



Minutes of the Studham Annual Parish Meeting

Held at

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

on

Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 6.00pm

	<u>Parish Councillors Present:</u> Lola Harris (LH), Jennifer Rushmer (JR), Chris Morrell (CM), Sue Holliman (SH), Mo Rashid (MR) Tejinder Dhaliwal (TD) Jason Jackson (Jjk) <u>Also in attendance:</u> Clerk – Brian Mew (BM) Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Ward Councillor – Kevin Collins 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: Rachel Hopkins MP CBC Ward Councillor - Vicky Malone Bedfordshire Police – PC Leah Barron Neighbourhood Watch – Richard Hodge and Mandy Roberts SKAW Good Neighbours – Michael Pittam Parish Link – Fiona Mc Dougal Studham Sports and Social Club – Mark Horton and Mike Bailey Studham Methodist Church – Linda Hillier
3.	The MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH MAY 2025 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 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. There is currently one vacancy on the Parish Council, and application forms and further information can be obtained from the Clerk. The email address for all councillors is the Clerk email address, and the Clerk also deals with website and Parish email queries. Planning Considering and reviewing Planning applications in the Parish forms a large part of each meeting. Central Bedfordshire Council ("CBC") is the Planning Authority and determines all planning applications – the Parish Council does not decide any applications. In most cases, the Parish Council is a Statutory Consultee for planning applications in the parish, which means that CBC must take our comments into account when considering applications but doesn't necessarily have to follow them. The parish council's role is to review applications in the light of local knowledge and any feedback from residents and submit our comments to CBC. In some cases, the Parish Council may comment on applications in neighbouring parishes where it is not a statutory consultee, but where the application is of significance to the parish. Last year, between April 2024 and March 2025, the Parish Council considered 39 planning applications, of which 7 concerned tree works and 3 related to Planning Appeals.
	Neighbourhood Plan During the year, the Parish Council and appointed consultants have been working on formulating a Neighbourhood Plan, which would sit alongside the CBC Local Plan and help govern the planning and development process for the parish going forward. The next stages of the process will involve extensive consultation in the parish, hopefully leading to a finalized plan and referendum. by the end of the year. This work has primarily been funded by a one-off grant from the Government and some use of parish council reserves.
	Finance In 2025/26, total income was nearly £30,000, with £28,000 from the Parish precept collected through the Council Tax bill. Expenditure was nearly £24,000, including spend of over £9,600 on Neighbourhood Planning. The Parish Council's balances remain healthy going into the new financial year at just over £34,000. This is above recommended levels for a parish of our size but planned spend on the costs of the Neighbourhood Plan will reduce this to recommended levels.
	Defibrillators The parish council manages the operation of our 3 defibrillators which are supported by the Community Heartbeat Trust.
	Highways and other Portfolio activities Problems associated with highways and issues such as fly tipping and potholes constitute a large part of day-to-day workload, and the Parish Council manages the salt bins around the village for use in icy weather, with the help of a team of volunteers.
	Community Payback The Parish Council has continued to engage with the Probation Service to enable Community Payback teams to undertake much needed work in the parish, including notice board, bench, and church yard maintenance. It is hoped that these work team assignments will continue, enabling other issues such as footpath and bridleway maintenance to be tackled, at the same time as providing valuable work experience for participants. Thanks to St Mary's Church for their support of this initiative.
	The Year Ahead Precept In January, the Parish Council set a precept of £29,998 for 2026/27, an increase that was required to keep pace with rising costs and maintain the Council's balances at recommended levels after further work is progressed on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Thanks As well as thanks to individual councillors, thanks are due from the Parish Council to the wide range of community groups and organisations in the for the invaluable work they do in our community.

5.	REPORTS OF LOCAL BODIES AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS Brief reports and presentations were received from the following local bodies and community organisations: CBC Ward Councillor Kevin Collins Kevin gave a brief overview of the past year at CBC. Politically and managerially, the last year had been more settled at CBC. Kevin and Vicky Malone were Chair and Vice Chair respectively. A consensus had ultimately been reached on the Budget. Significant budget challenges had led to some impacts on services but progress was being made on achieving savings. Kevin thanked the community and the parish council for their support. Scouts Group – Paul Rushmer Paul gave a brief presentation on the activities of the Scouts’ groups this year. The last year had seen growth in membership, and there were currently 16 Beavers, 22 Cubs, 22 Scouts, and 29 Explorers. Paul reported that the Longrove camp now received over 3500 visitors per year. Extensive tree works had been needed to the site and 50 trees had been felled under felling permits. Studham, Kensworth, and Whipsnade Good Neighbours – Becky Salisbury SKAW had provided a brief written report on their good neighbours’ support to vulnerable people, those with mobility and loneliness issues, etc. St. Marys Church – Rev. Canon Nicola Lenthall Nicola was honoured to have been serving the communities of SKAW for 24 years, caring for the church and providing support and stability to the whole community. The church was due for its quinquennial architects’ inspection next year, and Nicola noted that the church was due to move to electric heating. Nicola spoke about the Church’s activities including the Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday, Easter services, Christmas services, and ongoing activities such as foodbank collections and the choir. Nicola thanked the churchyard volunteers, churchwarden Meg Bender, the Scouts, the parish council and all local groups and volunteers for their support. May Fair – Chris Morrell Chris provided an update on the successful May Fair held last Saturday. Chris noted that particular highlights were the brass band, ukuleles, and maypole dancing, and thanked the organising committee and all attendees. Friends of Studham Common (FOSC) – Bob Wilkin Bob reported that 11 work parties took place each year, generally on the third Saturday of each month, including some work with guest volunteers from the Chiltern Society. There was a 5 year CBC plan for the Common and the Greensand Trust provided a monitoring role ensuring that Green Flag status was maintained. Dormice monitoring was one of the activities carried out.
6.	OPEN FORUM The open forum was an opportunity for residents to discuss matters of interest. MoP raised concerns over children being approached in Church Road near the school and asked whether CCTV could be considered for this area. KC would check legal position with CBC. A number of MoPs raised concerns regarding potholes, e.g. Pedley Hill, highways issues, and flytipping. A particular concern was CBC responses through the FixMyStreet system and the closure of reported issues even though they remained a problem. Questions were also raised regarding transparency of the criteria for fixing, a problem of contractors not undertaking full repairs, and reducing service standards. CM noted on grasscutting that the number of annual cuts had been reduced from 14 to less than 8. KM advised that FixMyStreet reports should be copied to Councillor Malone, and would also obtain responses to some of these points.
	The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 7.16pm.

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