

Minutes of a Little Chalfont Parish Council

Held in the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Wednesday 10 June 2015 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr B Drew (Chairman); Cllr I Griffiths; Cllr V Patel; Cllr D Rafferty; Cllr G Roberts.

In attendance: Mrs N Meldrum (Parish Clerk)

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Parker and Cllr Walford.
2. **To accept a resolution that standing orders be suspended to allow any members of the public to speak (10 mins):** Not applicable.
3. **To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2015:** The minutes were approved.
4. **To vote on the co-option of a member of the public to fill a vacancy for a Councillor.** Cllr Drew reported that following the first stage of the co-option process, the councillors of Little Chalfont Parish Council had unanimously decided to co-opt Mr Chris Ingham as a Councillor to the ward of Little Chalfont North East. Cllr Drew proposed and Cllr Roberts seconded that Mr Ingham was co-opted as a Councillor. Mr Ingham accepted and joined the table. Mr Ingham then signed his declaration and acceptance of office which was witnessed by the Clerk.
5. **Declarations of Interest:** None.
6. **Approval by Chairman of items for any other business:** i) Speedwatch; (ii) Room layout for council meetings; (iii) Update on the Little Chalfont Community Library; (iv) Wifi access.
7. **Chairman's Report:** Cllr Drew highlighted the issue of the Waste Transfer Station. A meeting of the BCC Development Control Committee had approved the application for the Waste Transfer Station. Cllr Drew has written to the Chief Executive of Bucks County Council to comment on the way the meeting was conducted. Once a reply has been received it has been agreed to write to the Secretary of State to call in the application. In addition, a letter will be sent to Isabel Darby, the Leader of Chiltern District Council, asking that CDC consider not granting a lease for the Waste Transfer Station.
8. **Clerk's Report:** The Clerk reported that a claim had been received regarding an incident at the bicycle racks at the end of Chenies Parade. The issue had been passed to Bucks County Council with supporting information that BCC installed the bicycle racks. The matter is now being dealt with by our insurers. Cllr Drew highlighted that this raised the issue of ownership of other items within the village.
9. **Update on councillors as members of committees /working parties:** Cllr Roberts confirmed that she would be part of the Local Business working party and the Community Buildings working party. Cllr Drew invited Cllr Ingham to consider which committees or working parties he would like to be involved with.
10. **To receive reports, as appropriate, from members of outside bodies and working parties:** Cllr Roberts reported that the Nature Park Trust had raised £71,000 to date and had been shortlisted for an Aviva grant. Following Village Day, there had been a number of expressions of interest in sponsoring items within the Nature Park. Dr Pegg is producing an educational package and will be in touch with local schools to find out about their requirements.

- 11. Feedback on 'Parishes engaging with young people' event held on Tuesday 5 May:** Cllr Roberts attended the event and highlighted some of the main points which consider methods and strategies for involving young people in decision making. This ranged from participation in the Youth Parliament to the use of Facebook and Twitter. Bucks County Council had run the event and will offer advice and support to councils trying to improve youth participation. A youth club has previously been run in Little Chalfont, but was not currently in existence. Cllr Drew expressed his support for including young people in decision making and noted it was a large issue that would need further discussion at a future meeting.
- 12. Schedule of meetings:** Cllr Drew asked for clarification about the schedule of planning meetings in November 2015 - January 2016 as there were a series of four week gaps between meetings. The Clerk will confirm the dates. The issue of Council meetings and Planning meetings being held on the same evening when the weeks coincide will be discussed at the next meeting.
- 13. Financial procedures:** Some updates to the financial procedures had been previously circulated and comments had been received. The Clerk highlighted the main elements of the proposed changes to the procedures and emphasised this was an ongoing process of review and implementation. Cllr Drew requested if there were any further comments to notify the Clerk. The document could then be placed on the parish council website.
- 14. Report on the Accounts 2014/15:** The report had been previously circulated. The Clerk highlighted the main issues within the report. Cllr Drew explained the mechanism of the precept and how this may change in the future. There was also a discussion about the Councils reserves and how they are divided into different categories.
- 15. Internal Audit report 2014 /15:**
- (i) Internal audit visit:** Cllr Drew reported that Ernest Newhouse, the Internal Auditor, had visited the Parish Council on 3 June 2015 and his report had been received. The report had found the Council's finances and procedures to be in good order. A few suggestions were made within the report to consider over the next financial year. A response will be written to Mr Newhouse.
 - (ii) Internal review of internal control to be conducted.** In previous years, Cllr Parker had undertaken a review of the internal control process. It was agreed that Cllr Parker would be asked to examine the auditor's findings once again.
- 16. External Audit report 2014/15:** (i) Section 1 – the Statement of Accounts for the Annual Return 2014/15 together with the Cash and Investment Reconciliation and Supporting Reserves Reconciliation reports had been previously been circulated. The councillors confirmed they were content with the figures to be submitted with the Annual Return. Councillors also approved the Annual Governance Statement. Section 1 and 2 were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk. (ii) It was noted that the notice of the exercise of electors rights would be announced on 17 June and interested parties would be able to inspect the accounts in between 1 – 28 July 2015.
- 17. Financial matters:**
- (i) List of payments and cheques to be signed: This paper was approved and signed by the Chairman.

- (ii) Income and Expenditure Report. The way in which the report is set out was explained. Councillors confirmed they were content with the income and expenditure report to date.
 - (iii) Schedule of s137 payments 2014/15: The schedule had been previously circulated. Cllr Drew asked for clarification in the schedule that the payments to the LCCA were for the delivery of the newsletter.
 - (iv) Earmarking of reserves: It was agreed this would be examined at the next Council meeting.
- 18. Snells Wood Car Park – free one hour charges:** It was reported that a letter from Chiltern District Council had been received and there would be an increase in the charge for the free one hour parking in Snells Wood car park. The charge in 2015/6 would be £996.43 per month which includes £100 machine maintenance costs. This is an increase of £63.43 per month. It was also noted the letter highlighted that Members at CDC would be looking for cost savings over the next financial year and the free one hour car parking may have to be reconsidered in the event that the charge to us increased substantially.
- 19. Devolution of services:** Cllr Drew gave an outline of the new responsibilities of the Parish Council following the devolution of services. Bucks County Council are paying parishes the same fee as they would have spent on the services themselves, but it is expected that in the next financial year the figure will be significantly smaller to take account of the cuts at county level. The third cut of the verges will be commencing in the middle of June. A few comments had been received about the quality of the grass cutting to date. The Clerk will draw up a schedule of roads close to the councillors' homes so that they can inspect the work on the verges and report back on the quality of the grass cut and any problems. Councillors agreed to undertake this role. The Clerk reported that a new agreement had been sent through from Bucks County Council. She would examine the agreement to check for any changes. The councillors gave authority for Cllrs Drew and Roberts to sign the agreement if necessary.
- 20. Improvements to Nightingales Corner:** Cllr Drew confirmed that £5,500 had been granted from the LAF fund to improve Nightingales Corner. This will include the installation of bollards as well as some landscaping improvements and the addition of a village sign. Cllr Drew reported that sign would cost approximately £1000 and there would be an additional cost for installation. Cllr Drew also raised the question of who would have responsibility for the maintenance and liability for the bollards and surrounding area. The Clerk will seek written clarification from Bucks County Council. Cllr Drew asked for authority from the councillors to spend up to £1000 to make the area more attractive. This was agreed. Cllrs Drew and Roberts will look at the area with the Clerk.
- 21. Parking Survey:** Cllr Drew reported that there were still a number of roads in Little Chalfont in which no decision had been made about parking. A further informal consultation had been issued recently to these roads and the responses were currently being received in the Parish Office. At the end of the consultation period, the responses would be analysed and discussed with TfB prior to the full public consultation which is expected towards the end of the year.
- 22. Community Buildings Working Party:** Cllr Drew reported that the response had been received following the pre-planning application meeting with Chiltern District Council. The response referred mainly to the size of the proposed building and the location of the

greenbelt and ancient woodland. A meeting of the Community Buildings Working Party would be arranged shortly to discuss the response and next steps.

- 23. Contract with Westwood Park Football Club - timber storage shed:** It was reported Westwood Park Football Club were content to extend the term of the lease to seven years with a renewal on a rolling basis each year thereafter. As negotiations had been completed satisfactorily, the contract was signed by Cllr Drew.
- 24. Renewal of cleaning contract with Busy Homes:** The Clerk reported the cleaning contract with Busy Homes for the village hall and Westwood Park was due for renewal. The existing contract was instigated two years ago, with a clause for a possible extension of two further years. The cleaning contract is currently working well. It was agreed that the contract could be extended for a further two years. A tender exercise would be conducted at the end of the two year period.
- 25. Grants and Donations:** The Clerk reported that two grant applications had been received. The first was from the Good Companions group, a regular hall user. Further information would be sought from the group following clarification from the Parish Council's policy document on the approval of grants. The second application was from Bucks Girl Guides to fund a trip to Brownsea Island. On this occasion, the council decided not to offer a grant.
- 26. Streetwise:** Cllr Drew explained that Streetwise was a new element of social media. It is a national organisation that is local to the community so in this case only relevant to Amersham and Little Chalfont. Cllr Drew suggested the Parish Council could sign up to Streetwise. It would be an opportunity to advertise any upcoming events and issues and also respond to queries. It was agreed that the Parish Council would sign up to this site.
- 27. Reports and Notifications:**
- (i) NALC Legal Briefing: The Local Government (Religious etc. Observances) Act 2015. Circulated 26 May 2015;
 - (ii) Various roads in various parishes in the Chiltern area (Temporary prohibition of through traffic and temporary no waiting restrictions) (Special event) order 2015. Circulated 26 May 2015;
 - (iii) Proposed Transport for Buckinghamshire Chiltern District Multi Order. Circulated 1 June 2015.
 - (iv) Proposed temporary road closures (Microsurfacing works June – August 2015) Circulated 2 June 2015.
- 28. Any Other Business:**
- (i) **Speedwatch:** Cllr Roberts reported that six volunteers had contacted the Parish Council to take part in the programme. Volunteers will check the speeds of cars in a certain area and cars over the speed limit will have their registration numbers listed and passed onto Thames Valley police when they would then receive a warning letter. Volunteers will receive training before they commence the programme.
 - (ii) **Layout of furniture for Council meetings:** Cllr Griffiths suggested that the meeting room is set up differently for meetings to be more user friendly. A number of different options were discussed. It was agreed to trial a different layout for the next Planning meeting. Cllr Drew also suggested that the Council meetings were formalised a little more with councillors indicating to the Chairman they wanted to speak. The possibility of using a microphone was discussed. This will be considered for future meetings.
 - (iii) **Update on Little Chalfont Community Library:** The Library received a £4,000 grant towards their running costs and it had been agreed to pay a further £2,000 when work

on the extension commenced. It has now been confirmed that work on the extension will commence before the end of this financial year. Cllr Drew had been notified that the Library wanted to erect a small plastic shed on the land. There were no objections to this proposal.

- (iv) **Wifi access:** Cllrs Griffiths and Roberts raised the possibility of using Wifi within the village hall for ease at meetings. The Clerk agreed to investigate the security of issuing the Wifi code.

29. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 8 July 2015 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.