



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 17th November 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

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

Others present: Laura Brooks-Payne – Clerk, 4 members of the public

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and approve:** Cllr Eaglestone, Cllr Ken Crofton, Linda Haysey
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation:** none
- 3. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd September 2021:** unanimously approved as an accurate record.
- 4. Chairs Report:** Cllr Stokes reported that the PC continue to be extremely busy. The refurbished pavilion was officially opened in October. Ken Crofton kindly provided refreshments from his locality budget. New benches and picnic tables have been purchased with the 'Welcome Back' grant. These are now in situ, in their winter position, next to the pavilion. Cllr Stokes thanked Cllr Morris, Standbrook and Tony for their help with assembling these. On Remembrance Sunday there was an additional small ceremony at the War Memorial led by the Vice Chairman, Cllr Hunter. This was well attended. Cllr Stokes attended a conference organised by the Herts Sports Partnership which was informative. The Parish venues have been added to their register for hire. Cllr Stokes will deliver a Dementia Friends Information Session on 10th January 2022 at 7.30pm in the village hall for residents to attend free of charge. Cllr Eaglestone will be collecting 20 'bags of kindness' distributed via CDA Herts to be given to residents of the village who may be alone over the Christmas period.

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

- 5. To receive questions and comments from the public:** none

Standing Orders reinstated from here

- 6. To discuss a new social committee and fundraising:** Cllr Stokes explained that the PC need to consider how they move forward with a new committee. It was discussed that there is currently no one 'group' of residents who would like to take this on. Individual events could be run by interested parties. It was suggested that the PC look back at the last village survey results to re-establish contact with those interested parties. It was noted that there has been interest via the Community Café to hold a 'Strictly Come Dancing' finale party in the village hall on 18th December. Cllr Stokes will form an Organising Committee. It was noted that the Firework evening in November did not take place this year because

inadequate time was available to ensure that the correct insurance, and health & safety measures were in place. This will be taken into account when planning the firework evening for 2022.

7. HIGHWAYS

7.1 **To discuss speeding issues:** Cllr Stokes reported that PC's can now request for the Police speed camera vehicle to attend the village to carry out speed checks. Regular requests will be made. Appropriate vehicle locations were discussed.

Cllr Stokes reported that she had recently attended a zoom meeting organised by 20's Plenty for Herts. Herts County Council are looking to roll out 20mph zones for certain parts of the County and a copy of the map of suggested locations sent to district councillors has been requested from Cllr Crofton.

7.2 **To update on the state of the drains on Robins Nest Hill:** Cllr Standbrook reported the issue to Thames water of suspected sewage leaking from a manhole. It was subsequently discovered that Thames Water are not responsible for this, but in fact Highways is responsible. This has been reported. Cllr Stokes has also spoken to Environmental Health in reference to the issue. The PC will continue to investigate with a view to getting this problem resolved.

8. PLANNING

8.1 **To receive & discuss the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk:** the PC have visited the recent application sites and comments have been forwarded to the planning department.

8.2 **To discuss system for viewing applications:** It was discussed that the current viewing and reporting on new applications is working well.

9. OPEN SPACES

9.1 **To report on playground issues:** Cllr Standbrook reported that maintenance is up to date with minor issues. The old picnic table needs to be disposed of.

9.2 **To report on overgrown hedges and footways:** Cllr Standbrook reported that he has received a quote from one of the PC's preferred suppliers to cut back the hedge along the edge of the recreation field. Cllr Standbrook will also ask the Cricket Club contractor to quote.

It was discussed that it would be an idea to reduce the height of the hedge at the back of the recreation field to enable residents to be able to see the view across the valley. Cllr Standbrook will try and have this added into the scope of work for this Autumn.

Cllr Kent reported that he is still working with the rights of way officer regarding clearing of parish footpaths. There is currently a voluntary role advertised on the website for a 'surveyor' to identify rights of way issues twice per year, which would be ideal for a local resident.

9.3 **To update on new benches & picnic tables:** see item 4

9.4 **To update on litter collection:** Cllr Hunter reported that Paul has now returned to the village and will carry on with his litter picking role from the beginning of December. The PC thanked Mark for covering in his absence. The PC have now acquired larger trade waste bins

which will be emptied weekly and stored behind the pub. It was discussed and agreed the PC will purchase another black bin to replace the damaged green litter bin on the recreation field.

9.5 To discuss grass carpet matting for parking on the recreation field: Cllr Stokes has investigated pricing for heavy grass matting. The PC has provisionally been offered approx. £6500 towards this from the 'Welcome Back Fund'. It was agreed that the PC would go ahead with this to enable additional village parking. It was discussed that this will only be used as and when needed for larger events in the village and hirers of the hall and pavilion by prior arrangement. The area will not be available for everyday parking.

9.6 To discuss resident's concerns regarding the village shop: Cllr Stokes reported that she received 4 responses regarding the shop potentially using the recreation field as a temporary location. It was noted that this is not going ahead because of planning permission constraints. The responses flagged up some concerns around parking, waste disposal and village relations. This information has been passed to the owners of the shop and it was suggested that further communication is had between the owners of the shop and the immediate local residents.

9.7 To discuss the Queens Canopy project: Cllr Stokes reported that funding of £350 has been made available to purchase trees/hedging as part of this project. Cllr Eaglestone has taken the lead on this. Discussion was had regarding exact placement of trees.

10. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

Village Hall

10.1 To report on the Village Hall: Cllr Standbrook reported that the joists in some places below the flooring are now not supporting the floor probably due to water leakage. It was suggested that a full inspection was arranged to ascertain issues that need working on, including the roof. Cllr Standbrook will obtain quotations and investigate further. Heating was also discussed. Infra-red heating has been researched and Cllrs agreed that this will be put on hold due to the high cost of installation. Cllr Morris and Standbrook will discuss installing thermostats to the existing heaters to increase efficiency.

10.2 To update on advertising and a booking system for use of the Village Hall and C&C Pavilion: Clerk advised that she had researched booking calendars to add to the website for potential hirers to look at availability. It was discussed that the current website could not support a simple free calendar. Further discussion is needed regarding websites along with the future increase in bookings.

Cricket & Community Pavilion (C&C Pavilion)

10.3 To receive the latest report & information on the Cricket & Community Pavilion: Cllrs Standbrook reported that there is a faulty heater in the pavilion still under warranty which is being dealt with. Cllr Morris will look at the clock mechanism which is not working. The gutters will need to be cleaned when all the leaves have fallen. Gutter guards were discussed. The trial period for Home Farm Dog Training (HFDT) operating at the pavilion and on the field has ended and Cllr Stokes reported that HFDT would like to have an annual contract with the PC. This was discussed and a draft contract will be forwarded to HFDT.

- 10.4 **To update on pavilion bar refurbishment:** Cllr Standbrook distributed a list of works and costs to Cllrs prior to the meeting. It was thought that the Cricket Club have provisionally agreed to pay half of this refurbishment. It was agreed that funds required for the refurbishment will not be added to the precept but taken from parish reserves and income from rentals.
- 10.5 **To report on the end of season meeting with the cricket club:** Cllrs Stokes and Standbrook reported that this was a positive meeting. The fixture list for the 2022 season will be forthcoming. Members of the Cricket Club have asked the PC if they could have a reduced rent for the 2022 season. This was discussed and it was agreed that further discussion will be had further into the financial year.
- 10.6 **To discuss the possibility of holding car boot sales on the recreation field:** Cllr Stokes has received an enquiry to hold car boot sales. This was discussed and it was agreed that this was not a possibility due to cricket fixtures, traffic congestion, lack of parking and damage to the recreation field.

11. FINANCE

- 11.1 **To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts:** Clerk had circulated the accounts to Cllrs prior to the meeting which were unanimously agreed.
- 11.2 **To approve the budget & precept for 2022-2023:** Clerk had circulated the document to Cllrs prior to the meeting, these had been discussed and it was agreed that the precept sought would be £15,000.
- 11.3 **To adopt and approve the amended Financial Regulations:** Clerk had circulated the document to Cllrs prior to the meeting which was unanimously agreed and adopted.
- 11.4 **To consider a donation to Citizens Advice East Herts:** This was discussed and it was agreed to donate £100 to this good cause.

12. **To approve the date of the next meeting on 19th January 2022:** approved.

13. **To approve the meeting dates for 2022:** 19th January, 16th March, 18th May, 20th July, 21st September, 16th November. It was suggested that the Annual General Meeting could be held in April, dates will be considered.

14. **To close the meeting:** Cllr Stokes closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

Parish Clerk: Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne
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