

LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 15th May 2019 at 9.30pm in the Village Hall, Little Berkhamsted.

Present; Cllr Hunter (Vice-Chair), Cllr Standbrook, Cllr Stokes, Cllr Holt, Cllr Latham-Koenig (L-K), Cllr Morris

In Attendance: 7 members of the public, Laura Brooks-Payne (Clerk)

1. **Opening of the meeting** – Cllr Hunter opened the meeting
2. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Linda Haysey (council meeting), Cllr Ellis Downes
3. (long standing engagement) and Cllr Ken Crofton (Council meeting)
4. **To approve Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2018** – Cllr Hunter read out the minutes. These were agreed and approved.
5. **To discuss Matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2018** - It was noted that the Speed Indicator Devices will be installed in the summer 2019 with no cost to the council with thanks to Cllr Holt for his hard work in obtaining these.
6. **Parish Council Review of the Year – Cllr Downes** – Cllr Hunter read out Cllr Downes report in his absence;

Council has worked well as a team and developed and completed a number of exciting initiatives for the benefit of the village and its residents. He thanked the hard-working Clerk, Laura for keeping the PC on the straight and narrow. Thanks went Richard Chaplin, past Council Chairman and Councillor for his hard work and valued contributions who decided not to stand for re-election at the last elections. Thanks went to the PC's local councillors Linda Haysey and Ken Crofton for on-going support and sage advice. We have been financially prudent and remained within budget and have build up limited case reserves to deal with unforeseen problems.

Signage – This project, ably led by Cllr Dominic Latham-Koenig, whose talents in design have benefitted the village has helped freshen up the signage and given the village a subtle new "brand". The majority of feedback from residents has been positive and while there will be no perfect location for the positioning of the signs, the council attempted to make the best decisions. Future work will be done including signage in the village

Speed-Cameras – Thanks to the hard work of Cllr Holt we have been awarded a grant to enable us to put up 2 speed cameras which should result in speeding traffic, a major problem in the village, slowing down. We still have some work to decide best positioning, and we can't please all residents.

Footpath Project – Led by Cllr Holt, the PC are aiming to have a pushchair and wheelchair friendly circular pathway through and around the village. This has been

delayed for a number of valid reasons, and is one of the top priorities for the new incoming council.

Cricket Club – We had difficult relationships with the previous club administration due to changing officers at the club making meeting with decision-making officers difficult. There is now a new regime at the club. Constructive meetings have been held with them. They are working hard to clean and renovate the club and its surroundings and have big plans for the club moving forward. We are in the process of re-writing the old contract between the cricket club and the parish council. The contract between the cricket club and Apple day care will also be re-written and rental agreements between these two parties re-visited with the aim of increasing rental rates. Exciting times ahead.

Playpark. The council continues to maintain the playpark (thank you for leading on this Cllrs Morris and Standbrook) which is for the benefit of all children and their parents in the village.

Planning. The council is actively involved in planning applications by Parish residents and gives recommendations whether the application should be "objected" or "no objection". The PC try to be fair, transparent and consistent. When flagrant planning breaches are brought to our attention we will immediately contact the enforcement team who are generally very responsive.

Village Hall. The council takes its responsibility to maintain one of the village's most important properties very seriously. It is an old building and needs continual maintenance. Thank you Cllr Standbrook for your hard work ! This is an important on-going project.

New Council's - To Do List (subject to Councillors Approval & Modification)

- a. Complete cricket club contract after legal review.
 - b. Supervise cricket club negotiations with Apple day care including new contact and increased rental.
 - c. Complete circular walkway.
 - d. Update village asset audit ensuring appropriate insurance cover and maintenance schedule where appropriate.
 - e. Develop close relationships with Recreation Committee
 - f. Optimize income growth for village where possible a) Review of rental from village hall cottage, b) Apple day care rental costs c) be more pro-active in identifying 3rd party grants to be spent on improving village amenities.
 - g. Web-site. Dated and urgently in need of a re-launch.
 - h. Communication. Needs to be improved. We need to be more visible in the village – posters, articles in the Parish Magazine and better use of digital technology will improve engagement.
7. **Update on the year gone by and local Plan – Linda Haysey** – Leader of the Council – unfortunately Linda Haysey had another council meeting and she was unable to attend.
8. **Recreation Committee Review of the Year** - See Annual Meeting of the Council minutes 15th May 2019.

9. **Questions from the public** – A resident expressed his sincere dissatisfaction that both the annual meeting of the council and the annual parish meeting (APM) were held on the same evening and in his view the APM was an 'afterthought'. He reported that in previous years there were many residents present at the APM and it was a social gathering with wine and nibbles. Clerk advised that because it was an election year the APM had to be taken second because the first item that the PC legally had to carry out was to elect a chairman. In any other year the APM could have been held first. The resident told members of the PC that Cllrs were not engaging satisfactorily with the residents and that most residents were unaware of the meetings. The clerk explained that the agendas for both meetings were on the website and on the noticeboard as they usually were. He suggested residents needed to be given an apology. Cllr Hunter advised the resident that Cllrs would consider holding the APM on a different evening next year.

Another resident stated that communications were poor between the Cllrs and residents and that the APM should be a social occasion.

10. **Close of meeting** - Cllr Hunter closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

Laura Brooks-Payne
Clerk
21st May 2019.