

**Minutes of Stanstead Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting
held at Stanstead Village Community Centre, Stanstead
on Monday 16th September 2024 at 7pm**

Present: Stanstead Parish Council (SPC): Cllr A Green (Chair), Cllr D Harkness (Vice Chair), Cllr D Finch, Cllr D Wilson, G Claydon (Parish Clerk - Minutes).
Plus the Chair of Stanstead Village Community Centre and Social Club (SVCC)

Absent: Babergh District Council (BDC): Cllr M Holt, Cllr S Plumb Suffolk County Council (SCC): Cllr R Kemp,

1.09.24ex Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence

Meeting opened at 7.09pm by Cllr A Green. Apologies for absence received from District Cllrs: S Plumb and M Holt. County Cllr R Kemp had advised that he would try to attend but in the event was not present at the meeting.

2.09.24ex To receive Councillor's declaration of interest, pecuniary or non-pecuniary in items on the agenda

Cllrs: D Harkness, D Finch and D Wilson all declared that they were members of the Stanstead Village Community Centre and Social Club.

3.09.24ex To consider applications for dispensation.

Dispensations were approved for Cllrs: D Harkness, D Finch and D Wilson for 4 years by reason that 'granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area'. Forms were signed by these councillors and retained with the minute for future reference.

4.09.24ex Arrangements with Stanstead Village Community Centre and Social Club

It was agreed that there were 3 areas to be discussed: Solar Panels, Incorporation /Governance and Lease.

Solar Panels

The chair of SVCC explained that the rationale for wanting to install solar panels was a financial one, stating monthly cost of electric at around £345 against monthly profits of around £129.

SVCC have received 3 quotes. Suitability survey has been carried out and the chosen provider, Greenscape, have suggested a 24 panel system with battery storage at a cost of £13,930.95. The illustration suggests this system should save around £2,500 per year, meaning it should pay for itself within 6 years.

A grant of £8,357 from Babergh Rural Communities Fund has been agreed. SCC will match fund at 50% of the total funds raised, although the terms of the grant does not allow SVCC to use their own funds, which leaves a shortfall of £930 being requested from SPC.

SVCC to email Survey to the Parish Clerk.

Resolved unanimously to fund £930 towards the cost of the solar panel system from SPC's neighbourhood community infrastructure levy (CIL) funds.

Incorporation /Governance

The chair of SVCC explained that it is necessary for SVCC to become a legal incorporated structure in order to reduce the liabilities for committee member. It is hoped that this will also encourage others to join the committee to ensure its longevity for the community.

Suffolk Pro Help, part of Community Action Suffolk, have been providing help and support on a pro bono basis to SVCC on the process of how to become a Community Interest Company (CIC), other options were considered but a CIC was felt a better option as it is simpler model and also works well for generic type of grants. SVCC envisage the timescale for change to be January as this is when the annual memberships are renewed. Although SVCC committee are yet to formally agree, it is the intention to provide complimentary (free) membership to village residents and to charge a nominal membership fee (£5 per person) to non-village residents wanting to join. Babergh licencing team have agreed a 'club premises certificate' is suitable for this new structure and agreed it was not a requirement to charge for membership. The new name will be 'Stanstead Village Community Centre CIC'

Resolved unanimously that SPC are in favour of the new structure being a CIC.

Lease

The chair of SVCC advised that they are looking for a new 20 year lease which would provide clarification of responsibilities. SVCC's preferred option would be for the (once newly to be formed) CIC to have responsibility for the whole site eg the building, car park, green to the rear of the building and the play park to the rear of the car park. The rationale for this being that having one entity responsible for risk assessments, policies and procedures would avoid duplication /omission and /or confusion over who is responsible for what. It would also help with potential grant funding in the future enabling better financial planning.

Cllrs discussed concerns around relinquishing responsibility for the play park and green behind the building and although conditions could be put into the lease that these areas remain available for all to use, agreement regarding whether the whole or part of the site should be included in the lease could not be reached at this time. There was a suggestion that time limits on functions, number of functions per year should also form part of the conditions in the lease.

The chair of SVCC advised that Suffolk Pro Help would prepare the first draft of the lease using the 'Action for Community and Rural England' template. It would then be put out to consultation with the SVCC committee and SPC.

Resolved unanimously, in principle, to a new lease agreement but that the terms of the new lease would need to be agreed at a later date.

The chair of SVCC confirmed they would progress: the solar panels application (including emailing the survey report to the Parish Clerk), the incorporation

/governance to a CIC with Suffolk Pro Help and start the lease process with Suffolk Pro Help.

Meeting Closed at 8.12pm

Name:David Finch..... Position:Chair.....

Date:30th September 2024..... Time:19:37.....

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