

**Minutes of the Second Annual Meeting of Little Chalfont Parish Council
Held at 7.30pm on the 13th May 2008
in the Village Library, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont**

Present: Cllr. M Dale, Cllr B Drew, Cllr. C Gibbs, Cllr C Ingham, Cllr. D Marshall, Cllr A Tate (Chairman Item 1a), Cllr. G Smith and Cllr. F Wilkinson (Chairman Item 1b onwards).

In Attendance: Mrs J Mason (Clerk), Cllr. M Phillips (Chiltern District Council), Cllr. M Smith (Chiltern District Council) and Cllr. M Tett (Buckinghamshire County Council).

Members of the Public: H. Wizgier, Chiltern Voice weblog; M. Mason, LCVS/ LCRG/LCMTHC: Paul Houghton, Oakington Avenue Resident; Ian Morris, Chalfont Art; Ian MacKay, LCVS and Fatima Selahi, Floral Art.

1. Appointment of officers for 2008/9

a. To Appoint a Chairman of the Council – It was proposed and seconded that Cllr F Wilkinson be appointed Chairman of the Council for the year 2008/2009. Cllr Wilkinson accepted this appointment and thanked colleagues for the trust they were placing in him.

b. To Appoint a Vice Chairman of the Council – It was proposed and seconded that Cllr B Drew be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the year 2008/2009.

c. To Appoint a Chairman of the Planning Committee – It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Ingham be reappointed as Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Cllr Wilkinson commented that the Finance and General Purposes Committee business had, in recent months, been subsumed satisfactorily into Council meeting agenda and would therefore no longer meet.

2. To Propose and Agree Membership of Sub Committees

a. Establishment: Membership: It was proposed and seconded that the following would be members of this committee: Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Chairman of the Planning Committee.

3. Membership of Outside Bodies

- a. Revitalisation Group: Cllr B. Drew was proposed and seconded.
- b. Neighbourhood Action Group: Cllr G. Smith was proposed and seconded.
- c. GE Healthcare Liaison Group: Cllr A. Tate was proposed and seconded.
- d. Village Hall Management Committee: Cllr B. Drew and Cllr C Gibbs were proposed and seconded.
- e. Getting Closer to Communities: Cllr F Wilkinson was proposed and seconded.
- f. Local Area Committee/Forum: Cllr F Wilkinson was proposed and seconded.

Cllr Wilkinson noted that the membership of the latter two bodies would be reviewed at a later date.

4. Report on the Council's First Year of Operation: Cllr Tate

Cllr Tate looked back on events over the Council's first year. He was grateful for the support colleagues had given him during the year and thanked them for this. However, he felt a degree of disappointment with progress in a number of areas. For example, he would have liked to have seen more progress with refurbishment of the Village Hall and Westwood Park pavilion together with resolution of outstanding issues regarding the transfer of capital from Amersham Town Council. Additionally, the outcome of some planning applications, in particular the old sawmill site in Bell Lane, were at odds with the views of the Parish Council.

Cllr Wilkinson, in thanking Cllr Tate, reassured colleagues that the Council was still evolving and his future priorities would include areas raised by Cllr Tate. He emphasised the need to set in place robust administrative procedures and to follow through with the refurbishment of the Hall and to seek a resolution of outstanding financial matters with Amersham Town Council.

5. Report on the Accounts: Mrs J Mason

Mrs Mason reported that the precept for 2007/2008 had been set at £196,000. Other significant items of income had been an initial capital transfer from Amersham Town Council in December of £62,932 whilst a contingency amount of £50,000 had not been spent. This latter item was indicative that budgeting in the first year had, inevitably, not been as precise as it would be in future years. Main areas of spending had been on the hall, the pavilion, grounds, maintenance, street lighting and salaries. In conclusion, although spending had been quite conservative in the first year, this did mean that the Council now had funds to achieve some of the objectives indicated by Cllr Wilkinson. At 31 March 2008 there was a balance of almost £110,000. The balance sheet and income and expenditure accounts were circulated.

6. Appointment of Auditors

Mr Vince Morris was appointed as Internal Auditor and it was noted that Mazars were the Council's external auditors.

7. To accept a resolution that standing orders be suspended to allow any members of the public to speak.

The above resolution was accepted. Mr P Houghton, a resident from Oakington Avenue, urged the council to put pressure on the management of the Glencoe site to reduce significantly the noise from the plant which he compared to the constant torture of a dripping tap. Representations had been made to plant management, the District Council and the local MP Cheryl Gillan. His view was that the response from the District Council had been less than satisfactory and the best approach now would be to establish the constant noise as constituting a nuisance.

Cllr Phillips then responded to comments made by Cllr Tate and stated that he felt that the shadow Parish Council had had a fine line to tread between helping the establishment of the new Council and being seen as intrusive. Turning to the issue of the Saw Mill site in Bell

Lane, he had been disappointed that the area, previously designated an employment site, was now most likely to be developed for housing.

Mr M Mason urged those present to make a recommendation for the Chairmanship of the Revitalisation Committee; Cllr Drew had done a fantastic job and it would be detrimental to the village and aspirations to the achievement of a successful Market Town Health Check were it to lose its strong leadership.

8. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2008

These minutes, which had been circulated previously, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

9. To agree a resolution that matters arising from the minutes be deferred until the next meeting of the Council on 10 June 2008 with the exception of those items covered in items 10 and 11 of this agenda.

This resolution was agreed.

10. To discuss and, if appropriate, make proposals regarding the use of advertising boards by businesses in Little Chalfont.

Cllr Wilkinson reminded colleagues that at the last meeting several shop proprietors had made representations objecting to the confiscation of advertising boards by the Council, following warnings that the boards were causing an obstruction. In acknowledging that perhaps more consultation might have been appropriate prior to taking the action to confiscate boards, he referred to the legislation supporting the action, namely the Highways Act of 1980, in particular section 130 and following, section 143 and section 149. Additionally, Little Chalfont Parish Council has delegated authority from Buckinghamshire County Council to act in removing unauthorised signs from the Highway. At one stage the number of signs had proliferated to over thirty, causing obstructions and distraction to drivers and pedestrians. However, the Council agreed that the action taken had not perhaps been as pragmatic as it might have been. For example, more explanation of the law should have been given and a uniform, village-wide strategy should have been developed. He emphasised that the Council were not unsympathetic to shop and business owners in these difficult trading times; this had been demonstrated by the strong support given over recent discussions about parking. Cllr Tate supported these comments and Cllr Drew suggested the possibility of adopting the guidelines used by the County Council. This action was agreed and Cllr Wilkinson, together with the Clerk, undertook to liaise with each trader on this guidance. In conclusion, Cllr Drew hoped that a dialogue could be established with businesses to discuss areas where help can be given. He urged traders to join the Revitalisation Committee, the ideal forum for such initiatives.

11. To receive an update on plans for Village Day

Reminding colleagues that Village Day was on 28 June, Cllr Drew reported that Alan Watson was organising the programme with his usual flair and enthusiasm. As a result the event would be bigger than last year, utilising the whole of Westwood Park. There would be a

Farmers' market on the Village Green and Dr. Challoner's High School were holding their Summer fete on the same day. The Council were funding the Bird of Prey demonstration and the provision of toilet facilities at the park. Programmes would be a £1 each and the profit from a recent cabaret evening at Dr Challoner's was being put towards the costs. The website gave more details and he thanked the Council for their support.

12. To consider noise pollution in Oakington Avenue

Cllr Ingham, Chairman of the Planning Committee, addressed this item. He had been alerted to the issue when he had originally stood for election. He had spoken to the Chiltern District Council Enforcement officer, Mrs Francis, to establish whether the activities being undertaken were consistent with their approved category of planning use (B(8)). She had advised that it was not consistent but only a marginal infringement. An approach was made to Glencoe at the plant but no action had been taken by them. However, it transpires that the company have moved the hammering element of their activities to another site. The remaining noise from the vehicles beeping and the pressure washing were therefore not planning issues but noise as a nuisance and as such an environmental health issue. It was agreed that the Council would keep this item under review and establish whether the hammering had definitely been transferred elsewhere. Additionally, they would assist residents make representations to the Environmental Health Department and, if appropriate, the Planning Department.

13. Date of next meeting: 10 June 2008 (in the Library)

Signed.....

Date.....