



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) of the Council held on Wednesday 24th April 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

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

Cllrs not present: Cllr Eaglestone, Cllr Fellowes

Others present: Parish Clerk – Laura Brooks-Payne, 27 members of the public, Cllr Bob Deering

1. Opening of the meeting:

Cllr Stokes welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Stokes explained that the village hall had recently been refurbished, including insulation of the ceiling, painting and decorating throughout and new secondary glazing installed.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Eaglestone, Cllr Fellowes, County Cllr Ken Crofton. All approved.

3. To approve minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) 2023:

Unanimously approved.

4. To discuss matters arising from the minutes from the APM 2023:

A resident noted that the ceased recreation committee 'ring-fenced' fund should be more widely advertised Cllr Stokes advised that the document is on the website as requested at last year's meeting but further thought needed to be given to raising awareness among residents.

5. Parish Council review of the year:

Cllr Stokes had written a report of the past year that went to all Parishioners prior to the meeting. The detail of which can be read in the minutes dated 15th May 2024 or read on the website.

Cllr Stokes had researched and put together a presentation of a short history of the Village hall. This was shown to all present on the projector screen which everyone found interesting. Thanks went to Cllr Stokes for spending much time putting the presentation together.

The presentation can be viewed on the website here; (Microsoft Powerpoint is required to view): <https://www.littleberkhamsted.org.uk/village-hall.php>

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

Cllr Bob Deering officially 're-opened' the newly refurbished village hall. Cllr Deering noted that a great deal of time and work had been put in by Cllrs on the project.

Cllr Deering reported on the following:

EAST HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL

All District Council's need to have a Local plan. Local plans set out how any local council is going to manage their allocation of new housing going forward because housing needs have to be met.

The new theatre in Hertford will be opening in the coming months and has been renamed 'Beam'.

The newly refurbished Hartham Leisure Centre is now in full use and well attended.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENTS

Cllr Deering updated on recent enforcement issues.

Robins Nest Hill – Approximately 9 months ago the hedgerow had been quite considerably breached, removed for access. The landowner has now appealed against the objection of the retrospective planning application that was submitted. This case will therefore now go to the Secretary of State for appeal with East Herts planning Department submitting a report of the recent history.

Bucks Alley – 'Bellswood' Site – The landowner is erecting what looks to be large chalets. There is a history of caravans being on site previously. The landowner believes that the current licences in place also cover the new chalets. There is some discrepancy and therefore East Herts planning department are currently taking legal advice.

Cllr Deering thanked PC members for the work they undertake through the year.

7. Questions from the Public:

A resident asked how the finances were looking. The Clerk explained that PC funds are looking very healthy, having also undertaken major works. When last year's VAT had been reclaimed the PC have approximately £26,000. The Clerk explained that this figure is not static because invoices are constantly being paid and receipts coming in. The Clerk noted that any resident can ask to view the accounts at any time, and that they are transparent.

A resident commented that the Cllrs have undertaken great work in the last year.

A resident mentioned the overgrown hedges along some roads in the Parish. It was discussed that though the PC do try to work with landowners to keep the hedges cut back, some unfortunately do not oblige, and that the PC will need to discuss the possibility of using PC funds to do this.

Cllr Stokes elaborated on the speed surveys that had recently been carried out, with a view to implementing measures on the highways to reduce overall speeds. Results indicated that the overall mean speed of all vehicles is less than 30mph, however, highways have agreed that speeds are too fast through the very centre of the village. It was noted that approximately 2000 vehicles travel through the centre of the village during rush hours. Highways have also observed that Robins Nest Hill speed limit could change to a 40mph from 60mph before it changes to a 30mph. This is because the 30mph perhaps starts a little too early. Research is ongoing and the next stage is a feasibility study which is likely to take place towards the end of the year.

8. **Close of meeting:** Cllr Stokes closed the meeting at 8.45pm and everyone was invited to stay for drinks and socialising.

Parish Clerk
Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne
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