

## **STAPLEFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

### **MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022 IN THE JUBILEE PAVILION AND COMMENCED AT 7.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Gillian Pett (Chairman), Cllr Jenny Flynn, Cllr Michael Gatward, Cllr Barbara Kettel, Cllr Howard Kettel, Cllr David Pepperell.  
Stapleford Parish Council Clerk: Belinda Irons - Minutes  
South Cambs District Cllr Peter Fane  
Cambridgeshire County Cllr Brian Milne

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were 10 members of the public present

**APOLOGIES:** SCDC Cllr Nick Sample

1. Chairman's Welcome and Report

We have lost 4 councillors this year – Charlie Nightingale, Colin Greenhalgh, Paul McPhater and Jez Raphael – and we thank them all for their valuable contribution. Thank you to all the present councillors for their continuing commitment to the village. We should have 11 councillors and now have only 6, increasing to 7 after May 5th, which is barely sufficient to function adequately. We are all volunteers.

In spite of being such a small number, we have worked hard. Notable achievements have been the completion of the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area), which is now well used for tennis and netball. It is available for hire for other sports such as football and basketball. The shed has been refurbished with improved storage for sports teams. The play equipment in the children's playground has been replaced making it a more adventurous area for children to play in safely. Work has been carried out in the cemetery to make the area safe. The council has also been very active in its objection to GCP's (Greater Cambridge Partnership) plan for a busway through greenbelt in the village and has joined a coordinated response with surrounding villages to object to the destruction of valuable greenbelt without benefit for the environment and the village. The Neighbourhood Plan is being revitalised to be a driver for local identity, with a shared vision and recognition of the needs of the villages. The ownership of the Parish Pit (an old chalk quarry and now a nature reserve for the benefit of the village) has been transferred to the Magog Trust. A well attended Eco Evening has focused the Parish Council's attention on care of the environment, with bird and bat boxes being one of the projects resulting from it. It is intended to take forward some of the suggestions made at that evening.

The Parish Council has representatives on the Feoffees and the Village Hall Estate Fund, both organisations which can fund individuals or groups needing financial support. We also have a representative on the recently formed OASISS (Open Arms in Shelfords/Stapleford) welcoming Ukrainian refugees to the villages.

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The pavilion continues to be used for village functions, with restrictions on use now lifted. Advertisement for a caretaker/village handyman did not receive the response required so your councillors have voluntarily assumed responsibility for small maintenance tasks, restocking the pavilion, putting out rubbish bins, checking the bus shelter and defibrillator, litter picking, occasional weeding, etc. The list of these tasks goes on. We would welcome help from anyone able to give it. Your Parish Councillors cannot do everything. If you notice something that needs doing, you are more than welcome to volunteer help.

Plans for next year are to continue to oppose the busway through legal representation and we are grateful for public support. We aim to reconfigure and improve the pavilion so that is more suitable for current use; plant trees for the Queen's Jubilee; and work on the vision of a community orchard in the Slaughter House garden and/or establish the far end of the new cemetery with a wild flower meadow. More councillors are needed so we can move these improvements to the village forward as well as managing routine matters. However, we cannot do all these things at once because of funding and time constraints, as well our small number of councillors. Please consider putting yourself forward to join us. We are just like you, villagers helping to do the best for the village and make it a pleasant place to live. No special expertise is needed, although there are training sessions to help new councillors understand how local government works. A diverse range of skills and abilities makes for a well functioning Parish Council.

A representative of SSYI gave a presentation to the Annual Parish meeting about the work being done with young people aged 11 to 18 in the local villages. The Covid lockdowns have proved detrimental to the health and well-being of our young people, and there are well-attended groups in the refurbished youth centre in Shelford every day, as well as opportunities for 1:1 emotional and mental health support, and rebuilding of social skills.

Annual reports from most village clubs and societies are available on the Parish Council website. Sadly, no reports have been received from the sports clubs.

*Cllr Gillian Pett, April 2022*

## 2. South Cambs District Councillors reports

### **Update on the Business Plan April 2022**

This report gives an update on the actions of SCDC in 2021/22, and plans for the next financial year under each of the council's four priorities:

1. Growing local businesses and economies
2. Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in

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3. Being green to our core
4. A modern and caring council.

### **1. Growing local businesses and economies**

*We will support businesses of all sizes, including rural enterprise and farming, to help create new jobs and opportunities near to where people live and support the local economy to recover post-pandemic.*

Actions and achievements of South Cambs District Council over 2021-22 in this area include:

- Increasing the reach of the *Open for Business* Newsletter to over 2,000 businesses and '*On Your Doorstep*' social media campaign to promote and support local businesses throughout the pandemic
- Launched a *Visit South Cambridgeshire* brand to support and promote retail, tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses
- Our High Street Support Officer teams visited over 2,000 businesses face to face since the onset of the pandemic and worked with partners to provide support and advice to over 100 businesses
- Developed a fund that supported innovations and start-ups as we start a green post pandemic recovery phase. Over 100 businesses in South Cambs were awarded a pot of £1.383m.

Over the coming year, 2022-23, SCDC priorities include:

- Support Businesses post COVID with to help them to adapt and grow
- Develop a skills and training package to assist career enhancement, and ensure that re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities are widely known and accessible.
- Deliver support to start-ups and small businesses to help them set up and expand, create new local jobs and deal with the new requirements of post-Brexit trade
- Promote SCDC as a vibrant, attractive and commercially welcoming place in which to launch and scale businesses, focusing on Enterprise Zone development
- Continue to deliver on our Investment Strategy to ensure positive local Economic Development and growth outcomes

Ongoing objectives into 2022-23 will include:

- Working with parish councils and village-based businesses to support local economies. This will include helping to establish new local markets, and offering advice and support to local businesses
- Encouraging residents to use their local shops and food outlets so that high streets remain viable and local, independent businesses are championed.
- Maintaining and extending marketing campaigns such as *#On your Doorstep* and *Visit South Cambs - best days out and weekends away in Cambridgeshire* to support and promote local commerce
- Continue to work with the CPCA encourage Inward investment into our region
- Provide a voice and advocacy for South Cambridgeshire businesses with wider partners and networks (including through the Joint Local Plan) and ensure the District is adequately represented in key economic policy/decision-making initiatives

## **2. Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in**

*We will build vibrant communities in locations where people have good access to facilities and transport links, so they can genuinely afford to lead a healthy life.*

Actions and achievements of South Cambs District Council over 2021/22 include:

- Completed 47 new Council homes in 2020/21 and remain on track to deliver at least 60 homes in the current year, signing contracts to deliver over 100 new Council homes
- Invested over £1.5 million in our Council houses to make them more energy efficient
- Supported around 1,000 people on benefits who moved to Universal Credit, including providing funding for a coach to help people into work
- Played an active role in national schemes to rehouse refugees
- Agreed a Homeless Strategy to target support to those in the greatest need
- Implemented a new Resident Involvement Framework, including improved communications with DC tenants
- Published the First Proposals for the Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan for consultation setting out where new homes and jobs will take place
- Granted outline planning permission for the first phase of a new town north of Waterbeach and detailed planning guidance for a new village at Bourn Airfield

Over the coming year, 2022-23, our priorities will include:

- Increase the number of Council homes each year to support people on lower incomes. These will include high energy standards and renewable energy.
- Work with local people to set out where and how new homes and communities will be built across the Greater Cambridge area
- Improve the energy efficiency of existing Council housing to reduce carbon impact and running costs
- Support the delivery of more affordable housing – seeking external funding wherever possible
- Promote Neighbourhood Plans
- Work with national and local partners to support the needs of refugees

## **3. Being green to our core**

*We will create a cleaner, greener and zero-carbon future for our communities.*

Actions and achievements of South Cambs District Council over 2021/22 include:

- First phase of installation of LED fittings in all council owned streetlights to be completed by March 2022 and 60% reduction in energy consumption of streetlighting for Parish Councils
- Delivered a third round of funding through our Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme, awarding grants totalling £100,000 to community-based projects; strengthening the Zero Carbon Network through a programme of workshops, web-based resources and e-bulletins
- An anti-fly tipping campaign that reached over 40,000 people and resulted in significant increase in reported incidents and increased tonnages of waste collected

Chairman's signature..... 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022

- Improved the way we plan our street sweeping and introduced a system so residents know when we will be coming to their area
- Introduced the first one electric bin lorry and two small electric vans into the fleet
- Installed 4 additional charge points for staff/visitors at Waterbeach depot
- Over 70 applications were received from parish councils for the 6 Free Trees scheme for 2022
- Published First Proposals Local Plan setting out ambitious targets for reduced water usage, building in climate resilience, supporting low carbon development options and highlighting opportunities for strategic scale landscape and biodiversity enrichment.
- Undertaken trials of weekly separate food waste collection

Over the coming year, 2022-23, our priorities will include:

- Working towards a zero-carbon future by 2050
- Work with partners to protect and enhance the environment with the aim of doubling nature
- Retrofit our Council Commercial Property including South Cambs Hall with renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures
- Continue to transition to electric vehicles for the waste service, including the investigation of on-site solar panel energy generation
- Support Parish Council and community group projects to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, move toward the zero-carbon target and help Double Nature through habitat enhancement, advisory support for community land acquisition, local green space designation and tree-planting
- Complete the upgrade our stock of 1,800 streetlights to LED, which will reduce energy consumption and save Parish Councils money
- Implement the new Air Quality Strategy, monitoring air pollution and reducing air quality impacts from future developments
- Improve recycling and reduce waste at community events
- Reduce the amount of non-recyclable (black bin) household waste collected

Ongoing objectives into 2022-23:

- Promote walking, cycling and public transport improvements through planning decisions and by working with local communities and partners
- Influence the planning of new major transport routes, such as the proposed East West rail line, to ensure the environment is fully considered and a net gain to natural capital is delivered where possible
- Support homeowners to upgrade the environmental performance of historic buildings
- Promote effective implementation of supplementary planning guidance supporting low carbon developments
- Work with communities and partners to deter fly-tipping, particularly at locations where it happens frequently
- Encourage the expansion of electric vehicle charging points and explore the provision of electric vehicle charging points in sheltered housing schemes

#### **4. A modern and caring council**

Chairman's signature..... 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022

*We will provide our customers with high-quality services, strive to reduce costs, build on what we are good at to generate our own income and make decisions in a transparent, open and inclusive way.*

Actions and achievements of South Cambs District Council over 2021-22 include:

- Achieved Level 1 and 2 of the Disability confident standard
- 7 new Mobile warden schemes delivered
- Updated and published the council's Equality Scheme
- Apprenticeship Strategy reviewed and strengthened
- Launched a new toolkit to help communities take forward Community Led Plans to address the issues they feel are important to them as we recover from the pandemic
- Worked with 13 areas of the district that have been more prone to flooding to help create local flood plans

Over the coming year, 2022-23, our priorities will include:

- Generate income through delivering the Council's investment strategy
- Make it easier for customers to access and carry out transactions online
- Council and committee meetings will be run paper-free wherever possible

Ongoing objectives into 2022-23 will include:

- Expand Council commercial services
- Continue to work with public sector partners and a network of parish councils and voluntary groups to support businesses throughout the response phases of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr Fane took questions from the audience:

Cllr Pepperell commented there are only 5 parishes out of some 60 which will have elections. Stapleford and Shelford will not have elections and those standing will be elected unopposed. There is apathy in the villages. The Annual Meeting used to get high attendance, but not now. Will there be an election for the District Council seats?

PF: yes, District will be contested. All nominations have been published, and all 45 seats will be contested. Sawston PC will not be contested, with only 12 standing for 19 seats.

A vote of thanks was extended to Cllr Flynn for the Messenger advertisement.

### 3. SPC Annual Accounts Report

The Clerks salaries remain the biggest financial commitment the Parish Council has. The post of Caretaker was made redundant due to Covid and the resultant Government lockdowns which halted income from the pavilion. The Assistant Clerk deals solely with funerals and headstone applications following staff restructuring. Stapleford Parish Council has utilised the Section 106 account to provide the MUGA, refurbish the playground, renovate the sports shed, and commence initial consideration of the refurbishment of the pavilion, with provision of public toilets a key consideration which was one of the findings of the public survey.

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A vote of thanks is extended to Cllr Gillian Pett and the playground committee which raised £55,710.77 in grant funding which provided the majority of funds for the playground refurbishment, thus reducing the impact on the public purse.

A vote of thanks is also extended to former Cllr Paul McPhater for his delivery of the MUGA which was a considerable achievement for the community.

Shown below is the summary of the Section 106 expenditure:

Brought forward:	£277,028.02
All weather cricket strip:	£7,995.00
MUGA	£95,411.77
Playground	£33,163.54
Shed:	£44,924.91
Art Installation	£25,000 (Ring Fenced)
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE:</b>	<b>£70,532.80</b>

CSET has been a major consideration for the Parish Council. It has received substantial public support for its opposition, with £3,750 public funding helping the Parish Council press the GCP reconsider its position.

SSYI has received ongoing financial support. The Warden Scheme also received support, and also received the transferred fund from The Tree Community Group.

Grounds maintenance is a major expenditure which can be seen from the accompanying spreadsheet. Total grounds maintenance costs are £13,540.71.

The Public Works Loan will finish this financial year.

The Pavilion is also a major expenditure. However, it also brings in a substantial amount from hire.

Total income was £23,311.50. Each hirer is required to provide a £200 refundable deposit. £3,800 was refunded from total income. Total expenditure was £13,481.27. Deduction of refunded deposits, utility charges and maintenance cost provided a total income of £6,030.23. This figure does not include any Clerk costs. Bookings are going well, with £12,700 income from our regular hirers, and approximately £7,000 net from ad hoc hire.

The Neighbourhood Plan finances will be managed by Gt Shelford PC. The outstanding balance of grant funding has been transferred from Stapleford PC.

#### 4. CSET Busway update and public discussion

Cllr H Kettel expressed gratitude to the village for its passionate opposition to building in the Green Belt countryside. The proposed busway does not follow the best route. There is a very real risk of infill development should it go ahead. The decision to build on Cambridgeshire's best countryside was considered extraordinary. The redevelopment of the A1307 could deliver the same benefit. Both District and County Councillors are up to speed on this issue and conversations are ongoing. A vote of thanks was extended to Councillors for their support.

Cllr H Kettel further commented that the Cambridge Independent had been very supportive of the campaign. 26 people attended a photo shoot within 24 hours of it being requested. The Cambridge Independent had faithfully reproduced the letters from the Parish Councils asking the GCP to rethink its position. Great Shelford PC had written one of the best letters ever seen setting out the reasons to halt the project and reconsider. The GCP had not acknowledged or responded to it. The

GCP is an unelected, undemocratic organisation. The Parish Councils are seeking open and transparent dialogue. There are many opportunities to improve the scheme but the GCP is not listening to reasoned argument. The only option now is voting at the ballot box.

Further information is available on the 'Betterways than Busways' Twitter feed.

Cllr Pepperell commented that the top political parties are not supporting communities. It is difficult to know who to vote for, given the past history of promises made on the doorstep but not followed through once elected. The Parishes are not being listened to.

Mrs Elsbury asked, of the 6,500 leaflets distributed, what proportion expressed as 77% against (the busway) did the statistic relate to against the actual number of total votes made? Statistics are hard to assess. Cllr H Kettel responded that the GCP consultation was multiple choice, with 2 schemes very similar schemes which split the vote. The GCP then claimed that the current route had public support. Anthony Browne MP had more than 2,000 responses to his consultation with 81% strongly or probably opposed to the current busway route.

Cllr Fane commented that all 3 parties standing are agreed and broadly supportive of an alternative to the current route. All Transport and Environment groups also agree. The GCP is not democratic. The Mayor has no vote. The GCP has been committed to the current route for the past 7 years. There is general agreement that the current route is unlikely to succeed as the cost/benefit ratio is already negative. The route will need to be amended as a direct result of the Axis retirement village granted planning permission on the route. The Transport Plan is due to be published in the summer and the GCP cannot ignore it. A cheaper route is more beneficial.

Cllr Fane further commented that the extensive amount of work undertaken by Cllr H Kettel cannot be underestimated, and he offered his personal thanks to Cllr H Kettel.

Cllr Flynn advised that a TV celebrity will be making a video about CSET and Cambridge Past Present and Future, from the Wandlebury/ Gog Magog vantage points.

Cllr H Kettel commented that there is a perception that GCP officers have the ear of Cabinet. The officers would appear to have a vested interest in the outcome. There are frequent changes of Chairman which means officers are running the project. Elected Members need to be challenged to get a grip on the situation given the extreme reluctance from officers to change course.

5. Neighbourhood Plan report: Cllr Flynn:

Gt Shelford and Stapleford Parish Councils are producing a joint Neighbourhood Plan, which, given the joined boundaries and close associations, is more beneficial to the community. All residents, those owning property or working in the parishes are able to shape planning preferences and policies. The committee is formed of Parish Councillors and residents. It is an epic piece of work. The first stage is completed and will go to consultation shortly, via an online and hard copy questionnaire to coincide

with the official opening of the playground. Information will be collated on what peoples priorities are, including green space access, travel and transport, development, and also what concerns them. The results will shape the direction of the Neighbourhood Plan. More detailed surveys will follow. There will be monthly updates in the Messenger and on Facebook. All comments are valuable and those present were urged to respond.

Cllr Pepperell commented that affordable housing is a major issue. The current practice of demolishing bungalows and building million pound houses on the sites means local people cannot afford to live here.

Cllr B Kettel commented that whilst the Parish Council can make recommendations as a statutory consultee, it does not take the decision. Every member of the community has the opportunity to make their own comments and contribute to the process. The Parish Council has no mechanism to prevent development.

Cllr Fane agreed with Councillors comments. Any development of less than 10 dwellings does not attract affordable contributions.

Cllr Pepperell questioned whether they were truly affordable.

Cllr Fane commented that the Housing Needs Survey results showed a need for 100 affordable homes in Gt Shelford, and 30 in Stapleford. The Housing Needs Survey needs to be updated. Whilst Gt Shelford had made some progress, the total number of affordable homes needed had not been met. The focus for these needed to be on what is classed as 'exception' sites, where development would not ordinarily be approved which can include Green Belt.

Cllr B Kettel commented that only large developments are required to supply affordable units, and both villages are short of space to build on. Affordable homes need to be secured in perpetuity, an example of which are Alms homes. The parishes do not want affordable units to be rescinded.

Cllr Pepperell commented that the land behind Mingle Lane owned by the Diocese had the potential to be an exception site.

6. Parish Organisation reports: (available on the SPC website)

SSYI: Tilly represented SSYI at the meeting, and provided an informative presentation, explaining that the lockdowns had impacted the mental and physical health of young people which necessitated one to one work with the additional support provided by schools.

Behaviour had been adversely affected by lockdown, where previously it had been very good.

Covid has affected the teaching system with many teachers off sick, resulting in schools offering academic training only. Emotional and mental needs are now not as supported as previously, and SSYI are trying to bridge the gap. Whilst they are not trained counsellors, they are doing as much as they can as a listening and support service, signposting for referral to professional

services. There are no fast track mechanisms, so SSYI is providing stop gap support.

The new Shelford centre is excellent, and the numbers attending are expanding, with youngsters coming from Whittlesford and Duxford as well as Shelford and Stapleford.

Cllr Flynn suggested SSYI contact Granta Medical, Sawston, as it has a person responsible for signposting to professional services.

Tilly offered a vote of thanks to the Parish Council for its ongoing support of SSYI.

Village Hall Estates: a representative commented that it has funds available for applications from individuals and organisations. The only application received recently was for funding for the Cox's Close Christmas Party.

7. Public Discussion: any other matters

Slaughterhouse and Gardens: work is needed on these important village assets.

Complaints against the Parish Council: A parishioner who stated that she was one of 5 former Parish Councillors present in the audience commented:

1. The Parish Council doesn't know what is happening in the village: the 'grass roots' are missing
2. Communications: The Parish Council does not advertise enough
3. Focus: the focus of the Parish Council needs to change – more people need to be involved. Where are the young people?
4. Consultation: The Parish Council is taking decisions without consulting the community. The Chairman responded that public consultation has taken place specifically about the environment at the Eco meeting. The meeting was very well attended and tree planting was one of the many issues discussed.
5. Slaughterhouse Garden: any orchard will need to be maintained and the site isn't big enough for an orchard; the Millennium Stone needs enhancement; the Villedomer Garden is maintained by Twinning volunteers but the borders need Parish Council attention
6. The Parish Council minutes don't say what the parishioner wants to know.

Cllr H Kettel advised that minutes are not verbatim but record the decisions made by the Parish Council. Communications are the best they have ever been with lengthy articles in the Messenger, and Facebook posts. There is a real effort to communicate which is challenging given the deadlines it has to achieve. Cllr H Kettel applauded the Chairman for her proactive position, and applauded the progress the Parish Council has achieved.

Clerk's Piece: Whilst Cllr Gatward's reports are well received, Clerk's Piece is not mentioned. Volunteers have previously carried out extensive work which is not recognised. Cllr Gatward responded that Clerk's Piece is being considered as part of an overall ecological improvement process, but it is a

difficult balancing act to provide what parishioners want with the small number of Councillors working on projects.

Cllr Flynn asked if those present would assist the Parish Council in bringing projects forward? Councillors spend many hours working on behalf of the community. The Slaughterhouse is a big project. The Parish Council could increase the precept and get a professional to do all the work. The Councillors are overwhelmed, given there are 11 seats and only 6 Councillors.

A member of the audience responded that those present have done their bit, and young people need to come forward and do more.

Cllr B Kettel responded that we do need younger people to be involved but they either don't know or are not interested in Local Government. She commented that she has been involved in raising the profile of Local Government in secondary schools and colleges, but Sawston Village College did not see a need for her to visit, even though they have the same curriculum as all other Cambridgeshire educational establishments. She hoped that the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire would bring views forward and improve the village. The current perception is that Stapleford is a dormitory village with people coming here to sleep, but not to engage in community activities.

A parishioner recommended that the Parish Council finds a way to engage parents through the children, so the Parish Council should involve the children to reach the parents. Cllr Flynn commented that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will be liaising with parents using parent mail. Cllr Gatward commented children will be encouraged to become involved at the Village Weekend with eco craft stalls.

Highways: roads and footways are in a poor state of repair and are a particular risk to cyclists. Hedges are overgrown and impede progress. Cambridgeshire County Cllr Brian Milne responded that the Highways Board are re-evaluating contracts and operational parameters with a new scanning system able to pinpoint defects before they emerge.

*Meeting closed at 8.23pm*