



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

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

Cllrs not present: none

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

- 1 To receive apologies for absence and approve:** District Cllr Ken Crofton and Sandie Ash - approved
- 2. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation:** none
- 3. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17th January 2024:** approved
- 4. Chair's Report:**

Cllr Stokes reported that the PC have been successful in an application for a grant from EHC to complete the current improvements to the village hall. The PC can now upgrade the heaters, install thermal window blinds and get an EPC for the building. As a result we will have a warm welcoming space, reduced energy bills and contributed to Net Zero.

This week is ACRE Village Halls Week 2024 and their theme is Go Green. Cllr Stokes thanked Cllr Standbrook who shared his knowledge, experience and expertise at the East Herts Village Halls and Community Buildings Consortium conference that was held this morning.

Cllr Stokes reported that the contract for the Alpaca Walks has been signed. They will start in the next month or so with non-paying walkers helping the organiser with the initial set up. The PC will be kept informed of plans and provided with a full schedule in due course.

The cricket season starts next month and Apple Day Care will be using the pavilion a few days a week over the summer period. These hirers along with the Dog Training Classes taking place on the field mean that excellent use is being made of the pavilion and field. It was noted that the village hall is now open and available for hire - at a reduced rate for village residents.

Cllr Stokes advised that the PC just missed the deadline for applications for a grant from Cllr Deering's Locality Budget. Cllr Stokes thanked Bob for making this available to the Parish and assured him that the PC will be making an application in the next round.

The PC has been advised that notice has been given that the Modification Order for Bridleway 18 has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. An Inspector will be appointed by the Secretary of State to determine the Order and consideration of it will take the form of exchanges of statements and comments of case. The deadline for submissions is 7th May. Further information will be available on the 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 update on new PC Website:

Cllr Stokes advised that a meeting is being held tomorrow morning with Shy Studios, Cllr Stokes and Cllr Fellowes to discuss the design. Cllrs will report back.

7. To update on work being done with archive materials:

Cllr Morris has not yet managed to get in contact with Kate Noble to collect the material but will try again.

8. To discuss 80th Anniversary D-day celebrations:

Cllr Stokes has advertised for help for a potential event for the last 3 months but has received very little response. Putting on an event was discussed, but without help an event cannot run. The provision of food, drinks, and the pub running a bar was discussed. However, with lack of help, the PC could organise for the beacon to be lit, and the pavilion open showing the D-day landing. The beacon lighting will be advertised further, this may attract more interest for helpers.

Cllr Stokes advised that there is a specific flag that can be purchased for the event. Cllrs agreed to purchase, this was unanimously approved.

9. HIGHWAYS

9.1 To update on traffic calming:

Cllr Stokes reported that further traffic surveys on Robins Nest Hill took place in January. The data shows that, overall, the mean speed is 34/35mph, which covers the entire 24 hour period. Though many other factors need to be taken into account when looking at the overall picture of speeding. There are over 3000 vehicles using the road and the traffic seems to slow down due to the SID placement. Cllr Stokes will liaise with Rupert Thacker to gauge thoughts on the way forward.

10. PLANNING

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

The Clerk had circulated the latest planning report prior to the meeting. There is one new application since the last meeting. It was discussed and agreed that the PC would send a comment of no objection for the application at 1 Woodcock Lodge Farm, 3/24/0526/FUL.

11. OPEN SPACES

11.1 To report on playground issues:

Cllr Standbrook reported that fence has been repaired behind the goalpost. New signs have been installed. The rose bush has been removed in the playground. Cllr Standbrook advised that twigs and branches have been picked up and deposited in the corner of the churchyard. Cllr Standbrook will liaise with Sandie Ash regarding this.

11.2 To update on quotes for replacing the field path and improving drainage:

Cllr Standbrook/Eaglestone now have 3 quotes. All quotes are comparable at circa £6,000. The PC may receive funding towards the project. Work is ongoing.

11.3 To discuss the replacement of missing stile on Footpath 11:

The Clerk has been in touch with the landowner to ask them to allow a staggered barrier to be installed, replacing the previously removed stile. This is at the location of the exit to the path onto

Church Road, to increase safety for users. The barrier would be installed free of charge by Rights of way. The footpath comes straight out onto Church Road. The landowner will not allow this.

- 11.4 **To update on work needed on Footpath 10:** Cllr Stokes reported that she has spoken to Nick Maddex from Countryside & Rights of Way, about the need to improve the surface of the footpath. There may be funding available from May.

12. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

- 12.1 **To update on registering the management of Parish premises as Charities:**
Cllr Stokes reported that the decision on this has been deferred until there is a new council after May's elections.
- 12.2 **To discuss advertising of both venues:**
Cllr Stokes suggested that the facilities need to be further promoted, especially the village hall having recently been refurbished. Cllrs discussed advertising on Facebook & Instagram. Ways in which this can be achieved were discussed. The height of the hall will be measured (Cllr Morris) to ascertain if bouncy castles can be allowed. It was suggested that the creation of floor plans for the village hall and pavilion could be designed and added to the website, to show off the facilities. Cllr Stokes/Fellowes will discuss the matter at the website meeting tomorrow and will report back. The Clerk will investigate heights of bouncy castles and prices for free-standing whiteboards/flip charts and permanent wall display boards.

13. Village Hall

- 13.1 **To update on maintenance work carried out:** Cllr Standbrook reported that the new toilet alarm has been installed. Safety lights will be checked annually in January by I & B Electrical. Draught excluder brushes will be installed on the door in due course. Cllr Eaglestone suggested an automatic closure on the outside gate by the front door for child safety and will investigate prices for a new gate.
- 13.2 **To update on the grant application for thermal blinds, EPC & heaters:** see agenda item 4. Cllrs discussed the type of new heaters that could be installed. Cllr Standbrook will investigate 'intelligent' heaters that can be programmed to come on when required.
- 13.3 **To discuss the Annual Parish meeting and refurbished hall opening:** Cllr Stokes advised that meeting will start at 7.30pm. Cllr Stokes and Hunter will organise refreshments. Cllr Fellowes suggested creating some displays on the history of the hall and the village.

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

- 14.1 **To receive latest report on the C & C Pavilion:** Cllr Hunter asked if the Healthy Hub banner needs to be returned to CDA. The Clerk will investigate.
- 14.2 **To update on maintenance work that has been carried out:** Cllr Standbrook reported that a pipe recently froze, causing a leak in the ceiling which is currently being repaired. The batteries need changing in the sensor on the alarm and in the key cupboard. Cllr Morris will complete this work.
- 14.3 **To discuss Apple Day Care (ADC) contract for this year:** Cllr Stokes advised that ADC would like to use the pavilion starting on 16th April, 3 days a week, Tuesday to Thursday, 7.30am to 3.30pm. Cllr Stokes has spoken to the immediate neighbour regarding the early start time. It has been agreed that ADC would start at 7.30am for the first few weeks of term until the footpath has dried out. The parents can then drop the children directly at the pavilion for this short period.
Cllr Stokes also advised that ADC would like to use the Pavilion for an open day on Monday 8th April. This was agreed.

15. FINANCE

It was noted by the Clerk that the External Audit forms had just been published by PKF Littlejohn. The Clerk will be working on the figures in the next month.

- 15.1 **To approve the financial statement and payment of accounts:** The Clerk had circulated the latest accounts prior to the meeting. Cllrs approved the accounts.
- 15.2 **To approve cost of new disabled alarm, £260:** Cllrs agreed and approved expenditure.
16. **To report that a Casual Councillor Vacancy has been advertised:** The advertisement is on the noticeboard and website and information has been sent out in a mailchimp.
17. **To approve the date of the next Parish Council meeting – Wednesday 24th April – Annual Parish Meeting and Wednesday 15th May – Annual Meeting of the Council:** Agreed and approved
18. **To close the meeting:** Cllr Stokes closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

Parish Clerk
Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne
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