Recreation Ground;** is an area – at the moment leased from the District Council, but in the throes of being transferred to Parish Council ownership – the a small pavilion suitable for changing rooms, a very well kept cricket table, two football pitches and a children's play area. Once in the ownership of the Parish Council it is hoped that the pavilion may be suitable to hire out for meetings.

**North Close;** is a children's play area with a large open area for general games.

**Mayflower Road;** is again a children's play area with an attendant area suitable for informal football and similar games and is much used as a dog's exercise area.

**Woodbury Fields;** this area is again under consideration for devolvement of assets from the District Council to the Parish Council. I consist of a large area of open grassland with a hard surface suitable and laid out for Basket Ball, and a children's play area

**Cherry Hill;** probably the smallest of the areas with a children's play area and a small area of open grass.

**The Parish Centre;** is a large area with the Parish Offices, the Council Chamber - which is let out when not in use by the Council, a permanent children's nursery, and a function room, which again is fully booked most of the time, a barn where the groundsmen store their equipment and an area of open land used for Scouting functions, Parish fetes, Dogs shows and football.

To summaries these premises are available on a rental basis to groups as widely diverse as Scouting activities, Sports Groups, Young families, Hobby Groups, Business Groups, The U3A, Elderly Folks Groups, Religious Groups, Quangos such as the Residents Associations, Foresters Friendly Societies and Local transport Groups.

## **Heritage**

There are a number of buildings which are 'listed buildings' and are therefore legally protected. We also have several areas which are 'locally protected', and which although they don't have the same force of law as 'listed buildings' they still afford a degree of protection from inappropriate development.

The Parish sits in an area of Green Belt land which is highly prized and fiercely protected, but it is evident that some of the land which, in general terms, does not necessarily meet the criteria for Green Belt Land may have to be given up to Development.

One of the Villages in the Parish – Bricket Wood has a large area of woodland, owned by a local landowner. This has ancient associations with 'Witchcraft' and it is reputed that Witches still meet in the wood. At the turn of the 20 century the majority of the land at Bricket Wood was in fact woodland and attracted an annual fair which came out from London. Because it was wooded and thus protective it became an ideal situation for naturist camps, there were five originally now reduced to three which still operate all the year round. A further area of land once owned by the Yule Family (noted for their equine activities). This area of land has, since the demise of the last of the Yule's, been sold off to various organisations, the last parcel of land has now been earmarked for the development 138 houses, too large for inclusion in the Plan but certainly adds to the overall impact of housing and the number of residents, plus of course the increase in traffic and the requirement for suitable infrastructure.

The Parish lies in a triangle formed by the M1, M25, A1M motorways and the arterial road A414 and A405, these roads are some of the busiest in the Country and the area suffers from grid-locked traffic on a regular basis. The traffic and transport position is therefore critical with any development that takes place.