

Notes of Little Chalfont Parish Meeting
Held on Wednesday 6 April 2011 at 8pm
In the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Members of the Parish Council Present: Cllr M Dear; Cllr B Drew (Chairman); Cllr L Hunt; Cllr C Ingham; Cllr P Martin; Cllr V Patel and Cllr G Smith.

Speakers: Mrs L Johnson, Community Relations Manager, GE Healthcare, and, Cllr C Ingham, Chairman of Little Chalfont Parish Council Planning Committee.

In Attendance: Mrs J Mason (Parish Clerk); Mrs K Sterling (Assistant Clerk).

Members of the Public: Mrs A Begg; Mrs K Hinkly; Mr J Hinkly; K Draper; N Davies; Mrs D Stewart; Mr R Rolls; Mr R Funk; Ms J Carr; Ms S Strange; Mrs V Way; Mr P Way; Mr D Howroyd; L Mathieson; I Mathieson; Ms Z Bloomfield; R Berkerey; M Berkerey; Mr J Fantes; E Cox; Mr P Cox; Mr R Prizeman (the above are those who signed the attendance sheet).

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr T Butcher (BCC); Cllr M Dale; Mr D Rafferty and Cllr M Smith (CDC).
- 2. Minutes of the Parish Meeting Held on 19 May 2010:** These were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- 3. Lynn Johnson, Community Relations Manager, GE Healthcare “The Company and Little Chalfont”:** Mrs Johnson explained the structure of the Company which employs over 46,000 people worldwide. There are three sites in Little Chalfont. The Grove Centre in White Lion Road manufactures diagnostic equipment and monitoring systems, recent developments in which have enabled people to undertake more and more treatment in the comfort of their own homes rather than having to travel and undertake gruelling, lengthy, treatments in hospital. Ultrasound equipment has reduced in size dramatically over recent years and is now often easily portable, so making treatment accessible to remote peoples across the globe. In addition to The Grove Centre there are offices in Amersham Place whilst Pollards Wood is the Global HQ making that site the only division with a headquarters outside the United States. GE takes a great interest in local communities. In the last year £36,000 had been donated to local charities and organisations. Beneficiaries have included the Chiltern MS Centre, the Hospice of St Francis, the NSE and the PACE Centre in Aylesbury. GE also contributed to the Little Chalfont Parish Council badge of office. In addition, staff undertake local volunteering and each year in June the company has a Global Community Day, which in this area has resulted in staff carrying out a fencing project at the Chiltern Open Air Museum, landscaping at the Little Chalfont Community Library and mentoring school children to encourage them to follow careers in science. A national competition for school children was currently being organised by GE in its capacity as an Olympic sponsor. Children have been asked to design a break time and the aim is that they should incorporate healthy eating, physical exercise and emotional well being. The Company is happy to share facilities and makes rooms available to Young Enterprise and the Chiltern MS Centre. Mrs Johnson then invited questions from the audience. Mr J Hinkly asked whether the Company planned to remain in Little Chalfont. In response Mrs Johnson stated that GE was a big company and did not have to stay in Little Chalfont. Pollards Wood was rather small and plans had been submitted to develop the site but these had been refused. Nonetheless significant investment had been made at the site and she was not aware of any plans to

move. In addition, The Grove Centre was not an easy site to vacate. Cllr M Tett asked about the rationale behind the cutting down of trees at The Grove. Mrs Johnson stated that this had been necessary because of problems caused to the drainage and in undertaking the work the Company had been sensitive to concerns raised by the local community when the new planting took place. Cllr Drew thanked Mrs Johnson for her most interesting talk and for the generosity shown by GE to the people of Little Chalfont over the years. He hoped that this relationship would continue well into the future.

4. **Chairman's Report:** The full report can be viewed on the Parish Council's website at www.littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk. The Chairman thanked the Council and staff for their hard work and referred to significant events throughout the year including the following: success in winning "Playbuilder" funding for a new playground at Westwood Park; use of the Village Hall and sports grounds; contract management; successful funding applications resulting in the installation of new grit bins and a VAS (vehicle activated sign); the LCCA's bid for land at Snells Lane, which, if successful, will result in the land's eventual use as a park, and, the significant body of work, led by Cllr Ingham, associated with evaluating and commenting on the Core Strategy.

5. **Core Strategy – Cllr C Ingham, Chairman, Planning Committee:** Cllr Ingham recapped on the background to the development of Chiltern District's Core Strategy, in that there was a government requirement for an additional 2900 new homes in CDC by 2026 (this figure was currently being disputed by CDC). This was not as large a requirement as that imposed in other areas in the South East, however, the proportion of houses allocated to Little Chalfont in the Core Strategy is felt to be unfair to Little Chalfont. With the valuable assistance of the Little Chalfont Community Association, a campaign has been fought to object to the numbers imposed and Cllr Ingham thanked those of the audience who had sent e-mails to CDC in support of objections raised by the Parish Council and the LCCA. Little Chalfont is one of four major settlements in Chiltern District, the others are Amersham, Chesham and Chalfont St Peter. Five major development sites have been identified and in effect there are two in Little Chalfont: Bell Lane (former saw mill site) and the Donkey Field off Burtons Lane. In addition, twelve further potential development areas have been identified which are in the main, garden sites. Cllr Ingham showed a slide illustrating these. Over the coming weeks, the draft Core Strategy would be the subject of an Examination in Public (EiP) by a planning inspector. Cllr Ingham would be presenting evidence at the EiP on three main matters: housing numbers; development of the Donkey Field and infrastructure. Written submissions had already been sent to the Inspector. Following the EiP, the Inspector would consider comments received and would then approve, amend or revoke the Core Strategy. Turning to the issue of development in the Green Belt, Cllr Ingham explained that the Core Strategy had been drawn up on the basis that there should not be development in the Green Belt. Nonetheless, three major developments in the District were in fact in the Green Belt (Newlands Park, and sites in Chesham and Amersham) although none are in undeveloped sites. Cllr Ingham anticipated that developers would try to build on the Green Belt behind Chessfield Park although CDC would probably be able to resist this as it can demonstrate a five year rolling supply of sites. If this could not be achieved pressure could be put on them to release further Green Belt sites. If the Inspector approves the Core Strategy, the next stage is to prepare a Delivery Development Plan document. This would spell out exactly

what could be built where. In the meantime, Cllr Ingham would make sure that (i) Little Chalfont's concerns about the unfairness of the proportion of new homes allocated to Little Chalfont were heard, (ii) the need to keep any development of the Donkey Field low in density and appropriate to the surrounding area, and (iii) the adverse impact on services, utilities and other infrastructure, were made clear to the Inspector.

- 6. Open Forum:** Cllr Drew thanked Cllr Ingham for his presentation that had made a complex issue much more understandable. He wished Cllr Ingham good luck for next week's EiP. Turned to the forthcoming elections, he reminded members of the public that all voting would take place at the Village Hall. Little Chalfont South residents no longer had to travel to Chalfont St Giles. He then threw the floor open for comments or questions. There were some concerns expressed that the land behind Sandycroft Lane might be developed for housing rather than be used for allotments. In addition, the state of the site, which had been subject to fly tipping, was raised. Cllr Drew undertook to arrange for Paradigm Housing to be asked to clear it up. The question was raised as to whether the Core Strategy and the proposed closure of Bell Lane School were linked ie was the site one for potential development? Cllr Tett gave reassurances that there was no conspiracy. Indeed, the most recent Ofsted report had been very encouraging. The impact of development in Little Chalfont on roads and parking was raised. Cllr Drew said this was a good point. Although individual dwellings would have allocated parking, there would be an impact on demand for spaces in the Village Centre. Additionally, the extra traffic using Bell Lane would be problematic at the rather tight junction with White Lion Road. To this end, the junction was being widened. The sufficiency of school places was also queried. Cllr Drew responded that he had been advised that there were, theoretically, spaces in Amersham for children, even if Bell Lane closed. He hoped, however, that this eventuality would not arise. Following a discussion on gardens as brown field sites the meeting concluded. Cllr Drew thanked everyone for their attendance and reminded them that Parish Council meetings are open to the public and there is an opportunity at the beginning of each meeting for residents to address the Council.

Signed.....

Date.....