



Minutes of the Studham Annual Parish Meeting

Held at

Studham Scout HQ, Clements End Rd, Studham, Dunstable LU6 2NG

on

Tuesday 30th April 2024 at 6.00pm

	<u>Parish Councillors Present:</u> Lola Harris (LH), Jane Jacoby (JJ), Jennifer Rushmer (JR), Chris Morrell (CM), & Jason Jackson (Jjk) <u>Also in attendance:</u> Clerk – Brian Mew (BM) Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Ward Councillor – Kevin Collins Bedfordshire Police – PC Asif Sabir 16 Members of the Public (MoP)
1.	WELCOME. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Lola Harris, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was an opportunity for the community to hear reports on community matters from the parish council, community groups, and other organisations.
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were noted from: Andrew Selous MP CBC Ward Councillor Vicky Malone Studham PC Councillors Rashid, Holliman
3.	The MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3RD APRIL 2023 were confirmed as a true and correct record.
4.	REPORT FROM STUDHAM PARISH COUNCIL Lola provided an introduction on the role of the parish council, the seven councillors and their individual portfolio areas, the council's meetings, and the availability of the council's agendas and minutes on the website and parish email. Lola reported on the last year and the year ahead on a few key topics: Planning The council is not the planning authority and the parish council's role as a statutory consultee is to review applications and submit comments to CBC. Last year, between April 2023 and March 2024, the Parish Council considered 42 planning applications, of which 8 concerned tree works to trees with Tree Preservation Orders and 4 related to Planning Appeals.

Finance

In 2023/24, total income was just over £25,000, just over £24,000 came from the Parish precept collected through the Council Tax bill. Expenditure was just under £32,000, higher than in previous years, largely as a result of a donation of £7,000 to the Sports and Social Club for a new Klargester. The Parish Council's balances remain healthy going into the new financial year at £25,500, a little above recommended levels and potentially providing some scope for projects in the coming year.

Administration

Administratively, the Parish Council has improved and updated its processes in recent years, and is currently looking at further improvements. All policies are reviewed on an annual basis. Councillors also recently attended an informal session with a number of our neighbouring parishes, which provided a very valuable opportunity to exchange ideas.

Defibrillators

The parish council manages the operation of 3 defibrillators which are supported by the Community Heartbeat Trust and a team of volunteers.

Highways and other Portfolio activities

Highways and issues such as fly tipping constitute a large part of day-to-day workload. CBC and other authorities are working resolve ongoing pothole issues at the junction of Pedley Hill and the B440. The Parish Council manages the salt bins around the village for use in icy weather, with the help of a team of volunteers.

Mobile Telephone Mast

In November, the Council received a presentation from Pegasus Consulting and Shared Access for the latest proposal of a mast sited in Whipsnade Zoo. The Council made representations to CBC in support of this proposal, and the latest application is now due to be determined by CBC in the next couple of weeks.

The Year Ahead

In January, the Parish Council set a precept of £26,000 for 2024/25, an increase that was required to keep pace with rising costs. Councillors have already attended a range of CBC seminars and briefing sessions on emerging CBC plans and strategies including Development of the Local Plan, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the Local Transport Plan. The Council will look to try and maximise external grant funding as far it can, with a particular focus on play facilities.

Lola thanked councillors and the clerk, and expressed thanks from the Parish Council to the wide range of community groups and organisations for the invaluable work they do in our community.

5. REPORTS OF LOCAL BODIES AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Chair read out a message from Andrew Selous MP

Brief reports and presentations were received from the following local bodies and community organisations:

Bedfordshire Police – PC Asif Sabir

PC Sabir reported that the Dunstable Community Policing Team was a dedicated team of 6 PCs and 4 PCSOs. 22 crimes were reported last year, compared with 29 crimes the previous year. PC Sabir provided a breakdown of crimes in the parish and commented that crime was probably underreported. Questions were asked regarding Neighbourhood Watch.

CBC Ward Councillor Kevin Collins

Kevin Collin gave an update and brief information about the role of a ward councillor. Caddington ward comprises 6 parishes and 8000 people, stretching from Hyde to Whipsnade . CBC had a large number of new councillors elected last May, and a new Executive and Leader. There had been more evening meetings and more Full Council consideration of issues. There had also been some changes in senior management, including highways. Kevin noted that there had been good parish council engagement on planning issues over the past year. Regarding the mobile phone mast, revised plans and drawings had been submitted and a decision was hoped for soon. Liaison between CBC & Dacorum BC / Hertfordshire CC councillors was taking place regarding road surface issues at the Pedley Hill / B440 junction. Kevin expressed his thanks to the Parish Council for their help and support.

Friends of Studham Common (FOSC) – Pam Rumfitt

FOSC had been founded in 1997. Monthly work parties took place on the third Saturday of each month. Work took included cutting back brambles, restoring hedgerow, etc. Unimproved grassland was a disappearing habitat. Pam referenced the Green Flag award, recent work with young people, various recent projects, and the monthly newsletter.

May Fair - Derek Spriggs

Derek provided an update on the May Fair, which was organised by a sub-committee of the St Marys Church committee. This years' fair was at the Playing Fields on 17th May and promotional work was underway.

Methodist Church – Linda Hillier

Linda provided a brief report on the group of churches and chapel, and provided details on activities such as Remembrance Day, Warm Hubs, Harvest Festival, and providing online access to services.

Neighbourhood Watch – Richard Hodge

Neighbourhood Watch restarted in 2016. 196 households were signed up and more involvement of households would be welcomed.. Much of the activity now involves warnings re: scams. Possibility of liaison with SKAW Good Neighbours re: vulnerable people was discussed.

Playing Fields and Sports and Social Club – Sally Thorne

Sally provided a brief history of the playing fields, cricket, tennis, football, and social clubs. There was a new website www.studhamssc.co.uk The football team had won a league cup and the cricket team liaised with Dunstable CC on player development. Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for the Klargester donation, which had cost £17.5k in total. The Klargester area would be seeded as a wildlife garden. Sally encouraged more use of facilities by the parish. There was a question re: potential provision of a footway from village by CBC. SPC and CBC would investigate further.

	Scouts Group – Paul Rushmer Paul gave brief presentation on the Scout Group, which had been formed in 1956. The new HQ had been completed in 1994. There were active cubs and scouts units, and a new explorer unit, with about 80 members in total. Fundraising and IT expertise would be welcome on the Trustee board. Thanks were extended to the May Fair for funding of the kitchen. Paul reported on the Longrove camp site new building, for which the group had raised £165k, including a parish council grant. This had extended use of the site including school usage for SEND and forest schools and other groups. Over the past year there had been over 3600 visitors in total. LH reported on the Scouts’ St. Georges Day parade. Studham, Kensworth, and Whipsnade Good Neighbours – James Gregory SKAW provided good neighbours support to vulnerable people, those with mobility and loneliness issues, etc. Good neighbour tasks included hospital visits, shopping trips, pet care etc., with the afternoon tea a highlight of last year. There was currently a focus on trying to recruit new volunteers. Village Hall Trustees – Des Salmon Des provided some background on the Village Hall and a brief update on plans to rebuild. Des appealed for more potential trustees to come forward. Income came from lettings and there were a wide range of activities A Games club afternoon would be introduced from 20th May. Des referenced parish and lottery funding and noted that the VH was facing some cost increases. The next AGM was Friday 26th July 2024 at 7.30pm. Women’s Institute – Fiona Desmond Studham WI was the oldest organisation in Studham and would be celebrating its 106th anniversary. There were a range of activities, talks, and monthly meetings at the VH. Members ranged from 30s to 90s in age. St. Marys Church – Rev. Nicola Lenthall, Meg Bender Nicola expressed thanks to the parish council and was honoured to be serving the communities of SKAW. There were services every Sunday, and other services included Holy days, Harvest, Festival, Remembrance Sunday, and the annual remembrance service, etc. Nicola worked in schools and on governing bodies and provided individual support. Meg was Churchwarden for the Studham Parochial Church Council (SPCC). SPCC volunteers opened and closed the church, set services etc. There were quinquennial inspections and routine maintenance, and Wi fi had been installed. The Churchyard continued to be open for burials and was a valuable amenity area and habitat for wildflowers. etc Thank were expressed to the parish council for the donation for upkeep. There was a question re D Day 80th commemoration.
	The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 8.05pm.