

Little Berkhamsted Parish Council

MINUTES of a meeting of Little Berkhamsted Parish Council
held on Wednesday 15 July 2015 at 8.00pm in Little Berkhamsted Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Elaine Hunter (in the Chair for items 18 and 19), Richard Chaplin,
Ms Leanne Davey, Ellis Downes, Jim Holt, Wayne Morris, Derek Standbrook

In attendance: Cllr. Mrs Linda Haysey, East Herts Council
Cllr Ken Crofton, Hertfordshire County Council
Nine members of the public

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Parish Clerk was unable to attend the meeting as she was delayed by rail disruption.

19. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Ellis Downes was nominated by Richard Chaplin and seconded by Derek Standbrook to be Chairman of the Parish Council for the 2015/16 year and was unanimously elected. Cllr Downes thanked his colleagues for the honour of being elected as their Chairman and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on 20 May 2015 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them.

22. MATTERS ARISING

None.

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In response to questions from members of the public, it was reported that:

- 1) Broadband reception in the Village Hall was currently impaired because trees in the neighbouring property were interfering with the signal from the transmitter on the Epping Green tower. The problem will persist until the trees are lopped in the autumn.
- 2) Current information from the Herts & Bucks 'Connected Counties' programme is that superfast optic fibre broadband will hopefully be available in the parish by the end of 2017.
- 3) An informal event in the Village Hall to recognise the work of the previous Parish Council and the four councillors who had not sought re-election in May 2015 was under consideration.

24. HALL, COTTAGE AND OPEN SPACES

Hall –

The render on the front elevation of the Hall and Cottage is in urgent need of repair and Cllr Morris is obtaining a quote for this from specialist contractors. When the render has been made good, the front of the building will need redecoration and it was agreed that desirably this should be done before the onset of winter weather.

Open spaces –

- 1) The bark layer under the swings in the Recreation Ground play area is much depleted and needs supplementing as soon as possible. Cllr Standbrook suggested that 'long life' rubber bark should be bought instead of the wood bark used in the past and it was agreed that the Clerk should be asked to contact him for further details in order to progress this. It was also noted that new seats were needed for the cradle swings and that a grant was possibly available for these, via Ian Sharratt at East Herts Council.
- 2) The arrangement between the Cricket Club and Apple Daycare whereby the pavilion on the Recreation Ground is used for childcare during school term-time was discussed and the suggestion made that this might be having an overly intrusive effect on the use of the Ground and play area. The current arrangement ends on 1 September 2015 and it was agreed that the Clerk should request the Cricket Club secretary to provide the Council with a draft of any new agreement before it is signed so that the Council can decide if the proposed terms of use of the pavilion give any cause for concern.

25. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

It was agreed that the 'Slow Down for Children' signs installed at the entrances to the village had been a very worthwhile initiative and that the cost of these signs should be paid out of the Council's Funds reserved for Traffic Calming.

26. RECREATION COMMITTEE

Cllr Hunter summarised the last meeting of the Committee which had been mostly concerned with preparations for the Village Fete which had taken place on Sunday 12 July. It was a brilliant day which was enjoyed by all and is provisionally estimated to have made a profit of approximately £3,500. The Chairman thanked the Recreation Committee for all their hard work in making the Fete such a success.

27. MINERALS AND LANDFILL

It was reported that the County Council Development Control Committee had refused an application to allow revised contours at Bunkers Hill Quarry which would have effectively allowed substantial overtipping at the quarry to remain in place. As recorded under Item 6 of the minutes of its 20 May meeting, the Parish Council, jointly with Bayford Parish Council, had strongly objected to the application. The County Council has authorised enforcement action to require the overtipping to be removed but it is anticipated that the quarry operator will appeal against the refusal of the application and the enforcement action. County Councillor Crofton informed the meeting that the County Council will contest vigorously any such appeal.

28. FINANCE

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Council approve the financial statements to 30 June 2015.
- b) The Council approve the payments now due as listed by the Clerk (to Little Berkhamsted Parochial Church Council for the shared rent of the Glebe Field; to Paul Curson for litter picking and to Fusion Landscaping & Maintenance for grass cutting) and also approve payments for the 'Slow Down for Children' road safety signs and for repairs to the Cottage gatepost and play area fence.

29. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Chairman reported that applications for the conversion of a barn to a cattery at Howe Green House and for single storey rear and side extensions at Tile Cross, Epping Green had recently been granted permission by East Herts Council. He drew the attention of councillors to the following two applications which had been issued for consultation:

- 1) Demolition of existing house and replacement with new dwelling at Howe Green Hall. A draft submission has been prepared objecting to one aspect of this application (the design of a proposed angled projection in the frontage of the new dwelling). Any councillors disagreeing with this objection were asked to contact the Chairman and Clerk urgently – otherwise the Clerk is instructed to submit it to East Herts Council by the deadline date of 23 July.
- 2) Demolition of existing dwelling and building of new five bedroom detached house at Breach House, Little Berkhamsted Lane. Submissions on this application must be made by 4 August and councillors were asked to send any comments to the Chairman and Clerk well in advance of this date to allow time for a consensus view to be arrived at.

30. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

None.

31. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND NOT PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED

As the Clerk could not attend the meeting, this item was carried over.

32. MATTERS TO NOTE OR BE CONSIDERED AT FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the agendas for future meetings should periodically have items to consider the state of Footpaths and Bridleways in the parish and action to clear litter, the discarding of which from passing vehicles seems to be an increasing problem.

Before closing the meeting at 9.25pm, the Chairman invited Linda Haysey and Ken Crofton to say a few words about how the District and County Councils can interact positively with our Parish.

Linda Haysey mentioned that the District Council provides various types of grant funding and the Parish should always contact it to determine whether a grant is available before incurring expenditure to acquire or maintain assets or on special events – eg the District Council will be encouraging local celebrations of the Queen's 90th birthday in 2016 and grants will be available for this purpose.

Ken Crofton described the funding pressures on the County Council from substantial reductions in Central Government grants and cited highway maintenance as one area of activity that was under pressure. He encouraged parishes and individuals to report highway faults, either on the dedicated phonenumber, 0300 1234047, or the website www.hertsdirect.org/highwaysfaults .

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday, 16 September 2015.