



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council (AMC) of the Council held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall in Little Berkhamsted.

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

Cllrs not present: Cllr Cookson

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

1. To elect the Chairman for 2025-2026:

Cllr Wayne Morris, proposed by Cllr Hunter and seconded by Cllr Eaglestone

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

Cllr Morris signed the form.

3. To elect a Vice-Chairman for 2025-2026:

Cllr Elaine Hunter, proposed by Cllr Morris and seconded by Cllr Fellowes

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

Cllr Hunter signed the form.

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:

The Clerk explained that documents had not changed since last year and proposed they all be adopted for the forthcoming year. The Clerk will, however, review all the forms over the coming months. Cllrs unanimously agreed. It was discussed whether the PC should have in place Fire Risk Assessments for both the Pavilion and the Village Hall.

ACTION

The Clerk will look at model documents for risk assessments.

6. To receive apologies for absence and approve: Cllr Cookson, Cllr Bob Deering

7. To receive declaration of interest and dispensation: None

8. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 19th March 2025:

Cllr Standbrook noted that Cllrs unanimously agreed and approved the minutes.

9. Chair Welcome:

Cllr Morris welcomed residents.

Standing orders suspended

This is the only section in which members of the public are allowed to speak, at all other times, Councillors & Clerk only are permitted to speak.

10. To receive questions and comments from the public:

Sandie Ash asked where the Defib would be situated near the Beehive Pub and when it would be fitted. Cllr Morris advised that he will be fitting the unit in the next week.

Further Defib training was also discussed. Cllr Morris suggested a general first aid course for residents too. The Clerk advised that she organised the Defib training last time it was undertaken.

Sandie also asked where the archive photos are being kept. Cllr Morris has most of the archive material which will be scanned in and added to the website when it is up and running.

ACTION

Cllr Morris to fit the Defib at the Beehive Pub.

The Clerk will contact the first aid trainer to organise Defib training & obtain prices for a First Aid Course.

Standing Orders reinstated

11. HIGHWAYS

11.1 To update on traffic calming implementation:

Cllr Fellowes advised that the Clerk was to contact the Clerk at Bayford regarding funding from the PCC for traffic calming. This has not been carried out and would be.

Cllr Morris suggested that the PC re-visit the 20's plenty campaign to potentially obtain a 20mph limit through the centre of the village. This was discussed at length. It was suggested that because traffic calming is likely to incur very large costs, to speak to Cllr Crofton in the first instance to gain his thoughts on how best to tackle the issue.

The Pencil sign at the bottom junction at the bottom of Robins Nest Hill has been removed and not replaced and the bus stop moved to its place. This seems a dangerous place for the bus stop which additionally has no waiting area.

ACTION

The Clerk will contact Highways regarding the missing sign and bus stop.

The Clerk will contact the Clerk at Bayford PC.

Cllr Morris will arrange a meeting with Cllr Crofton.

12. PLANNING

12.1 To receive & discuss the latest Planning Report circulated by the Clerk:

The Clerk had today, circulated to Cllrs a detailed report from the Senior Planning Officer at East Herts Council regarding the Bucksbury Farm Enforcement Case.

A meeting organised by East Herts Council Planning department meeting will take place online via zoom tomorrow in which Bellswood Development on Bucks Alley will be discussed (NB this development is within Bayford Parish). Clerk and Cllrs will be attending.

13. OPEN SPACES

Litter Picking was discussed. It was noted that the resident from Bucks Alley who has regularly picked up litter no longer does because of the dangerous nature of the roads. Cllrs, therefore, discussed the possibility of organising another Parish Litter Pick. A date of Sunday September 28th 2025 was proposed and agreed. Cllr Hunter agreed to organise and advertise the event.

ACTION

Cllr Hunter will organise the September Litter Pick.

Cllr Cookson will advertise the event as a Mailchimp and/or in the Parish Magazine.

13.1 To report on playground issues:

Cllr Standbrook reported that materials have been purchased for the repairs.

13.2 To update on new hard standing area to the front of the pavilion:

Cllr Standbrook advised that the work has been started this week. In addition, a hard standing area is being installed for the tennis table to be located, in order for it to stand on a hard level surface. The cost for this work is an additional £1500 plus vat. This was agreed and approved by Cllrs, half of the cost being taken from the ring-fenced Recreation Fund.

It has been discovered whilst the work is being undertaken that there is an electric pipe running through the ground so slight alterations to the ground design will be required.

13.3 To update on refurbishment of the goal mouth on the recreation field:

Cllr Standbrook reported that this had been repaired with top soil and grass seed and is ready to be used again.

13.4 To approve purchase of containers for planting around village signs:

Cllr Morris asked for this to be deferred to the next meeting, though the overgrown surrounding foliage was discussed and the height of the signs, so the planters will need to be low in height.

ACTION

Cllr Morris to research planters.

13.5 To update on maintenance of highway hedges:

The Clerk advised that she had been in touch with the landowner who has not maintained the hedgerows of her land along Church Road, for some time. The landowner reverted back to the PC to ask for photos. Cllr Morris has replied to explain that it is the landowners responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the state of their own land/hedgerows. The PC are awaiting a response.

ACTION

Cllr Morris will write to the landowner one more time before taking the matter further.

13.6 To update on repairs to the uneven alleyway between Goddards Close to Church Road:

Cllr Hunter & Cllr Fellowes have contacted Network Homes, Herts County Council and Highways, and ascertained that none of these contacts seem to own the footway. Highways suggested that the PC contact the Property Team at East Herts District to gain further information.

ACTION

Cllr Fellowes will contact the Property Team.

14. PREMISES MANAGEMENT

14.1 To update on advertising for both venues:

It was discussed that the buildings are regularly advertised on the website, in the newsletter and via mailchimp, as well as a hall booking website.

Cllr Morris suggested that children's summer camp companies may be able to make use of the pavilion and the recreation ground.

ACTION

Cllr Morris will contact some Summer Camp Companies.

VILLAGE HALL

14.2 To update on maintenance work carried out – Cllr Standbrook

Nothing to update since last meeting

14.3 To update on repair of damage caused by the Limes boiler flue;

Cllr Standbrook reported that after the last PC discussion re concerns with implications to the PC insurance that he has emailed the owner twice who has not responded to date. Simon Hedley has repaired the wall and added a piece of Perspex to help protect the wall. It was discussed and agreed that this temporary repair is not a permanent resolution to the problem.

ACTION

Cllr Standbrook will contact the owner of the Limes by phone to chat to them about how we can work together going forward.

14.4 To discuss repairs to condensation build up in the cottage:

Cllrs Standbrook and Morris visited the cottage to assess the extent of the problem. A moisture meter was used. Considerable damp was found surrounding the chimney stack. There are small areas of mildew on a couple of walls, and in the bathroom. It was discussed that increased airflow is required.

The letter box is falling out and plaster on the exterior wall has blown. The front door and frame is in poor repair and could do with replacement.

It was noted that a layer of insulation would benefit the exterior walls.

ACTION

Cllr Standbrook will obtain quotations for the work required.

14.5 To discuss new sign for the front of the hall:

It was discussed that there is minimal room at the entrance to erect a new sign and therefore not feasible.

ACTION

Clerk will remove item from the next agenda.

CRICKET & COMMUNITY PAVILION (C&C Pavilion)

14.6 To receive latest report/maintenance work on the C & C Pavilion:

Cllr Hunter reported that the Cricket Club had started playing again for the season.

Unfortunately a fight had taken place last weekend between the teams and the match abandoned.

Apple Daycare have cleared out their storage shed and the pavilion door key will be returned to Cllr Hunter.

There seems to be an uptick in bookings. It was noted that now the pavilion has been refurbished and painted, and a new patio is being put in place, the facility is more desirable for future bookings.

Cllr Standbrook reported that the loft storage and insulation work is now complete.

The table tennis equipment will be stored in the Pavilion going forward and not outside because it gets stolen.

It was noted that the cleaner is off for the next three weeks. Terry Hunter will be cleaning during this time.

ACTION

Cllr Cookson to advertise the table tennis table and new area in the Parish Magazine when work is complete.

14.7 To update on the painting of the exterior of the pavilion:

Cllr Standbrook reported that this has now been completed to a high standard.

15. To receive the latest Crime Report:

The Clerk had circulated the report prior to the meeting. It was noted that in the month of April there had been no crimes reported. Also see Addendum for further Police information.

Cllr Morris reported that the Ukrainian flag had been stolen from the Church.

16. To update on new PC Website:

Cllr Morris explained that Iones will be the new Website provider/host who provide a migration service in which the company liaise with all parties involved, eg PC IT Guy, PC website provider and Clerk to have the new website migrated over from the previous host. Cllr Standbrook also pointed out that Cllrs/Clerk need to see a version of what is going 'Live' because it was up to date about a year ago.

Cllr Standbrook advised that potential facility users trying to download the facilities booking form on the existing PC website sometimes have trouble downloading it. The Clerk advised that she is aware of the issue but had parked it because the new website was imminent, however, this has not been forthcoming.

ACTION

Cllr Morris will arrange for Iones to do the migration.

Cllr Morris will speak to Shy Studios (new website provider) to send an up to date copy of what will be going live.

The Clerk will speak to existing website provider to try and solve the booking form issue.

17. FINANCE

The Clerk explained that she had received news from the surveyor that she has been working with in order to potentially reduce Business rate costs for the Pavilion and the Village Hall. The Clerk explained that although the Village hall could not receive any discount (due to PC's not being able to receive retail discount) it was possible that the Pavilion would receive 100% discount going forward and will also receive rebates for invoices paid since 2024. The Clerk has now received a letter from East Herts Council confirming the refund.

17.1 To approve latest accounts summary circulated by the Clerk:

The clerk had circulated the latest accounts to Cllrs. These were unanimously approved.

17.2 To agree and approve Internal Audit:

The Clerk had circulated the document to Cllrs. Cllrs agreed and approved unanimously.

17.3 To agree and approve figures for the External Audit and sign documentation:

The Clerk had circulated the documents and figures to Cllrs. These were unanimously approved and documents signed by the Chair.

- 18. Items for future consideration:** None
- 19. To approve the date of the next Parish Council meeting:** 16th July 25 – Approved.
- 20. To close the meeting:** Cllr Morris closed the meeting at 9.55pm.

Parish Clerk
Mrs Laura Brooks-Payne
Email: clerk@littleberkhamsted.org.uk

ADDENDUM

Further Information received from the Local Rural Crime Officer for the month of April;

The Neighbourhood Policing Team have seen a rise in Burglaries across rural area's particularly across the EAST side and have proactively produced night time patrol strategies across the rural area's to help prevent further offences.

There has been an increase also in vehicle related crime including Theft of Motor vehicles.

At the recent Priority Setting Forum meeting in April, a review of the past 4 months priority of Hare coursing and poaching has seen a reduction in this type of offence due to increased rural patrols in company with the ROST team. The better, dry weather may also have had an impact as several calls to Broxbourne Woods have identified an issue with off-road vehicles. Police have progressed investigations in the area and have identified one of the riders, further enquiries are in hand.

The new priorities are due to be set for the next 4 month period in early May 2025.

With the clocks going forward and lighter evenings, we will continue proactive patrols of local parks and other areas that may be susceptible to antisocial behaviour.

If you need to report a crime in progress, please call 999, for all others please use 101 or online reporting <https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

The Herts Connected system delivers Hertfordshire police's crime alerts. Registered local residents can receive the latest crime or emergency updates and alerts, as well as information about policing events in your area. Local residents can get involved in helping to make their local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in their area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe, and tell us what matters are causing local communities harm.

The more residents that register, the better informed and safer our communities will be. We would be most grateful if you could continue to share the link below in any parish communications, and especially on social media, to encourage as many local residents as possible to sign up.

<https://www.hertsconnected.co.uk/>