

LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 15th January 2020 at 8pm in the Village Hall, Little Berkhamsted.

Present;

Cllr Downes (Chair), Cllr Hunter (Vice-Chair), Cllr Standbrook, Cllr Stokes, Cllr Holt, Cllr Morris, Cllr Kent

In Attendance: 40 members of the public, Leader of the Council Linda Haysey, District Cllr Ken Crofton and Laura Brooks-Payne (Clerk)

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and approve;** none
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation;** Cllr Morris for item 10.3
- 3. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of the Council Wednesday 20th November 2019;** Approved with one sentence removed on item 10.3.

Standing orders suspended to allow members of the public to speak if they wish

4. To receive questions and comments from the public;

Sandie Ash, on behalf of a resident reported that a volunteer had built a small bridge across a lowland area on the second field behind the church. This has proved to be useful to walkers but is slippery. An anti-slip surface such as chicken wire was requested to be laid across the bridge to avoid pedestrians from slipping and falling. Cllr Holt will speak to Nicholas Maddox on the issue.

A resident asked if the street lights along the path via the church and by the Sanctuary Housing were now working. Cllr Hunter reported that they had been working intermittently. The clerk has been in regular contact with Sanctuary Housing and a cherry picker is now needed to tend to the remaining lights.

A resident asked if there was a possibility of the 30mph sign on Robins Nest Hill being moved further down the hill to help slow vehicles sooner before they reach the village centre. Cllr Crofton explained that Highways will not act upon such a request from one or two individuals and that this needed to be a statutory body decision to consider moving a roadway sign. The Cllrs all agreed and Cllr Holt will contact Highways on the issue.

Cllr Downes moved item number 10.3 into this section due to many residents present interested in the development of the issue. Cllr Downes explained that the PC had received much unwarranted criticism regarding the issue of the bridleway location and how the PC had been dealing with the issue. It was explained that the PC were happy to liaise with residents on the matter but the recent hostility received was unacceptable. Cllr Downes went on to explain that the issue was not within the remit of the PC to resolve as the PC hold no legal powers but of course can facilitate and help residents where they can. Cllr Downes had been in contact with the Senior Mapping Officer at Herts County Council (HCC) clarifying the position on the issue. Until a full investigation has taken place HCC cannot accept or deny that the bridleway runs in the incorrect position. HCC have removed the sign for the bridleway in the meantime. In addition a definitive map modification order has been made by a regular user of the bridleway with the purpose of modifying the map.

A resident asked if there was a specification to where the bridleway should run. Cllr Downes reported that there are two ongoing issues – the first is deciphering whether the definitive map or the definitive statement is correct. The second investigation is that a legal challenge has been made in that habitual use of the bridleway may ensure its continued use as a proven right of way.

Standing Orders reinstated from here

5. **To receive the chairman's report;** Cllr Downes had nothing that was in addition to the current agenda.
6. **To update on new website design;** Cllr Stokes had been in contact with our current website provider and several layouts were currently being discussed with involvement from the clerk. Discussions were continuing. The clerk asked if it was an appropriate time to move onto using dedicated PC email addresses for cllrs. Cllr Downes asked if it was possible to divert these to personal email addresses as not to have to 'log on' to access PC emails. It was suggested as part of the survey that the word count could be increased on the contact form to cllrs. Cllr Stokes and the clerk will liaise with the website provider on both points.
7. **To receive an update on the future of Little Berkhamsted Recreation Committee** – Cllr Downes explained that the Recreation Committee was still in abeyance and currently suspended. Cllr Stokes reported that the recent village survey results just having been collated showed that in fact there was much interest in the village for a recreation committee and that the PC must act on these findings. It was suggested that the social event for parishioners being held on Friday 17th January may gather even more interest.
8. **To discuss VE75 Celebrations;** Cllr Stokes explained that the PC should celebrate this and reported that the church were putting on an event on Friday 8th May with a 1940's theme, including music, picnic, stalls etc and everyone in the village is welcome. The PC agreed to support the event.
9. **To update on the village questionnaire** – Cllr Stokes reported that to date 60 surveys had been returned completed, which were all hand delivered and collected by cllrs. Results were currently being collated and some positive comments received. A social evening is being held on Friday 17th January for all residents with drinks and nibbles being served and the raffle for a meal at The Beehive being drawn. The PC would like to engage with all residents to bring the village together.

10. OPEN SPACES

- 10.1 **To report on playground issues** – Cllr Standbrook reported that the two gateways had now been reinstated and that he is now up to date with all playground repairs.
- 10.2 **To update on siting another dog waste bin** – Cllr Stokes reported that permission from the landowners had now been received to site the new dog waste bin on glebe land. Confirmation had also been received from East Herts Council (EHC) that the bin could be emptied at this location. A unanimous decision was made to site the bin on the Goddards Close side of the Glebe Land. Cllr Stokes will arrange purchase of the bin and advise the landowner.
- 10.3 **To discuss issues concerning Bridleway number 18** – discussed in item 4.
- 10.4 **To discuss setting a date for Litter Picking;** It was agreed that the date for the next event would be Sunday 1st March at 10.30am. Cllr Linda Haysey will kindly organise litter picking kits to be delivered and Cllr Stokes will further organise.
- 10.5 **To discuss the maintenance of the new Village signs;** Cllr Standbrook reported that the paint is badly peeling on the new signs which have been in situ less than a year which was disappointing. Cllr Standbrook will forward photos to the clerk who will contact the company.

11. PLANNING

- 11.1 **To receive the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk;** Cllr Downes reported that there were no new applications since the last meeting and briefly went through the report that the clerk had circulated prior to the meeting.

- 11.2 **To update on the retrospective planning refusal at Dene Orchard 3/17/1621/HH;** Clerk has contacted the planning officer on the question of the rules governing permissible development in a conservation area. Clerk will continue to pursue.

12. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

- 12.1 **To report on the Village Hall** – Cllr Standbrook reported that the outside lights had been repaired and were now working and the guttering was due to be cleared next week.
- 12.2 **To report on pavilion roof issues and refurbishment** – Cllr Downes explained to residents present that usage of the pavilion is currently suspended due to poor repair of the roof. A working party of cllrs has been formed and quotations are being sought for repairs. It was explained that the current situation has brought to light various issues with the building and it is clear that it is in need a full refurbishment and not currently fit for purpose. It is the aim of the PC for the pavilion to be a thriving hub of the village and with that in mind the PC are investigating ways to fundraise and apply for grants to fully refurbish the building. Cllr Kent is currently looking into this. A scope of work is currently being drawn up, this will be needed in order to apply for grants etc.
- 12.3 **To report on Cllr meeting discussing the new cricket club contract** – Cllr Downes reported that the new contract is on hold until repairs are complete and the building can be used again. It was noted that discussions with the cricket club have included the need to keep the building in good order, clean and tidy.
- 12.4 **To report on meeting with cottage tenant and new tenancy contract** – Cllr Downes will organise a date with the tenant.
- 12.5 **To update on training for new defibrillator;** Cllr Stokes advised that Defibrillator training has been organised with the Red Cross and will take place on 8th February 2020. It is £10 to reserve a place which is refundable. Only one place has been booked so far so please sign up.

13. HIGHWAYS

- 13.1 **To discuss white line painting in The Boundary** – Cllr Holt advised that the cost will be £500. It was noted that evidence will need to be gathered of consistent offenders before the work can be approved by Highways. Residents agreed to collect evidence of the frequency of the road being blocked.
- 13.2 **To discuss possible replacements for 'slow down for children' signs;** Cllr Stokes is currently investigating.

14. FINANCE

- 14.1 **To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts;** Accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting by the clerk. These were approved.
15. **To approve the date of the next meeting, 18th March 2020;** date approved. The date for the Annual Parish Meeting was also decided as Wednesday 13th May 2020.

16. To receive Correspondence (for information only); none

17. To close the meeting: the meeting was closed by the chair at 9.30pm.