

**Minutes of Stanstead Annual Parish Council Meeting
held at Stanstead Village Community Centre, Stanstead
on Monday 20th May 2024 at 7.30pm**

Present: Stanstead Parish Council (SPC): Councillor (Cllr) D Finch, Cllr D Harkness, Cllr D Wilson, G Claydon (Parish Clerk - Minutes)
Suffolk County Council (SCC): Cllr R Kemp

Absent: SPC: Cllr C Warne Vice Chairman, Cllr A Green
Bamburgh District Council (BDC): Cllr M Holt, Cllr S Plumb
no members of the public or press were present.

Meeting opened at 19:57

01.05.24 Election of Chair

Resolved to elect Cllr D Finch as Chair for an interim period until the July 2024 meeting - proposer Cllr D Harkness, seconder Cllr D Wilson. Declaration of acceptance of office form completed.

02.05.24 Election of Vice Chair

Resolved to elect Cllr D Harkness as Vice Chair – proposer D Finch, seconder Cllr D Wilson. Declaration of acceptance of office form completed.

03.05.24 Chairman's welcome and apologies for absence

Cllr D Finch thanked all those attending.

Resolved to approve the absence of Cllr C Warne and Cllr A Green. And to accept apologies from Cllr M Holt and Cllr S Plumb.

04.05.24 To receive Councillors declarations of interest, pecuniary or non-pecuniary, in relation to items on this agenda

None.

05.05.24 To consider applications for dispensations

None.

06.05.24 To adopt minutes of the council meeting held on 25th March 2024

Resolved to adopt the minutes as an accurate record and for them to be uploaded to the website as a PDF.

07.05.24 To receive /acknowledge reports received from: District Councillor M Holt /S Plumb and County Councillor R Kemp

[District Councillor's Report May 2024](#) as provided prior to the meeting.

[County Councillor's Report May 2024](#) as provided prior to the meeting.

08.05.24 Public forum, members of the public are invited to question Councillors and /or speak on any Parish matters

No members of the public were present.

09.05.24 Neighbourhood plan update

Email contact has been made with 3 consultants, to establish what help they might be able to provide and the associated cost, whilst acknowledging that grants are available in relation to neighbourhood planning.

- 10.05.24 EICR update**
Remedial work now completed including installation of new fuse board. It is anticipated that the testing /issuing of the certificate will be completed by around the end of May.
- 11.05.24 Playground update**
Two signs have been made, collected and are ready to be installed. Weekly visual inspections are being completed. Order has been placed with HAGS for the 3 monthly operational inspections which are to be arranged to fit in around our current yearly inspection which takes place in September and will continue to be provided by Rospa Play Safety. A site meeting took place with HAGS and Cllrs: D Finch, C Warne & D Wilson following which remedial work has been done to address the uneven surface under the matting. SPC to inspect the playground to establish if they are happy with the remedial work completed. SPC thanked Cllr D Finch for all his hard work in getting the playground completed.
- 12.05.24 Village Sign Update**
Confirmation was received that the photos taken of the village sign as on <https://www.suffolkvillagesigns.co.uk/> can be used by SPC for their website /advert for new councillors /other communications. 3 photos were sent to SPC for their use. SPC expressed their thanks and gratitude to Bob Mitchell who took the photos and will endeavour to add the village sign photo(s) to the Parish Council website.
- 13.05.24 Survey of Trees Maintenance Plan**
Resolved to deferred to the next meeting.
- 14.05.24 Broadband Contract update**
Three costed options presented to SPC. SPC were unclear whether BT can offer full fibre into the building and if speeds quoted can be guaranteed.
Resolved to obtain clarification on the points above and if the answer to both of these questions is yes, to go ahead with the BT option.
- 15.05.24 Bank Mandate update**
Confirmation received from Lloyds bank that Cllr A Green and Cllr D Harkness have been added to the bank mandate, so all Cllrs are now signatories.
- 16.05.24 Audit 2023 Update - To approve Website Accessibility Statement**
Resolved to approve the Website Accessibility Statement. SPC would like to thank G Ross for her help and assistance with testing and rectifying errors.
- 17.05.24 Adopt /confirm the following policies and procedures:**
- a. Standing Orders**
Resolved to adopt amended Standing Orders.
 - b. Financial Regulations**
Resolved to defer until the next meeting.

c. Risk Assessment & Management

Resolved to adopt amended Risk Assessment and Management (financial).

d. Councillors Code of Conduct

Resolved to adopt Councillors Code of Conduct.

e. Financial Controls

Resolved to adopt Financial Controls.

f. Fire Risk Assessment

Resolved to adopt Fire Risk Assessment.

18.05.24 To approve invoices /accounts for payment

Schedule of Payments made since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 12.5.24		
Broadband April	24.99	+VAT
Clerk Wages April including 26 hours over-time agreed under minute ref 23.03.24	603.72	

Schedule of payments to be made at the meeting		
SALC payroll 6 months to 31.3.24	45.00	+VAT
SALC annual membership	206.17	
Clerk expenses for stationery	7.92	+VAT
Playground sign x 2	73.00	+VAT
Clerk wages May	283.06	

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

Signed and Resolved that income and expenditure records reconcile to the bank statement at 12th May 24.

19.05.24 To approve the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) return

Signed & Resolved to a approve the Neighbourhood CIL Expenditure Report and for this to be uploaded to the website and submitted to infrastructure@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk by no later than 30th June 24.

20.05.24 Internal Control Report submitted to Council for signature

Resolved to approve Internal Control Report dated 29th March 24 and to agree that the next review of system of internal controls will be 27th January 25. Approved copy to be uploaded to the website.

21.05.24 To agree /approve end of year income, expenditure, reconciliation & significant year on year variances and note no section 137 spending

Resolved that income and expenditure records reconcile to the bank statement at 31st March 24. To be uploaded to website, copy to be sent to the external auditor and signed copy to be retained on file. It was noted that there had been no expenditure under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The clerk advised that a column has been added to ensure any Section 137

expenditure is itemised within the accounting spreadsheet for 24-25 and future financial years.

Resolved to approved significant year on year variances for year ending 31st March 24 and for these to be uploaded to website and sent to the external auditor.

22.05.24 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 23-24

a. To receive Annual Internal Audit Report

Resolved that the Annual Internal Audit Report had been received and will be uploaded to the website, sent to the external auditor and displayed on the 2 notice boards in the Parish.

Also received was the Suffolk Association of Local Council's Internal Audit Report. The clerk brought to the SPC's attention the following points that were incorrect within this report: Page 5 commentary box (box) 3 should read 31st March 2023 (not 20234). Page 12 box 2 wages are paid via cheque not via internet banking. Page 13 box 5 The Asset Register was approved by SPC as per minute ref 20.03.24.

The clerk also brought to the SPC's attention the following points which were discussed and actions agreed:

Ref	Point of note	Action
Page 4 box 1	to ensure that Standing Order 18av and 18c are amended	Already amended and adopted minute ref 17.05.24
Page 4 box 2	NALC Model Financial Regulations May 2024 version should be adopted	To be adopted July 2024
Page 5 box 1	It was acknowledged that on one occasion a member participated in the process of settling expenses due in which they had a beneficial interest (contrary to Financial Regulation 6.4.	See minute ref 15.05.24. All Cllrs are now signatories so that this need not occur in the future
Page 6 box 4	Recommendation: Once a contract has been awarded contracting authorities are required to publish at least the following information on contracts Finder, in the Award Details Section: • The full company name of the winning contractor • The date on which the contract was entered into • The total value of the contract	Clerk to update information in relation to new playground
Page 7 box 3	Council might wish to ensure that it is able to demonstrate that it has reviewed the risks facing the Council in transacting its business and has taken out appropriate insurance to manage and reduce the risk relating to property, cash and legal liability (amongst other	Resolved that insurance would need to be increased to cover the increased value of the play park as discussed at a previous meeting. Risk to SPC include general

	things). A minute ref at either the annual council Meeting or the meeting at which the renewal documents would suffice.	risks associated with business and public liability. Cllr D Harkness to check insurance cover against these risks at renewal
Page 9 box 3	Council might wish to review the time-scales for monitoring of budget to ensure the periods are in accordance with its own Standing Order 17c which required the production of quarterly statement showing evidence of comparisons between budgeted and actual income and expenditure.	Ensure reference is made to Standing Order 17c when minuting provision of financial information to SPC for period ending June (at July meeting), Sept, Dec (at Jan meeting).
Page 9 box 4 & Page 16 box 3	Council should note guidance as issued by Proper Practices with states that it is regarded as acceptable for a council's general reserves to be equal to 3 to 12 months of Net Revenue Expenditure and should ensure that the level of general reserves held is in accordance with an adopted General Reserve Policy. There is no upper limit for earmarked reserves, but they should be held for genuine and intended purposes and their level subject to regular review and justification (at least annually).	SPC to adopt a general reserves policy
Page 11 box 3	Annual CIL Statement council should be aware that the Regulations provided clarity on the timing of the reports, and by which date they should be brought into the public domain.	To be actioned by 30.6.24 see minute ref 19.05.24
Page 15 box 4	Council is advised to consider its response to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement given that it did not correctly provide for the exercise of public rights of its accounts and provide a note to the accounts to explain the reasoning for the response in the negative.	Resolved to add comment: See Minute Ref 22.05.24 b
Page 16 box 1	Analysis of variances was not completed for the 22-23 financial year	Acknowledged that this was an error on the part of SPC and that for the 23-24 financial year this has been done see minute ref 21.05.24
Page 18 box 2	Loose leaf minutes are lawful provided that the pages are consecutively numbered and initialled by the person signing the minutes at the time of signature.	This is routinely being done but the clerk wanted to highlight this point to SPC Councillors.

Page 19 box 1	Annual Parish Meeting is a meeting of the electors and should take place between 1 March and 1 June. Minutes of the proceedings that took place should be presented for approval at the annual parish meeting scheduled for the following year.	Noted, this year's Annual Parish Assembly meeting took place 20 th May 24 agenda item 3 was 'To formally adopt the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 th July 2024'
Page 19 box 4	Ensure council knows which Local Government Transparency code it falls under. Relates to if income or expenditure is under or over £25k	Noted.
Page 19 box 5	Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, public authorities must provide access to information held which must be published proactively. The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme and to publish information covered by the scheme. The council's publication scheme could not be seen on the website. Council is advised to review the provision of the 2000 Act and ensure that it publishes the information as specified.	Clerk to action
Page 20 box 3	Consider importance of using .gov.uk domains for websites and emails for both Officers and Councillors.	Noted for future action

b. To approve Annual Governance Statement (Section 1)

Resolved to approve and sign Annual Governance Statement (Section 1), with the following note attached:

Note to Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 - Assertion 4
Stanstead Parish Council have answered in the negative to assertion 4 because, although the council provided for the exercise of public rights this did not include the first 10 working days of July. This was an error on the part of the Council. This year the exercise of public rights will commence on Monday 3rd June 2024 and end on Friday 12th July as per the recommendations on the template document on PKF Littlejohn LLP's website.

Minute Ref 22.05.24 b Gail Claydon Stanstead Parish Clerk

Both to be uploaded to the website, sent to the external auditor and displayed on the 2 notice boards in the Parish.

c. To approve Accounting Statement (Section 2)

Resolved to approve and sign the Accounting Statement (Section 2), and to be uploaded to the website, sent to the external auditor and displayed on the 2 notice boards in the Parish.

d. To approve the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights

Resolved to approve the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights for period 3rd June 24 to 12th July 24 and for notices to be uploaded to website, sent to external auditor and displayed on the 2 notice boards in the Parish

23.05.24 To agree future meeting dates

Resolved to agree the following Mondays at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated:

29th July
30th September
25th November
27th January
24th March
19th May Annual Parish Assembly Meeting 7pm
19th May Annual Parish Council Meeting
28th July
29th September
24th November

24.05.24 To discuss quote received for work to St James Church Clock

Discussed quote received, but SPC felt that it was unclear what was to be provided. Discussion around whether other Parish Council's / Churches undertake similar works.

Resolved to clarify the works within the quoted price. What the cost of changing the time would be, this would need doing twice yearly although one could be done at the time of an annual service.

Resolved to attempt to obtain other quote(s) for the works once it is established what is needed.

25.05.24 Discussion regarding Stanstead Village Community Centre

SPC are supportive of the community centre's plans subject to seeing the details in due course.

26.05.24 To discuss Grounds Maintenance Specification and Contract

Deferred to the next meeting.

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

Survey of Trees /Maintenance Plan
Adopt Financial Regulations
To discuss Grounds Maintenance Specification and Contract

Meeting Closed at 21:49

Name:Andrew Green..... Position:Chair.....

Date:29th July 2024..... Time:19:35.....

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