STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the
Parish Council
held Monday 20 March 2017
in the Village Hall at 7:30pm

PRESENT: Joanne Hodson, Roger Heron, Jim Watson, Mandy Jauncey, Peter Brown, Esther Dickson, Ashley Kenlock, Cllr Mark Smith, Julie Betts (Clerk)

APOLOGIES:

ABSENT:

Action/Power

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Dick Thompson attended the meeting to ask about the highway verges. He was concerned that there was no order or strategy to the cutting of verges. He is keen to maintain the wildflowers in the verges and asked that the Council seek clarification. Action JB.

The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended by s100, LGA 1972

Dick continues with litter picks and asked if litter warning signs could be erected at Spring Lane and Wick End? Action JB

56/16 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies.

LGA 1972, Sch 12 para 40

57/16 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The meeting acknowledged that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16 January 2017 were a correct record.

LGA 1972, Sch 12, para 41

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting, held on 16 January 2017, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

58/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

As previously declared and as recorded in the minutes.

59/16 **REPORTS**

(a) Borough Councillor's Report, Mark Smith

Cllr Smith reported that the ward funding would continue, Councillors to consider for next year.

Local Plan 2035, consultation begins in April 2017.

Bedford Borough Council will be backing a campaign to save Bedford Hospital.

60/16 **UPDATES ON CURRENT ISSUES**

(a) Police/Crime Report

Attached at Appendix A.

Thursday 30 March 2017 meeting with PCSO at Great Denham.

(b) Pub

Draft letter to owners to be circulated for approval.

Jim agreed to take over from Ashley to further the application to Bedford Borough Council.

Pub Nights at Stagsden Village Hall continue last Friday of the month. 7.30pm – 10.30pm.

(c) Speed Watch

No update.

(d) Pension

Previously it had been agreed that the Clerk would receive an annual honorarium of £84.55 per year.

This amount had never been transferred because there were no other accounts to transfer into.

Since the introduction of Auto-Enrollment Pensions this practice is now out of date and would not be paid.

(e) BATPC Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

The new Transparency Code, introduced effective from 1 April 2015 for Smaller Authorities (i.e. those Authorities with a turnover not exceeding £25,000), requires the publication of the following information:

- All items of expenditure above £100;
- End of year accounts;
- Annual governance statement;
- Internal audit report;
- List of councillor or member responsibilities;
- Details of public land and building assets;
- Minutes, agendas and meeting papers.

The Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils (BATPC) has reported that the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) is already making spot-checks on compliance with the code, and from 2017/2018 Councils not complying risk legal challenge. DCLG has made new burdens funding available to Councils in scope of the Transparency Code to enable (i) new equipment to be provided and (ii) to pay for additional staff hours required to comply with the code – each Council in scope can claim for up to 3 hours per month staff time in each of the three years of the funding to keep the information on the website up-to-date.

An application for a Transparency Grant was, therefore, submitted for the provision of a laptop and software (£399.16 excluding VAT) and staff costs totalling £350.00 (based upon 4 hours set up time and 1 hour per month during 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 to publish and maintain the information in accordance with the code).

The total funding received was £749.16 and this was paid direct to the Parish Council Bank Account.

RESOLVED

(1) That the application for a Transparency Grant of £749.16 for hardware, software and staff time from the DCLG New Burdens Funding be supported.

(2) That, an honorarium payment of £350.00 be made to the Parish Clerk for the additional time incurred in complying with the provisions of the new Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

(3) That, the new hardware and software be included on the Parish Council asset register.

(f) Councillor Funding

Councillor Funding of £980 received for fencing for the Village Hall.

(g) Neighbourhood Planning

Peter Brown declared an interest.

Mandy circulated the budget for Neighbourhood Planning for the next 6 months.

Next steps will be the issues and options paper which will be distributed in May 2017. This will be submitted for approval at the PC meeting in May followed by an event on 16 June 2017.

Preferred sites for Stagsden

Mandy circulated sample site layouts for sites at Manor Farm, Wick End Barns and Land at 90 Bedford Road. The preferred sites from the NHP questionnaire and subsequent considerations by the NHP group were:

- Brookmead Farm
- Manor Farm
- Wick End Barns
- Land between 50 – 90 Bedford Road

Site 253 Bunyan Farm had been withdrawn

Site 697 Church Lane had been lost in email. The group had applied the agreed criteria but the site had not been shortlisted.

All preferred sites were brownfield sites.

Bedford Borough Council were not going to allocate sites for category 3 and 4 villages.

RESOLVED

(i) To apply for a further grant of £2850 from Groundworks UK towards costs for Neighbourhood Planning.

(ii) That Brookmead Farm, Manor Farm, Wick End Barns and Lane between 50 – 90 Bedford Road are the preferred sites as recommended by the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

Prop: Mandy Jauncey, Sec: Roger Heron, All in favour

(h) Conservation Areas

The Neighbourhood Plan Group were concerned about preserving the character of the village. They would like to explore the possibility of Conservation Areas or Listing buildings.

Cllr Mark Smith to bring information to the next meeting. MS

(i) Village Hall

No update.

(j) Allotments

No update.

61/16 **PLANNING**

(a) Schedule of Applications

17/00466/FUL Meadowfield, 44 Bedford Road, First Floor Rear Extension

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

RESOLVED

No objections

17/00106/FUL, Howbrook Farm Wick End, Erection of Agricultural Workers Dwelling

RESOLVED

No objection but concerned with the size of the building.

(b) Report on Recent Applications

16/03245 The Roost Wick End, Conversion of storage building and external alterations to form a single dwelling house.

Refused – Policy CP13 permits development in the countryside that is consistent with national policy. Relevant section of the NPPF is para 55 which advises that local planning authorities should avoid the creation of isolated dwellings in the open countryside unless there are special circumstances.

Of the four special circumstances listed, one is relevant: where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

The building has been unused for a relatively short period and is in good repair. The application building was specifically designed following a previous refusal of permission to have a barn like appearance to blend with its rural location. Resident conversion and further domestic clutter would degrade its barn like appearance and not enhance the immediate rural setting.

16/3059/FUL Stables rear if /of No. 60 High Street, Conversion and extension of stables and hay barn to form one residential dwelling and other associated works. –Refused

62/16 **FINANCE**

(a) Schedule of Receipts and Payments – Feb-Mar 2017, Appendix B

The Council received the schedule of receipts and payments made during Feb-Mar 2017. LGA 1972, s150 (6)

Prop: Joanne Hodson, Sec: Peter Brown, All in favour

(b) Budget Update including NHP Budget

Councillors considered the budget update and had no concerns, attached at Appendix C.

(c) Grants Received 2016-2017

Grants received FOR 2016-2017 Totaled £4,509, summarized at Appendix D.

(d) Internal Audit/Risk Management, Appendix E & F

Mandy and Julie reviewed the effectiveness of Internal Audit, including the following:

1. Scope of Internal Audit
2. Independence
3. Competence
4. Relationships
5. Planning and Reporting
6. Existing Internal Controls
7. Previous Internal Auditors report
8. Parish Council's risk assessment.

There were no recommendations from the audit.

Section 1 of the Annual Return

Parish Councillors considered Section 1 the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return and confirmed their responsibility for ensuring a sound system of internal control including the preparation of the accounting statements by answering "yes" to the 8 relevant sections of the return. Parish Councillors answered N/A to section 9 as Stagsden Parish Council had no trust funds.

RESOLVED

To approve and acknowledge the Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit Report, noting the sub-committee's recommendations and opinion that the internal systems of Stagsden Parish Council are effective.

That Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2016/2017 be signed confirming by saying yes to all questions that to the best of our knowledge and belief Stagsden Parish Council has a sound system of internal control.

(e) Asset Register

Councillors acknowledged the Asset Register 2016/2017, attached at Appendix G.

63/16 **Amenities**

(a) Play Areas

JB order pressure washing of rubber matting. JB

JB Check wood in play area. Consider new equipment part funded by Councillor funding 2017-2018.

(b) Rights of Way/Footpaths –No update

Footpath infrastructure – No update

(c) Highways

BBC repaired part of bridge but still some to do.

No plans for quiet road surface.

Mandy reported an issue with the pavement from High Street to the corner of Spring Lane. The path is very overgrown with moss which makes it slippery in the wet and the width is greatly reduced. Some of the problem is caused by the brambles overhanging the pavement from the field. Ashley agreed to speak with the people managing the field. AK

64/16 **NEW MATTERS FROM COUNCILLORS FOR DISCUSSION AT NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Conservation Areas.

65/16 **CORRESPONDENCE, APPENDIX H**

- Email from BBC Re naming of new development off High Street.

Councillors agreed by email that the name of the cul-de-sac development of 9 houses should be St Leonard's Close.

- Email from BBC confirming that the request for street name plates for Hay Lane came from the industrial units on this site.

- Bulky Waste Collection Sunday 21 May 2017

Corner of Oakcroft	1pm – 2pm
Spring Lane Junction Main Road	2pm – 3pm
Wick End Junction Main Road	3pm – 4pm

Advertised on noticeboards , website, social media.

- Orange sacks now available at Bromham Library and 11 Oakcroft, Stagsden

See Correspondence list attached, Appendix H.

66/16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Meeting closed at 9pm.
The next meeting will be held on **Monday 8 May 2017 (7.30pm).**

MINUTES AGREED: _____

Date: _____**2017**

APPENDIX A

CRIME STATISTICS

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS THEFTS NOT CLASSIFIED ELSEWHERE	08/2/2017 17:30	SPRING LANE STAGSDEN BEDFORD

APPENDIX B

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS Oct/Nov 2016

b/f	14125.83		
600.00		Stagsden Allotments	rent
980.00		BBC	Councillor funding for VH Fence
	600.00	JC Brown	rent for allotments 16/17
	24.00	Julie Betts	expenses
	755.62	Stagsden Village Hall	50% of insurance
	202.11	Bedford Borough Council	Salaries Feb 17
0.11		Nat west	interest
749.16		BATPC	Grant for transparency code
	350.00	Julie Betts	grant from transparency fund
	202.11	Bedford Borough council	Salaries Mar 17
	4.50	Bromham PC	Printing
0.53		Nat West	Interest
	200.00	Historical Society	Donation as per budget
2329.27	2138.34		
c/f	14,317.29		

APPENDIX C

Update as at 20.3.17	Budget	Actual
Receipts		
Interest	0	4.34
Precept	7950	8200
Precept top up grant	45	0
Grants	0	4509.16
Allotments	600	600
Total Receipts	8595	13313.5
Payments		
Election Costs	500	0
Staff costs (Salary/Expenses)	3250	2855.32
Admin (Stationery & Postage)	210	47.5
Councillor expenses	100	
Training	100	0
Subscriptions	90	90
Hall Hire	100	84
Village Hall	750	755.62
Grass Cut	700	400
S137/Community Action	250	150
Allotments	600	600
Bank Charges	0	25
Legal Fees	0	0
Audit	100	135
Insurance	600	627.92
Play Areas	785	0
Open Space	0	0
Maintenance of village furniture	110	4
Defibrillator	150	0
Good Neighbour Scheme	0	
Stagsden Historical Society	200	200
Councillor grants	0	350
Neighbourhood Planning		2780
Total Payments	8595	9104.36

APPENDIX D

Grants received 2016-2017

Date	From	type	for	£
Dec-16	BBC Cllr funding	Councillor Funding	VH Fence	£980
May-16	Groundworks	Neighbourhood Planning	Plan	2780
Feb-17	BATPC	Transparency Fund	Computer	749.16
				£4,509

APPENDIX E

Report on the Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Mandy Jauncey
Julie Betts
1 March 2017

Councillors considered the Councils internal controls, the previous years Internal Auditor's Report and the Risk Assessment Document.**Internal Controls:**	**Comment**	**Action**
Proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	Yes	None
Recording in the minutes of powers under which expenditure is being approved	Yes listed in minutes	None
Regular returns to HM Revenue and Customs	Financial Regulations 2.1 Return done yearly, unless large amount spent then more regularly.	None
Contracts of employment for all staff annually reviewed by the Council, systems of updating records for any changes in relevant legislation	Advice and updates from NALC/SLCC	Review 2017
Training of RFO in matters of VAT	Yes, Training Jan 2017	None
Regular Budget Monitoring	Yes reported regularly	None
Developing Systems of Performance Measurement/Appraisal	consider bi-annually	make appointment
Procedures for dealing with and monitoring grants or loans made and received	F&GP Budget Updates	None
Minutes properly numbered with master copy kept in safekeeping	Yes	None
Document procedures to deal with enquiries from the public	Yes Correspondence log	None
Documented procedures to deal with response to consultation requests	Yes	None
Procedures for document receipt, circulation, response, handling and filing	Yes	None
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members interest, Gifts and Hospitality received	Yes form available for Councillors	None
Adoption of codes of conduct for members and employees	Yes	None

Monitoring arrangements by the Council regarding Quality Council status	Consider 2018	2018

The meeting considered the two principal aspects of the review of internal audit to comply with standards and overall effectiveness :

1. Meeting Standards:			
Expected Standard	**Evidence of Achievement**	**Yes or No**	**Areas for development**
1. Scope of internal audit	Terms of reference for internal audit were drawn up and will be considered by Parish Council at their March meeting. Internal audit work takes into account both the council's risk assessment and wider internal control arrangements. Internal audit work covers the council's anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.	**Yes**	
2. Independence	Internal audit has direct access to those charged with governance (see Financial Regulations). Reports are made in own name to management. Internal audit does not have any other role within the council/board.	**Yes**	
3. Competence	There is no evidence of a failure to carry out internal audit work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.	**Yes**	
4. Relationships	All responsible officers (Clerk/RFO) are consulted on the internal audit plan. (Evidence is on audit files). Respective responsibilities for officers and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and corruption matters (job descriptions and engagement letter). The responsibilities of council members are understood; training of members is carried out as necessary. (See Member training plan).	**Yes**	
5 Audit Planning and reporting	The annual internal audit plan taking into account the risks facing the council and would be considered by the March Parish Council meeting	**Yes**	

2. Characteristics of Effectiveness			
Characteristics of 'effectiveness'	**Evidence of Achievement**	**Yes or No**	**Areas for development**
Internal audit work is planned	Planned internal audit work is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the council's needs.	**Yes**	
Understanding the whole organisation its needs and objectives	The annual audit plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance for the council's Annual Governance Statement.	**Yes**	
Be seen as a catalyst for change	Internal audit supports the council's work in delivering improved services to the community.	**Yes**	
Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives	The council makes positive responses to internal audit's recommendations and follows up with action where this is called for.	**Yes**	
Be forward looking	In formulating the annual audit plan, national agenda changes are considered. Internal audit maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.	**Yes**	
Be challenging	Internal audit focuses on the risks facing the council. Internal audit encourages managers/members to develop their own responses to risks, rather than relying solely on audit recommendations.	**Yes**	
Ensure the right resources are available	Adequate resource is made available for internal audit to complete its work. Internal audit understands the council	**Yes**	

Previous Internal Auditors Report			
No issues.			

Risk Assessment	Comment	Action
Risk Assessment reviewed	RA reviewed by Mandy Jauncey and Parish Council	

Summary & Recommendations

Review Contract of Employment
Start Appraisal System
Consider Applying for Quality Status 2018

Signed:

Mandy Jauncey

2 March 2017

APPENDIX F

STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

H=High M=Medium L=Low

Progress	Risk – Assets	Level	Controls
Done	Security & Safety of Assets, Updating Register, Insurance of Assets (play areas, multi-sport etc)	H	Administrative transactions are carried out by Parish Clerk except where indicated. Play area safety inspections are carried out annually and work carried out to eliminate risks identified. Visual inspections also undertaken by Clerk and Parish Councillors All play area are added to insurance policy Asset Register and insurance of assets updated regularly.
Done	Office Equipment – Computers, Copier, Phones, Furniture	M	None.
Done	All Street Furniture	M	Insurance cover arranged – New additions added to insurance and regularly inspected.
Done	Children's Play Equipment	H	Insurance cover arranged – New additions added to insurance
Done	Public Open Space/Play Area	H	Insurance cover arranged and regularly inspected. Individually risk assessed.
Area	**Risk – Financial**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Banking/Investments	H	Investments kept under regular review by the Committee and returns monitored. Risk is minimised by appropriate regard to investment limits and types of investment made.
Done	Risk of Consequential loss of income	M	Insurance cover arranged
Done	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty petty cash procedures	H	Insurance cover arranged. Fidelity Guarantee considered annually. Cash received is deposited once per week if required
Done	Financial controls and records	M	Financial Regulations approved. Monthly reconciliation of payments (cheque & direct debit) logged and reported to the Parish Council on a regular basis. Two signatories on cheques. Internal and external audit, review of effectiveness by Committee Representative.

Done	Comply with Customs and Excise Regulations	H	VAT claims calculated by Parish Clerk with Internal and External auditor to provide double check. VAT claimed annually.
Done	Budgeting to underline annual precept	M	Council receive detailed budgets in late autumn following detailed consideration by Clerk & Chairman (in accordance with Financial Regulations). Precept derived directly from this. Budget monitoring reports considered by Full Parish Council several times per year.
Area	**Risk – Third Party Liability**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Risk to third party, property or individuals	L	Insurance in place. Parks and Open Spaces checked regularly. Trees and faults investigated when damage reported. Risk assessments prepared for individual events as required.
Done	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership (especially playgrounds)	M	Insurance in place. Regular checks of playgrounds. Annual check of play areas undertaken by Independent Inspector. Individually risk assessed.
Area	**Risk – Employer Liability**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Comply with Employment Law	M	Membership of various national and regional bodies including Employees Organisation. Checked regularly for updates. Clerk is Member of NALC, BRCC, CPRE, BATPC Advisory Groups
Done	Comply with Inland Revenue requirements	M	Regular advice from NALC on payment scales. Salaries paid via Bedford Borough Council. Internal and External Auditors carry out annual checks.
Area	**Risk – Legal Liability**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	M	Parish Clerk to clarify legal position on any new proposal. Legal advice to be sought where necessary.
Done	Proper and timely reporting via the Minutes	M	Council meets regularly and always receives and approves Minutes of Meetings held. Minutes made available to press and public and via the web site.
Area	**Risk – Councillors Propriety**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Registers of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality in place	M	Register of interest completed and submitted to designated Monitoring Officer at Bedford Borough Council yearly and changes are advised when required.
Area	**Internal Audit**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Annual Internal Procedures and testing specific internal controls	M	Annual review by Committee.
Done	Review of Insurance cover	M	Annual review by Committee.

APPENDIX G

STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

ASSET REGISTER FOR 2016/17

Date Purchased	Item	Location	Cost
	4 Roadside seats		£809.75
2000	Village Sign		£3,665.40
	Litter/dog bins		£184.50
	Seat (1) wood and metal ends	MK Entrance to High Street	£488.93
	Seat (2) wood and metal ends	Centre near Browns	£500.00
	Seat (3) wood and metal ends	Wick End Turn	£500.00
	Seat (4) metal	Millenium	£1,000.00
	Noticeboard	Village Hall	£1,437.05
	2 Single Bay Notice Boards	High Street	£958.38
	VAS Sign		£5,995.75
	Various play equipment	Oakcroft Play Area	£13,004.69
	Cast Bronze plaque		£40.37
2011	Printer	Clerks Home	£50.00
18/10/2012	Hags Goro 1 Bay Swing	Oakcroft Play Area	£1,700.00
21/06/2012	Allotments Noticeboard	Allotments	£800.00
01/11/2013	Village Gates	Entrances to village	£1,000.00
	Play equipment, Zig Zag	Play Area	£850.00
01/02/2014	Salt Bin	West End Lane	£200.00
01/01/2015	Defibrillator	Stagsden Village Hall	£1,500.00
03/03/2016	Noticeboard	Stagsden Allotments	£1,300.00
		Total	£35,984.82

2013	£29,134.82
2014	£31,184.82
2015	£34,684.82
2016	£35,984.82
2017	£35,984.82

** Auditors need cost price, insurance need replacement price

APPENDIX H

Correspondence List

27.1.17	email	BBC Emily Spencer	street naming for cul de sac development High Street Stagsden	PC
16.2.17	email	Groundwork UK	end of year grant complete	AJ
14.2.17	email	BBC	Local plan 2035 next stage	PC
21.2.17	email	Kim Wilson, BBC	Additional site for call for sites for stagsden	PC/AJ
24.2.17	email	Sonia Gallagher,BBC	Wilhamsted Neighbourhood Area	PC
24.2.17	email	Harlequin Group	Proposed base station Dropshot Farm	PC, JB ack
24.2.17	email	BATPC	information sharing event on 28.3.17	PC
1.3.17	email	BATPC	Bugle attached	PC
10.3.17	email	BATPC	S137 £7.57	PC
10.3.17	email	Highways England	Stakeholder programme	PC
19.3.17	email	BBC Louise Akram	recycling sacks available at Bromham Library	PC
19.3.17	email	BATPC	Successful application for transparency grant	PC

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