



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 24th May 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

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

Cllrs not present: None

Others present: Parish Clerk – Laura Brooks-Payne, 2 members of the public

1. To elect the Chairman for 2023-24:

There was some discussion between Cllrs. Cllr Stokes was unanimously voted in as Chairperson.

2. To receive the Chairman's declaration of Acceptance of Office:

Form has been completed and received by the Clerk.

3. To elect a Vice-Chairman for 2023-24:

Cllr Hunter was unanimously voted in as Vice-Chair.

4. To receive the Vice-Chairman's declaration of Acceptance of Office:

Forms have been completed and received by the Clerk.

5. To review Policies & Documents held; Registers of Interest, Standing Orders, Financial regulations, Asset Register, Financial Risk Assessment, Data Protection Policy, Complaints Procedure, Website Accessibility:

Deferred to next meeting to enable time to ensure the PC is working with the most current dated policies. There is an updated Code of Conduct which the Clerk is currently working on.

Cllrs agreed to review one document each by the next meeting as follows;

Clerk – Code of conduct, asset register, financial regulations

Cllr Hunter – complaints

Cllr Stokes – Data Protection

Cllr Fellowes – financial risk assessment

Cllr Morris – Standing Orders

Cllr Noble – Website Accessibility

6. To co-opt the remaining seat for Councillor and for new Councillors to Sign their Declaration of Office:

Kate Noble was unanimously co-opted as the 7th Councillor member on the Parish Council.

Forms have been completed and received by the Clerk.

7. To receive apologies for absence and approve: None

8. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation: None

9. To approve & sign minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th March 2023:

The Clerk had circulated the minutes prior to the meeting. These were unanimously approved and signed by the Chair.

10. Chair Report:

Cllr Stokes thanked the committee of residents that came together to organise a very successful village event celebrating the King's Coronation at the beginning of the month. Thanks to the generosity of many the only cost was the hire of the band. The BBQ, Bar and Auction of Promises raised much needed funds for the Hall Insulation Project and the Cricket Club. The final total has yet to be calculated so will be reported on in due course.

Fund raising for capital improvements to community buildings continues to be a priority to avoid increases in council tax so it is disappointing that all residents are not supporting the trial of the Clothing Bank initiative and the PC are having to investigate other less favourable locations for the bin.

The East Herts Lottery is a very simple way for residents to support the village and a £1 ticket each week puts you in with a chance of winning a £25,000 cash prize and this month, a luxurious European City Break.

At the very well attended Annual Parish Meeting on 19th April, the PC wished Linda Haysey, the PC's Ward Councillor for the past 12 years a long and happy retirement. She was presented with an engraved oak cheese board from the village to thank her for all her hard work and support. Linda kindly donated to the village 3 large folding trestle tables for the pavilion and a large quantity of white bone china, which will be stored in the hall and pavilion for use at future events.

At the APM an ex-member of the Recreation Committee asked that villagers were made aware of the funds that were transferred to the Parish Council from the Recreation Committee's account. At the PC's discretion this money is available to anyone wanting to organise a community event in the village. This information will be posted on the community website and in the next mailout to residents.

After a postponement due to illness, the Emergency First Aid course went ahead in April. The course was excellent, and attendees reported feeling much more confident about coping in an emergency situation. Unfortunately, not everyone who expressed an interest secured a place, so another course will be organised next year.

Cllr Stokes advised that there were no crimes reported to the police in Little Berkhamsted in April. However, there has been an increase in theft from vehicles in the area and residents are reminded to always lock their vehicles, particularly at night.

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

11. To receive questions and comments from the public:

Andrew Green attended the meeting. Andrew rents a field in the village and keeps 6 alpacas on the field. Andrew would like to carry out Alpaca experiences and walks. Andrew has approached the PC to ask of the potential to hire the recreation field to carry out part of the walk and use the facilities at the pavilion after the walk.

Andrew plans to run the walks between April and September, two to three times a week including Saturday mornings. Andrew explained that he is flexible with times and would like to work with the PC to and the Community to allow this to happen. Cllrs briefly discussed the proposal and agreed that this will need to be discussed with the Cricket Club, who regularly use the field on a Saturday for matches. Cllrs agreed to hold a couple of 'meet the alpacas' events during the summer to gauge levels of interest in the service. The dates will be organised in due course and advertised to residents. Andrew will liaise with the Clerk going forward. In principal Cllrs are interested with working with the proposal, subject to seeing Risk Assessments and relevant paperwork.

Standing Orders reinstated from here

12. To update on new PC Website:

Cllr Noble reported that there have been difficulties with photos being uploaded because they need to be in 'RAW' format, but that the design was well underway. Cllr Noble will forward Cllrs the current draft version.

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

Cllr Noble reported that a date will be organised in due course.

14. HIGHWAYS

14.1 To update on traffic surveys:

Cllr Stokes reported that the traffic surveys have now been completed. Two weeks were surveyed on Robins Nest Hill and one week on Church Road. At first glance the data clearly shows that the majority of the traffic is travelling at over 30mph. Approximately 500 vehicles travel daily in each direction through the centre of the village between 8am and 9am every weekday morning. The information has been forwarded to Highways to enable the PC to discuss future traffic calming measures. The data will need to be analysed. Cllr Fellowes suggested that the data is sent to the national 20's Plenty for Us campaign to advise the PC on the data received. Cllrs briefly discussed traffic calming measures for the village. It was agreed that the PC will liaise with Highways to ascertain the next steps.

15. PLANNING

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

Cllrs discussed the report. There has been one more application since the last meeting.

16. OPEN SPACES

16.1 To report on playground issues:

Cllr Standbrook advised there is nothing to report.

16.2. To discuss and approve contract for Alpaca Walking on the field:

Discussed in item 11.

16.3. To discuss and approve involvement in a Hedgehog Highway project:

The information regarding a Charity project to purchase hedgehog route markers to raise awareness of the hedgehog's plight had been distributed to Cllrs prior to the meeting by the Clerk. Cllrs agreed to support this cause. The Clerk will liaise with the charity.

17. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

17.1 To discuss registering the management of Parish premises as Charities:

Cllr Stokes advised that she is awaiting a third quotation for the work to be carried out and will liaise with Cllrs when this has been received.

18. Village Hall

18.1 To update on grant for insulation & secondary double glazing:

Cllr Standbrook advised that the PC are waiting for the East Herts contracts officer to sign off the application to enable the funds to be transferred to the PC.

18.2 To update on maintenance work carried out:

Cllr Standbrook advised that the tap in the kitchen has been replaced.

19. Cricket & Community Pavilion (C&C Pavilion)

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

Cllr Hunter reported that new cleaners have been appointed for the pavilion which is working well. Apple Daycare (ADC) Nursery are using the pavilion again for the season. The ADC provision at the pavilion had its 6 yearly Ofsted Audit last week: The owner was delighted that a good rating was received in all areas. The Cricket Club are up and running again this season. They have had to cancel some matches because of the wet conditions. The dog training classes are still running twice a week weather permitting. The Friday Club is still being held, more residents from Little Berkhamsted and also Bayford are attending. A Christening celebration was held in the pavilion last month.

The takings for the Coronation event (bar and auction) will be reported in due course.

Cllr Hunter also reported the celebrations for the Coronation of King Charles took place on the Recreation Field on Saturday 6th May. The weather was poor and wet but this did not spoil the enjoyment. A band played, the bar was open and the BBQ was lit. The Auction of Promises was led by Cllr Morris as the auctioneer. There were 13 lots ranging from babysitting to 2 tickets for

Ascot ladies' day. £785 was raised to go towards the insulation in the village hall roof. Cllr Hunter thanked the volunteers.

19.2 To update on the replacement of the new clock & security lights:

Cllr Stokes reported that the new Pavilion Clock is up and working. Cllr Morris has agreed to put up the security lights in the next two weeks.

19.3 To discuss review of the Cricket Club's (CC) Contract with the PC:

Cllr Stokes explained that the contract is due to be reviewed in June for the remainder of the fee for 2023. It was noted that the wet weather has impacted a couple of games this year. Cllr Standbrook advised that the CC need to be reminded to publish their fixture list. It was noted that the CC have blocked the gent's toilet and not resolved the issue. Cllr Standbrook explained that the CC nets to be removed when play is not on. Cllrs discussed reviewing the rent but agreed to arrange a meeting with the CC to discuss the recent issues, and will approve any change in rent at the next meeting.

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

Cllr Standbrook reported that the water tap has been replaced on the field. The Clerk advised that she is attempting to communicate with Affinity Water (the wholesaler who deal with the equipment for Castle Water) to attend the site to repair a leak on the stop tap.

19.5 To update on the Apple Day Care contract:

Cllr Stokes reported that the 2023 contract has been signed and hourly rate agreed.

20. FINANCE

20.1 To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts:

The clerk had circulated the latest accounts prior to the meeting. The clerk explained that additional sheets and columns had been added to the new spreadsheet for the Financial Year that has just started. This will enable the Clerk & Cllrs to have an immediate overview of the two PC managed buildings – the village hall and the pavilion.

20.2 To approve the Internal Audit:

The Clerk explained that she has been working with the Internal Auditor, Janet Pearce, over the last few weeks on both the Internal and External Audits. Documents were circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. This is now complete.

20.3 To approve figures for the External Audit and Chair to sign audit forms:

The Clerk explained that she has completed the External Audit figures and accompanying online forms including explanation of variances which has also been checked by the internal Auditor. The Chair has signed the External Audit Forms.

21. To approve the date of the next Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 19th July 2023:

Date approved. Cllrs will meet at 7.30pm on 19th June in the Pavilion for an informal meeting.

22. To close the meeting:

Cllr Stokes closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

**Parish Clerk
Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne**

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