

Minutes of a Meeting of Little Chalfont Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 11 December 2013 at 7.30pm
In the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Present: Cllr B Drew (Chairman); Cllr J Hinkly; Cllr L Hunt; Cllr D Rafferty; Cllr M Parker; Cllr V Patel; Cllr J Walford, OBE and Cllr J Wyper.

In attendance: Mrs J Mason, Clerk.

1. **Apologies for absence:** None.
2. **To accept a resolution that standing orders be suspended to allow any members of the public to speak:** Not applicable as no members of the public were present.
3. **To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2013:** These were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.
4. **Declarations of Interest:** (i) It was noted that on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, Councillors with property in the Parish should have declared a DPI in relation to discussions under item 11, Budget and Precept and (ii) Cllr Drew proposed and Cllr Hinkly seconded a resolution that Councillors with such a DPI who have applied to the Clerk for a dispensation be granted such a dispensation, so they can speak and vote on item 11. The resolution was agreed unanimously. (Note, the dispensation for such discussions shall apply until May 2015.)
5. **Approval by Chairman of items for any other business:** The following items were approved (i) Greystokes advertising sign; (ii) ID cards for Parish Councillors; (iii) Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS).
6. **Chairman's Report:** The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Chairman had encouraging feedback following the 7 December Small Business Saturday event. 75% of the traders had participated and most saw footfall increase by 20 – 30%. 90% had new customers and many saw an increase in sales. All but one business would wish to repeat the event.
7. **Clerk's Report:** The report had been circulated previously. Cllrs Walford and Wyper had found the walk round the village the previous Friday helpful and had spoken to a number of residents about a variety of concerns including parking, dog fouling and overgrown hedges. The issues raised will be referred to the relevant authority or organisation so that remedial action can be taken in the hope that the general appearance of the roads around Elizabeth Avenue in particular can be improved. The new Christmas tree lights have been well received by residents.
8. **To receive reports, as appropriate, from members of outside bodies and working parties:** (i) *Library* – Cllr Hinkly confirmed that the Friends of Little Chalfont Library had now received permission from the Charity Commission to change its status to that of charitable limited company; (ii) *LCCA* – Following the public exhibition at the end of November, Cllr Parker reported that the Nature Park survey results to date were 402 residents in favour of the proposals and one person against. The LCCA are establishing a liaison and monitoring group so that residents who have any issues arising from the Donkey Field development have a forum for discussion. In addition the LCCA will be writing to Buckinghamshire County Council to seek assurances that any s106 monies arising from the development are ear marked for investment in Little Chalfont. A letter reinforcing the association's objections to the Citygate site is being sent to the planning inspectorate. Kate Lewis, the recently appointed Community Relations Manager at GE Healthcare attended the meeting and she will be focussing on increasing the company's public profile locally.
9. **Financial matters:** (i) *List of payments and cheques to be signed* – The schedule of payments had been previously circulated and was approved. The Chairman signed the schedule, authorising payments totalling £16,133.83. (ii) *Income and Expenditure Report* - This had been circulated in advance of the meeting and detailed discussion was subsumed within item 11 below.

- 10. LAF funding applications 2014/15:** Funding applications for transportation projects had to be with the County Council by the end of December. At its 13 November meeting the Council had agreed to underwrite the crossing works outside Halifax House and it was now agreed therefore that an application should be made to recoup as much of the cost as possible. Funding for other projects would be discussed on 8 January and any ideas should, if possible, be forwarded to the Clerk in advance of the meeting.
- 11. Budget Preparation 2014/15 and Precept:** *To report on the budget meeting held on 3 December 2013 and to discuss the budget proposals and precept for 2014/15* – The covering paper circulated in advance of the meeting is attached to these minutes (attachment 1). Following a detailed discussion Cllr Hinkly proposed and Cllr Walford seconded a proposal that the draft budget as presented be supported, pending a final decision on 8 January 2014 by which time it would be known whether or not CDC would be making a grant available in 2014/15 to offset the impact of the localisation of council tax benefit. The precept will be set at the 8 January meeting. This was agreed unanimously.
- 12. HS2 Consultation:** *To consider how to formulate the Parish Council's response to the HS2 Hybrid Bill consultation which closes on 27 January 2014 (see also 17 (ii) below)* – It was agreed that Cllrs Hinkly and Parker would work together in preparing a draft response for consideration at the 8 January meeting of the Parish Council. The Clerk will also contact some of the neighbouring Towns and Parishes.
- 13. LAF Project – Cycle Racks:** *Update following 13 November 2013 meeting* – Buckinghamshire County Council had advised that it would not be possible to contribute the money remaining from the cycle racks project to the MVAS project. However, it could be used to buy cycle racks for installation adjacent to the Village Hall and library. The Clerk will liaise with Mr Brooks about a suitable site.
- 14. Community Buildings Working party:** The Working Party had now visited the offices and projects of all three short listed architects. Their final presentations were scheduled for 4 March 2014 and the Chairman invited all Councillors to attend if available. The architects' brief for 4 March will be discussed at the 8 January 2014 Council meeting.
- 15. Youth Club:** *Update*- It was noted that the Dr Challoner's student was currently consulting with her peer group about preferred youth club facilities and her findings would be available in the New Year.
- 16. War Memorial and Remembrance Parades in Little Chalfont:** The Chairman reported that his informal soundings amongst a variety of organisations had indicated a level of support for a memorial in Little Chalfont. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate possible options and report back.
- 17. Parish Meeting 2014:** *To agree a date and consider themes and speakers*- Wednesday 7 May was the first choice with 21 May held in reserve depending on the availability of speakers. It was agreed to invite Kate Lewis from GE Healthcare (see 8 (ii) above), the recently appointed area police commander/superintendent, and, Cllr Martin Tett.
- 18. Reports and Notifications:**
- i. December 2013 Neighbourhood Policing Newsletter - Amersham Neighbourhood Team (e-mailed 2 December 2013);
 - ii. HS2 Hybrid Bill Documentation – to note that the documentation is available to view in Little Chalfont Community Library (some documents are available as hard copy and others are on a memory stick);
 - iii. S137 Payment Limits 2014/15 – To note that the Department for Communities and Local Government has confirmed that the appropriate sum for parish councils for the purposes of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for 2014-2015 is £7.20. (This is the amount that results from increasing the amount for 2013-2014 (£6.98) by the percentage increase in the Retail Prices Index between September 2012 and September 2013 (of 3.2%), in accordance with Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act.)
 - iv. ACRE 26 November briefing regarding government consultation on Village Hall VAT.
- 19. Any Other Business:** (i) *Greystokes advertising sign*- The Clerk will speak to Cllr D Phillips; (ii) *ID cards for Parish Councillors* – Cllr Walford's suggestion that ID cards be provided for Councillors when they are on Council business was supported. The Clerk will investigate; (iii) *Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign*

(MVAS) - Councillors were asked to respond by 20 December 2013 to the Assistant Clerk's recent e-mail and paper asking them to rank the MVAS locations suggested and put forward any other sites.

- 20. A resolution was agreed 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. (Minuted below as no confidential information is contained in the minute.)
- 21. **Buildings Working Party:** *To receive an update* – A formal response from Amersham Town Council is awaited. The Clerk will ask their Clerk for a progress report.
- 22. **Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 8 January 2014 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont.

Signed.....

Date.....

Little Chalfont Parish Council
11 December 2013
Item 11
Budget Preparation 2014/15 and Precept

To report on the budget meeting held on 3 December 2013 and to discuss the budget proposals and precept for 2014/15.

1. 3 December 2013 Discussions

Cllrs Drew, Parker and Walford met with the Clerk to discuss the first draft of the projections for the year end 2013/14 and the budget for 2014/15. These were discussed on a line by line basis and the amendments suggested are incorporated into the attached report.

A notional precept of £216,850 has been entered for 2014/15 (a 2% increase on the current year precept).

2. Current Year Projected Actual

On the basis of the above report, at 31 March 2014 there will be a budget surplus of £33,735 plus transfers into reserves totalling £35,000 (201 4201 Building Reserve £25,000 and 210 4207 WWP Amenity Reserve £10,000). Please note that at the 3 December meeting it was agreed to include these figures as projected actuals rather than recording them as zero, so this is different from last year's practice. Reserves at 31 March 2014 would therefore be £381,735 plus transfers into reserves, so a total of £ 416,735.

3. Projected Reserves 2014/15

Next year's budget would result in a deficit of £3,365. Reserves would be £413,370 plus transfers in reserves of £35,000 so a total of £448,370.

4. Final Decision on Precept

The Council will be unable to make a final decision on the precept for 2014/15 until the 8 January 2014 meeting. This is because Chiltern District Council will not have decided until 17 December whether or not to make a grant available to us that will offset the impact of the localisation of Council Tax benefit. They have asked for our precept demand by 31 January 2014.

5. Decision on 11 December 2013

The Council is asked to discuss, amend (as appropriate) and agree a draft budget. This is in advance of further discussion on 8 January 2014 when, hopefully, a final decision on the budget and precept for 2014/15 can be made.

JEM 6 December 2013