

**Minutes of Stanstead Parish Council Meeting
held at Stanstead Village Community Centre, Stanstead
on Monday 24th March 2025 at 7.30pm**

Present: Stanstead Parish Council (SPC): Cllr D Finch, Cllr D Harkness, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr A Green, G Claydon (Parish Clerk - Minutes)
Babergh District Council (BDC): Cllr S Plumb
1 member of the public was present.

Absent: BDC: Cllr M Holt, Suffolk County Council (SCC): Cllr R Kemp

01.03.25 Election of Chair

Resolved to elect David Harkness as chair proposer Cllr A Green, Seconder Cllr D Finch.

02.03.25 Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence

Meeting opened at 19:32 by Cllr D Harkness who thanked all those attending. Apologies for absence Cllr M Holt and Cllr R Kemp

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

None

04.03.25 To consider applications for dispensation

None

05.03.25 To adopt minutes of the council meeting held on 27th January 2025

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

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

[District Councillor's report March 2025](#) as provided prior to the meeting.

Devolution update: There will be a unitary authority in Suffolk, it is anticipated that following an election a Mayor will be in place by 2026, thus County Council elections will be postponed. The District Council would like there to be 2 or 3 unitary authorities (East and West or East, West and Borough of Ipswich) which will delay District Council elections, the outcome will be less Cllrs and will not give more decision making power to Parish Councils. Final decision will lie with the Secretary of State.

Planning update: For Babergh the Government has increased the requirement from 416 to 775 new homes a year (up 86%). The message is that Neighbourhood Plans are vital for Parish Councils. There is a 'Planning Statement of community Involvement consultation' which runs from 17th March to 12th May details will be on the parish website under [latest news](#) in local libraries and on the [Babergh website](#) everyone is encouraged to have their say by completing the short survey.

The Parish Council thanked BDC Cllrs S Plumb and M Holt for their Locality award funding of £280.

[County Councillor's report March 2025](#) as provided prior to the meeting.

07.03.25 Public Forum members of the public are invited to question Councillors and /or speak on any Parish matters

1 member of the public (Stanstead's defibrillator custodian) reported on the problems encountered with the defibrillator in recent weeks. In March the batteries failed (they were not due for replacement until 2028), the custodian replaced the batteries at their own cost to get the defibrillator back working asap, however the circuit breaker had tripped to the cabinet and therefore the defibrillator couldn't be stored there and was taken out of service to the public and register on 'the Circuit' (as per the agreed procedures) as unavailable, it was placed inside the community centre in case of emergency by users of the centre. However, during this time there was a call on the defibrillator and the wrong information was given out by an East of England Ambulance emergency call handler due to a clerical error on their part, for which an apology is to be issued to the custodian.

After investigation it was established that the heater needs to be replaced as the cabinet has to be heated. Costs are estimated to be £120+VAT for the heater and £40 for fitting and the custodian asked how this could be funded. The custodian would like to provide a refresher course on how to use the defibrillator in due course.

The Parish Council would like to thank the defibrillator custodian for their help, support and dedication in providing this vital community resource.

Resolved unanimously to purchase the heater for the defibrillator and pay the installation costs.

08.03.25 Planning Applications

a) Planning Application DC/25/00876 Erection of single storey workshop outbuilding. Location: The bungalow, Lower St, Stanstead CO10 9AH

The householder was invited to this Parish Council meeting as the Parish Council had some questions about the planning application, when asked they agreed to attend but did not attend on the night.

The Parish Council has the following concerns /questions:

- Whether the workshop will be used for private or business use.
- If for business use, it was felt this would not be appropriate.
- What machinery would be used in the workshop?
- If the machinery is likely to be noisy, it was felt that soundproofing should be installed.
- Whether the workshop would increase the flood risk (either pluvial or river) as there are known problems in this area.

Resolved unanimously to provide this consultee feedback to BDC planning.

b) Planning Application DC/25/01144 To determine if Prior Approval is required for a proposed Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwellinghouses (C3) and for building operations reasonably necessary for conversion. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q - Conversion of existing redundant farm building into 1no. dwelling. Location: Barn West Of Dales Farm, Shimpling Road, Stanstead, Suffolk

Resolved unanimously that there are no objections.

- c) **To discuss 'Statement of Community Involvement Consultation' /survey**
Resolved unanimously to upload documents to website under latest news see minute ref 06.03.25
- 09.03.25 Noticeboard update**
Still awaiting quotes.
- 10.03.25 Cleaning of bus shelters update**
Still awaiting further quote.
- 11.03.25 Bench maintenance update**
Still awaiting quote.
- 12.03.25 Playground**
a) To discuss replacement of wooden gate
Discussion around: the need for new gate posts, the hedge needing to be cut back enough to accommodate the new post and obtaining quotes.
b) To discuss quarterly inspection reports Dec 2024 & March 2025
Resolved to write to HAGS who installed the playground equipment as it is still under warranty and there are still some issues to resolve.
c) Cleaning of combination goal update
Still awaiting quotes.
d) Signs update
Now installed, awaiting invoice.
- 13.03.25 a) To adopt sexual & general harassment policy & procedure**
Resolved to adopt and upload to website as PDF.
b) To discuss positive duty to prevent sexual harassment /risk assessment
Discussed the need for all members of the Council to familiarise themselves with the extent of the prevent duties.
- 14.03.25 To discuss VE Day**
Discussion around encouraging the Stanstead Village Community Centre and Social Club gaging interest in holding a celebration event.
- 15.03.25 To discuss and agree items on the Asset Register**
The only items in question were number of grit bins, it was felt that there are 7 and asset register amended to show 7 grit bins.
Resolved that interim Asset register as at 24.3.2025 be adopted to satisfy audit requirements subject to: visual inspection of number of grit bins, Number being feed back to the clerk who will update Asset Register.
- 16.03.25 To approve invoices /accounts for payment /monitor income & monitor budget position**

Schedule of Payments made since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 23.3.25		
Clerk wages Jan + 17 hrs overtime	576.64	
Broadband February	24.99	+VAT
Pest Control – moles at community centre	60.00	
Clerk wages Feb + paid annual leave for 2024	855.68	
Broadband March	24.99	+VAT
Quarterly playground inspection	75.00	+VAT
Fell and stump grind Norway Maple tree	830	+VAT
Income tax & employers National Insurance	266.82	
Clerk expenses McAfee antivirus	14.99	
Clerk Wages March	371.68	
Income Received since last meeting and already included in the reconciliation at 23.3.25		
SVCC Rent	80.00	
Lloyds Bank Compensation	75.00	
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	3930.00	
County Councillor Locality Grant	550.00	
Recycling Credits	136.34	
Schedule of payments to be made at the meeting		
None		

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

Signed & Resolved unanimously that income and expenditure records reconcile to the bank statement at 23.3.2025, hard copy to be retained on file. NB £266.82 authorised online but not yet cleared from bank.

Signed & Resolved unanimously that budget monitoring spreadsheet as at 23.3.25 had been circulated to all Cllrs before the meeting and that it be approved for audit purposes.

17.03.25 **Councillor vacancies update**

Resolved to approve the councillor advert. To be uploaded to website, placed on notice boards and 30 to be printed for handing out at neighbourhood plan information event.

18.03.25 **To receive letter of engagement from SALC for internal audit service 2025** **Resolved** the letter be officially received, audit booked for w/c 7.4.2025.

19.03.25 **Neighbourhood Plan**

a) Information event at Community Centre 29th March 2025 from 2-5pm

Post cards distributed to householders and posted on website. Venue access arranged.

b) Grant monitoring /update

The clerk read out the grant monitoring question and advised they would complete the monitoring form after the information event had been held.

20.03.25 Stanstead Village Community Centre update

a) Working party meeting /advice from SALC

Discussed and agreed the opening working party meeting was a good one and that the terms of the lease would be discussed in due course.

Resolved to go back to SALC regarding the advice they had given.

b) Textile recycling bank

The clerk advised paperwork requesting this had been sent 10.2.25 and will be delivered in due course.

c) Electric vehicle charging points

Discussed email received from chair of Stanstead Village Community Centre and Social Club (SVCC&SC).

Resolved to advise SVCC&SC that further discussion will be required before permission can be given for the installation of electric vehicle charging points.

21.03.25 Thermal imaging project update

Ongoing.

22.03.25 Banking changes update

Online banking is now working well despite the initial problems. There is a payment to HMRC for £266.82 (Income tax and employers National Insurance) which although authorised, has not yet been taken from the account and will need monitoring to ensure the payment deadline is not missed.

23.03.25 Church clock update

Discussion around the quotes requested for the service of St James Church clock including feedback from a 'fellow of the British Horological Institute'.

Resolved unanimously to obtain photos of the clock workings and dial for future reference /use when requesting quotes.

Resolved that Haward Horological be requested to undertake the service to coincide with when the clocks go forward.

24.03.25 To discuss tree condition survey /maintenance schedule /work completed

Resolved unanimously to defer until July meeting.

25.03.25 Village sign maintenance update

The clerk advised the sign painter had been in contact and is waiting for a good weather day to come and take pictures of the sign and give advice on maintenance.

The clerk advised a notice advertising the mobile library service had been pinned to the village sign and that they had sent a text to the mobile library service manager to contact the clerk. It was agreed no signs should be put on the village sign.

Resolved to notify the mobile library manager that no signs should be put on the village sign but that they can be put on the 2 village notice boards and and/or the village website.

26.03.25 Trees on Suffolk County Council land (village green) update

Still awaiting update from SCC.

27.03.25 Gov.uk domain and village website update

Discussed quotes obtained in relation to the clerk now being responsible for updating the parish council tab on the village website.

Resolved to go ahead with the switch to Gov.uk using Community Action Suffolk's service.

28.03.25 Parish Council Facebook page update

Work is ongoing.

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

To accept the resignation of Cllr D Finch

30.03.25 Date of next meetings:

a) **Annual Parish Assembly Meeting 19th May 2025 at 7.00pm**

b) **Annual Parish Council Meeting 19th May 2025 at 7.30pm**

Meeting Closed at 21:53

Name:David Harkness..... Position:Chair.....

Date:19th May 20..... Time:19:49.....

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