

Minutes of a Meeting of Little Chalfont Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 14 December 2011 at 8.30pm in the Village Hall
Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Present: Cllr M Dear; Cllr B Drew (Chairman); Cllr L Hunt; Cllr M Parker; Cllr V Patel; Cllr D Rafferty

In Attendance: Mrs J Mason (Clerk)

Members of the Public: None

1. **Apologies for absence:** These were received from Cllr J Hinkly.
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2011:** These were approved as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.
3. **Proposal to suspend standing orders enabling members of the public to speak:** No members of the public were present.
4. **To receive declarations of interest:** None
5. **To agree items for Any Other Business:** The following items were agreed (i) Forthcoming Methodist Church Service (ii) Transport for London's new timetable (iii) Update on Actions Arising from the Buildings Working Party and (iv) to discuss recent comments in the publication "In Touch". It was agreed that items (iii) and (iv) would be taken with the confidential matters following item 14.
6. **Chairman's Report:** This was received, having been previously circulated. The Chairman was now in a position to expand further on the **Community Park**. As reported, planning permission has, at last, been granted for the entrance to the park from the High School access road. The Little Chalfont Charitable Trust can now complete negotiations over the ownership of the land and start to plan the next steps. The Parish Council must be involved in discussions about the design of the park to ensure that once the land was passed to it for future maintenance, costs would be within a budget acceptable to the Council. To this end the Parish Council, following discussion, agreed that (i) the invitation from the Trust to the Council for the Clerk to represent its interests on the committee being established to plan the layout and preparatory work should be accepted, and (ii) the Clerk should write to the Chairman of the Charitable Trust confirming her membership of the committee and the need for costs to be maintained at a level deemed reasonable to the Council. It would be spelt out in that letter that the Council would veto any proposals that were not so deemed and that if agreement could not be reached the Council would not take over the maintenance of the park. The letter would also confirm the understanding that the charge to the Council for the land would be a nominal rent. Turning to London Underground Ltd's work in **Beel Close**, the Chairman reported that the decision and action log for the project prepared by Buckinghamshire County Council was available from the Parish Office. It was also confirmed that the underpass would remain open for the duration of the works.
7. **Clerk's Report:** This was received having been previously circulated. The Council was pleased to note that Amersham Town Council had agreed to renew the **grounds maintenance contract for Westwood Park** on the same terms and rates as the current contract, subject to reviews in years two and three dependent on the increase in the cost of fuel, seed, loam and such like. Any increases would have to be reasonable and the Clerk would be amending the contract terms to protect the Council's interest in this respect. It was also agreed that the Clerk could copy her imminent response to HMRC to local MPs and to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Finally, Cllr Drew volunteered to help with the campaign on 17 January 2012 at Westwood Park to encourage responsible dog ownership.
8. **Financial matters:** (i) *Income and Expenditure Report* – this was received having been previously circulated. It was noted that at 1 April 2011 reserves had stood at £311,646. At 30 November 2011 they were £353,461 and at the year end 31 March 2012, based on predicted outturn, would stand at £245,779 (ii) *List of payments and cheques to be signed* - cheques and payments totalling £114,009.34 were approved. (iii)

Playground invoice – it was noted that satisfactory guarantees have been secured from Wicksteeds, confirmed in writing. A 90% payment (£96,120 gross) has been made, sent under cover of the Clerk's 25 November letter with attachments.

9. **Budget Preparation and Precept 2012/13:** *To discuss outturn for 2011/12, draft budget and precept for 2012/13* – as reflected in the figures noted above, the freezing of its precept at the same rate (£208,433) for two years had led to a reduction in Council reserves. Similarly, the budget presented at the 9 November Council meeting and under further discussion at this meeting, would have a similar impact. Total budgeted income for 2012/13, including a precept of £208,433, would be £234,202. Budgeted expenditure for 2012/13 was £277,640 (deficit £43,438). However, given the current economic situation and the fact that the Council's five year plan was still under discussion, Cllr Drew proposed and Cllr Hunt seconded the resolution that the budget as presented be adopted and that Little Chalfont Parish Council's precept for the year 2012/13 be set, for the third year running, at £208,433. This resolution was agreed unanimously.
10. **Reports from outside bodies:** (i) *Library* – Cllr Hunt reported that the library committee had received their award from NatWest and this was being spent on redecoration and storage carousels. (ii) *LCCA* – although Cllr Parker had been unable to attend the last committee meeting, he was aware from the minutes that there was a possibility of the 6th formers at Dr Challoners helping with the digital switch over information campaign. The need for a parking survey in Little Chalfont had also been agreed but no concrete plans were yet in place. It was agreed by the Council that this issue, which had also been raised at the 9 November Council meeting, should be placed on the 11 January 2012 Parish Council agenda. (iii) *Youth Club* – Cllr Patel reported that following a recent incident all members had been asked to carry wallets containing parent/guardian contact details. (iv) *Westwood Park Working Party* – Cllr Drew reported on the 17 November meeting. The request for a storage container by one of the pitch users would be considered further at the 11 January 2012 meeting of the Parish Council. (v) *Community Buildings Working Party* – A further meeting had been held on 5 December 2011. Cllr Drew reported that he had apprised Cllrs Philips and Martin about discussions to date. He had explained that the remit of the working party was to look at options for improving facilities at the Cokes Lane site currently occupied by the Village Hall and car park, library and scout hut with a view to reporting back to the Parish Council. Two architects had kindly agreed to provide free of charge preliminary drawings based on the suggestions put forward by the working party. The various possibilities would then be costed and consultation would take place with members of the public, hall users, youth groups and the community library committee. It was crucial to have the support of the community before taking any proposals forward. (vi) *Buckinghamshire County Council Standards Briefing 10 November 2011* – Cllr Parker had attended this briefing which had examined proposals following the abolition of the existing Standards Committees under the localism bill (which had received Royal Assent on 15 November). In the coming Spring relevant authorities, which include Town and Parish Councils, will have to adopt, amend or replace a Code, approved by the full Council, which will promote seven general principles of public life. The practicalities and problem areas associated with the new arrangements had been discussed in detail. Cllr Parker was of the view that guidance from bodies such as NALC would be essential to encourage conformity. The hand out from the briefing was available in the Parish Office. (vii) *Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group (BRAG) Conference 25 November 2011* – Cllr Hinkly's written report had been circulated previously.
11. **Parish Meeting 2012:** It was agreed that the Parish Meeting for 2012 will be held on Wednesday 30 May 2012. Cllrs were asked to give further consideration to possible speakers to be finalised at a future meeting.
12. **Notifications and Correspondence:**
- i. 5 December e-mail from BCC Democratic Services Officer attaching Better Health Care in Bucks newsletter and report (e-mailed to Councillors 5 December 2011)
 - ii. 5 December e-mail from CDC Electoral Services Officer attaching revised electorates for parishes within Chiltern (e-mailed to councillors 5 December 2011)

- iii. Chiltern Society e-mail newsletter December 2011 (e-mailed to councillors 2 December 2011)
 - iv. Chilternnews – Chiltern society Magazine December 2011 (available in parish office)
 - v. 28 November 2011 letter from Chief Inspector Ian Hunter setting out proposals for front counter service in Thames Valley police area. (Included in attachments to clerk’s 5 December e-mail.) It is suggested that the Parish Council’s response to this letter be finalised at the 11 January 2012 meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk would draft a response for circulation prior to and finalisation at the 11 January 2012 meeting of the Parish Council.
 - vi. 22 November e-mail from CDC’s Community Safety Officer about White Ribbon Day (e-mailed to councillors 22 November).
 - vii. 10 November e-mail from Transport for Buckinghamshire about road closures (Burtons and Roughwood Lane(s) in Little Chalfont) next March to allow resurfacing (e-mailed to councillors 11 November 2011). (It was noted that the work in Burtons Lane had in fact taken place.)
 - viii. 30 November notice from BCC Head of Legal and Democratic Services re closure of Lodge Lane on 30 November because of a burst water main.
- 13.**Any Other Business.** (i) *Transport for London’s New Timetable* – it was noted that many commuters from the area are unhappy with the longer journey times that had resulted. (ii) *Forthcoming Methodist Church Service*- Cllr Rafferty confirmed that he would be taking a reading at the forthcoming service as a local councillor and not as a representative of the Council.
- 14.**To consider a resolution that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is advisable, in the public interest, that the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting and be instructed to withdraw.** This was agreed.
- 15.**Hall Redecoration (main hall, rear lobby and WC):** *to decide which contractor should be invited to undertake this work on the basis of the quotations received* – minuted under confidential minute 15 of this 14 December 2011 meeting.
- 16.**Parish Council Payroll:** *to agree that this work be outsourced* –minuted under confidential minute 16 of this 14 December 2011 meeting.
- 17.**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 11 January 2012 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....