

# LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 8pm in the Village Hall, Little Berkhamsted.

**COVID 19 NOTE** - *This meeting was held during the Covid-19 Pandemic via Zoom*

**Present;**

Clr Downes (Chair), Cllr Hunter (Vice-Chair), Cllr Standbrook, Cllr Stokes, Cllr Morris, Cllr Kent

**In Attendance:** 2 members of the public, Laura Brooks-Payne (Clerk)

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and approve;** Cllr Hunter (IT issues), but joined after 30 minutes
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation;** Cllr Morris for item 8.2, update on bridlepath and item 9 for planning on related matters.
- 3. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of the Council Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020:** Cllr Stokes reported that Ringway have cleared the drain reported at the last meeting prior to the road being resurfaced. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Morris, seconded by Cllr Stokes

Standing orders suspended to allow members of the public to speak if they wish

- 4. To receive questions and comments from the public** – none

Standing Orders reinstated from here

- 5. To receive the chairman's report:** Cllr Downes reported that there was a Zoom remembrance service which went very well. All other issues will be discussed during the meeting.
- 6. To receive an update on Little Berkhamsted Recreation Committee & approve conditions for funds to be transferred to the PC:** The Rec Committee have met and formally resolved to close the committee. The document for transferring the committee funds to the PC account is currently being signed by both parties. The funds will be ring fenced in the PC account for community events only. This was unanimously approved. Further discussion is needed to organise future events and it was suggested by Cllr Morris to add some detail to the website to collate ideas for future events from residents. Cllr Stokes will add notes to the website and agreed to be a point of contact should residents have any interest in organising village activities.
- 7. To approve the new Apple Daycare Contract;** Cllr Downes explained that aspects of the contract are still being negotiated and the final contract has not been approved or agreed yet and are ongoing.

## **8. OPEN SPACES**

It was noted that the PCC are asking the PC for funds for renegotiating the lease for use of Glebe Field for residents. It was discussed that Cllr Downes would reply to the PCC asking if it is possible to negotiate a 10 year lease.

- 8.1 To report on playground issues:** Cllr Standbrook reported that the issue regarding perimeter fencing repairs is ongoing. Cllr Hunter will liaise with the adjacent resident. Ground bark chippings will need to be replaced in the Spring. Cllr Stokes reported that the dips in the ground

were getting quite deep, especially beneath the swing and discussion as to how to resolve the problem will continue.

- 8.2 To update on latest information for Bridleway number 18:** Cllr Downes reported that the consultation period has previously been extended twice for various reasons but ended on 6<sup>th</sup> November. It is likely that a decision will be published in the next few weeks. A further consultation may occur should there be an appeal. The Parish Council have no jurisdiction in this decision making process and are formally aware of the disquiet of residents not being able to utilise the path.
- 8.3 To report on refurb of village signs:** Cllr Standbrook reported that the replacement new signs have been ordered and are ready for collection and will liaise with a resident for help to install them.
- 8.4 To discuss replacement/new litter bins:** Cllr Stokes reported that new steel 120 litre square waste bin, to replace that at the bus stop, had been ordered. A resident has kindly agreed to install this for the PC when delivered.

## 9. PLANNING

- 9.1 To receive the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk:** The clerk had circulated the planning application document. Cllr Morris declared an interest. After discussion cllrs agreed to visit both sites this coming Saturday provided that it is convenient for the applicant. It was discussed generally that there seem to be a lot of applications currently using 'permitted development' rights and that there seems to be some discrepancy as to what is allowed for each applicant.
- 9.2 To approve how the PC consider new planning applications;** It was agreed that Cllrs will visit all new applications to increase engagement with residents and be more fully informed when making comments to the planning inspector. Cllr Kent will liaise with the applicants on the two upcoming visits.

## 10. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 To report on the Village Hall:** Cllr Standbrook reported that the ceiling has been repaired and may need an ongoing maintenance schedule if funds allow. New heater guards are needed which are approximately £100 each but that he may be able to repair them more cheaply. Cllr Morris has fitted a light guard above the defibrillator. Cllr Standbrook has fixed the broken guttering.
- 10.2 To update on pavilion refurbishment and management:** Cllr Stokes reported that the cushions have now been recovered and the bar stools are currently being recovered. It was discussed that the PC will need a regular caretaker and/or cleaner on occasions. Cllr Kent and Standbrook will speak to potentially interested parties. Fire extinguishers have all been serviced. Cllr Kent will clear the gutters in the next few weeks. Cllr Stokes reported that the sanitisers are in situ and Cllr Hunter has completed the inventory. Cllrs will further discuss further work that is still needed. Cllrs agreed that it would be useful to employ a 'handyman/woman' to complete small jobs in the village hall and the pavilion. Cllr Standbrook will approach a resident who he thinks may be interested.
- 10.3 To approve the new tenancy agreement for the village hall cottage:** Cllr Downes has sent a job description to the tenant's son for perusal and comment. A shorthold tenancy agreement has also been drawn up and will be sent to the tenant shortly.

## 11. HIGHWAYS

- 11.2 To receive an update on the siting of the SID:** Cllr Stokes reported that District Cllr Ken Crofton, Cllr Downes and herself walked around the village to look at potential new sites for relocating the SID from Church Road. Two potential sites were located but the adjacent residents were not in favour. It was discussed however, that these two positions were more suitable than the current position in Church Road which doesn't currently serve its purpose. Cllr

Stokes will further liaise with Highways to ascertain if one of the two chosen potential locations are viable.

- 11.3 **To receive and update on the Drive Safe scheme petition & HCC's Speed management strategy:** Cllr Stokes reported that there was recent communication from the 20's Plenty scheme which was worth looking into. The Clerk also advised that there are 20's plenty bin stickers that can be purchased which may be useful in reducing speed. Cllrs will look into this further.
- 11.4 **To update on the overgrown hedges/verges, obscured/damaged traffic signs, in the village & on the Lower Hatfield Road:** Cllr Standbrook has reported 7 issues relating to this on the Herts Faults reporting system. Ringway have been to site to ascertain what can be done but did mention that they rely on the good relations with landowners to keep their hedges trimmed back. Cllr Standbrook suggested that the PC contact the landowners initially. Cllr Standbrook will follow this up with the landowners.

## **12.FINANCE**

- 12.1 **To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts:** Clerk had circulated the accounts prior to the meeting and these were approved, proposed by Cllr Hunter and seconded by Cllr Standbrook. It was noted that the external Audit has also been finalised.
- 12.2 **To approve the Budget & Precept for 2021-22:** The Clerk had circulated the budget prior to the meeting which had been discussed by email at length. It was unanimously agreed that the future potential pavilion rental could offset some of the costs that were necessary so that the precept could be kept to a minimum. It was approved to set the precept at £13,000, an increase of 5.69% on the previous financial year. This was unanimously agreed, proposed by Cllr Standbrook and seconded by Cllr Morris.

- 13. To approve the Document Retention Policy & Public Play Areas Risk Assessment;**  
Document retention policy unanimously approved and the Play Area risk assessment will be completed in due course.

- 14. To advise of a councillor vacancy:** Cllr Downes reported that after the resignation of Cllr Jim Holt a councillor position had become available and that the PC were now in a position to Co-Opt a new Cllr. The Clerk had not received any applications to date. Cllrs will advertise the vacancy and information is on the noticeboard.

**15.To approve the date of the next meeting, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021;** approved

**16.To receive Correspondence (for information only):** none

- 17. To close the meeting:** Chair closed the meeting at 9.25pm