



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Others present: Laura Brooks-Payne (Clerk) 7 members of the public, Linda Haysey - Leader of East Herts Council

- 1 To receive apologies for absence and approve:** Cllr Fellowes, Cllr Morris, Cllr Eaglestone
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation:** None
- 3. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th January 2023:** Cllrs unanimously approved the minutes.

4. Chair's Report:

Cllr Stokes reported that since the last PC meeting, Ringway have done some work on the drainage issues on Robin's Nest Hill. The cause of the large puddle which formed by the church every time it rained has been identified and the ditch cleared. However, over time the ditch will silt up again and the puddle will reappear. Unfortunately, the freezing weather meant that Ringway were unable to complete the clearing of the drain the entire length of the road and will have to come back for another 4 days, the date for which will be confirmed in due course.

In January, Cllr Stokes thanked those in the village who volunteer their time for the benefit of the village. On behalf of the Parish, the PC presented Georgie Deering with a bouquet of flowers to thank her for her time she spends litter picking.

Parish volunteers met in February to start planning an event celebrating the King's Coronation on 6th May 2023. There will be an evening BBQ at the pavilion organised by the Cricket Club(CC). The CC bar will be open, profits will be shared between the CC and the PC. A local Hertfordshire band will play two sets and there will be an Auction of Promises. Any donations for the auction will be gratefully received. Any money raised will be put towards the hall insulation project.

5. To receive questions and comments from the public:

A resident asked how the new clothing bank funds will be used. Cllr Stokes advised that the PC will receive a percentage of the funds raised per kilo.

A resident reported that there is some village reticence against the new clothing bank recently placed in the pub car park. It was reported by the resident that it could potentially attract anti-social behaviour including people using it as a urinal. It was also noted that the Parish is in a Conservation Area. The resident commented that it could become a problem in

the future with 'piles of clothes' surrounding the area and hence the area could become an eyesore. It was noted that planning permission may be needed for change of use of the pub car park. The clerk will investigate this. Cllr Stokes advised that the PC are mindful of the issues raised, and that the clothing bank is in situ on a trial basis, during which time the situation will be monitored closely. Cllr Haysey suggested that the resident keeps a record, including photographs, as evidence of any problems surrounding the bank. Cllr Stokes added that the village needed to increase funds and this another way of doing so.

6. To update on new PC Website:

Cllr Noble reported that the website is in progress and a draft will be available for Cllrs to view next week.

7. To update on the meeting held to start work on the archive materials:

Cllr Noble reported that the meeting will be held in due course.

8. HIGHWAYS

8.1 To update on the traffic survey:

Cllr Stokes reported that after three quotations being obtained, Herts County Council will be undertaking the traffic surveys on behalf of the PC which will be measuring speed and volume in two locations. The PC are awaiting a date as to when the surveys will occur.

9. PLANNING

9.1 To receive & discuss the latest Planning Report circulated by the clerk:

The Clerk had circulated the latest planning summary prior to the meeting. Cllrs discussed and noted that only one new application had come in since the last meeting and that the PC had sent comments to East Herts Planning for this.

10. OPEN SPACES

10.1 To report on playground issues:

Cllr Standbrook advised that he had spoken to CPM Playgrounds regarding the pits under the swing that have appeared from constant use/wear & tear, and occasionally flood. It had been discussed that the only way to permanently rectify the problem is to instal new surfacing which is very costly. It was also noted that the surface bark will be replaced this month, the cost of this being unanimously approved.

Cllr Standbrook also reported that one of the PC's Grounds Contractor's are no longer able to cut the grass on the field for the forthcoming season. Cllr Standbrook has met with two potential companies that could undertake the work and is awaiting quotes.

10.2 To update on siting of a charity clothing bank in the village:

See Item 5. Cllr Stokes also advised that the recycle bin will be in situ for a trial period of 6 months and will be emptied weekly.

10.3 To update on the upcoming First Aid course:

Cllr Stokes advised that the course being held on 29th March is now full with 2 residents on the waiting list.

11. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

11.1 To discuss registering the management of Parish premises as a Charity:

Cllr Stokes explained that she had recently attended a course on the subject to enable the PC to obtain further in-depth information. A Charity would need to be set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) responsible for the management of the Village Hall and Community Pavilion. The benefits of creating a Charity to look after the two buildings will include reduced Business Rates, and the ability to obtain the Grants that the PC is unable to access.

The plan would be for the PC to lease the properties to the charity so the assets can be recovered should the charity run into difficulties. All the responsibilities for the buildings would be on the charity as tenant. The Charity will need to have Trustees. It was noted that the PC, as a corporate body, cannot be a trustee of a CIO, but individual Cllrs can be management trustees. Initially two or three trustees from the PC could be nominated and then people sought from outside the council to act as trustees of the Charity. The Clerk has contacted a few solicitors in the last week, with a view to helping the PC to draw up the lease. Work is ongoing.

Village Hall

11.2 To update on quotations for insulation & secondary double glazing:

Cllr Standbrook reiterated that the PC were not able to obtain the grant promised for the work to be completed. There may, however, be funds available from April from the Shared Prosperity Fund. Work is ongoing.

11.3 To update on maintenance work carried out:

Cllr Standbrook reported that the tap in the kitchen needs to be replaced, this will be organised.

Cricket & Community Pavilion (C&C Pavilion)

Cllr Hunter reported that a new cleaner is required for the cricket season and has met with a potential new company. Cllrs unanimously agreed to take them on a trial basis for a month, at £15 per hour for 2 hrs per week during the cricket season.

11.4 To receive latest report on the C & C Pavilion:

Cllr Standbrook reported that the intruder alarm is battery driven and when it beeps twice it is time to replace the batteries. This has now been done and will need to be monitored regularly.

11.5 To update on the replacement of a new clock:

Cllr Stokes advised that the new clock has been ordered and hopefully will be delivered and installed in the next couple of weeks.

11.6 To update on installation of new security lights:

Cllr Stokes reported that Cllr Morris has the lights and will instal them on his return from holiday.

11.7 To update on maintenance work that has been carried out:

Cllr Standbrook advised that the leaves on the roof have been tackled. New chairs and tables were discussed, and further thought will be given to these.

Insulation to the roof was discussed, including boarding to enable access to the stopcock and clock.

11.8 To update on the Apple Day Care contract:

Cllr Stokes has sent a new draft Licence to Occupy to the company and is awaiting a reply. Cllrs unanimously agreed a new rate of £11 per hour for rental.

12 FINANCE

12.1 To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts:

The clerk had circulated the latest accounts prior to the meeting. Cllrs unanimously approved the accounts, which were also signed.

12.2 To discuss and approve solicitor costs for work on a lease between PC and any new charity running the village facilities:

Cllrs discussed the potential new Charity set up and approved costs pending two additional solicitor quotes currently being sought.

12.3 To update on possibility of obtaining funds from the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF):

Cllr Stokes reported that there may be funds available for the village hall insulation and double glazing via the SPF from April 2023 and work is ongoing to secure these funds.

13 To discuss upcoming Elections:

The Clerk explained that she had sent Cllrs an email with all the information needed to apply to become a Cllr again should they wish to. It was reiterated that if Cllrs did not complete and hand deliver the forms by the deadline of 4th April 2023, they would no longer be able to stand as Cllrs. Further information will be issued from East Herts Electoral Services to the Clerk, once all candidates have applied.

14 To discuss Leader of the Council, Linda Haysey's retirement:

Cllr Stokes asked if Cllrs would like to mark the occasion at the next meeting. It was agreed and discussed that thought would be given as to an appropriate gift.

15 To approve the date of the Annual Parish Meeting on 19th April 2023 and the Annual meeting of the Council on 24th May 2023:

Dates approved

16. To close the meeting:

Cllr Stokes closed the meeting at 8.45pm

Parish Clerk

Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne

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