

LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 24th March 2021 at 8pm in the Village Hall, Little Berkhamsted.

Meeting held online via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Present; Cllr Downes (Chair), Cllr Hunter (Vice-Chair), Cllr Standbrook, Cllr Stokes, Cllr Kent, Cllr Noble, Cllr Morris

In Attendance: 21 members of the public.

1. **Opening of the meeting:** Cllr Downes opened the meeting and welcomed residents
2. **Apologies for absence:** Laura Brooks-Payne (Clerk), Cllr Linda Haysey, Cllr Ken Crofton, Martin Squirrel.
3. **To approve Minutes of APM 15th May 2019:** It was noted that there was no meeting held in 2020 due to the pandemic. Cllr Standbrook proposed, Cllr Stokes seconded.
4. **To discuss matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2019:** There were no matters arising.
5. **Parish Council Review of the Year:**

Cllr Downes had produced a newsletter highlighting the work of the council over the past year. This had recently been delivered to all households in the parish by Cllrs. Cllr Downes touched on several points within the newsletter.

Pavilion

The Pavilion project had taken up substantial time and the first two phases have now been completed.

Village Hall

The Village had been maintained inside and out. A new Defibrillator had been installed outside the Village Hall.

Highways

Due to the speed and increase of traffic through the village the PC received funding for two Speed Indicator Devices (SID's) for the parish. The first is now located on Church Road, the second on Robins Nest Hill.

Planning

It was recently decided at a parish council meeting that in order to give a true account of the planning applications that two Cllrs will try to visit with the

applicant for an informal meeting to gain more information and to meet more of the residents.

Parish Council Website & Facebook Group

The website has been updated and is now more interactive. The Pc also has a Facebook group called Little Berkhamsted Village Notice Board to which the PC will add information from time to time.

Recreation Committee (RC)

The committee has raised funds tirelessly for the village over the years. Recently it has found it difficult to encourage people to join so unfortunately it was decided to disband the Recreation Committee earlier this year. The RC funds have been ring fenced within the PC bank account to be spent specifically on social events. It is hoped that events can start to take place later in the year.

Local resident Bridget was thanked for making the village look blooming with planting in the bus shelter and along the fence in front of the recreation field. Footpaths have been completed for the circular walk around the village. The bus stop waste bin has been replaced and additional waste bins will be purchased in due course. An additional dog waste bin has also been installed. It is hoped to run another Litter Pick this year if Covid restrictions allow. Lottery Tickets can now be purchased raising funds for the Parish.

6. **Update on the year gone by:** Cllr Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council had forwarded a written report apologising for her absence due to a previous engagement:

As you'd expect my report for the last twelve months is unlike any previous. Officers of the council had to leave the offices overnight and start working from home. Walking round the offices some months later, it was apparent that everyone just upped and left, IT was unplugged, chairs taken, tins of cake and biscuits left, friends and colleagues left behind. Services essentially just carried on; there were changes to some of the rubbish collection rounds. Officers in many departments were moved to others to help out; Revs and Bens have had to deal with many of the grant programmes coming from central government; environmental health officers have been involved with ensuring safe operating procedures in towns, pubs and public areas such as parks.

However, the role of council and councillors has still remained to provide support to residents and our local parish councils. Several departments have faced a significant increase in work levels; both planning and enforcement have experienced increased pressure; litter bins have overflowed.

The district council is facing budgetary pressures - much of our income has been lost and will never be recovered - car parking; leisure centres for example. The government has provided some significant one off funding but that will not continue. At the moment the council is able to continue to provide grants available to local community groups.

We have all learnt how to communicate on Zoom/Teams somehow. But I dearly hope we all meet face to face very soon.

Cllr Downes advised how grateful the Parish Council is for Cllr Haysey and Cllr Croftons support for the parish and attendance at meetings.

7. Questions from the Public:

A resident had sent in questions to be raised;

1. Due to the Recreation field being very wet she was concerned that vehicles should not be allowed on the field except in an emergency.
The issue was discussed and agreed and it was decided that a padlock would be fitted to the gate to allow limited access.
2. It was asked if the Cricket Club match dates could be in the public domain so that villagers know when they can use the field.
It was discussed and agreed that the cricket club will be asked to advise the Clerk of their fixture/practice list to add to the noticeboard and website.

It was also noted that the Apple Day Care (ADC) contract had not been agreed and finalised as yet for use of the pavilion for childcare. There was some concern among residents regarding the arrival and departure times causing congestion and parking issues. ADC have assured the Parish Council that the children will be dropped off at the company's residence 'Dhoon' when appropriate, and not immediately adjacent to the recreation field.

It was suggested that a notice could be erected to ask walkers and cyclists to be considerate when using the field in the wet weather. It was also noted that litter is currently problematic and bins are filling more quickly than usual probably due to increased walking due to the lock down in the pandemic. The PC is hoping to arrange for more collections of rubbish from waste bins. Residents were also advised that the War Memorial is due to be cleaned in the near future, and that the PC were looking into the possibility of erecting low chain link fencing to discourage the propping up of bicycles on the memorial.

8. **Close of Meeting:** The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Laura Brooks-Payne/Cllr Hunter
27th March 2021