

STANDON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the **Standon Parish Council** held on Tuesday, 28 April 2009.

*Cllr M 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: 2 members of the public.
District Cllr Andrews
Stephen Whittaker, PCSO
Sgt Duncan Wallace

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Attard-Butler and Marks.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Acford	Personal	Community Centre – husband of Chairman of the Management Committee
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CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman placed on record his gratitude to Cllr Goodsell for standing in as Chairman at the last meeting.

Members were reminded of the East Herts Rural Conference being held at the Community Centre on 27 May 2009. The Chairman, plus Cllr Mrs Wilkinson and Cllr Marks would be in attendance.

PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS

None.

POLICING MATTERS

Members agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow discussion in respect of this matter.

(i) Introduction to new PCSO

Sgt Wallace introduced Stephen Whittaker, the new PCSO, and he expressed his gratitude for the generous support of the Parish Council in enabling this position to materialise. It was confirmed that Stephen would patrol the whole of the Parish and this had been cleared with Hertford Police who were responsible for west of the A120. At the times when Stephen was not on foot patrol, he would be given the facility of a car. He was the Parish Council's first point of contact.

The appointment came on the back of a good year in respect of crime statistics for East Herts with this year showing a 20% drop in reported crimes over the previous 12 months and a 40% increase in detection rate. Other matters had been addressed, for example anti-social behaviour. Stephen was looking forward to working with the Parish Council and he hoped that his presence would allay any fears of the perception of crime.

(ii) Vehicular damage – Lunardi Court and Tollsworth Way

There had been a number of reported crimes with regard to vehicular damage at the above locations. Amanda Higham was dealing with this matter through Neighbourhood Watch and she was working with the community in the hope of generating awareness of criminal activities and the need to report such crimes to the Police.

(iii) Obstructive Parking – Puckeridge High Street

The offence of parking on the double yellow lines had been noted and patrols of the area would be increased. This would be one area of activity on which Stephen would concentrate by making direct contact with the owners of the vehicles.

Sgt Wallace stated that Amanda would still be responsible for the eastern area and Stephen's appointment was looked upon as complementing the cover given by Amanda. The current shift pattern for both PCSOs was between the hours 8.00 am and 11.00 pm. This was felt to be a generous PCSO cover under the current agreement.

(iv) Police Locality Minutes

Members had been circulated with a copy of the Locality Minutes of 11 March 2009 and Sgt Wallace pointed out that there were 3 objectives emanating from the meeting:

1. Speeding of vehicles

Speeding of vehicles on the B1368 was a continuing problem and Amanda was concentrating on this area affording a high visibility presence.

2. Obstructive Parking in Puckeridge High Street

Obstructive parking in Puckeridge High Street had been identified and, as previously mentioned, this matter would be addressed by Stephen. However, it was pointed out that the Police no longer had the power to issue parking tickets to offenders unless deemed to be causing an obstruction. The Police role was one merely of persuasion.

3. Travelling Criminality

Of further concern was the travelling criminality, especially hare coursing, and such matters were being addressed.

The next meeting of the Locality Panel would ascertain whether the objectives had been met.

In reinstating Standing Orders, the Chairman thanked both Sgt Wallace and PCSO Whittaker for their input and he expressed gratitude for their attendance at this evening's meeting.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2009

Page 4035, Minute 3 – Zurich Inspection Report

Cllr Mrs Dearman asked that an addition to the Minutes be made in that clarification be sought from Zurich over the matter of signage.

Having given effect to the above amendment, the Minutes were confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and were signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

1. Recreation Ground Trustees

To note that the Charity Commission website had been amended.

2. Litter Agency

To note that Mr Stacey had been informed of his duties and level of remuneration and the cheque for his first payment would be drawn this evening.

3. Community Centre – Planning Application for Heating

Cllr Acford expressed his concern that Cllr Marks had raised an issue over planning permission for the heating at the last Parish Council meeting, which in Cllr Acford's opinion should have been referred to Cllr Lang, the Parish Council representative, as a matter of courtesy. The Chairman stated that the Agenda item, Community Centre, was all embracing in respect of matters appertaining to the Community Centre and, therefore, any member was at liberty to raise or research any issue appertaining thereto.

Members felt that there was a need to outline precisely the roles and duties of Councillors/representatives and this would be a matter which would be discussed at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

With regard to the payment to Loop Air-Conditioning the Chairman confirmed that there had apparently been a misunderstanding and he informed the meeting that the payment had now been released.

PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Current Applications

(a) No objections were raised on the following planning applications:

3/09/0444/LB Part demolition of single storey wing to Butler Hall at St Edmund's College, Old Hall Green.

3/09/0461/FP Demolition of existing barn and re-erection to provide living accommodation at Sunfield, Bromley Lane, Wellpond Green.

(b) Deferred to Planning Committee on 12 May 2009

3/09/0544/FP Single storey extension to the living room, raised terrace and extension to garage at Moncrieff, Hadham Road, Standon.

(c) Objections were raised on the following planning application:

3/09/0427/FP Single storey porch extension and garage conversion at 34 Tollsworth Way, Puckeridge.

(ii) To receive Minutes of meeting held on 14 April 2009

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2009 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

(iii) Training of Councillors

(a) Herts Association of Local Councils – Planning Seminar

Due to the County Officer, Mrs Carina Helm, having sustained a broken collar bone, the planned June seminar would not now take place. Arrangement were now being made for a revised date in the Autumn. Members would be notified accordingly.

(b) East Herts Council – Planning Seminar

The Monitoring Officer, East Herts Council, Mr Simon Drinkwater, had confirmed that he was willing to convene, at no cost to the Parish Council, a planning seminar at a date, time and venue of the Parish Council's choice. Members were requested to suggest a suitable date with a list of topics that they would wish to have discussed. It was agreed that this matter be referred to the next meeting as an Agenda item.

(iv) Parish Plan

The Chairman stated that the Planning Committee should be the vehicle for driving this initiative forward. The Chairman stated that a Parish Plan was a vital tool in the planning process and represented the aspirations and visions of the Parish. Both the District Council and the Hertfordshire County Council viewed such a document as a vital link with the grass root community, which complimented the Local Development Framework.

Cllr Cowell felt that there was a need for the Parish Council to have serious thoughts on the division of duties which would emanate from the preparation of the document, which would involve a considerable amount of work. Perhaps the Planning Committee was a vehicle for kick-starting the Plan with the Parish Council as a whole being responsible for producing the documentation with an input from all members of the Council.

Cllr Ms Painter suggested that there should be champions of ownership in respect of the various component elements making up the document.

The general consensus of opinion was that there would be too much work involved for Planning Committee members and that this matter should be given further consideration with a view to the whole Council being responsible.

(v) 42 High Street, Puckeridge

Members had been circulated with a copy of a letter from East Herts Council regarding a complaint made by the Parish Council in respect of the changing of the shop front. This letter confirmed that the new window and window frame did not materially alter the look of the premises and, as such, no further action was being taken.

HIGHWAYS MATTERS

The Clerk tabled for members' information Minutes of the Highways Meeting held on Wednesday, 22 April 2009. The Chairman stated that this meeting had been a difficult one and had been repetitive in that a number of the items raised had been matters which had been ongoing for many months. The attitude of Hertfordshire Highways would appear to be reactive rather than proactive. A statement had been made that Hertfordshire Highways should be notifying the Parish Council of actions to be taken rather than relying heavily on the Parish Council for input.

Cllr Acford stated that at the May meeting the Parish Council should consider allotting each Parish Councillor responsibility for various roads for him/her to report on remedial work required. To this end it would be useful for each Parish Councillor to be supplied with a map of the Parish.

There was contained within the Minutes a number of items which had been identified for consideration by the Parish Council as follows:

Item 15 (ii) – page 3

The suggestion to provide a small footbridge over the stream from Huntsmans Close to the car park was felt to be totally inappropriate and no further action was contemplated.

Item 26 (iii) – page 5

With regard to the provision of a bus shelter, the Chairman stated that the Hertfordshire County Council might consider replacing the structure from Section 106 monies in respect of the development taking place adjacent to the Raj Villa Restaurant. The Clerk was asked to contact Mr Dan Tanock (Passenger Transport) in respect of this matter.

Standon Ford – page 6

Following suspension of Standing Orders, Sgt Duncan Wallace explained that this was a road and very little could be done to stop it up. However, if vehicles were causing a nuisance this was a police matter and, at present, they were looking at similar issues with other fords and would include Standon.

COMMUNITY CENTRE

(i) Minutes of the Community Centre Management Committee

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Community Centre Management Committee held on 10 March 2009 be received. (See Appendix A)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Community Centre Management Committee held on 8 April 2009 be referred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

(ii) Quotation for Footpath Diversion

The Clerk informed members that Martin Sallows had confirmed that the cost of providing a continuation to the concrete footpath would be in the region of £350.

A general discussion took place on whether there was a need to provide a grill from the existing equipment to ground level to give protection to the public. This was a matter which would be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

RESOLVED that the quotation from Martin Sallows be accepted.

The Chairman confirmed that a revised planning application was being submitted in respect of the air conditioning unit on the outside of the building. He did not feel that this would present any problems and planning permission would be forthcoming.

(iii) Agreement between Parish Council and Management Committee

The Chairman confirmed that the Clerk had signed the agreement and that he, the Chairman, had witnessed the signature. He would be seeking countersignature by the Community Centre Management Committee. Members requested that once the document had been duly signed that this form part of the Minutes.

PLAYING FIELDS – TO DISCUSS PROVISION OF SIGNAGE AND SAFETY

The Chairman referred to an e-mail which had been received from a local resident requesting that consideration be given to erecting signs in the vicinity of the play area stating that all dogs should be kept on leads close to the area. Evidently a 4-year old child had been frightened by an over-enthusiastic dog and the sign would be to remind people that it was an area where children play and they could be frightened by dogs.

The general feeling of members was that it would be inappropriate to ban dogs from the general area of the field. However, there was strong feeling that there should be a complete ban on dogs entering the play area. Initially a sign could be erected to this effect. Cllr Marks referred to an appropriately worded signs at the Bishop's Stortford Town Council's paddling pool area, which she felt would be suitable.

At this juncture Standing Orders were suspended.

A reference was made to a national law banning dogs off leads in public places and it was felt that this was something which the Parish Council could investigate. Members were informed of an incident in Standon High Street when a motorist had been observed stopping outside Burrs Meadow and allowing her dog to enter the field off lead unaccompanied. It was felt that the national law would enable action to be taken in the aforementioned case. The Police stated that the law only appertained to dogs which were not under control. There had been instances where the police had taken action under these circumstances. Whilst the new PCSO had no power of enforcement in this matter, he could issue warnings

Standing Orders were reinstated.

The Chairman referred to a request made for the command cargo net frame to have the end columns painted red, which would obviate the potential risk to children banging their heads on the equipment. As this matter had not been raised by Zurich in their recent report, it was agreed that the matter be noted.

Reference was made to the springs on the gates to the play area with a request that they be replaced. With reference to the locked gate on Station Road, the Chairman questioned whether securing the gate was a problem. The general feeling was that as no complaints had been received, then the best thing was for the gate to be kept locked.

Cllr Mrs Dearman referred to the slippery surface on the skateboard ramp and to the fact that this matter had been raised at a previous meeting with a request that the matter be taken up with the manufacturers. It was noted that this was not a matter of concern to Zurich in their latest report.

The Clerk referred to a request from a representative of the Bowls Club for a 'no entry' sign to be erected at the car park exit point fronting the Bowls Pavilion. It was agreed that this matter be an Agenda item for discussion at the next meeting.

STORAGE FACILITY FOR MAYDAY EQUIPMENT

Cllr Acford stated that the Mayday Committee was looking for a single garage or similar structure for storage for its equipment and he asked whether members could give some thought as to a possible site. Cllr Mrs Dearman stated that storage was a problem and she was also looking for storage for the Scouts.

Note at this juncture 8.35 pm Cllr Acford left the meeting.

LITTER AGENCY – NOTICE OF RESCISSION – MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2009 (PAGE 4019)

The Chairman referred to discussions regarding the continuation of the Litter Agency now that Mrs Sallows had agreed to undertake the duties for a 6 month trial period. Under the circumstances, a formal resolution in accordance with Standing Order 36 was required. The notice of rescission was duly signed.

ALLOTMENTS – TENANCY AGREEMENT

The Clerk informed members that he was still awaiting a reply from Mr John Harris confirming whether there was any evidence of the Standon Charities having set any condition on the use of the land. According to the Chairman of the Standon Charities, Cllr Banks, no conditions were in evidence.

Cllr Mrs Dearman referred to the tenancy agreement and, in particular to 5 (d), which stated that no dog should be brought into or kept in the area of the allotments by the tenant or by anyone acting with his authority or approval. The general feeling of members was this was not felt to be appropriate and should be deleted, as there is no restriction to access by non-allotment holders.

With regard to the availability of future land, it was agreed to request Cllr Acford to consider giving notice to Pearce's Farm Shop, at the appropriate time, that part of the land was required to allotment purposes.

GRANT – 3 VILLAGE ECO GROUP

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Mr Rob Street to give a short presentation. Mr Street stated that the group, comprising the villages of Braughing, Standon and Puckeridge, had been set up in July 2008 with the prime purpose of improving the quality of life of the residents by embarking on methods of achieving sustainable living and energy efficiency. There was much enthusiasm within the group which was currently promoting an eco-film festival encouraging the reduction in the use of plastic bags, promoting car sharing and outlining many more eco-friendly schemes, including installing a small hydro scheme in the River Rib.

The group had been successful in securing a grant of £10,000 from EDA to purchase thermal imaging cameras as part of the energy promotion. Such equipment, which would be owned by the group, would be hired to the public at no cost enabling properties to be photographed to show where energy savings could be made.

Cllr Cowell referred to the installation of the hydro scheme and agreed to discuss this matter with Mr Street outside the meeting.

In conclusion, Mr Street was thanked for his attendance following which Standing Orders were reinstated.

RESOLVED that the proposals which the 3 Village Eco Group were pursuing be incorporated into the Parish Plan discussions.

PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP – TO RECEIVE MINUTES 11 FEBRUARY 2009

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the above meeting be received. (See Appendix B)

STANDING ORDERS – WORKING PARTY

RESOLVED that the Standing Orders Working Party be convened for Tuesday, 13 May 2009, following the conclusion of the planning meeting.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts as set out in the attached statement be duly authorised for payment. (See Appendix C)

(ii) Financial Statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached statement be received. (See Appendix D)

Cllr Mrs Dearman requested a copy of the latest inspection report from Broadmead Leisure.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- (i) Notice boards
- (ii) East Herts call for sites (suggestions required for land use and future development – part of the LDF process)
- (iii) Standing Orders
- (iv) Litter Agency – Remuneration (June meeting)
- (v) Commons Act 2006 (Transitional Period) – Amendment to Current Register
- (vi) Roles and duties of Councillors/Representatives
- (vii) EHC – Planning Seminar
- (viii) Highways – Parish Councillor responsibilities for various roads, etc
- (ix) Community Centre – Minutes of Community Centre Management Committee held on 8 April and Provision of grill
- (x) Playing Fields – ‘no entry’ sign to car park exit point fronting Bowls Pavilion.
- (xi) Confirmation of date of next Finance Committee (4 June)

DATES OF MAY MEETINGS

Tuesday, 12 May 2009 Planning and Standing Orders Working Party

Tuesday, 26 May 2009 Annual Parish Meeting followed by
Annual Parish Council Meeting

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the Press and Public be excluded during the next Agenda item in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

CLERK'S CONTRACT/JOB DESCRIPTION

(i) Job Description

Members had been circulated with a copy of the Job Description which had been compiled from the recommended format produced by the NALC.

RESOLVED that the Job Description be confirmed.

Cllr Mrs Wilkinson requested that the Clerk obtain an answer machine.

(ii) Clerk's Contract

Members had been circulated with a copy of the Clerk's Contract, which had been drafted by the Clerk in association with the Chairman, Cllr Cowell and Cllr Goodsell.

The following issues were also raised which required action:

- (i) The need to carry out a risk assessment on the lone working of the Clerk. This would be undertaken by the Chairman.
- (ii) The Clerk to keep a record of the weekly hours worked during the year.
- (iii) Clarification of the PAYE position, vis-a-vis the Clerk and the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the Contract be approved and duly signed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.35 pm.