

# St Michael Parish Council

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023

held at the School Room, rear of St Mary's Church, Childwick Green, St Albans

Present: Councillor D Meachin  
Councillor E Rose  
Councillor S Slaughter  
Councillor R Woodward  
J Reading Parish Clerk  
One member of the public attended

**I. APM2023/01 Apologies for absence**

Councillor E Rolfe had asked for her apologies for absence to be given. No further messages of absence had been received.

**II. APM2023/02 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6 May 2022**

The minutes had been previously circulated and were taken as read. It was agreed that the minutes were accurate and Cllr Meachin added his signature to them.

**III. APM2023/03 Chairman's report to the Parish for the year ending 30 April 2023**

Cllr Meachin gave a summary of key points from the report that he had prepared, a copy of which is appended to these minutes, below and overleaf.

**IV. APM2023/04 Presentation of the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022**

The Clerk confirmed that an accounts pack was ready for consideration and approval at the Annual Parish Council Meeting which directly followed this meeting, and that any interested parties, including members of the public, would be able to inspect the documents at this Meeting, or during a period of public rights in the coming weeks.

A question was raised about a bank account credit in March 2023. The Clerk advised it had been paid in error by SADC, having been intended for another payee with a similar name, and that the money's return was covered in the cheque schedule for May 2023.

**V. APM2023/05 Any Other Business**

None.

**VI. APM2023/06 Electors'/residents' discussion forum**

None.

The Annual Meeting of St Michael Parish Council commenced immediately upon closure of the Annual Parish Meeting.

Signed.....Date.....

## St Michael Parish Council - Chairman's Report for the year ending 30 April 2023

A warm welcome to all.

It is my pleasure to pen the Chairman's report for 2022/23, reflecting back on the last year. It has been nice to be able to conduct meetings, and our wider lives, in person, without the concern and restrictions that the recent pandemic brought about. And whilst we should have been able to look forward to an exciting and brighter future, we find ourselves in a world where the cost of living has risen significantly, putting tremendous pressure on our living standards.

The past year has been one of change for St Michael Parish Council (StMPC). Last year Cllr Rolfe wrote about the upcoming Community Governance review of Parish and Town Council wards and boundaries and that this might affect us. Indeed, this review has resulted in a decrease in the number of residents in the Parish of St Michael, due to houses on the northern side of Ragged Hall Lane being reallocated to the Parish of St Stephen. Whilst we are sorry to see these residents leave our Parish, it is undeniably more practical to have Ragged Hall Lane fall under one Parish in its entirety and wish these residents well in their new "home".

Whilst the number of residents in our Parish is relatively few, the amount of green belt land within our boundary is vast. COVID lockdowns served to highlight how important open space is for our mental and physical well-being. Debates around housing needs rumble on and we continue to see developer appetite to build on green belt, citing poor housing supply in the district as the "very special circumstances" required to develop green belt land. StMPC accepts the need to be pragmatic in its view, but is absolutely committed to opposing inappropriate, incohesive and poorly formed developments plans, large or small, that will affect the Parish and its surrounding area.

StMPC continues to have interest in planning applications within the Parish and opposes development where there are no very special circumstances to justify green belt sacrifices. When a new Local Plan is finally delivered there will likely be large implications to our Parish. We have, and will continue to provide feedback to SADC on planning applications where deemed appropriate.

On a lighter note, I am pleased to have the opportunity to highlight some successes we have had on projects and initiatives:

We had success in getting signs erected in Potters Crouch in the last year, warning large and heavy goods vehicles not to use the narrow lanes in the area. This has been a problem plaguing local residents over the recent past and we hope the "no HGV" signage will help to reduce the volume of this industrial traffic and consequently stop damage to properties and verges that has been reported.

We are pleased to have worked with Townsend School on the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to mark her platinum jubilee. StMPC helped organise the provision of a number of young trees and material for their planting in the school grounds and look forward to seeing them grow over the coming years. I would like to thank Townsend School for their partnership on this project and hope we can have more interaction in the future.

We have adopted a grants and donations policy for the benefit of residents in the Parish and full details can be found on our website.

I would like to express gratitude to all Councillors of the Parish for their time and dedication throughout the year, with a special mention to Julia Reading, our Parish Clerk, who works tirelessly for StMPC and keeps us all on track; thank you! Sue Lopes-Dias recently informed StMPC of her decision to not stand for re-election and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sue for her commitment during her tenure.

It is with great sadness that I write of the recent news of the passing of Cllr Peter Limebear and on behalf of the Parish I would like to express our condolences to his family at this difficult time. Peter was a member of StMPC for the best part of 25 years, many of those as Chairman, and we owe him a debt of gratitude for his participation and leadership having only recently retired from his position.

Post the recent elections, StMPC is seeking to fill two Councillor positions and would welcome applications from anyone who might be interested in fulfilling this role with more information being available on our website.

It has been my privilege to chair StMPC this year and I would like to wish residents of the Parish, their families and friends the very best for the year ahead.

Best,

**David Meachin**

**Chair of St Michael Parish Council**