

# LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 8pm held online via Zoom.

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

**Present:**

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

**In Attendance:** 1 member of the public, Laura Brooks-Payne (Clerk), Leader of East Herts Council Linda Haysey and District Cllr Ken Crofton

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and approve:** none
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation:** Cllr Noble for 7.2 and 8.1, Cllr Morris for 7.2

**To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of the Council Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>**

**January 2021:** Cllr Kent reported that he had spoken to the owner of the shop regarding the missing waste bin. The owner has advised that the bin has been gone for many years. She did offer that if the bin by the bus stop gets full to the top that the contents could be deposited in the shops commercial waste bin. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Hunter and seconded by Cllr Morris.

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

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

Sandie Ash expressed that she was very pleased with all the hard work on the various projects that the PC had completed in the last year, especially considering the recent pandemic. Cllr Downes thanked Sandie for her kind words. Sandie also suggested that as the flowers along the fencing and by the bus stop are paid for by a resident every year that the PC could consider having an annual budget to pay for the flowers.

Cllr Downes advised that this had already been suggested within the last week and discussed by cllrs. The PC considered this and agreed to add £400 to the budget for the following year. £200 would be drawn from the recreation committee funds and £200 from the PC annual budget and precept.

**Standing Orders reinstated from here**

**4. To receive the chairman's report:**

The Chair has written an annual report detailing the Parish Councils activities which will be distributed to households in the next week and added to the website.

**5. To update on the Apple Daycare (ADC) Contract for possible use of pavilion:**

Cllr Downes reported that negotiations are still on going. ADC would like use of the pavilion all day and all year, but Cllrs feel that there should be some flexibility for residents to use on an ad-hoc basis, enabling the wider community to make use the building. Cllr Downes advised Cllrs that ADC will accept eight half afternoon days use per year, for use by residents/third parties with two weeks notice. In this time ADC could choose to use the village hall instead. It was noted that drop off and pick up times may increase traffic congestion issues. It was noted that

this issue has already been discussed with ADC and that particulars will need to be written into any contract drawn up. Cllrs agreed this and the licence to occupy will now be drawn up.

## **6. OPEN SPACES**

Cllr Stokes suggested that the War Memorial needed to be cleaned, it has not been cleaned since 2015. Cllrs agreed and Cllr Stokes will obtain relevant quotations. It was noted that cyclists regularly rest bikes up against the memorial so the PC will investigate the possibility of purchasing some low chains and posts to dissuade cyclists from doing this.

Cllr Stokes suggested that the community makes use of Glebe Field adjacent to the church, that the PC pay rent for. It was suggested to purchase goals there for football to be played, though it was noted that the PC will need to work together with the church to coordinate the use of the area.

### **7.1 To report on playground issues:**

Cllr Standbrook reported that the bark will be replaced in the Spring and new edging is also needed. The PC will continue to work with contractors, Fusion Landscaping and Moody Grounds for the parish grass cutting and cricket field area.

### **7.2 To update on the latest information for Bridleway number 18:**

Cllr Downes reported again that the report is now in the public domain. Hertfordshire Council are liaising with stakeholders and will publish a Modification Order in due course, other procedural actions may follow.

### **7.3 To update on a 'Keep little B tidy campaign':**

Cllr Stokes suggested replacing the broken bin or siting another litter bin on the recreation field. Litter is more of a problem in recent times, and with the pandemic with an increase in walkers and visitors to the village. Clerk suggested that the PC have a few litter pickers for residents to use. Cllr Stokes will obtain quotations for these. Linda Haysey will pass the PC details of who to contact to have the waste bin collected more often.

### **7.4 To discuss and organise a date for the next Litter Pick:** Cllr Stokes reported that the 'Keep Britain Tidy' Group have a national Spring Clean Campaign being held between 28<sup>th</sup> May and 13<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and it was agreed that a litter pick could take place between these dates.

### **7.5 To discuss a possible village day for this year and an Annual Parish Social event:**

Cllr Stokes suggested that as lockdown restrictions may ease throughout the year that it may be possible to arrange functions again soon. Cllr Stokes has added some detail of this to the newsletter and information has been sent out by mail chimp via the website for volunteers. The Bank Holiday on 30<sup>th</sup> August was decided as a good date for the village day and will be organised in due course.

## **7. PLANNING**

### **8.1 To receive the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk:**

It was noted that there are few new planning applications of late. Cllr Stokes reported that she has been unable to contact the applicant for Henderson Place to arrange to visit the property. Cllr Kent will try to contact the agent. Danes Farm has been visited by Cllr Downes and Kent. The Cllrs have no objection this application. Cllr Noble declared an interest and did not vote.

## **9. PREMISES MANAGEMENT**

### **9.1 To report on the Village Hall:**

Cllr Standbrook reported that the heater guards have been refurbished. Simon Hedley has repaired the decking outside the fire door. Cllr Morris will carry out the electrical safety certificate

in the next couple of weeks. It was noted that the recent electricity bills have been very high, though it has been within the winter months. Heaters are left on a low setting during the winter months to reduce the risk of burst pipes. Cllr Standbrook and Morris will discuss this further and obtain independent advice, including possibly a survey. Linda Haysey also suggested to look at grants for improving old buildings to make them more climate friendly.

**9.1 To update on pavilion refurbishment and management:**

Cllr Standbrook reminded Cllrs that the bar needs to be refurbished, a skip needs to be hired to continue clearing and tidying and some painting of exterior of the shed and perhaps the pavilion needs to be carried out. Cllrs agreed to have a zoom meeting to discuss this going forward.

**9.2 To approve the new tenancy agreement and tenant job description for the village hall cottage:**

Cllr Downes reported that both documents are now finalised and signed and thanked Sandie Ash for her involvement.

**9.3 To update on issue of Cricket Club contract for 2021 play season:**

The Clerk has sent the annual contract and payment details to the Cricket Club and are awaiting payment for the forthcoming season. The Clerk reported that there has been no acknowledgement of CC receiving the document. Cllr Downes reported that the Cricket Club have not purchased any lottery tickets, accepted any grant advice or been in communication with the PC. It was agreed that if the PC have not heard from CC by Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, unfortunately they will not be able to use the PC facilities for the forthcoming cricket season.

**10. HIGHWAYS**

**10.1 To receive an update on the re-siting of the SID:** Cllr Downes reported that following his discussions with contacts at Highways, he received a pleasant email from the Head of Highways, Paul Patmore, with helpful documents that the PC had been requesting for some time, with the promise that his department would fund the re-siting of the SID recently installed. The PC will now need to undertake a formal consultation to enable the device to be formally relocated. Cllr Stokes and Downes will investigate what is needed to undertake the consultation.

**10.2 To update on the '20's Plenty' scheme:**

Cllr Stokes reported that the PC have purchased bin stickers and these have been distributed to those that wanted them. Posters have also been put up. The recent speed 'zoom' meeting for Herts parishes was interesting and helpful, attended by Cllr Downes Noble & Stokes. It was further discussed that large banners would be useful to slow traffic even further. Cllrs agreed to the purchase of these.

**10.3 To update on the overgrown hedges/verges, obscured/damaged traffic signs, in the village & on Lower Hatfield Road:**

Cllr Standbrook had no more to report. Clerk had received no response from the letter sent to the landowner. Clerk will send a second letter. It was agreed that Cllr Noble will take over Highways issues. It was noted that the work on the drainage issues in Robins Nest Hill will be started next month. District Cllr Ken Crofton offered his support to the PC on any Highways issues where he could.

**11. FINANCE**

**11.1 To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts:** Clerk had circulated the accounts prior to the meeting. These were unanimously approved.

It was noted that a further Covid 19 grant will be received in the next week due to the village Hall being out of action due to the pandemic. Some of this grant must be used for the village hall.

**12. To approve the date of the next meeting of Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and a reminder of the Annual Parish Meeting being held on 24<sup>th</sup> March at 8pm:**

Confirmed

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

**14. To close the meeting:** Cllr Downes closed the meeting at 9.55pm

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