



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 15th September 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

Cllrs present: Cllr Stokes (Chair), Cllr Standbrook, Cllr Hunter, Cllr Noble, Cllr Eaglestone

Others present: Linda Haysey - Leader of the Council, Laura Brooks-Payne (Clerk), 8 members of the public

- 1 To receive apologies for absence and approve:** Cllr Kent (illness), Cllr Morris (prior engagement), Cllr Ken Crofton.
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation:** None
- 3. To approve the Minutes from PC meeting on 21st July 2021:** Minutes were approved, proposed by Cllr Standbrook and seconded by Cllr Hunter.
- 4. Chairs Report:** Cllr Stokes thanked all who organised and attended the recent village picnic which was a success despite the poor weather. Cllr Stokes suggested that a new model for a recreation committee could run whereby separate events could be organised by a group of interested residents. Donations of Golden Jubilee mugs were much appreciated and sold raising £188 towards the Recreation Committee fund and will go towards the firework display.

Lifting of lockdown restrictions has enabled the PC to advertise, encourage and increase the use of both the C&C pavilion and village hall.

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

5. To receive questions and comments from the public:

Several residents advised that the cricket club is using the pavilion until very late in the evening after matches have been played and recently there has been, on occasion, very loud music being played until the early hours. Cllr Stokes apologised for this on behalf of the PC and will liaise with the Cricket Club because the contract states that they are to be off site by 22.30hrs. The PC will review the contract.

It was noted that there is a Macmillan coffee morning being held in the church on the morning of Friday 24th September. All are welcome.

A resident reported the blocked drains and flooding again on Robins Nest Hill. This is an ongoing issue due in the main to tree roots blocking the drains. Highways are aware of the issue but only have two drain clearance vehicles in the County and therefore progress is

slow. Linda Haysey advised that a Town & Parish Council meeting is being held on the subject of Planning via zoom on 30th September.

[Standing Orders reinstated from here](#)

6. HIGHWAYS

6.1 **To receive an update on the re-siting of the SID:** Cllr Stokes reported that Highways have approved the re-siting of the SID and will re-locate the device outside house number 21 on Church Road.

6.2 **To update on the '20's Plenty' campaign:** Cllr Stokes reported that Herts County Council are currently looking at the criteria proposed by highways officers to enable the deployment of 20mph areas across the county in accordance with the Speed Management Strategy (SMS). The 20's Plenty for Herts Campaign group, to which Little Berkhamsted belong, have severe reservations about the SMS itself, and an open complaint to the Council on the consultation process that led to its adoption. 20's Plenty for Little Berkhamsted will continue to work alongside the Herts campaign group to lobby HCC for a more forward thinking and value for money approach to managing speed on our residential roads.

7. PLANNING

7.1 **To receive & discuss the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk:** The Clerk had circulated the latest report. There was one new application which Cllrs had viewed. PC comments had been submitted to the EH planning department.

7. OPEN SPACES

8.1 **To report on playground issues and approve new signage:** Cllr Standbrook reported that the football goal sign and playground slide sign has been replaced, both were approved. It was noted that there are two spare swing seats in the village hall. The contractor will spray the weeds around the edging of the playground in due course.

The pathway hedges have been trimmed back between the church and the pub. The overhanging trees on the pathway will be dealt with by the pub owners.

8.2 **To report on overgrown hedges and footways:** Cllr Standbrook reported that Cllr Kent has been in email contact with owner of the field off Church Road regarding Rights of Way. The owner is now aware that it is her responsibility to keep this cut back and will arrange for this to be maintained.

8.3 **To update on War Memorial Quotes:** Cllr Stokes has yet to obtain any further quotations, companies being slow to get back to her. Still ongoing.

8.4 **To discuss the use of Glebe Field:** Cllr Stokes had written to the Parochial Church Council to enquire whether Glebe Field can be utilised more by residents in any capacity. It was noted that the reply had explained that the lease from the Diocese restrict the permitted use of the Glebe field to 'open space in accordance with its green belt status with occasional use for community events or services at St Andrew's Church' and in addition recreational walking. It was noted that the PC pay half of the rental costs to the Diocese for the rent of the area and have just paid half of the new lease at just over £1000.

8.5 To update on new benches & possible parking matting for the recreation field:

Cllr Stokes advised that new benches have been ordered. It was explained that it may also be possible that car parking matting for the recreation field could also be purchased under the welcome back grant. Communications are continuing.

- 8.6 To approve employment for temporary cover of new litter picker:** Cllr Stokes reported that the current litter picker is away temporarily. The PC have, at short notice, enlisted the help in the short term of a young village man on the same hours and hourly rate until Paul's return. This was unanimously approved.

8. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

Village Hall

- 9.1 To report on the Village Hall:** Cllr Standbrook explained that he had been researching a grant for the village hall to enable the PC to improve the efficiency of the heating. Data had been provided to the grant provider after which Cllr Standbrook advised it is likely that the PC will be eligible to gain a grant towards some of the cost. The company has recommended infra-red heating. This is being investigated.

Cllr Standbrook explained that Utility Aid, a not-for-profit broker, may be able to help the PC reduce costs of the Village Hall energy bills too. Further investigation needed.

- 9.2 To update on installation of WiFi and approve:** The Clerk reported that following lengthy phone conversations and organisation, a BT line and WiFi were to be connected this coming Friday to the Village Hall. Cllr Eaglestone and the Clerk will oversee the process. The cost of the installation and ongoing monthly contract with BT were approved by councillors.
- 9.3 To discuss use of hall for the printing of the Parish magazine:** Cllr Stokes explained that she has been approached by the editor of the Parish magazine, who has asked if a new printer/copier can be stored at the village hall. This is to enable the group that organise the newsletter to have enough space to print and collate the publication. They also asked if their monthly meetings could be held at the village hall. In principal Cllrs approved this subject to additional information being sought on the size of the machine and the frequency of meetings.
- 9.4 To discuss a booking system for use of the Village Hall and C&C Pavilion:** The Clerk reported information gathered so far: packages are available to attach to the current website at a cost ranging from £150 to £200 a year. There are various free online calendars that can be shared with Cllrs. Clerk is still researching other options to enable the wider public to view the bookings. Cllr Standbrook suggested that CDA Herts may be able to help. Investigations ongoing.

Cricket & Community Pavilion (C&C Pavilion)

- 9.5 To receive the latest report & information on the Cricket & Community Pavilion:**

Cllr Hunter reported that a wedding is being held on the recreation ground this coming weekend. On Wednesday 6th October the opening ceremony for the refurbished pavilion is being held, all are invited.

Cllr Standbrook advised that a new doormat and padlock will be purchased for the pavilion. Vermin control for the pavilion was discussed. This will be monitored.

9.6 To update on pavilion bar refurbishment: Cllr Eaglestone informed the PC that quotes were still being sought for this which was proving difficult in the current climate. Cllr Stokes advised that it may be worth looking at a website that sells second hand pub equipment. Research will continue.

9.7 To update on arrangements for the Pavilion reopening and social evening on 6th October: see item 9.5. Thank you to Cllr Ken Crofton for the locality budget grant of £300 for refreshments. This is currently being applied for by the Clerk.

9.8 To discuss Cricket Club 2021 play season & Risk Assessment (RA): The Boundary RA has been completed and it advised that netting of various heights up to 18 metres high be erected in certain areas would reduce the risk of ball strikes outside the boundary area. After discussion, it was agreed that this will be costly, unsightly and obviously not eliminate the risk altogether. Cllrs resolved that in order to help mitigate the risk of fast balls falling outside the boundary area and striking property the Cricket Club will be asked not to play T20 style matches on our small village cricket field from next season.

9.9 To update on Apple Day Care (ADC) use of the pavilion: Cllr Stokes reported that members of the PC recently held an informal meeting with the director of ADC. It is unlikely that ADC will use the pavilion again until January 2022, after the current contract ends in September. Cllrs agreed that the venue was not suitable for wrap around care and that ADC may use the C&C Pavilion again for similar hours from January.

9. FINANCE

10.1 To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts: Clerk had circulated the latest accounts. These were unanimously approved and signed.

10.2 To approve changes to signatories, account name and details on PC Bank Account: The Clerk explained that it has come to light that the exact name on the Natwest bank account is incorrect. In order for the Clerk to be able to change the bank account name, a mandate needs to be completed by the only remaining signatory on the account, Cllr Hunter. It was agreed that the Clerk should also become a signatory on the account. It was resolved that Cllr Hunter would complete the mandate form with the Clerk in due course.

It was discussed that funds are needed in order for the firework display organisers to purchase items they need for the event. It was noted that as the RC bank account was closed last year, this has made withdrawing funds difficult. The Clerk is in process of researching how the PC can release funds for recreational events and take electronic payments by card.

11. To approve the date of the next meeting on Wednesday 17th November:
Unanimously approved.

12. To close the meeting: Cllr Stokes closed the meeting at 9.20 pm