

Stocking Pelham Parish Council (SPPC)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7pm on Thursday 11th May 2017 At the Village Hall

Present: 7 Parishioners and 5 Parish Councillors + Clerk

	Action
<p>1. Apologies: Ruth Banks, Sarah Hutchins</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the AGM held on 26th May 2016 were signed as correct.</p> <p>3. Matters arising</p> <p><u>Item 3.1:</u> SPPC membership has remained the same since the last AGM. The Chairman reiterated that the Council currently has several long-standing members, including himself and that the SPPC remains keen to welcome new members, particularly those representing a younger generation. He added that there is an expectation that new members should be committed and proactive.</p> <p><u>Item 3.2:</u> The Cock Public House – see item 7.</p> <p><u>Item 3.3:</u> Refurbishment of the Telephone kiosk library is imminent.</p> <p><u>Item 3.4:</u> Clean the Village has been successfully repeated and will be continued. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Juliet Badger for organising this events.</p>	
<p>4. Chairman's report, presented by Chairman of SPPC, David Nicholls</p> <p>The Chairman summarised the issues that have been on the Stocking Pelham Parish Council agenda from May 2016 to May 2017.</p> <p>The SPPC website went 'live' in October 2016. A list of councillors, agendas, minutes, annual reports and end-of-year accounts are now publically accessible via the website as required by the Transparency Code. A quarterly newsletter gives details of other relevant local council matters. The site is being actively promoted via emails circulated by Mike Hutchins.</p> <p>A considerable amount of SPPC time and effort has been directed at planning issues (see item 7), particularly with reference to the site of the Cock Public House.</p> <p>Support has continued to be given to the residents affected by the illegal recycling activities at Silla Farm. The fire that took place on the site was of significant concern and SPPC remained in regular contact with the residents and relevant agencies during this period. Enforcement action regarding removal of the waste is being pursued.</p> <p>The SPPC regularly discuss the condition of the parish Highways (see item 6).</p> <p>Communication with neighbouring parish councils is often undertaken and SPPC have also recently become members of the Hundred Parishes Society.</p>	
<p>5. Finance report, presented by Finance Officer, Graham Mackrell</p> <p>The financial statement for the year ended 31st March 2017 was circulated. The closing balance at Lloyds TSB was £3002.39. The Finance Officer explained that the SPPC funds have been boosted by both the New Homes Bonus and by the Transparency Code funding. The expenditure of £600 was paid for the services of a consultant with regard to planning matters concerning the Cock Public House. The Council is looking to accumulate sufficient funds to be able to purchase speed warning signs, if these are not to be funded by the county.</p>	

5. Highways report, presented by David Nicholls on behalf of Highways Officer, Ruth Banks

There have been regular concerns about the condition of the local highways. Some issues, such as the permanent surface water near Wash Farm remain unresolved despite repeated communication with the relevant agencies. Others are successfully resolved within a short period of time. There is concern that the resurfacing that is currently taking place on parts of the highway may not suffice in the long term. SPPC are concerned that vehicles are frequently travelling faster than the speed limit and are looking to install a moveable speed warning sign. The council has approached both the Highways Department and the Police for guidance on this.

6. Planning report, presented by Planning Officer, Paul Lucas

A summary sheet for planning applications received or outstanding during the past year was circulated and explained.

Attention was drawn to the application made by the Pelham Substation for a Battery Storage Facility, to be located in the parish of Berden but having a greater effect on some residents of Stocking Pelham. Although SPPC objected to the application, Berden Parish Council did not object and the application was subsequently approved.

In the case of the vacant Cock Public House, an application for change of use to residential was made in August 2016. The application was accompanied by a report containing detailed justifications, including a claim that there was insufficient interest in buying it as a pub.

SPPC were asked to submit a response to the application within two weeks. Multiple grounds for objection were stated, including that the price to purchase the vacant pub was too high and that efforts to market the property were weak. In addition, a change of use to residential would not be consistent with the Section 106 agreement.

Local residents were encouraged to submit individual responses and a total of 117 letters of objection were posted. Simon Dobson of PHD Associates produced two reports on behalf of SPPC, with a detailed analysis of planning issues and the future viability of the pub.

Having submitted objections to the application in September 2016, SPPC are still waiting to hear the decision on this application. On a positive note, a report commissioned by East Herts Planning concluded that a pub on the site is viable. There has been regular correspondence with the East Herts Planning Department and SPPC has been advised that a full investigation into the financial position of the developer has been necessary before a decision can be announced.

SPPC have recently objected to an application for an 'infill' development. There is concern that this would set a precedent for further 'infill' development, which would be unsustainable in a village which lacks services and amenities (a Group 3 village). When considering this and other applications, SPPC always refer to latest edition of the East Herts District Plan, which sets out the criteria for development in different locations. Across the region, there is a need to fulfil housing quotas through sustainable development but the policy for Group 3 villages is clear – that 'infill' development should be limited and should be appropriate to the location.

<p>8. St Mary's Church report, presented by Jane Bailey</p> <p>Following a successful Quinquennial Review of the condition of the church building, attention has turned to the heating system, which consists of space heaters. These are effective but may need up-grading on grounds of safety. The diocese has been consulted but there is no solution as yet.</p> <p>Thanks were given to members of the PCC and to all those who have helped in the maintenance of the church and the church yard, particularly Robin Whitefield, who is stepping down from cutting the grass after many years. A rota and/or paid help may be necessary in future.</p> <p>Jane appealed for support in the attendance of services and the provision of summer church teas.</p>	
<p>9. Pre-school Report</p> <p>The Pelham's Pre-school continues to thrive and is an asset to the village.</p>	
<p>10. The Cricket Club report, presented by Colin Berthoud</p> <p>With a new season underway, there is an aspiration to meet the record of last season by securing a team for every game. On behalf of the Club, Colin thanked Sid Whiffen and David Bailey for their commitment to maintaining the equipment and the pitch. SPCC holds an AGM in February. The annual dinner raised almost £1000. Insurance costs are the largest expense, being in excess of £1500 per year.</p>	
<p>11. The Village Hall report presented by Mike Hutchins (Treasurer of SPVHC)</p> <p>Last year, the Village Hall was extensively refurbished and as a result, funds at the end of the year were in deficit. However, at the end of this financial year there is a surplus of £3694.83.</p> <p>Rental income and a successful Quiz Night means that the Village Hall Committee received £5779.50 in the year 2016-2017. The party to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday is an example of a non-fundraising event, for which the main purpose is to bring the residents of the village together. The switching-on of the Christmas lights is similar, with all donations being awarded to a local charity.</p> <p>Insurance is the largest expense this year. Picnic tables for the recreation ground were purchased jointly with the SPPC.</p> <p>The SPVHC currently holds approximately £15,000 funds in reserve. This is as a contingency in case, for example, the two existing flat rooves need to be replaced in the near future.</p>	
<p>13. Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chairman concluded the AGM by thanking those who attended and expressing a hope that a greater number of parishioners might be encouraged to attend the next AGM. The meeting closed at 7:30pm.</p>	