

ST STEPHEN PARISH COUNCIL

Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green and Park Street

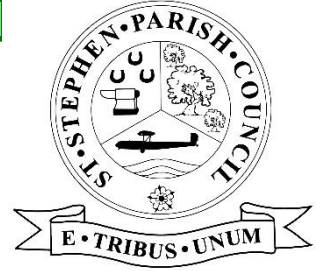
The Parish Centre, Station Road, Bricket Wood

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 16 May 2024 at 6.30pm in Tennyson Hall, Parish Centre, Station Road, Bricket Wood, AL2 3PJ

Present

Cllr David Yates

Cllr Wendy Berriman

Cllr Dorothy Kerry

Cllr Tyndale

Cllr Mark Skelton

Cllr Eileen Whittaker

Cllr Ajanta Hilton

Cllr Adrian Ruffhead

Also present:

Sue Hake, Clerk

Joanna O'Brien, Administrative Officer

Amanda Feron, Assistant Clerk

15 Members of public

1. Welcome by the Chair

Councillor Yates, the Chair, welcomed members of public, councillors and staff to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Councillors Pryce, Brannen, Jacob and Curthoys.

3. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 May 2023

Resolved: Councillor Yates proposed approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 May 2023, seconded Councillor Hilton.

Votes: For, unanimous

Motion Carried

4. Chairman's Report on the last year- Councillor David Yates

Councillor Yates reported that in the last year the Parish Council spent approximately £1.4million on services for the community. £670,000 came from the precept and the remainder from rental and hirer income and from S106 funds. S106 Funds are developer contributions towards infrastructure improvements. This spend, approximately double the precept has enabled the Council to provide extra value for money and services for our residents.

Staff retention and turnover in the last year, we have welcomed a new member of staff Jo who has replaced Diane and will be taking on the additional responsibility of events. Josh joined the Grounds Team last summer and has now left the Council.

Former Parish Councillor Dick Downs has sadly passed away. He will be remembered for working tirelessly for Park Street Village Hall.

Woodbury Field play area improvements are almost complete and there will be a formal opening on 1 June. We successfully submitted a project proposal for S106 funds to update the play area. Thanks to the staff team for working hard and delivering a successful outcome.

5. Committee Reports

Fixed Assets- Councillor Mark Skelton

In addition to utilizing S106 developer contributions to update play equipment, a particular success was securing S106 funding for the solar panel installation at Greenwood Park Community Centre. We have already seen cost savings which will help to mitigate the running cost of the Community Centre.

Independent consultants-Essex Place Services are working on an output report. The report was delayed because of the need to incorporate the findings of the community survey. We wanted to ensure that the survey was inclusive and gave everyone in the community an equal chance to express their views not to the exclusion or benefit of any one group.

Parish Events- Councillor Ajanta Hilton

Our major Parish event last year was the Coronation event. Despite the wet weather we had plenty of people attending in the end. It was a fantastic event despite the weather, lots of support and positive feedback.

Armed Forces Day-It was a lovely day last year for the event which was very well attended. John Drinkwater is an amazing asset to our Parish organising the event. Councillor Hilton expressed the thanks of the Council to John for his tireless efforts running this event which is much appreciated by us all.

Remembrance Service in November- this event was again well attended by members of the community and by local schools, cadets, scouts, brownies and beavers.

On 1st September we are planning our summer event. This will be a community event at Greenwood Park to celebrate 130 years of the Parish and have representation from local groups. This year we are also planning a Christmas event this year after a few years break. This will take place on 1st December at Greenwood Park.

The engagement survey asked two questions about events: How important are large community events and how likely are you to attend or take part. The responses identified clearly that the community supports events in the Parish.

So far this year we have had 1 car boot sale and we are having another one on Sunday and one in June. This is a developing event, and we are glad to see an increase in support this month

Planning- Councillor David Yates

Role of Planning Committee is as a consultee. This year we have seen lots of major planning applications in the Parish. Up until the end of February this year no appeals on Green Belt land were granted. Since March no appeals have been turned down. This has been a sea change in approach.

We have had about 1,000 extra houses in Park Street, Bricket Wood and Chiswell Green. Developers do have to make contributions towards improving the infrastructure but there are rules about where and how the contributions are spent.

In good news, the St Stephen Neighbourhood Plan is established and developers are looking at and addressing its recommendations in their planning statements

6. Community Awards

We asked our residents to nominate individuals and groups they felt deserved recognition for their commitment to making our Parish a better place. St Stephen Parish Council were pleased to award the following:

Business Award - How Wood Pharmacy

Group Award - Park Street Residents' Association

Individual Award - Roy Clegg

Following Chiswell Green and Park Street Residents Association Parish in Bloom competition, the Parish Council was delighted to present Parish in Bloom awards to the three overall winners.

7. Special Award

This year, the Parish Council is proud to present a Special Award to the Bricket Wood Station Heritage Trust. This award recognizes the remarkable hard work, commitment, and dedicated efforts of the Trust in restoring the station building and creating a café for the community. The Trust's work has significantly contributed to preserving local heritage and creating a communal space for all to enjoy.

8. The Year Ahead- Councillor David Yates

Cllr Yates, at his first Annual Parish Meeting as Chair, was delighted to see more members of the public this year and suggested that next year it is more of an event, held on a different to the Annual Council meeting with residents, local groups and members of residents' associations.

The most important thing the council is aiming to do is to move out of the Parish Centre. Our Grounds Team drive an additional 2,000 miles a year between the Parish Centre where their tools and machinery are stored to Greenwood Park where most of their work takes place. We would very much like to rationalise our facilities.

This year staff have been working hard updating play areas. In particular Woodbury Field, Park Street Recreation Ground and Greenwood Park have benefited from improvements this year. We now have a 10 year Play Area plan in place to plan spending for improvements to our other play areas.

Our theme for next year is more of it and better.

9. Closing Statement from the Chairman

Thank you to everyone for coming

Meeting Closed at 7.23pm

Signed

Date: