

**Minutes of Stanstead Parish Council Meeting
held at Stanstead Village Community Centre, Stanstead
on Monday 29th January 2024 at 7.30pm**

Present: Stanstead Parish Council (SPC): Cllr C Warne Vice Chairman, Cllr D Harkness, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr A Green, G Claydon (Parish Clerk - Minutes)
Babergh District Council (BDC): Cllr M Holt, Cllr S Plumb Suffolk County Council (SCC): Cllr R Kemp

Absent: SPC: Cllr D Finch Chairman, no members of the public or press were present.

Meeting opened at 7.35pm

01.01.24 To accept the Chair's resignation from Chair to Parish Councillor
Resolved to accept the Chairman's resignation from the position as chair to position as parish councillor.

02.01.24 To elect a new Chair
Resolved to elect a new Chair at each meeting who will stand until the next meeting and to review the situation at each meeting.
Resolved to elect Cllr C Warne as Chair until the next meeting.
Resolved to elect Cllrs as Vice Chair due to interests needing to be declared:

Vice Chair	Proposer	Second
Cllr D Harkness	Cllr A Green	Cllr D Wilson
Cllr D Wilson	Cllr D Harkness	Cllr A Green
Cllr A Green	Cllr D Wilson	Cllr D Harkness

03.01.24 Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence
Cllr C Warne thanked all those attending. The Chair, Members of the Parish Council, District & County Councillors all thanked David Finch for the all the brilliant work he has done and his achievements for the Parish whilst being the Chairman, especially bringing the plans for the new play park to fruition.
Resolved to approve the absence of Cllr D Finch.

04.01.24 To receive Councillor's declaration of interest, pecuniary or non-pecuniary in items on the agenda
Resolved to accept declaration of pecuniary interest from Cllr C Warne in respect of items 22.1.24, 23.1.24, 24.1.24 where Vice Chair Cllr D Harkness will preside and Cllr C Warne will abstain.

05.01.24 To consider applications for dispensation
None

06.01.24 To adopt minutes of SPC meeting held on 27.11.23
Resolved to adopt the minutes as an accurate record and to be uploaded to the website as a PDF.

07.01.24 To receive reports from: District Cllr M Holt /S Plumb & County Cllr R Kemp
[District Councillor's Report January 2024](#) as provided prior to the meeting.

Discussion regarding car parking charges proposal in Sudbury. District Cllrs advised they still have some locality budget funding left, any application for funding would need to show that 3 quotes for works have been obtained. [County Councillor's Report January 2024](#) as provided prior to the meeting. Cllr R Kemp advised he still has some locality budget funding left. Discussion around the previous request for a contribution to the electrical work needed at the Stanstead Village Community Centre.

08.01.24 Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

09.01.24 To discuss Local Plan

Information given by District Cllrs to the meeting, for Parish Councils this is a Neighbourhood Plan, there's lots of information available on Babergh's website about establishing a neighbourhood plan, scope includes: green spaces /housing /design. The usual procedure is for Parish Councils to employ a consultant to help in the production of a neighbourhood plan, which can be funded through a grant (depending on if still available at the time).

Resolved for some preliminary enquiries to be made regarding this.

Resolved that Neighbourhood Plan be on the agenda for March.

10.01.24 EICR update

Resolved as per discussion in minute ref 07.1.24 to re-apply for funding for the working being undertaken soon.

11.01.24 To adopt the Data Protection Policy

Discussion around this policy needing to link to other policies which are not yet in place and as such it was felt that it would be best to be in a position to adopt this and the other related policies at the same time.

Resolved that this and the other related policies be adopted at the March meeting.

12.01.24 To discuss Playground: signage, inspections (weekly & 3 monthly), accident book, hedging.

12.1.24.a Signage

Examples of signage size and content was shared. Discussion around what is actually needed on the sign including phone number to report issues to and also where to place signage.

Resolved that there should be a sign on each gate eg 2 signs needed. That they should be metal and approximately A4 in size.

Resolved that SPC have a dedicated Parish mobile phone number which can then be included on the sign.

Resolved that HAGS be contacted to establish what other information is needed on the sign and the age group equipment is suitable for. Once established for the sign to be purchased /installed.

12.1.24.b Weekly Inspections

Discussion around what is needed for weekly visual inspections and how this has been done since the installation and how this can be achieved on an ongoing basis.

Resolved that until a permanent solution is found to weekly inspections that Cllrs will undertake this task on a rota basis.

Resolved to liaise with the person who used to inspect the play park in the first instance to establish if they are interested in providing weekly visual inspections and what cost. If they are not able /willing to do this then to ask, via the village facebook page and Community Centre contacts if there is someone in the local community willing to undertake this role.

12.1.24.c 3 Monthly Inspections

Contact has been made with the company who currently complete annual inspections of the play park and Babergh Mid Suffolk who offer annual inspections to see if they offer 3 monthly operational inspection and at what cost.

Resolved to feedback outcome to Cllrs.

12.1.24.d Accident Book

Resolved to implement an accident book which the clerk will hold.

12.1.24.e Hedging

Resolved that hedging will not be provided at this point in time.

13.01.24 Village sign update

Everything is now ready for the sign to be re-erected. SPC would like to thank everyone involved in restoring the village sign and it is hoped that it will be back in it's rightful place by the March meeting.

Resolved to accept, with grateful thanks, the donation of the wooden finials for the Village sign from Mr D Warne.

14.01.24 To adopt the Equal Opportunities Policy

Resolved to adopt the Equal Opportunities Policy and to upload to the website as a PDF.

15.01.24 To agree quote for Copper Beech Tree

3 quotes requested, 2 received.

Resolved that Springhall Tree Care be contacted to go ahead with the work to the Copper Beech Tree on the Church Green as per their quote received 6.1.24.

16.01.24 To discuss survey of trees /maintenance plan

Discussion around what SPC are responsible for with a view to establishing a maintenance schedule. We are aware of our responsibility for these areas: church green and land to rear of Stanstead Village Community Centre including partial responsibility for the ditch.

Resolved that a comprehensive list of area of land and what trees are on that land be compiled with a view to establishing a maintenance schedule.

17.01.24 To sign update to bank mandate

It was established that the 2 new signatories have completed their ID checks.

Resolved that the 2 new signatories be approved.

- 18.01.24 Blooms Hall Lane update**
Awaiting no through road sign via Highways.
- 19.01.24 To agree uplift to Insurance re: play park**
Resolved that increased insurance cover for play park be agreed.
- 20.01.24 Local Government Services Pay Agreement**
Resolved that pay award be accepted and backdated to April 2023.
- 21.01.24 To review recommendations in Internal Audit Report**
Section 3 – It was acknowledged that the SPC have been working within the recommendation regarding pecuniary interests.
Section 5 – Understanding the budget and reserves policy, see below minute ref 22-25.1.24.
Section 8 – It was acknowledged that all expenses are now reimbursed in accordance with SPC financial regulation 6.4.
Section 14 – It was acknowledged that SPC now ensures that absences are minuted as approved by the Council.
Resolved to adopt – SALC Internal Control Statement (Section 4) at March meeting.
Resolved that SALC be appointed to undertake the internal audit for 23-24 as this will help to inform and ensure proper practices are implemented and adhered to (section 4).
Resolved as per minute reference 11.1.24 to ensure recommendations in section 14 regarding GDPR are implemented /related policies adopted.
Resolved to explore what is needed to produce a “Website Accessibility Statement”.
- 22.01.24 Budget Analysis 23-24**
Figures presented in spreadsheet format to the SPC Cllrs prior to the meeting. Analysis fully explained during the meeting to the satisfaction of all Parish Councillors, including:
- Expenditure (Net actual) to 16.1.24
 - Expenditure (Net projected) to 31.3.24
 - Income (actual and projected) to 31.3.24
 - 23-24 Budget against expenditure /use of Reserves
 - Reserves CIL (projected) to 31.3.24
 - Reserves Earmarked (projected) to 31.3.24
 - Reserves General (projected) to 31.3.24
- Resolved** to agree the budget analysis by all 3 Cllrs able to vote.
- 23.01.24 Budget Setting (forecast) 24-25**
Figures presented in spreadsheet format to the SPC Cllrs prior to the meeting. Fully discussed all elements of the budget forecast including the use of reserves for some of this expenditure with the rationale behind this decision fully explored and explained including reference to recommendations in the 22-23 audit report Section 5.
Resolved to agree budget for 24-25 be set as presented by all 3 Cllrs able to vote.

24.01.24 Setting the Precept 24-25

Figures presented in spreadsheet format to the SPC Cllrs prior to the meeting. Fully discussed the impact of the budget forecast, projected income, CIL / earmarked /general reserves position and rational for using some of the earmarked reserves for some elements in the forecast, in relation to the precept needed / impact on band D properties.

Resolved that the precept required be agreed at £10,455 by all 3 Cllrs able to vote, which equates to a 0.23% decrease for band D properties.

Resolved that precept request be signed at the meeting and presented to Babergh & Mid Suffolk Council prior to the 31.1.24 deadline.

25.01.24 To approved invoices /accounts for payment

Schedule of Payments made since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 16.1.24		
Broadband via direct debit December	24.99	+VAT
New Playground	41310	+VAT
Income tax	168.60	
Clerk wages December	287.26	
Village sign works plus fencing and gate	738.00	+VAT

Schedule of payments to be made at the meeting		
Broadband via direct debit January	24.99	+VAT
Chairman's expenses (Cllr DF)	26.45	+VAT
Clerk wages January	287.26	
Mole Treatment	60	

Resolved that mole treatment be added to the schedule previously emailed to Cllrs and is included in the above table.

Resolved that signed hard copy of schedule of payments be retained on file with minutes once adopted.

Signed & Resolved that income and expenditure records reconcile to bank statement at 16.1.24.

26.01.24 To discuss BMSDC consultation on scrap metal policy 2024-2029

Resolved to respond via email that SPC supports this policy.

27.01.24 To discuss BMSDC Local Plan 'call for sites' process

Resolved that SPC have no comments at this time.

28.01.24 To discuss BMSDC Joint Local Validation List consultation

Resolved that this was noted but no comments.

29.01.24 Matters to be brought to the attention of the Councillors /items for the next meeting's agenda

- Election of Chair
- Neighbourhood Plan
- EICR update
- Data Protection and linked Policies
- Playground
- Village Sign update

Survey of trees /maintenance plan
Review Audit Report
Adopt internal control statement
Broadband contract
Ditches on Blooms Hall Lane
Grounds maintenance specification & contract

30.01.24 Date of next meeting – Monday 25th March 2024

Meeting Closed at 10.15pm

Name:David Harkness..... Position:*Chair*.....

Date:25.3.2024..... Time:7.35pm.....

Signature: Hard copy retained on file has been signed and pages initialled