



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 19th January at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

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

Others present: Laura Brooks-Payne – Clerk, 1 member of the public

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and approve:** Cllr Noble, Cllr Linda Haysey, Cllr Ken Crofton who also sent his condolences for Cllr Kent (see item 4)
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation:** Cllr Morris for item 10.2 and 10.5
- 3. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17th November 2021:** unanimously agreed
- 4. Chair's Report:**

Cllr Stokes paid tribute to Cllr Peter Kent who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on 12th December. Peter was diagnosed last summer with a rare form of blood cancer but had kept this private from everyone – including most of his family – so his death came as a complete shock to all of us. Peter joined the PC in January 2020 just at the start of both the pandemic and the emergency situation we had at the cricket pavilion. He immediately stepped in and offered to investigate possible grants and to assist in organising the first phase of the pavilion renovation. Peter's hard work and commitment to this project was hugely influential in its eventual success.

Peter also got involved in all the other areas of PC work and brought his professional knowledge and expertise, his good sense of humour and sound common sense to our discussion and decisions. He will be greatly missed.

The PC presented his widow, Jennifer, with a rose bush – called Rosa Kent- in his memory. This is a patio rose so she can take it with her if she moves house in the future. As requested rather than funeral flowers a donation will be made to Blood Cancer Research.

In December Cllr Hunter collected 20 Bags of Kindness from the Charity Small Acts of Kindness to be distributed to lonely, elderly, sick and bereaved residents in the parish. The PC added some seasonal treats to these bags, and they were distributed just before Christmas.

The rapidly rising number of Omicron Covid cases meant that the Strictly Final night party that had been planned for Saturday 18th December was cancelled. This was

very disappointing for all those involved in its organisation. The raffle prizes which had been donated will be kept for the next event.

The January Dementia Friends Information session was postponed and will now be held on Wednesday 23rd February at 7.30 in the village hall. This is a free event and open to everyone. Places are limited. Please book via The Dementia Friends website.

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 & agree actions for the celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee: Cllr Stokes explained that the church are planning a flower festival that will run from 2nd to 5th June 2022. It was agreed that the PC will organise a village Big Lunch /Picnic on the recreation field on Sunday 5th June. The Cricket Club will be approached to see if they would like to be involved, and perhaps play a match on one of the days. Purchasing a beacon was also discussed as too was a bonfire to be held on the 2nd June. A committee needs to be organised to organise events. Cllr Eaglestone will investigate prices for a beacon.

7. HIGHWAYS

7.1 To discuss speeding issues: Cllr Stokes reported that she is continuing to work closely with 20's plenty for Hertfordshire. The Police department who organise the speed camera vehicle have visited the site location suggested by Cllr Stokes today to assess if it is an appropriate location to carry out the survey.

It was reported that Herts Highways have recently been out to assess drain issues on Robins Nest Hill. After discussion it was suggested that a site meeting be arranged with the landowner who owns the land that the drains run below.

Cllr Morris advised that the PC did not need any more stock of salt this year and will investigate prices for additional salt bins for locations in the village.

8. PLANNING

8.1 To receive & discuss the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk: Cllrs discussed recent applications. The PC had already commented on all but one application which was discussed. Cllr Morris will organise a site meeting with the applicant in order for the PC to comment on the application by 26th January.

9. OPEN SPACES

9.1 To report on playground issues: Cllr Standbrook will ask Simon Hedley if he will regularly maintain the ground bark.

9.2 To report on the contract with Home Farm Dog Training: Cllr Stokes reported that the 2022 contract has been signed for the company to use the recreation field on Tuesday

and Friday mornings throughout 2022. The outdoor cupboard at the pavilion will be used for their storage.

9.3 To update on grass carpet matting for parking on the recreation field: Cllr Stokes reported that quotes had been obtained and it was unanimously agreed that Frank Cooper & Sons was the best price at £5500 plus vat given that they would also install the matting at £880 plus vat. Cllr Stokes will submit the Welcome Back Fund grant application to Andrew Figgis at EHC for approval before placing the order.

9.4 To update on the Queen's Canopy project: Cllr Eaglestone reported that he had spoken with a landscape designer who had advised that a native Quercus Robur Oak species would be an appropriate robust long-lasting species to plant in a location on the recreation field. The tree would cost circa £140 and would need expert planting. Further information will follow. A brass plaque was discussed to mark the occasion too.

9.5 To agree the date for the Spring Litter Pick: Cllr Stokes reported that The Great British Litter Pick is running from 25th March to 10th April. It was agreed to hold a Litter Pick in the village on Sunday 3rd April 2022.

10. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

Village Hall

10.1 To report on the Village Hall: Cllr Standbrook reported that the chimney has now been repaired. A potential health survey for the village hall and cottage was discussed. In principle this was agreed. Cllr Standbrook & Eaglestone will research this further and obtain quotations.

10.2 To approve purchase and installation of a new heater in the Hall cottage: Cllr Standbrook advised that the cottage storage heater had broken. Cllr Morris advised that the heater is very old and the new storage heaters are much more efficient. It was unanimously agreed to replace the heater at a price of circa £800. Cllr Morris and Standbrook will progress this.

10.3 To review facilities hire charges: Cllr Stokes advised that compared with other parishes, our hire charges for the pavilion and village hall are very reasonable. Given the economic situation and pandemic situation, it was unanimously agreed that the hire charges will be reviewed again in the Autumn.

Cricket & Community Pavilion (C&C Pavilion)

10.3 To receive the latest report & information on the Cricket & Community Pavilion: The use of the storage facilities by the cricket club groundsman was discussed and it was agreed that this will be discussed further with the cricket club on 5th February and added into the new contract.

10.4 To discuss the cleaning contractor: Clerk reported that invoices have only recently been received and will be paid now bank details have been received. The current cleaner has increased the company's hourly rate. The PC are of the impression the service does not warrant an increase in hourly rate and will look at alternative companies in due course for this season.

10.5 **To update on pavilion bar refurbishment:** Cllr Standbrook reported that research is ongoing to source kitchen units at a reasonable cost and quotations for electricians. It was discussed that it would be helpful to instal an instant water heater while the refurbishment is taking place, this will be looked into further.

10.6 **To discuss terms for the 2022 contract with the Cricket Club:** It was agreed that the Cricket Club storage facilities should be made more specific within the contract. It was agreed that out of season storage is acceptable though will not be accessible during this period. It was unanimously agreed that the yearly rental cost will be kept the same as 2022 at a cost of £3500 for the year and not raised in line with inflation, given that the pandemic has altered financial situations. Waste removal details will also be revised within the contract.

Fixture lists will be required prior to the season starting. It was agreed that the PC will liaise with the Cricket Club regarding safety signage to be put out during play. It was discussed that the PC will look into purchasing generic safety signage for the perimeter of the field to warn car drivers and pedestrians of ball games being played.

11. FINANCE

11.1 **To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts:** The Clerk had circulated the most recent financial figures prior to the meeting. It was noted that the clerk had received a very high electricity invoice for the Pavilion from EON Next which is currently being investigated. Accounts were unanimously approved.

12. **To approve the date of the next meeting on 16th March 2022 and note the date of the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 30th March:** Approved.

13. **To close the meeting:** Cllr Stokes closed the meeting at 9.34pm.

Parish Clerk: Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne
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