



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) of the Council held on Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

Cllrs present: Cllr Morris (Chair), Cllr Hunter (Vice-Chair) Cllr Standbrook, Cllr Cookson

Cllrs not present: Cllr Eaglestone, Cllr Fellowes

Others present: Parish Clerk – Laura Brooks-Payne,
4 members of the public, Cllr Bob Deering, District Cllr Ken Crofton

1. Opening of the meeting:

Cllr Morris welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting is not an official meeting run by the PC but a meeting for residents.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Eaglestone, Cllr Fellowes. Approved.

3. To approve minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) 2024:

Unanimously approved.

4. To discuss matters arising from the minutes from the APM 2024:

It was noted that the Bells wood Planning Enforcement issue is ongoing.

5. Parish Council review of the year:

Cllr Morris advised that it was his first year in post and thanked Parish Cllrs, Cllr Crofton and Cllr Deering for their ongoing work and support. Cllr Morris formally thanked resident Jerry O'Reilly who has maintained the area surrounding the War Memorial for 33 years and has decided to retire from this task. The PC are looking into alternative maintenance contracts.

Cllr Morris reported;

A new waste bin has been erected in the play area. The PC are considering replacing some play equipment in the near future. A new path has been laid from the playground to the Pavilion. Paving slabs taken up will be repurposed at the front of the pavilion to help reduce mud being walked into the building. The Pavilion has been repainted by Simon Hedley and outdoor rubbish removed. Cllr Standbrook secured 100% grant funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund to insulate the Pavilion loft.

The Cricket Club contract has been renewed for 2025. The mowing contract has been updated with a provision for better coverage for the outfield area.

VE Day picnic will be held on Monday 5th May from 3-6.30pm. All welcome.

Apple daycare unfortunately have not renewed their contract for 2025. Home Farm Dog Training continue to use the recreation field.

Cllr Morris thanked Bridget Toomey for attending to the flowers in the centre of the village.

Bus Shelter - has been repainted. The PC are looking to obtain some planters to be situated to the front of the village signs.

A 50% **grant** funding was obtained for a second defibrillator for Epping Green sited at The Beehive Pub.

Village Hall – replacement Eco Heaters, new roller blinds, new secondary glazing and chimney has been repaired.

Litter - continues to be a problem through the Parish but thanks went to Paul Curzon and Georgie Deering it is kept somewhat under control.

War Memorial will be cleaned next year before the Remembrance Service in the church.

Landowners have generally maintained highway hedgerows apart from one landowner along Church Road.

Website – a new hosting company is now required – last few issues need smoothing out which will be completed in the next few weeks.

Bridleway 18 – The case Planning Inspector has now agreed that the Bridleway should be in situ and the case is now at the appeal stage.

There are 2 Councillor Vacancies which will be advertised again.

6. Update on the year gone by and Local Plan:

Cllr Deering reported:

The Local Council must have a local plan which is updated from time to time. The East Herts Council Local Plan is being refreshed currently. It was noted that a number of sites in the Parish have been put forward in response to the 'call for sites' for new housing. Cllr Deering touched on the outstanding Planning Enforcements which he has been very involved in.

Herts County Council budget is £2.7 billion. £1.2 of which is spent on County Council Services – adult services, children services & highways. £1.5 billion allocated to schools. 93% schools rated outstanding or good, and therefore if unitary authority County Councils come into force, there is a possibility this high figure could potentially drop. Cllr Deering hopes that some increased authority will file down to local Parishes.

7. Questions from the Public:

Cllr Crofton thanked Cllrs for their work over the last year.

Cllr Deering thanked parishioners for their support for Georgie Deering who collects litter along the busy Parish roads.

Cllr Crofton Reported;

Cllr Crofton thanked Cllr Deering for his work over the last 4 years, especially his work on finance and balancing the budgets. An independent company has indicated that Herts County Council were the best performing Council last year. Cllr Deering will be sorely missed but will be remaining in post as Leader of the Conservative Group on East Herts District Council.

Unitary Authorities – Cllr Crofton advised that one authority is probably best should this come into force from central Government with more input from PC's, especially on local issues. Cllr Crofton believes that planning issues are always best dealt with by local communities who know the surrounding area very well and are well placed to advise.

Highways – over £100 million spent on maintenance per year which is not nearly enough.
Supplements

8. Close of meeting: Cllr Morris closed the meeting at 8.20pm and everyone was invited to stay for drinks and socialising.