

**Minutes of Stanstead Parish Council Meeting
held at Stanstead Village Community Centre, Stanstead
on Monday 30th September 2024 at 7.30pm**

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

Absent: SPC: Cllr D Harkness, Babergh District Council (BDC): Cllr M Holt, Cllr S Plumb. No members of the public or press were present.

1.09.24 Election of Chair

Resolved to elect Cllr D Finch as chair – proposer Cllr A Green, seconder Cllr D Wilson. Declaration of acceptance of office form completed.

2.09.24 Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence

Meeting opened at 19.31 by Cllr D Finch who thanked Cllr R Kemp for attending.

Resolved to approve absence for Cllr D Harkness and apologies for absence accepted from Cllr M Holt and Cllr S Plumb.

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

Cllr D Finch and Cllr D Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11.09 in that they know one individual who will be invited to tender. Cllr A Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11.09 in that he knows one individual and may also know all other individuals /companies who will be invited to tender.

4.09.24 To consider applications for dispensation

None as not required.

5.09.24 To adopt minutes of the council meeting held on 29th July 2024 and 16th September 2024

Resolved to adopt the minutes of both meetings as an accurate record and to be uploaded to the website as a PDF.

6.09.24 To receive reports from: District Cllr M Holt /S Plumb & County Cllr R Kemp

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

[County Councillor's Report Sept 2024](#) and [Oct 2024](#) as provided prior to and at the meeting.

7.09.24 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

8.09.24 To discuss, agree and adopt the financial regulations

Detailed discussion regarding 'National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model Financial Regulations April 2024' and how to adapt to suit the needs of SPC.

Resolved unanimously that the above regulations be amended as per the discussion, adopted and published on the website

9.09.24 Survey of trees /maintenance plan update

The Clerk advised that having inspected the site themselves that it was unclear how many trees need to be inspected on the Church green (it had previously been advised that there were 9 on the Church Green and 2 at Stanstead Village Community Centre (SVCC) but it was established that there may be up to 11 on the Church Green and this will need to be confirmed before the survey goes ahead. The Clerk advised that 3 providers have been contacted to quote for a survey of the trees on the Church Green and at the rear of SVCC. 1 provider declined, 2 providers quoted and confirmed subsequently that the quote would remain the same whether there were 9,10 or 11 trees on the Church Green.

Discussed details of quotes provided for requested works (but not the name of the provider). Decision was based on details within the quotes and additional information regarding one being registered with 'The Arboricultural Association'

Resolved unanimously that Urban Forestry who is registered with 'The Arboricultural Association' be chosen to provide the survey of the trees on the Church green and rear of the SVCC once the number of trees on the Church Green has been confirmed.

10.09.24 To record declaration of gifts received

It had come to the attention of SPC that the current grounds maintenance contractor had provided additional grass cuts on a pro bono basis.

It was acknowledged that a ladder has been gifted to the church /SPC for accessing the church clock and that a volunteer has removed the bird nesting material which had stopped the clock from working.

11.09.24 To discuss and agree grounds maintenance specification and contract terms

Discussed details for the final specification. Discussed contractors to be invited to tender. Discussed details of the tender process and timescales.

Resolved unanimously that the final specification be updated to reflect the points discussed /agreed. That the contract term will be 1st August 2025 to 31st December 2028. That the 6 contractors discussed will be invited to tender. That invitees will have 1 week to respond to initial phone call asking if they wish to tender, with tender documents being sent thereafter. That the tender documents to be returned in hard copy address to the Clerk by 18th November 2024 and opened at the next Parish Council meeting on 25th November 2024.

12.09.24 Arrangements for Stanstead Village Community Centre and Social Club update

See minutes of extra ordinary meeting on 16th September 2024 [here](#). Cllrs all confirmed they would be willing to be on a working group should this be necessary in the future.

13.09.24 Neighbourhood Plan update

In order to progress with this SPC need to complete an 'Application to designate a Neighbourhood Area' with Babergh District Council. The Clerk advised that the form has been partially completed giving the details and asked if there a second contact could be added as well as the clerk. The Clerk presented the suggested made by the consultant in relation to what information to add for the: 'Statement', 'intention of neighbourhood area' and 'support for choice'

Resolved that this item be deferred until the November meeting.

14.09.24 To approve invoices /accounts for payment /monitor income and approve reconciliation to bank statement

Schedule of Payments made since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 23.9.2024		
Broadband August	24.99	+VAT
External Audit Service	315.00	+VAT
Clerk Wages August	353.46	
Information Commissioners Office Registration	35.00	
Broadband September	24.99	+VAT
Income Received since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 23.9.2024		
2 nd instalment of precept	5,227.50	
Schedule of payments to be made at the meeting		
Clerk Wages September	353.46	
Income Tax to HMRC	106.00	
EICR & remedial works	1,200.00	+VAT

Signed & Resolved that signed hard copy of schedule of payments & income (noted that precept received) be retained on file with minutes once adopted.

Signed & Resolved that income and expenditure records reconcile to the bank statement at 23rd September 2024, hard copy to be retained on file.

15.09.24 Councillor vacancies update

The clerk advised that this is still outstanding but will be done as soon as practically possible.

16.09.24 To discuss maintenance of village sign including potential of future damage caused by tree next to sign /bus stop

The clerk advised contact was made with the sign painter and that they are willing to meet and discuss how to maintain the sign (eg what brushes /cloths /products to use), date to be advised. The painter was concerned regarding the small tree next to the bus stop on the green, which is SCC land, as it may affect the longevity of the work done due to debris /bird droppings if the tree is left to grow. The clerk contacted SCC and was advised SPC can contact highways to request that the tree is removed to prevent damage to the sign or request permission to remove the tree.

Resolved that contact be made with SCC to ask if they can remove the tree and also the dead maple on the same green.

17.09.24 Bus stop in Lower Road update

The Clerk advised that the property in question is owned by BDC, that initial contact was made with BDC on 9th August 2024, that they have chased up on 2 occasions but have still heard nothing back from tenancy management.

Resolved that contact be made with Cllr M Holt for assistance.

18.09.24 Repairs and maintenance of church clock update

The bird nesting material has been removed by a volunteer and the clock started working again for a time but has now stopped again. A new ladder has been gifted to SPC (see also minute ref 10.09.24) and should be installed on a pro bono basis on 3rd October 2024 once installation guidance has been provided. Please also see previous resolution under ref 24.05.24.

Resolved that contact be made with the volunteer who has been changing the clock time when necessary for many years to establish how the ladder should be installed.

19.09.24 EICR update

Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) now received along with invoice. SPC noted the outcome of the report.

Resolved that invoice be paid as per minute ref 14.09.24.

20.09.24 To discuss playground update including benches and football area

HAGS have been to site following their quarterly inspection and have adjusted the gates and replaced some bolts. There is still some painting to be done. Signs are still to be installed on a pro bono basis. Annual playground inspection is due to be completed soon. Play equipment is in need of cleaning. Visual inspection and written summary completed on benches within SPC area which reveals that some maintenance is needed.

Resolved that maintenance of benches be carried forward to the November meeting.

21.09.24 To agree timescale for Notice of Conclusion of Audit publication

The clerk advised that the requirement used to be 2 weeks but suggested that this be agreed at no less than 3 weeks to allow for those who may be away for 2 weeks.

Resolved that notice of Conclusion of Audit be published for at least 3 weeks.

22.09.24 To discuss correspondence received on National Planning Policy Framework

SPC acknowledged information which had been circulated including that from MP J Cartlidge.

23.09.24 To confirm application for recycling credits submitted

The clerk advised SPC, that due to the timescale for response, they had consulted with the chair, completed and submitted the application for monies to be paid to SPC as in previous years.

Resolved that this was the correct course of action.

24.09.24 To approve registering an interest in switching to a gov.uk domain
Resolved unanimously that SPC will register an interest in switching.

25.09.24 Broadband update

The clerk advised of their contact with BT, in that, when they rang to switch to the suggested package 'Fibre 76 Essentials + Complete wifi' they were advised to opt for the enhanced package which provides 4G backup should there be a problem with the broadband connection. A subsequent conversation with a different person at BT initially suggested the pro package but upon checking discovered that it would not work in Stanstead nor would the enhanced package as the 4G signal is not thought to be strong enough in the Stanstead area. SPC felt that it would be worthwhile contacting other broadband providers to check what they could offer, before switching.

26.09.24 To discuss clerk hours /holiday pay

The clerk advised they keep a spreadsheet of the hours they work, which is available to Cllrs should they wish to see it. The clerk advised that so far this calendar year they have worked 26 hours overtime (which has been paid) and an additional 16 hours overtime up to 29th September 2024. They also advised that they have not taken any annual leave.

Resolved unanimously that 16 hours overtime be paid.

Resolved unanimously that any remaining annual leave not taken be paid.

27.09.24 To agree Councillor code of conduct training

The clerk advised that as per the 'Cllr code of conduct' adopted May 2024, Cllrs are required to complete code of conduct training, which is available via the SALC portal. All Cllrs have recently been sent a sign-up link for the portal.

Resolved that funding be approved for this training for all cllrs.

28.09.24 To discuss parish notice board

Resolved to defer until the November meeting.

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

Neighbourhood Plan
Maintenance of Benches
Maintenance of Play Equipment
Parish Notice Board

30.09.24 Date of next meeting – Monday 25th November 2024

Meeting Closed at 22:55

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

Date:25th November 2024..... Time:19:35.....

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