

## Stocking Pelham Parish Council

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7pm on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016 At the Village Hall

Present: 10+ Parishioners and 3 Parish Councillors + Clerk

	Action
<p><b>1. Apologies:</b> Graham Mackrell, Robin Whitefield, Ruth Banks, Sarah Hutchins</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of the last meeting and Matters arising:</b> The minutes of the AGM held on 14th May 2015 were signed as correct.</p> <p><u>Item 6:</u> SPPC contacted East Herts Planning Department to clarify the position regarding the pub site (See Items 3 and 6 below).</p> <p><u>Item 11:</u> Minutes of SPPC meetings are now regularly included in the Parish magazine.</p>	
<p><b>3. Chairman's report</b></p> <p>The Chairman summarised the issues that have been on the Stocking Pelham Parish Council agenda from May 2015 to May 2016.</p> <p>The elected members of the SPPC are mostly unchanged. Peter Dodd, a co-opted member of the council for more than 5 years, resigned when he moved house in June 2015. There is a strong consensus that the SPPC should reflect the interests of all age groups within the village and that those representing the younger generation should be encouraged to become councillors. This will be a priority for the coming year. The Chairman welcomed the interest shown at the meeting in joining the SPPC and advised that the correct protocol for acquiring new members will be activated.</p> <p>The Transparency Code for smaller authorities came into effect from 2014. The code specifies that smaller councils should publish data and information on a website which is publically accessible and free of charge. It includes: items of expenditure above £100, end of year accounts, annual report, audit report (internal audit), list of councillor or member responsibilities, details of public and building assets, minutes, agendas and meeting papers for formal meetings. In 2015, the Government provided funds to help small parish councils to achieve compliance with the transparency code. This has been used to purchase some IT equipment for use by SPPC and for occasional services of an IT consultant. As a result, a SPPC website is currently under development. To be most effective, the web-site needs additional input from other village organisations, which will be moderated by the Clerk of SPPC.</p> <p>With reference to the re-development of the pub, it was confirmed that a license had been granted which, according to East Herts Planning Department, fulfils the 106 planning obligation and enables both of the new houses to be legally occupied. The untidiness and state of neglect of the pub site has been raised on more than occasion with the developers. The developers insist that they are doing everything they can in order to sell the pub. One offer has been made but this was not accepted.</p> <p>It was suggested that villagers might volunteer to improve the appearance of the front of the site. The SPPC view is that a purchase price of £800,000 is too high, especially when compared to other local pubs that are on the market and considering the additional funds needed to complete the development. The fact that there is not an acceptable offer 'on the table' could be used as leverage should the developers decide to discuss possible 'alternative scenarios' with Planning Officers.</p>	DN

<p>It was <b>agreed</b> that SPPC should take a proactive approach and pre-empt any proposals for 'change of use'. A letter will be sent to the Planning Department, emphasising the view that the Cock Public House is an 'asset of community value' and the village determination that the pub should be completed according to the original planning application. This letter will be followed up by arranging a meeting with the Planning Officers. The Chairman encouraged people to keep a positive attitude regarding the future of the pub.</p> <p>A Parish Council can play a vital role in supporting and representing members of the community in the protection of their interests. In the case of the illegal recycling activities at Silla Farm, the SPPC has liaised with those affected and with the various agencies involved, such as Environmental Health, Waste Management and Planning. Following lengthy negotiations, enforcement notices have now been issued.</p> <p>Other SPPC matters have included the refurbishment of the Village Pump, the purchase of new picnic tables and the maintenance of Common Land. The Herts Wildlife Trust has conducted a wildlife survey on the Common Land at Crabbs Green. This showed some concern about the parts of the common that are mowed regularly (with the grass removed). Letters are sent annually to the residents who have been mowing some of the Common Land, reminding them that ownership remains with SPPC.</p> <p>Finance, Planning and Highways are reported by the councillors involved.</p>	<p>DN/PL</p>
<p><b>4. Finance report, presented by David Nicholls, on behalf of Graham Mackrell</b></p> <p>The financial statement for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 was circulated. The closing balance at Lloyds TSB was £978.17. Since the year end a contribution of £1050.0 has been received from the Stocking Pelham Village Hall Committee towards the cost of the electrical work undertaken in the Village Hall. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, there is a debtor of £260.07 in respect of reclaimable VAT. The £500.0 donation to the Stocking Pelham Cricket Club was to help cover the high cost of insuring the Cricket Pavilion.</p>	
<p><b>5. Highways report, presented by David Nicholls on behalf of Ruth Banks</b></p> <p>Despite the mild winter, the roads in Stocking Pelham continue to suffer more and more damage. In the past year there has been an increase in heavy lorries using our roads and breaking both the surfaces and verges. A few holes have been repaired by the County team. They and the water company have been unable to find the source of the water collecting in a manhole cover in the Wash.</p> <p>There should be an increased budget from the Government for road maintenance and although holes have been outlined, very few repairs have been carried out recently. If anyone sees a hole increasing in size, it should be reported to Herts Highways or the details passed to Ruth Banks.</p>	
<p><b>6. Planning report, presented by Paul Lucas</b></p> <p>A summary sheet for planning applications received or outstanding during the past year was circulated and explained. Four of the seven applications relate to the Cock public house. The latest of these, which was a proposal to build five garden letting rooms, was refused because there would be inadequate provision within the site for the parking of vehicles and would be likely to result in on-street parking, in contravention of traffic policy.</p>	

<p>A previous application, for six first-floor letting rooms, was supported by SPPC and permission was granted. It was noted that the company that owns the site is no longer referred to as Winchmore Developments and appears to have a new name – Brick Mort Investments Limited, headed up by Shaun Savage.</p>	
<p><b>7. St Mary's Church report, presented by Jane Bailey</b>  On a positive note, Richard Taylor has taken on the role of Church Warden and there were no major concerns revealed by the Quinquennial Review of the condition of the Church building. There is however, concern that church services are not currently well-supported, in spite of efforts to make significant church occasions such as Mothering Sunday as family-friendly as possible. It is also hoped that more people from this parish will attend the joint benefice Communion services that take place every 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday. It was acknowledged that although communion is an important feature of the Christian faith, the language used can be difficult to follow. The next special service will be Harvest Festival on 18<sup>th</sup> September, to be followed by refreshments in the Granary. A Remembrance Service will be held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November.</p>	
<p><b>8. Pre-school Report</b>  The Pelham's Pre-school continues to be well supported and maintained.</p>	
<p><b>9. The Cricket Club report, presented by David Nicholls</b>  The Cricket Club continues to be a going concern, which is commendable for such a small village. Shortening the home games to 30 overs has been effective in drawing and retaining interest. New club captain, Colin Berthoud has organised regular practise sessions and the current standard of play is pleasing.</p>	
<p><b>10. The Village Hall report presented by Bridget Hitchcock (Chairman of the Village Hall Committee) and Mike Hutchins (Treasurer)</b>  Bridget Hitchcock commented that the role of the Stocking Pelham Village Hall Committee is to hold events that bring residents together and to be responsible for the use and maintenance of the Village Hall. She added that funds raised by social events are also used to support good causes within the village. New blinds have now been installed at the windows of the Hall, completing the refurbishments that were carried out last year.  With the help of the SPPC, outdoor Christmas Lights were purchased for the tree on the triangle next to Crabb's lane. Villagers gathered for a 'switching on' ceremony, with refreshments and the lights themselves were very successful.  A Quiz Night is planned for Autumn 2016. The next SPVHC event is a party to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June.  Mike Hutchins reported that there is a healthy balance in both the deposit and current accounts of SPVHC. The painting and refurbishment costs totalled £4352.65. The electrical inspection expense (£1050) will feature in 2016/17 statement.</p>	
<p><b>11. Any Other Business</b>  The telephone kiosk Library has been tidied internally, thanks to John and Ruth Banks but is looking neglected from the outside. Special paint will be ordered so that it can be refurbished.  Juliet Badger was thanked for organising the 'Clean for the Queen' village tidy-up event, which brought the community together and was very successful. It was suggested that these 'Clean the village' events should take place twice a year.  The Chairman concluded the AGM by thanking everybody who attended and the meeting closed at 7:45pm.</p>	<p>MH  DN</p>

