

## STANDON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the **Standon Parish Council** held on Tuesday, 24 March 2009, at 7.30 pm in the Community Centre.

*Cllr Mr Acford	*Cllr A Lang
*Cllr Mrs A Attard-Butler	*Cllr W C Marks
Cllr G D Cowell	*Cllr Ms E Painter
*Cllr Mrs J A Dearman	Cllr R M Stacey (Chairman)
*Cllr K Goodsell	*Cllr Mrs M Wilkinson

\* denotes present.

In attendance: 9 members of the public.

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Cllr Goodsell took the chair.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Stacey and Cllr Cowell.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Acford    Personal            Community – husband of Chairman of the  
Management Committee

### CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.     User Group Meeting

8.00 pm Wednesday, 25 March 2009, at the Community Centre.

2.     East Herts Rural Conference

27 May 2009 at the Community Centre. Cllrs Marks and Mrs Wilkinson agreed to attend.

### PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS

1.     Road Sweeping

Concerns expressed regarding the lack of road sweeping in South Road, Station Road and the High Street (Puckeridge) with a comment being made that the villages were being neglected at the expense of the towns. A promise had been made that the County Council would be arranging a channel sweep last July which, because of the introduction of the traffic calming measures, never took place.

## MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2009

To note the following:

- misspelling of “Ralph Sadleir” on page 4021
- Minutes of the Community Centre were not those referred to on page 4018.

Having noted the above, it was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2009 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

### MATTERS ARISING

#### 1. Recreation Ground Trustees

Cllr Marks confirmed that the Charity Commission website had been updated to record the names of all members. However, Cllr Cowell was listed as G Cowell.

The Clerk was requested to amend the entry to record gender.

#### 2. Training of Councillors

Cllr Mrs Wilkinson referred to a forthcoming Planning Seminar and she requested to be notified of the date and venue.

#### 3. Litter Agency

Cllr Marks stated that Mr Stacey had still not been informed of his precise duties or the level of his remuneration.

The Clerk to action this matter.

### PLANNING MATTERS

#### 1. No objections were raised on the following planning application:

3090255/LB/FM      Demolition of five post war cartilage buildings at  
St Edmunds College, Old Hall Green.

#### 2. Planning permission granted by East Herts Council in respect of the following:

3/08/2114/FP      Change of use from B2 to B2 (general industry) and B8  
(storage and distribution), including minor external alterations  
to building, on Industrial Site, East of Station Road, Standon.

3. Planning permission refused by East Herts Council in respect of the following:

3/08/2040/LB            Secondary glazing to all first floor windows and ground floor kitchen window at 2 Mill End Cottages, Mill End, Standon.

3/08/1994/FP            Construction of single dwelling at Dowsetts Farm, Dowsetts Lane, Colliers End.

HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Members had been circulated with a copy of the attached letter (see Appendix A) and they agreed that in view of the large number of items covered that individual members would be responsible for investigating the points raised and submit their comments to the Clerk in order for a composite response to be formulated. Once completed the list would be discussed with the Area Highways Officer at a meeting which members suggested should take place on either Wednesday, 15 April, or Wednesday, 22 April at 9.30 am in the Community Centre.

Members agreed to be responsible for the following matters:

Cllr Acford – 14, 21 and 25

Cllr Mrs Dearman – 18, 19, 20 and 26

Cllr Goodsell – 10 and 11

Cllr Lang – 1 to 8 and 24 to 26

Cllr Marks – 15 and 16

Cllr Ms Painter – 9 and 17

Cllr Mrs Wilkinson – 12, 22 and 23

Other matters raised:

1. Road sweeping and channel sweeping – raised under ‘Parishioners’ Comments’.
2. Patching work – junction of Batchelors and South Road – ineffectual repair.
3. Road markings – junction South Road/A120 – still no action in reinstating.
4. Grasscutting – standard of cut abysmal.
5. Encroachment of hedge – footway South Road.
6. Obstruction – ParkLane/Station Road – potential danger to pedestrians.

A120 WORKING PARTY

Cllr Marks tabled the attached report of the Working Party meeting (see Appendix B) held on 16 March 2009 and he took members through the various issues raised. Cllr Marks stated that one of the significant factors relevant to any matters relating to the highways issues was the need to progress the preparation of a Parish Plan – a document which would encompass the vision and aspirations of the residents of the Parish. Cllr Cowell would be reporting back to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

Cllr Mrs Attard-Butler questioned the distinction between the A120 Working Party and the A120 group run under the Chairmanship of Mr David Bell. Cllr Marks stated that the A120 Working Party was looking at the problems of traffic and its effects on the whole community, ie the broader impact on the villages, whereas Mr Bells's group was more specific in looking at problems from the South Road junction to the east of Town Farm Crescent. Cllr Mrs Attard-Butler felt that both groups should be working in close liaison, especially in view of the planned expansion of Stansted Airport.

### COMMUNITY CENTRE

#### 1. Planning Application for heating

Cllr Marks informed members that the Chairman had made available to him the approved plans for the heating units on the outside wall which upon inspection were not in compliance with the permission. A discussion had taken place with Mr Stephen Emery, Planning Officer of East Herts Council, who had confirmed the contravention and the need for a retrospective planning application to be submitted. As a member of the Management Committee, Mr Tony Hall had submitted the planning application and it was, therefore, incumbent on him to address the matter. Cllr Lang was asked to raise this matter at the next meeting of the Management Committee and to report back to the next meeting of the Parish.

#### 2. Minutes of the Community Centre Management Committee

To note that none were available.

#### 3. Quotations for footpath diversion

Members felt that until the matter regarding the heating units had been satisfactorily resolved a decision on the footpath diversion should be deferred. However, concerns were expressed regarding the safety issues and it was generally felt that some protective barriers should be provided. Cllr Lang was requested to raise this matter with the Management Committee.

### PLAYING FIELDS

#### 1. Hedge cutting

The Clerk informed members that the total length of the boundary hedge had now been cut and the concerns of the resident of Britannia (Mr Savage) had been addressed. However, the Clerk reported that having inspected the area of land near the football shed, there were items of equipment and general rubbish which posed a danger to the general public. Members agreed for the items to be removed and the area tidied.

2. Request for take-away vehicle in the car park

A request had been made to site a take-away vehicle on the Community Centre car park. Members felt that this would be wholly inappropriate and resolved not to accede to the request.

3. Zurich Inspection Reports

Members had been circulated with a copy of the latest inspection report dated 2 February 2009. Cllr Mrs Dearman stated that in her opinion there was nothing contained within the report which gave cause for concern. However, she did refer to the recommendation regarding the General Play Area. Members felt that there was some merit in the suggestion to erect a suitably worded sign, but they sought clarification as to the need for the installation of a barrier at the exit. Clarification sought from Zurich over signage.

LITTER AGENCY

Members were reminded of the decision taken at the last meeting of the Parish Council when it had been resolved that the Litter Agency be handed back to the East Herts Council. Since the decision had been taken it had been necessary to employ Martin Sallows to empty the litter bins, as the previous litter collector could no longer continue operating the Agency agreement. Martin had stated that his wife (Denise) was prepared to undertake the work for the same fee. Members were pleased to note that Mrs Sallows was prepared to undertake the work and they agreed that the engagement be for a trial period of 6 months.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. Minutes of meeting held on 5 March 2009

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Acford stated that basically the Finance Committee had been set up to give protection to the Clerk and would be an ongoing commitment which over the years would provide checks and balances on the financial affairs of the Parish Council. The initial meeting was to set in motion the foundation of the Committee.

2. Risk Assessment

Members noted that the Financial Risk Assessment and the Financial Regulations would be the subject of further discussions at the next meeting of the Finance Committee. However, the Risk Assessment document was discussed with a few minor amendments being approved.

RESOLVED that the amended document as set out in Appendix C be adopted.

3. Effectiveness of the Internal Audit

Cllr Ms Painter referred members to the requirement of the External Auditor for the Parish Council to review the effectiveness of the Internal Auditor in order to comply with Regulation 6 (3) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006 and she tabled the attached document for members' information. (See Appendix D)

Cllr Ms Painter stated that following her review she was confident of the professionalism of the Internal Auditor and that the internal audit met the criteria as laid down by the External Auditor.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council, having undertaken a full review of the effectiveness of the internal audit, confirms that it is completely satisfied with the services provided and that the key risks of the Council were being addressed.

4. Terms of Reference of the Finance Committee

RESOLVED that the terms of reference as submitted to the Finance Committee held on 5 March 2009 be approved.

FUTURE OF SATURDAY SURGERY

Members were informed that no-one had attended the last three Saturday Surgery sessions and, as PS and the website, were a ready means of accessing members it was felt that the Surgery planned for April be the last.

The Clerk was requested to notify Mrs Acford that the Community Centre would no longer be required for Saturday Surgery meetings.

ALLOTMENTS

1. Tenancy Agreement Report

Members were informed that both Cllr Mrs Dearman and Cllr Mrs Wilkinson had met with Mr Brian Durrant to discuss the matters of the tenancy agreement and the hedge cutting.

The Clerk reported that the documentation with regard to the tenancy agreement was in the process of being prepared and would be made available to Mr Durrant prior to 1 April 2009.

Cllr Mrs Wilkinson stated that there were now 20 people on the allotments waiting list and she asked whether Standon Charities could be again approached with a view to establishing whether additional land could be made available. Cllr Acford agreed to raise this request at the next meeting of the Standon Charities.

## 2. Hedge cutting

Cllr Mrs Wilkinson informed members that she had obtained a quotation from Green Man Conservation in the sum of £445 to reduce the height of the hedge on the southern boundary. Martin Sallows had submitted a quotation in the sum of £650.

RESOLVED that the quotation from Green Man Conservation be accepted.

## STANDON FORD

A website “www.wetroad.co.uk” listed every ford in the county of which Standon was one of the 5-star fords in the country ranking high on the list of fords to visit.

Cllr Acford expressed his concern that both sides of the ford were in a terrible state from the use of the area by 4 x 4 vehicles and residents were unhappy that such vehicles regularly went through the ford damaging the banks and polluting the water. Cllr Acford suggested that the road be closed off in order to curtail this activity.

RESOLVED that this matter be raised at the Highways meeting being convened with the Area Highways Engineer.

## WORKING PARTY ON CLERK’S CONTRACT/JOB DESCRIPTION

The Chairman informed members that meetings had taken place with the Clerk and agreement had been reached on the content of both the Contract of Employment and the job description. Both documents would be presented to the next meeting of the Parish Council for members’ consideration.

## PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### 1. Payment of Accounts

Members referred to the account submitted by Loop Air Conditioning in the sum of £28,294.60 in respect of the recently installed units and in view of the perceived problems associated with the contravention of the planning permission, members felt that a proportion of the cost should be held pending a satisfactory outcome. In this regard, Cllr Lang was requested to discuss the matter with Mr Tony Hall and, if it was concluded that full consultation had been undertaken with the Planning Officer and retrospective permission was not required, then the amount withheld by the Parish Council would be released.

RESOLVED: (i) that a sum of £20,000 be authorised for payment to Loop Air Conditioning;

(ii) that subject to a satisfactory outcome of the planning issue, delegated powers be given to the Chairman (Cllr Stacey) to release the balance of £8,294.60.

RESOLVED that the accounts as set out on the attached statement (see Appendix E) be duly authorised for payment.

2. Financial Statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached statement (see Appendix F) be noted.

3. Withheld Payment

The Clerk referred members to the decision to withhold payment to F M Suckling Ltd in respect of the cost of repairing the drain cover at the Community Centre in the sum of £446.50. A letter had been received from Paul Suckling which stated that the refuse lorry had driven over the manhold cover damaging the frame and base, necessitating the repair. This would be a recurring problem unless the refuse vehicles were restricted from accessing the area near the manhole covers.

RESOLVED that the cheque be released to F M Suckling.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- (i) Notice Boards
- (ii) Storage facility for Mayday Equipment
- (iii) Policing Locality – Minutes of meeting
- (iv) Litter – notice of rescission
- (v) Allotment tenancy agreement
- (vi) Grant – 3 Veg
- (vii) Clerk's Contract/Job Description
- (viii) Standing Orders

CONFIRMATION OF DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday, 14 April 2009 – Planning Meeting

Tuesday, 28 April 2009 – Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

The above meetings will commence at 7.30 pm and will be held at the Community Centre.

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.