

**Minutes of a Meeting of Little Chalfont Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 9 February 2011 in the Village Hall
Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont at 8.10pm**

Present: Cllr M Dale; Cllr M Dear (item 9 onwards); Cllr B Drew (Chairman); Cllr L Hunt; Cllr C Ingham; Cllr P Martin; Cllr V Patel and Cllr G Smith

In Attendance: Mrs J Mason (Clerk)

Members of the Public: Mr R Williams, Chairman, Bell Lane School Board of Governors, and Mr J Greensmith, Bell Lane School Governor (items 1-6).

1. **Apologies for absence:** None.
2. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2011:** The minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Declarations of interest:** None
4. **Items for Any Other Business:** None.
5. **Proposal to suspend standing orders enabling members of the public to speak:** This proposal was agreed and the Chairman suspended standing orders. R Williams and G Greensmith were welcomed to the meeting and updated the Council on the actions that had been undertaken by the school governors at Bell Lane School following the announcement by Buckinghamshire County Council that they propose to close the school. (The consultation closing date is Friday 4 March 2011.) If the school closes Little Chalfont will not have enough primary school places to serve its population. The governors want the school to stay open and described the three courses of action they were currently concentrating on. First, the school continues to tackle the issues raised by Ofsted and it is hoped that the monitoring visit scheduled for after the coming half term would show signs of improvement. The point was made that Ofsted reports were written on a "one size fits all basis" and did not take into account the large number of statemented children at the school. Second, they were taking steps to ensure that if the school did have to close; all possible help would be available to existing pupils and parents. Finally, they were investigating how the school could be kept open and were consulting with other schools, the Department for Education, BCC and the local community. In the meantime, there was a meeting with the Department of Education on Friday and the governors would be meeting the following Monday. At that meeting the governors would decide how best to garner the support already offered from individuals, groups and organisations who wanted to join the campaign to keep the school open. The governors undertook to report the outcome of that meeting to the Parish Council so that if they wished, the council could incorporate some of the information provided into their response to the consultation process. The Chairman thanked the governors for their briefing and reinstated standing orders.
6. **Proposed closure of Bell Lane Primary School –to discuss and if appropriate agree future action:** The Council agreed that the school should be kept open unless there was really no other option. The Council discussed the implications of closure on the school's finances, the staff, pupils and Little Chalfont's overall primary school provision. It was apparent that the financial situation and the inflexibility of Ofsted reporting led to a number of paradoxes arising from a conflict between implementing financial and administrative processes and meeting the needs of the residents of Little Chalfont and the wider school community. . It was agreed that a response to BCC would be drafted once further feedback had been received from the school governors as indicated in item 5 above. The draft response would be prepared by Cllr Smith and the Clerk and circulated by e-mail to Councillors for further comment prior to sending the finalised version to BCC.

7. **Chairman's Report:** The Chairman's report had been previously circulated. It was agreed that the Clerk should make arrangements to adjust the positioning of the two new grit bins. The format of the Parish Meeting on 6 April was discussed. It was agreed to reduce the number of outside speakers to one and it was suggested that GE Healthcare be asked to send a representative to talk about their future plans and community involvement. Cllr Ingham agreed to make a presentation on the planning inspector's Examination in Public of the core strategy proposals. Turning to the next newsletter it was agreed that this would be sent out in March. The Clerk would make arrangements for printing and delivery. Finally, the Chairman requested that Councillors who did not intend putting themselves forward for re-election in May should so indicate. Sadly, Cllr Martin would no longer be eligible on grounds of residence. Cllr Ingham said he also would be standing down. The Chairman's view that his departure would be a great loss and that he had been an exemplary chairman of the planning committee was supported by the council.
8. **Clerk's Report:** This had been previously circulated and updated the Council on actions implemented from the last meeting. A report on the Clerk's Liaison meeting at CDC on 17 January was included.
9. **Financial matters:** (i) *Income and Expenditure Report* - This was unavailable as the Clerk's computer was currently being repaired. (ii) *List of payments and cheques to be signed* – Payments totalling £11247.37 were approved and the schedule was signed by the chairman. (iii) *Opening of 7 day access account with Scottish Widows* – noted. (iv) *Authorisation of Expenditure for Legal Fees* – Arising from a meeting of The Establishment Committee on 8 February, the Chairman requested that the Council authorise expenditure on legal fees associated with seeking guidance in relation to future pension provision. The expenditure would be £750 (net) and this was agreed together with fees to Cansdales of £350.
10. **Governance and Accountability** – (i) *to receive and agree revised financial procedures and standing orders*- revised financial procedures had been previously circulated and were agreed. Revised standing orders would be considered at the March meeting. (ii) *to receive and note Cllr Smith's report on the effectiveness of internal audit and the Clerk's letter to the internal auditor* - These items were both received and noted. (iii) *to receive and note the review of external audit by the Clerk* – the Clerk's review was received verbally as the external auditors had made no comment other than to request that in future amendments should be scored out and rewritten and not amended with tippex. The Clerk undertook to endeavour to complete the forthcoming return to the external auditors in a similarly thorough manner to that achieved for 2009/10.
11. **Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Review of Buckinghamshire** – The consultation runs until 3 April. The council agreed that a response should be sent to Buckinghamshire County Council supporting the proposals on councillor numbers and maintaining the status quo on the area covered. The effect would be that Little Chalfont would have one County Councillor rather than two.
12. **Buckinghamshire County Council Budget Consultation** – *to consider Parish Council's response (e-mail 24 January refers)* – it was agreed that the Clerk should respond by drawing attention to concerns about road safety if lighting is reduced on roads requiring maintenance; cross reference the issues regarding buses to the transport consultation covered in item 14 below, and, comment on the possible implications of the proposals for youth services on anti-social behaviour.
13. **Ordinary Elections for Parish Councils** – (i) *to receive notes of guidance for towns and parishes from Chiltern District Council* – These were distributed (ii) *voting arrangements Little Chalfont Village Hall* – it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Chief Executive at Chiltern District asking for an urgent resolution of this matter.
14. **BCC Transport Plan** – *to receive and if appropriate agree Parish Council's response* - The Chairman thanked Cllrs Ingham and Hunt for their work in preparing the draft response to this consultation. Following a vote the draft was agreed in its entirety and the Clerk would send a letter incorporating the draft comments to BCC.

15. **Reports (as appropriate) from outside bodies:** *LAF* – The Chairman reported that at the 19 January meeting, this Council’s delegated budget project to install lighting at the Beel Close underpass had been agreed in principle pending a costing exercise. *Library* – Cllr Hunt reported that the library was receiving a great deal of media attention as an example of best practice in running a community library. *NAG* –following speculation about the future of NAGS, a proposal had now been received for Melvin Mutch, of Thames Valley Police, suggesting that the NAG be revived as either a virtual forum or within the meetings of an established local group. It was agreed that Cllr Smith would draft a response for circulation to Councillors for approval prior to sending the finalised version.
16. **Notifications and Correspondence:**
 - I. BCC’s 26 January letter re anti-social behaviour in Buckinghamshire (e-mailed 31 January 2011)
 - II. Note from Switchover Help Scheme re change from analogue to digital services.
 - III. Ian Rennie Hospice at Home January letter re new memorial woodland planned for Hervines Wood.
17. **Any Other Business:** None
18. **Playbuilder Playground** – *to receive the report of the Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Officer* - the report had been previously circulated and stated that the proposed new site was a significant improvement in policing terms.
19. **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.** Agreed.
20. **Westwood Park:** The Clerk reported that site visits by potential contractors would be finished by the end of the week. It was agreed that in view of the computer problems in the Parish Office the open period should be extended until Friday 18th February. The Clerk would advise all concerned. The preferred contractor would be decided at the 9 March Council meeting in advance of which the Westwood Park Working Party would meet to give their input into considering the proposed designs and the Clerk would meet with Cllrs Hunt and Smith to consider the contractual aspects of the tenders received.
21. **Land at Snells Lane** – Cllr Drew reported that news was still awaited as to whether the agents would be advised to accept one of the offers on this land.
22. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 9 March 2011 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....