



Stanway

Parish Council

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**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH FORUM
Held on Tuesday, 23rd March 2023 at 7.00pm
VICTORY HALL, VILLA ROAD, STANWAY**

1. Attendance and Chair's Welcome

The following Councillors were in attendance: Cllrs D Bloomfield, J Cotter, D Jordan, J Norton, and J Spademan.

Also in attendance were Donna Tristram, Clerk, Amanda Ward, Deputy Clerk and Barry Cooper, Maintenance Worker.

There were 14 members of the Public present.

Cllr D Bloomfield welcomed those present to the Annual Parish Forum.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr D Chambers.

RESOLVED to accept the Councillor apologies.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Forum held on Tuesday 12th May 2022: APPROVED.

RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Forum of the 12th of May 2022.

4. Report from the Chair on the work of the Council:

Good evening and welcome all to our Annual Parish Forum.

In the last year your Parish Council has completed various projects including the upgrading of our two play areas at Silver Witch Green and Lucy Lane South. Holding a very successful Platinum Jubilee event for the late Queen Elizabeth II, which saw the community of Stanway come together for this once in a lifetime anniversary. The annual Quiz Night was held in November proving as popular as ever and the Community Services Committee is hoping to hold another on this November. The New Year brought the Children's Disco by DJ Karl Buzby who did a fantastic job keeping everyone dancing all afternoon with parents joining in as well. The children went home happy and tired, and I imagine some parents were worn out too.

The Council is keen to respond to recent, understandable concerns about the precept increase of 19.4%. The Council would like to assure residents that this increase was discussed at length over several months and during public meetings before the final budget was approved. A local council must comply with robust processes laid out in statute, under sections S41 and S49A of the Local Government Act, 1972 when setting their budget ie., the precept must add up all its anticipated revenue expenditure, its deficit from previous years and appropriate amounts for contingencies and reserves. From that it must deduct income from other sources and whatever it deems appropriate to fund from reserves. The balance of that calculation is the precept.

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In previous years, the reserves held against that of its peers in size ie., West Mersea, Tiptree and Wivenhoe were depleted as the Council strove to limit precept increases. To this end, our precept is still less expensive than these neighbouring parishes. This year's budget considers the increase in inflation and supply costs, but also looks to build reserves back up to where they need to be. Last year, the Council spent more on grounds maintenance with the increase in fuel and inflation, suffered unanticipated storm damage and vandalism, installed further playground equipment and disability access at Silver Witch Green Park and agreed to take ownership of Lucy Lane South and Silver Witch Green parks for the community of Stanway. All these factors meant that the decision had to be made to ensure the Council's finances were robust moving forward as for some years the Council did not have the funds to develop the parks or provide the community engagement it has been working hard to do over the last couple of years. This budget also reflects the position of the Council wanting reserves to ensure it can react to any changes/additions of assets which may be realised in the near future.

As a public body, the Council is very keen to promote resident engagement and welcomes all residents to its full council and committee meetings. The details of which can be found on our website www.stanwaypc.org.uk. The full budget can also be viewed on this portal. We are also keen to welcome new councillors who will be able to assist with our decision-making processes concerning finances, community engagement projects and management of our assets. So please step forward, become a Councillor and help make Stanway the best it can be.

Finally, I would like to thank our staff who work incredibly hard for Stanway. Our Clerk, Donna Tristram, Deputy Clerk, Amanda Ward and Barry Cooper our Maintenance Worker. Thank you for everything you do.

5. Questions from the public to the Chair and Councillors and any other matters raised by the public:

A resident asked how much of the Section 106 monies had been spent on the new Stanway Lakelands Centre. The Clerk explained that this was a question for Colchester City Council to answer as they decide on the allocation of Section 106 funds and explained that the Parish Council were asking the same question as well, given that Stanway has paid dearly in terms of housing developments of late.

Further discussion amongst the public around the allocation of Section 106 money took place.

6. Stanway Village Hall Management Committee Chair's Report:

In the absence of Ann Longman, the report was given by Teresa Baines.

Good evening, I am pleased to present our Community Centre report.

This has been a much easier year for us although not without its challenge.

Following the storm just before last year's Forum we had to have the guttering and fascia's replaced on the Victory Hall. An unexpected expense. We also have had the floor in Tollgate Hall replaced by the contractor following so serious faults in the laying. The Village Hall drains have been a problem with blockages caused by tree roots. Thank you to the Parish Council, our landlords, for arranging to have this sorted out later this month.

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Unfortunately, we are still waiting for the WiFi to arrive into the Tollgate Hall. Even after many surveys when they were erecting the pole that is needed the contractors managed to find a gas pipe. There was no danger to anyone, and it was quickly repaired. However, we are still waiting for the connections to be made. We are still planning to do some refurbishment in the Tollgate Hall, the ceiling, lights, toilets and entrance lobby. This will not be cheap, and funding will need to be sought. The new car park extension will be a great asset to the halls. When all three halls and the field are in use we need to be able to accommodate the users. Bike shelters also, although I did notice that a bike had been locked to the handrail next to the shelter!

Unfortunately, with the rise in utility bills etc we have had to increase our hire charges from this April. Our bookings have been good and with the assistance of our caretaking staff we have extended our weekend bookings which have become more popular especially children's parties. We have now confirmed with our insurers that bouncy castles in the halls can be used. This will please a lot of hirers.

We have a great team – Paul and Stuart our caretakers, Teresa Baines our Secretary and Ann Norton who helps out in so many ways. We have a very small committee who are committed to making the halls the best they can be for all hirers. My thanks go to all of them. Thanks also to Donna and Amanda for their help.

7. **Presentation by guest speaker Christina Edwards, Local Historian and Writer**
Much to the delight of those present Christina gave a fascinating talk on the history of the original Tollgate on the London Road, Stanway. The audience engagement was such that Christina was asked a variety of questions on the history of Stanway, all of which she easily answered due to her extensive knowledge even providing the explanation of where the term 'Pothole' come from.

8. **Presentation of awards to Stanway Community Champions:**
Cllr D Bloomfield presented the Community Champion Awards to:-
Wendy Pagden for Community Champion.
Barry Cooper for Unsung Hero
Sarah Camp for Unung Hero.

Sarah Camp was unable to attend due to a prior commitment. Sarah's award was accepted by Wendy Pagden on her behalf.

In conclusion of the evening, the Chair thanked the Staff and Councillors for their hard work and everyone who attended the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.43pm

Amanda Ward, Deputy Clerk

24th March

2023

Signed.....
Chair



27th April 2023