

STANSTED PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13 APRIL 2015 AT STANSTED VILLAGE HALL, MALTHOUSE ROAD, STANSTED AT 8.00 pm

PRESENT:	Cllr Harry Bott	Chairman
	Cllr John Brooker	
	Cllr Mrs Polly Falconer	
	Cllr Mrs Sheila Goodworth	
	Cllr George Goring	
	Cllr Michael Osborne	
	Mrs Roxana Brammer	Clerk
	Cllr Mrs Sarah Hohler	Kent County Council
	Cllr Mrs Ann Kemp	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
	2 members of the public	

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Miss Janet Howie and Cllr Mathew Balfour, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

2 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2014

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2014 were agreed and signed as a true record.

3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman gave his report:

It gives me pleasure to present my sixth annual report of the Stansted Parish Council.

Planning

During the year we have had 27 applications submitted of which 19 were approved or had no objection, 1 refused, 2 withdrawn and 5 are pending.

Highways

Highways continues to have its niggles but once again KCC have delivered overall in keeping the highways upto scratch. A solution is being found for the crocodile pond in Hatham Green Lane.

Rural broadband

This year has continued to be one of gestation for our £100k grant but the broadband has improved with the upgrading of the exchange. Things are looking positive that action will happen in the coming year.

Play equipment

We continue to accrue funds for the upgrading of the play equipment along with a generous donation from within the parish. In the coming year expect to start putting together a firm plan of action to start work on the upgrade.

Brownes Bequest

Sadly Miss Lyle passed away and this means we have full access to the site. This will require some work to be done on the shed and also coppicing which will eat into the reserves.

Thanks

Considering its size Stansted and Fairseat is a very active community which pulls together during the good and bad times. I would like to give thanks to all the people who have given up their time quietly to make everything run smoothly. I cannot name all individuals but particular thanks need to go to our County Councillor Sarah Hohler, Borough Councillors Matthew Balfour and Anne Kemp and our Clerk Mrs Roxana Brammer who all work tirelessly in front and behind the scenes to make things happen and keep the parish on the straight and narrow.

4 AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2014

The audited accounts for the year to 31 March 2013 were received. No questions were asked.

5 COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

a Kent County Council

Cllr Mrs Hohler gave her report:

KCC has had a challenging year, yet again, with savings of over £90,000,000 needed in order to deliver a balanced budget. As part of finding these savings KCC reviewed every area of its activities. This does not mean that services will be out-sourced, though this is one of the options, particularly for back office functions, but more about how better services can be provided more efficiently. Any major change has to follow a public consultation. Budget savings had been sought, for example, in the community wardens service but a huge response to the consultation meant that the wardens have, in the main, been retained.

An extensive 12 week public consultation on our plans to modernise our libraries, registration and archives service by the creation of a charitable trust has begun. The trust concept, our preferred option, would give the service more freedom and flexibility to grow and develop, generate additional income and seek additional grant funding which is not available to KCC. Under the proposals, KCC would remain accountable for the services and would contract with the charitable trust to provide the existing services to all Kent residents, with free access to books and ICT facilities, while also maintaining the historic archives.

Hard work in Kent's primary schools is paying off as results in Key Stage 2 SATS are showing significant improvement. The percentage of pupils reaching the appropriate level in every category - reading, writing, English, spelling, punctuation, maths and science - at Level 4 and above has gone up in the last year. The combined figure for reading, writing and maths in Kent has improved by 5%.

We have decided to press ahead with converting our stock of 120,000 street lights to LED with Central Management System technology. This will reduce our street lighting energy bill by around 60%, meaning that we can return every residential area to all-night lighting, which may be dimmed a little after peak hours. The new technology will also enable lights to be monitored remotely so faults can be detected as soon as they

develop. It will also be better for the environment. Conversion to LED could start later this year or early next and take three years to complete and will be done in two phases, starting with residential areas.

A lot of work has been done since the devastating floods of just over a year ago. An army of flood wardens has been trained, work has started on how best to increase the capacity of the Leigh Storage Barrier and specific schemes are under way.

We have told the Airports Commission that we do not think there should be a third runway at Gatwick and we are lobbying to reduce the impact of those living in West Kent whose lives are blighted by the changes to where flights into Gatwick are now routed. At last work is under way on the A21. And the extra carriageway on the M20 over bridge at junction 4 is keenly anticipated. We also await a decision on providing extra capacity at the Dartford Crossing, or a new crossing, our preferred option.

On schools, we have funding for three new primary schools at Leybourne Chase, Holborough and Kings Hill and we are awaiting a decision from the Minister about the development of a grammar school extension in Sevenoaks, to relieve some of the pressure on the excellent schools in Tonbridge. The need for the M26 slip roads to serve Sevenoaks has also come up the agenda once more.

For me it has been an interesting year as I was appointed as Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities a year ago. I am also a trustee or director of Kent Music, the Kent Community Foundation, the Rochester Bridge Trust and Turner Contemporary, and a member of the Kent and Medway Fire Authority. I remain very committed to supporting the arts and culture (in the widest sense of the words) and the essential role they play in the health, education, regeneration and happiness of our communities. We need to take a strategic view and work with existing organisations and volunteers, across the sector, to make sure the money we have is spent well.

This financial year, my grant allocation has been spent as follows:

Defibrillators for Addington, Birling and Trottscliffe. Water project for Leybourne Riding Centre for the Disabled. 2014 summer activities for young people in the Borough. Play equipment for Stansted playpark. Community centre refurbishment, under floor heating for the new scout centre, Christmas lights and tree, parking provision for the cemetery, all for Snodland. Streetlight updating for Ryarsh. On highways, I have cleared and cleaned signage on the A20, made safety improvements on Oxley Shaw Lane and Rectory Lane South in Leybourne, finally got a flashing speed sign for Offham and tried to alleviate the pressure of long-stay lorry parking at the A228 Ham Hill layby.

Cllr Mrs Hohler added that consultation on the libraries had just finished and was inconclusive. Street lighting would be changed to LED, which in the long term would reduce energy by 60%. Flood wardens were now in place.

b Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Cllr Mrs Kemp gave the Borough Councillors' report:

Yet again all the council's work has been overshadowed by the need to find savings, and once again Tonbridge and Malling have exceeded their target, hopefully pushing back the time when our reserves will be used up and the necessity to borrow to meet our obligations would become another call on our budget. Once again it was deemed

prudent to raise Council Tax by 1.99% (1p per day) to protect our services for as long as possible.

Savings of £2.8 million have been achieved over the past four years through shared services, taking advantage of technological changes and doing some things differently. An approach that is independently assessed by our auditors as “a strong focus on effective financial management” and “an effective framework to address financial pressures and to deliver planned savings.”

We can be justifiably proud of our recycling service, where we see residents recycle or compost 43% of household waste. Almost 90% of waste collected is made use of through reuse, recycling or energy recovery with only around 10% of waste going to landfill. We can be proud that most of our waste is dealt with locally, with around 85% being dealt with in Kent.

The ‘Love Where You Live’ campaign continues to inspire local support and activity. This Council is an Ambassador Authority for national Love Where You Live campaign and a lead authority in the Love Kent campaign (with numerous local projects, including: Bash the Trash events; the Street Monitor scheme; Voluntary Litter Code for businesses; Bag & Flag dog fouling events... to name but a few).

The successful establishment of a new Leisure Trust – achieving annual revenue savings to the Council of circa £500,000 – has meant that exceptionally high standards of service delivery are maintained.

The quality of our leisure facilities and increased leisure activity within the Borough continues to be excellent. The Easter and Summer programmes for young people and the Youth Forum have been maintained.

Sports participation rates across the borough have increased by 6.5% as measured by the Sport England Active People Survey, placing the Borough in the upper quartile in Kent.

Initiatives have included Spring into Sport and the Young Cricket Leader Programme and we have supported voluntary groups in staging the Tonbridge Half Marathon and provided continued support for local clubs.

Local community groups, town and parish councils through the Community Enhancement have been supported, with awards being made to over 200 community and voluntary groups and 20 town and parish councils.

For a second year running, the Council’s support to local town and parish councils had included New Homes Bonus income within the overall settlement. Rather than facing a 13.4% reduction or £23,011 in cash terms, our support is a 1.3% increase or £2,232 increase, resulting in a net benefit to the parishes of £25,243.

T&MBC have been key members of the successful lobby group that has secured the dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury. And will continue their efforts in securing East Facing Slips of junction of the M25.

Crucially, they have helped secure a total of £4.36M from the Local Growth Fund to improve Junction 4 of the M20 and to enhance Tonbridge High Street, along with a share of a further £4.89M to improve local rail stations including improvements to accommodate new HS1 services at Snodland.

Considerable success has been achieved in securing investment from the government's Affordable Homes Programme. Over £7 million of capital grant funding has been allocated to our housing association partners between 2015 and 2018 to provide new affordable homes. We have seen the highest number of affordable units proposed across the 2015-18 programme, with 283 homes constructed or in the pipeline. T&MBC has consistently featured within the top three authorities in Kent for the most successful implementation of Help To Buy. And critically, has a local housing allocations policy, bringing practical changes to ensure affordable housing to go to those households who are local and in most need of housing assistance.

The Local Development Framework - has delivered a robust land supply for new development, making sure we have been able to protect the best natural and historic features of this Borough through our Development Control function.

We have continued our strong influence on rail and bus services by lobbying for better public transport services, highlighted by our 'Rail Manifesto' and facilitating new improvements such as the successful bus/rail interchange at West Malling.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and for you for the next four years for the good of our communities and protection of our villages.

Cllr Mrs Kemp then said she wished to say goodbye, as following the ward boundary change, she would not be representing Stansted and Fairseat in the future, if elected at the local elections in May. On behalf of the Parish Council and parishioners Cllr Bott proposed a vote of thanks to her for her support over the years.

6 REPORTS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

No other reports were given.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No matters were raised.

The Chairman thanked councillors and members of the public for attending and closed the meeting at 8.10 pm.

SignedChairman

On theday of2016