

# LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held at 7.30pm on 16<sup>TH</sup> May 2018 in the Village Hall, Little Berkhamsted.

**Present;**

Cllr Downes (Chair), Cllr Hunter (Vice-Chair), Cllr Standbrook, Cllr Chaplin, Cllr Holt

**In attendance:**

Laura Brooks-Payne (Parish Clerk), 14 members of the public.

**1. Opening of the meeting by the Chairman**

Cllr Downes welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that traditionally in previous years the PC had held the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) and the Annual Meeting of the council on separate May evenings and we were trialling them on the same evening this year.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Wayne Morris, Sandie Ash, Cllr Linda Haysey and Cllr Ken Crofton.

**3. To approve Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2017**

The PC had just discovered that the 2017 APM minutes were not available as the clerk took over just after this period last year and prepared what she thought were the correct minutes from last year. A resident had a copy. Cllr Downes briefly went through the minutes; most of which will be covered in this evenings meeting. These were proposed by Cllr Standbrook and seconded by Cllr Hunter.

**4. To discuss matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2017**

These will be discussed in this evenings meeting.

**5. Parish Council Review of the Year – Cllr Downes**

Cllr Downes thanked residents for attending and encouraged other residents to attend. Fellow Cllrs were thanked for their work, not just for attending meetings but for the work that goes on between meetings. Cllr Hunter, Vice-Chair was thanked for her support. The clerk was thanked for her support and organisation having nearly completed a year in post.

Cllr Downes reported that projects that had been identified in the last year include the new 'easy access' circular footpath around the village, thanking Cllr Holt for his work on this to date. Cllr Holt reported that that PC had managed to secure another £1000 grant to put towards the project. He explained that a route had originally been found which was found not to be viable and a slightly longer route has now been identified. Work will include removing some kissing gates and stiles

to enable pushchairs and wheelchairs access. The next stage is publicising the route to parishioners and the possibility of creating a map of the route. Cllr Holt reported that any help was greatly accepted and should residents wish to walk the new route with him to get in touch.

Cllr Downes reported that the project of improving signage in the village is underway and designs are being finalised. A local designer, Dominic, has worked on the new designs free of charge and thanked him for his work so far.

Cllr Downes reported that there has been a lot of work carried out on the war memorial to keep it clean and tidy. The PC has also increased the insurance to provide adequate cover for the war memorial.

Cllr Standbrook reported that the PC try to keep on top of maintenance of the village hall – it being a very old building, therefore requiring ongoing maintenance and repair and briefly went through the work carried out in the last year.

Cllr Downes reported that the PC is a recognised stakeholder in planning terms and that the PC seriously view every new planning application that comes in for the village and make comment to East Herts District Council (EHDC). An issue that has been very contentious this year and caused some upset for villagers was the proposal from Mrs Vavarides for 80 new homes. In the last week, a property company, Bellis Homes, on behalf of Mrs Vavarides had approached Cllr Downes to ask the PC's opinion in terms of what the PC would accept for new housing on the previously discussed site that Mrs Vavarides owns. Cllr Downes had replied explaining that it would be unacceptable for the PC to 'help' developers with planning applications but rather would look at the plans should a proposal be put forward to EHDC.

A few residents had approached the PC to ask if a Petanque game area could be considered for the village.

Signage in the Five Horsehoes public house car park had recently been erected causing residents to get in touch with the PC on their size and nature. Cllr Downes had contacted EHDC planning department who had replied that the signs were a little larger than usually allowed but that it was not expedient to take action on this occasion.

Speeding through the village is a constant issue and controls are being explored. Cllr Holt reported that the PC had been researching funding for Speed Indicator Devices (SID's) to be put up in appropriate village locations, and had looked at other towns and villages where these are in situ. Each SID cost's approximately £5300 and evidence does suggest that cars do slow down for a smiley face.

## **6. Update on the local Plan by the District Councillor**

Cllr Downes read a report kindly sent to the clerk by Cllr Haysey in her absence. Cllr Haysey had explained that the district plan is in the final stages. The examination took place last October and the comments are now with the inspector with the final report being due by the end of May. The Plan will then be adopted by Council and be the legal framework to assess applications. Being so close to

the adoption means that EHDC have a 5 year land supply and can defend against inappropriate applications in areas not in the plan. Little Berkhamsted is a category 2 village so will not need to take large developments, only infill within the village boundary.

## **7. Recreation Committee Review of the Year**

In Sandie Ash absence, Cllr Hunter read the report which is attached at the end of the minutes.

## **8. Questions from the public**

A resident commented that in the minutes of the 2017 APM that the PC agreed that they would not go ahead with new signage and asked what had changed. Cllr Downes reported that the local resident had come forward to create designs free of charge and that, having looked at various other towns and village signs that it had come to the attention of the PC that the Little Berkhamsted signs were looking old and tired. When designs are finalised they will be put onto the website for residents to comment on.

A resident asked if and when residents are informed on the siting of potential new SID devices. Cllr Downes advised that the Cllrs work on behalf of the parish and that residents are advised of all work that the PC discuss and undertake through the website, noticeboards and public meetings in which all residents are welcome to have their view.

A resident asked if the questions of the legal responsibilities of the cricket club running the cricket pavilion had been answered. Cllr Downes replied that this is currently being looked at by the PC, and that a formal meeting will need to be organised between the PC and members of the cricket club when cricket is back in full swing.

A resident asked if the village hall could be more widely publicised and marketed for use by groups etc. Cllr Downes agreed that this would be a good idea.

**ACTION:** Clerk to add to the next agenda.

9. Close of meeting by the Chairman at 8.43pm.

Laura Brooks-Payne, Clerk  
21<sup>st</sup> May 2018