

Minutes of a Meeting of Little Chalfont Parish Council
Held on Wednesday 14 January 2015 at 7.30pm
In the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

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

In attendance: Mrs J Mason (Clerk) and Mrs N Meldrum.

Members of the public: Mr J Day.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** These were received from Cllr G Roberts.
- 2. To accept a resolution that standing orders be suspended to allow any members of the public to speak:** Not applicable.
- 3. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2014:** These were approved as a correct record and were signed as such by the Chairman.
- 4. Declarations of Interest:** It was noted that all Council members have declared a DPI in relation to discussions under item 10 , Budget and precept, and have applied for and been granted a dispensation, that applies until May 2015, enabling them to speak and vote on item 10.
- 5. Approval by Chairman of items for any other business-** The following were approved:
 - a. Chandos Close verge;
 - b. Nature Park Paths;
 - c. Signs;
 - d. Donkey Field.
- 6. Chairman's report:** This had been previously circulated. It was noted that the LCCA newsletter distribution would be taking place from the coming weekend and over the following week. At the same time a joint letter would be delivered updating community members about the need for a new Local Plan and inviting them to comment. Chiltern District Council's Youth Awards are taking place on Thursday 19 March at the Kings Church, Amersham, 6.15pm – 8.00pm. The Chairman hoped to attend and one other councillor could also come along. Any councillor who wished to take this place should contact the Clerk.
- 7. Clerk's report:** This had been previously circulated. The insurance claim mentioned had been passed to the council's insurers.
- 8. To receive reports, as appropriate, from members of outside bodies and working parties:**
 - a)** Library – Cllr Hinkly reported that new carpets, funded from an Affinity Water grant, had been laid. Junior loans had increased by 44% on last year and footfall had increased by 1,500. CDC's planning department had now validated the planning application for the single storey front extension. The library will be closed on Election Day 7 May because it will be used as a polling station. A fund raising quiz night is being held on 10 October.
 - b)** LCCA- A meeting of the joint LCCA /Parish Council new local plan co-ordination group has been scheduled for 19 January. LCCA members have also been in discussion with Chenies Parade management committee representatives about parking. One surprising solution being mooted to various problems was the use of ticket machines at the City Gate end. Cllr Parker reminded the council that such suggestions had been strongly opposed by the Parish Council and members of the community in the past. He would update the Council of any further developments.
 - c)** GE Liaison Group – The group had met recently but unfortunately Cllr Patel had been unable to attend due to ill health.
 - d)** Youth Club – Cllr Drew gave an update on the arrangements for the sale and disposal of some of the club's equipment. It was hoped that one of the pool tables could be stored in the Council's sheds behind the Village Hall. Cllr Patel undertook to look into finding transport to move this item.
- 9. Financial matters:** (i) *List of payments and cheques to be signed* – A schedule of payments totalling £22,383.40 had been circulated. Following a brief discussion this was approved and signed by the Chairman. It was noted that the Clerk's payment for reimbursement of purchases made on behalf of the Council was higher than usual because she had paid for the Bucks Free press vacancy advertisement by personal credit

card; (ii) *Income and Expenditure Report* - This had been previously circulated and was discussed briefly; (iii) Balance Sheet – This had been previously circulated and at 31 December 2014 reserves stood at £531,206.

10. Budget and precept 2015/16: To (i) *receive and discuss the Clerk's paper and recommendations for the budget* – The budget and accompanying paper had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the latter is attached at appendix 1 of these minutes. Following a detailed discussion Cllr Drew proposed and Cllr Parker seconded that the budget be agreed as presented to this meeting. This was agreed unanimously; (ii) *to set the precept for 2015/16* – A detailed discussion took place. It was noted that as yet HM Government had not imposed any capping on Town and Parish precepts. The income that would be requested from CDC would include precept and the grant for Council Tax support (£5,363.94 for 2015/16). This payment does not legally form part of the precept. Councillors were mindful of the need to balance the desire to minimise the impact of any increase on tax payers with the increasing demands being placed on Towns and Parishes and the need to deliver a high standard of service. Cllr Parker proposed and Cllr Hinkly seconded that the total funding request to CDC should be £218,600. This was agreed unanimously. The budget figures will be amended to reflect this decision. (This decision is reflected in the amendments made in red made to appendix 1 of these minutes.) The Clerk will advise Chiltern District Council.

11. Devolution of duties from TfB - *To receive an update from the Clerk on this project and discuss* – The following actions were agreed:

- i. The Clerk will seek “pump priming” funds for personal protective clothing for use by future volunteers;
- ii. Because information promised has not always been forthcoming, the projects implementation will be rather rushed. A letter will be sent to Cllr Phillips at BCC expressing disappointment;
- iii. In view of the above and to give the Parish Council a trial year, it was agreed that the devolved duties would be subsumed into one of the existing grounds maintenance contracts. Both these contracts are due to be retendered later in the year for a 1 April 2016 start date. The devolved duties work would also be put out to tender at this time. The Clerk will speak to the current contractors.
- iv. The current state of verges, paths and hedges will be audited and where practicable photographed before the start of the contract.

12. Community Buildings Working Party: The next meeting will be on 20 January 2015 when the architects will present revised drawings following the amendments to their brief, made as a result of the extensive consultation exercise in November and December.

13. Parish Meeting 22 April 2015 - To discuss further: It was confirmed that one of the community centre architects would be able to attend. In addition, a Nature Park update was suggested. A session on Parish Council activities and achievements would be included. In addition, Cllr Hinkly will provide the Clerk with the name of a contact at TfB who will also be invited to speak.

14. Parking – Informal consultation- Update: Cllr Parker reported that a summary of responses had just been received from BCC. The remainder of the data had been promised by the end of January. The Clerk was asked to arrange a meeting between Parish Council representatives and BCC staff for as soon as possible in February.

15. Vacancy for position of Parish Clerk- Update on advertising the post and relevant dates: The closing date is 30 January 2015 and interviews will be on 12 February.

16. School travel - To discuss associated issues: Cllr Drew advised that the home to school transport problems affecting Dr Challoners had been resolved for the time being. In addition, it had been commented on at a recent LAF meeting that Little Chalfont Primary School did not have a travel plan in place. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to both primary schools asking if they required any assistance in setting up their plans.

17. LAF funded project update: (i) *Bollards and improvements to village centre* - The Clerk outlined her proposals for improvements to the village centre which included new bollards (funded by the LAF), planting and a village centre sign. The Council supported these proposals and the Clerk will now liaise with contractors and BCC before instructing the work: (ii) *Projects for 2015/16* – These will be discussed at the February meeting. In the meantime the Clerk will circulate the relevant paperwork to Councillors who will give thought to suitable projects for consideration at that meeting.

18. Replacement flooring various areas in village hall - *To discuss a recommendation and, if appropriate, approve expenditure:* The Assistant Clerk had previously circulated a paper setting out three quotations for replacement flooring in the ladies and gents toilets, the front hall, the passage at the rear of the hall and the staff toilet. These need replacing for hygiene and health and safety reasons. The work will include removal of the old tiles, screeding and new commercial standard non-slip flooring. The Council discussed the project and

agreed unanimously to accept the quotation from T and A Flooring. The Assistant Clerk will instruct the work and consult with the Hall Management Committee on the colour choice.

19. Reports and notifications:

- (i) Chiltern Society Winter newsletter;
- (ii) December Newsfacts from TfB (Winter Gritting);
- (iii) CDC Open Spaces Strategy.

20. Any Other Business:

- a. Chandos Close verge – The bin lorries have been churning up the verges. The Clerk undertook to raise this problem, highlighted to Cllr Patel by a member of the public, with CDC and BCC.
- b. Nature Park Paths – A plan setting out the layout of the paths, which will accompany the planning application, was noted.
- c. Signs – deferred until the Planning Committee meeting on 20 January.
- d. Donkey Field – Cllr Parker highlighted concerns about debris from the site on the road and pavement in breach of the planning permission. Parking of site vehicles on Burtons Lane causing traffic problems was also a serious concern. It was hoped that the LCCA's liaison group would be able to sort out these concerns over the course of the next couple of weeks. It was agreed not to take the matter further in the meantime. It was also agreed that BCC would be chased to find out when the proposed parking restrictions along Burtons Lane relating to the Donkey Field will be implemented.

21. A resolution was agreed unanimously 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.

22. Nature Park lease - To receive an update on negotiations: The Clerk had circulated her draft letter to Lennons commenting on their amendments. It was agreed that this could be sent subject to any further amendments the Clerk felt were appropriate.

23. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11 February 2015 at 8.15pm in the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont (following the Planning Committee meeting which starts at 7.30pm).

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 1

Little Chalfont Parish Council

11 December 2013

Item 10

Budget Preparation 2015/16 and Precept

To (i) receive and discuss the Clerk's paper and recommendations for the budget; (ii) to set the precept for 2015/16 and to review and finalise the draft budget in the light of this decision.

1. 9 December 2014 Discussions and Council Meeting 10 December 2014

As previously reported, Cllrs Drew, Parker and Hinkly met with the Clerk to discuss the first draft of the projections for the year end 2014/15 and the budget for 2015/16. These were discussed on a line by line basis and the amendments suggested are incorporated into the report printed circulated in advance of the Parish Council meeting held on 10 December 2014.

In 2014/15 the income received from Chiltern District Council totalled £ 212,600. This figure, for ease of reference, is referred to as precept but more accurately and legally is reflected in the accounts as a combination of Council Tax support grant (£7,509.51) and precept (£205,090).

The papers circulated for the December meeting showed a notional precept (ie precept plus Council Tax support grant) increase of 2 %. However, at this time CDC had not advised what the grant element of the total would be and so the figures in the draft budget assumed that the grant element would remain the same for 2015/16. The Parish Council agreed, therefore, that a decision on the precept would be deferred until this information was forthcoming. A number of other budgetary matters were decided as set out in minute 10 of the 10 December Council meeting. These changes have been incorporated into the budget dated 13 January 2015 accompanying this paper.

2. Precept and Council Tax grant for 2015/16

On 22 December CDC confirmed that the Council Tax support element for 2015/16 would be £5363.94 (£7,509.51 in 2014/15). The precept and grants received income budgets for 2015/16 have been changed to reflect this figure whilst maintaining a 2 % increase on 2014/15 income derived from CDC. The total figure received on this basis would be made up of the following elements and have been included in the 13 January 2015 budget papers:

	2015/16	2014/15
Council Tax Support Grant	£5,363.94	£7,509.51
Precept	£213,236.06*	£205,090
Total	£218,600*	£212,600

3. Other changes to budget figures made since the 10 December meeting (included in the budget papers dated 13 January 2015).

- i. War memorial (4217 201) - An outturn figure of £1,656 has been entered.
- ii. Devolved services from BCC - Although the final figure for anticipated income arising from devolved services has still to be received, a new income code has been created for this item ((1007 105) with a budget of £10,210.
- iii. Nature Park – An expenditure budget of £5,000 for grounds maintenance (4080 107) has been entered in the light of discussions with the LCCT. This covers six months of expenditure.

4. Current Year Projected Reserves at year end

On the basis of the above, at 31 March 2015 there will be a budget surplus of £2,286 giving reserves of £425,795 (plus £35,000 transfers in reserves).

5. Projected Reserves 2015/16

Next year's budget would result in a deficit of £15,331.

Reserves at the year end would be **£412,212*** (plus transfers in reserves of £35,000).

6. Final Decision on Precept

Chiltern District Council would like to have our precept figure and budget details by the end of this month. In deciding whether to accept the budget and agree a precept/grant income increase of 2% as set out in the budget paper dated 13 January 2015 and the table in 2 above, the Council should bear in mind the following issues:

- I. Capping of precepts – This possibility is in the ether but has not yet been announced by DCLG. On the one hand the government wants Towns and Parishes to undertake more duties and on the other is hinting at reductions in revenue.
- II. Public perception.
- III. Ability to realise planned projects.

JEM 13 January 2015

*Figures in red are final figures following decision made at the Parish Council meeting 14 January 2015