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**LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL**

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 19th July 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

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

**Cllrs not present:** Cllr Eaglestone, NOT APPROVED, no official notice to Clerk

**Others present:** Parish Clerk – Laura Brooks-Payne, Cllr Ken Crofton, 1 member of the public

1. **To receive apologies for absence:** Cllr Deering
2. **To receive declaration of interest and dispensation:** None
3. **To receive Cllr resignation:** None received
4. **To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2025:**

The Clerk went through the action points from the last meeting:

It has been discovered that no one owns the alleyway between Goddards close and the Church. Cllr Fellowes will investigate repairing the hole and possibly adopting the alleyway.

Cllr Morris will check the light to see if there is power going to the unit.

Litter pick booked for 28th September. Cllr Hunter has organisation in hand.

Cllr Morris advised that planters in front of the village signs will be too large.

Clerk will email Bridget Toomey re railing flowers.

Cllr Morris will send one final email to the owner of the hedging along Church Road to ask if the PC can trim the hedging and forward the invoice to the landowner.

Cllr Morris is in conversation with two summer camp companies to potentially use PC facilities in 2026. This will be discussed further in the November 2025 meeting.

1. **Chair Welcome:**

Cllr Morris welcomed members of the public.

1. **To receive the latest Crime Report:**

The Clerk had circulated the Crime Report for May and June to Cllrs. There were no incidences of crime for the months of May and June in the Parish. The Clerk read out the updates. (See Addendum)

1. **To update on new PC Website:**

Cllr Morris and the Clerk advised that the PC IT support Iain Murray has been enlisted to help with the changeover from the old to the new website. It was agreed in a conversation with the Clerk and Iain Murray that in order for a smooth switch over we will look to complete this week commencing 4th August. The new website will need to be fully up to date by then.

 ACTION – Cllr Morris will look at the new website to ensure all is up to date by the agreed date. The Clerk will then organise switch over with Iain Murray.

1. **To update on first Aid courses:**

 The Clerk advised that First Aid Training had now been booked in:

 Saturday 23rd August – Defib Training (£200) – 12 people

 Saturday 25th October – one day First Aid at work course (which is a general 1st aid course) £580 for 12 people

 It was discussed that both will need to be advertised. It was discussed and agreed that parishioners will pay a subsidised rate pf £30 for the FAW.

 ACTION – The Clerk will design a poster to advertise the FAW and pass to Cllr Hunter. Cllr Hunter & Cookson will advertise both events.

1. **To receive questions and comments from the public:**

Paul Curson advised that the salt bags stored on his driveway area will need to be moved. This was discussed and further thought will be given as to there they can be stored. Salt bins were discussed.

 ACTION - Cllr Morris will organise moving the salt bags. Cllr Morris will also contact Cllr Crofton in order to obtain new salt bins for Howe Green and Epping Green.

1. **HIGHWAYS**
	1. **To update on traffic calming implementation:** Cllr Morris advised that he has floated the idea with Highways, of having a 20mph speed limit through the centre of the village only. A speed survey will be required. Conversations are ongoing.

 ACTION – Cllr Morris will continue liaising with Highways.

1. **PLANNING**
	1. **To receive & discuss the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk:**

 Cllrs briefly went through the latest applications.

* 1. **To discuss the Bellswood development on Bucks Alley:** Though not in the Parish of Little Berkhamsted, (Bayford Parish), the development includes the addition of a large number very large permanent deluxe caravans and will increase the traffic substantially into Little Berkhamsted from Bucks Alley. Conversations are ongoing with Bayford PC and East Herts planning Department.

1. **OPEN SPACES**
	1. **To report on playground issues:** Cllr Standbrook reported that repairs are ongoing. A new waste bin has been installed.
	2. **To update on new hard standing area to the front of the pavilion:** Cllr Standbrook reported that this is now complete including hard standing for the table tennis table. It was noted that two of the wooden benches on the recreation field require some attention. Cllr Standbrook suggested that these are repaired and the left over slabs from recent projects are laid underneath. This was agreed and approved.

 ACTION – Cllr Standbrook will action the bench repairs.

* 1. **To approve purchase of containers for planting around village signs:** Cllr Morris advised that the planters that he was researching will be too cumbersome for the front of the signs. It was agreed that anything less heavy though could have the potential of being stolen.

ACTION **–** It was agreed to archive the idea for the foreseeable future and the Clerk will remove the item from the Agenda.

* 1. **To update on maintenance of highway hedges & liaison with landowner:** Cllr Morris agreed again to contact the landowner once more indicating that if the PC have agreement, the PC will organise for the hedges to be trimmed and will forward the invoice to the Landowner.

ACTION – Cllr Morris will contact the landownerand send a copy to the Clerk.

* 1. **To update on repairs/ownership to the uneven alleyway between Goddards Close to Church Road:** Cllr Fellowes reported that he had spoken to East Herts Council, Highways and the Housing Association though it could not be ascertained as to who owns the alleyway. It was discussed and agreed that repairing the pothole would be given further thought and to research whether the PC adopting the alleyway would be viable.

ACTION – Cllr Fellowes to investigate further.

**13. PREMISES MANAGEMENT**

 **VILLAGE HALL**

**13.1 To update on maintenance work carried out:** Cllr Standbrook reported that the front door and internal work will be started in the next two weeks. The wisteria will be trimmed around the front door. Quotes are being obtained for the chimney stack repairs. The light over the Defibrillator is not working. The village hall garden has been baited for rats.

 ACTION – Cllr Morris will look at the Defibrillator light. Cllr Standbrook will obtain another quote.

**13.2 To update on repair of damage caused by the Limes boiler flue:** Cllr Standbrook informed Cllrs that he has tried to get in touch with the owners several times. It was suggested that as the repair has been completed, the PC will continue to monitor the building for any further signs of deterioration.

 ACTION – Clerk will remove the item from the agenda. Cllr Standbrook will continue to monitor.

**13.3 To update on quotations for repairs required in the cottage:** Cllr Standbrook advised that quotes are being obtained for the chimney stack repairs.

 ACTION – Cllr Standbrook will obtain further quotes.

 **CRICKET & COMMUNITY PAVILION (C&C Pavilion)**

**13.4 To receive latest report/maintenance work on the C & C Pavilion:**

It was noted that the PC are disappointed at how the Cricket Club are treating the building. A meeting has been arranged for the coming Saturday to discuss the issues. Cllr Eaglestone, Hunter and Standbrook will attend.

 ACTION – Cllr Hunter will advise the Clerk of the points raised and an email will be drafted to the Cricket Club after the meeting has taken place.

1. **FINANCE**

**14.1 To update on the rebate of Business rates for the Pavilion:**

The Clerk reported that she has been working with a surveyor who approached the PC in order to look at reducing the Village Hall and Pavilion Business Rates going forward and potential back date rebates. The PC have been successful in reducing the Pavilion future Business Rates to zero. This has not applied to the Village hall however because the rate relief applied to the Pavilion cannot be applied to village halls. The PC have received circa £4500 form East Herts Council after the surveyors fees have been paid.

**14.2 To update on VAT Reclaim from HMRC:**

 The Clerk reported that she has reclaimed VAT for the year end 2024-2025 and this has been paid into the PC bank account already.

**14.3 To approve cottage repairs expenditure:** Cllr Standbrook advised thatthe chimney repairs will be circa £1000, internal works £500. This was agreed and approved.

**14.4 To approve solicitors cost for planning application at Bellswood, Bucks Alley:**

The Clerk advised that the PC have enlisted the services of a solicitor to look at the detail of this planning process. Cllrs unanimously agreed to share the solicitor costs with Bayford Parish Council.

**14.5 To approve donation to Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB):**

The Clerk informed Cllrs that they had previously agreed to donate £150 to CAB. This amount was unanimously approved.

 ACTION – Clerk to pay CAB.

**14.6 To approve latest accounts summary circulated by the Clerk:**

 The Clerk had circulated the latest accounts to Cllrs. These were unanimously approved and invoices signed.

1. **Items for future consideration:** PAT testing for both buildings

**16 To approve the date of the next Parish Council meeting:** 17th September 2025:3 Cllrs could not do this date so changed to 10th September.

**17. To close the meeting:** Cllr Morris closed the meeting at9.20pm

**Parish Clerk - Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne**

**Email:** **clerk@littleberkhamsted.org.uk**

**ADDENDUM**

CRIME REPORT

Thanks to an extensive and diligent investigation led by Sergeant Miller, the suspects involved in last month’s theft from the Sainsburys ATM in Buntingford High Street, were arrested and charged.

Following a recent spate of shoplifting offences in Buntingford stores, the Neighbourhood Policing Team identified and arrested suspects in all the recorded crimes for June. Two of the offenders were also charged with similar offences carried out in the previous month. The team continue to take proactive action against rural fly tippers, with one such incident making the BBC news. The offender’s premises were searched and they were subsequently charged with further offences of possession of Class A and B substances. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9vrerjpexlo>

In a rapid response to a live call of a burglar at an address in Wareside, officers from the team apprehended a suspect. As part of Operation Agrarian, several vehicles were seized for having no insurance.

As part of ASB Awareness Week, the team carried out patrols in areas across the region where incidents have been reported, as well as organising related events including a targeted Herts Connected survey and sign up in Buntingford, and a Bicycle Security Marking event.

If you need to report a crime in progress, please call 999, for all others please use 101 or online reporting https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/

The Herts Connected system delivers Hertfordshire police’s crime alerts. Registered local residents can receive the latest crime or emergency updates and alerts, as well as information about policing events in your area. Local residents can get involved in helping to make their local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in their area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe, and tell us what matters are causing local communities harm.

The more residents that register, the better informed and safer our communities will be. We would be most grateful if you could continue to share the link below in any parish communications, and especially on social media, to encourage as many local residents as possible to sign up.

https://www.hertsconnected.co.uk/

Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Additional Crime Prevention Advice can be found via this link: <https://www.herts.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/> Thank you

East Herts Rural Highlights Video 2024-25
<https://youtu.be/bnf6PE4uuvc?feature=shared>