

Minutes of a Meeting of Little Chalfont Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 11 November at 7.30pm in the Village Library
Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Present: Cllr B Drew, Cllr C Gibbs, Cllr C Ingham, Cllr D Marshall, Cllr G Smith, Cllr A Tate and Cllr F Wilkinson (Chairman).

In Attendance: Mrs J E Mason (Clerk) and until 8.30pm Cllr M Tett (BCC).

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Dale.
2. **Approve of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2008:** These were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Suspension of standing orders enabling members of the public to speak:** There were no members of the public in attendance.
4. **Declarations of interest:** None.
5. **Chairman's Report:** The report had been circulated in advance and the following items were noted in particular: Village Entry Signs: Any further signs (perhaps in Burtons Lane and Bell Lane) would be charged to the Council and if agreed would, in future, have be paid for by the Parish Council (around £600 each); A Boards The remaining businesses still displaying Boards on the verges had been given until 24 November to remove them; Village Hall Work was progressing well on the refurbishment with minimum disruption to users. It was agreed that the existing budget for the hall work would allow for the purchase of new tables and chairs. Cllr Drew had obtained a sample of an upholstered chair and the Clerk undertook to investigate the possibility of obtaining fabric and further samples for the next meeting; Assistant Clerk Mrs Karen Sterling had been appointed and would start on Tuesday 2 December 2008; Council Dates Although the meeting dates had been set up until and including the May meeting, the possibility of holding Council meetings on generally the second Wednesday of the month, rather than Tuesday, was discussed. This would enable meetings to be held in the Village Hall. Planning meetings would remain on Tuesdays. Comments should be sent to the Clerk; Delegated Budget Any views or proposals should be sent to the Clerk by 26 November to facilitate discussion and a decision at the 2 December meeting; Vacancy as a result of Cllr Marshall's resignation This was noted with regret. Cllr Marshall's last Council meeting would be in December. The procedure for the filling of a vacancy for a Councillor would now be set in motion.
6. **Clerk's Report:** reinforcing comments already made by the Chairman regarding the Village Hall and the Assistant Clerk position the Clerk drew attention to the following: Annual Return The auditors had been in touch with one or two queries which the Clerk was responding to; Christmas Lights A local electrician had confirmed that the electrical installation at the base of the tree was in accordance with the BCC guidance. Further work to safeguard the transformer from theft had been agreed by the Clerk; Free Parking Before Christmas CDC had confirmed that free parking would be available in Snells Wood car park on the three Saturdays before Christmas (6, 13 and 20 December). The Clerk undertook to distribute leaflets for the traders to display if they wished; Street Lighting the Clerk updated the Council. Notice had been given to terminate the contract with Britons and in the meantime Forde and Mc Hugh had been employed to tackle the backlog of faults. The Clerk

was instructed to endeavour to ensure that the new contract terms were such that failure to undertake the requirements of the contract by the engineers would not result in any penalties if other contractors were brought in to provide the service expected.

7. **Reports (as appropriate) from Council representatives on the following groups :** (a) Village Society and the Revitalisation Group Cllr Drew informed colleagues about a meeting to be held the following evening to discuss a possible merger.(c)NAG Cllr Smith thanked members for their input to the letter he was sending to the police regarding the vandalism and anti-social behaviour at Westwood Park which he would be discussing at the next meeting of the NAG in the coming week. He also reported that the Clerk had been approached by CDC about the establishment of designated Public Places Order. It was agreed that the Clerk should hold follow-up discussions and report back, with a view to establishing such orders for Westwood Park and Chenies Parade ; (d) Website Cllr Marshall had recently updated the website to include an item about the ongoing street lighting problems and to remove the advertisement for the Assistant Parish Clerk position; (e) GE Healthcare Cllr Tate had attended a liaison meeting with the company on 21 October and extended their open invitation to the Chairman also to attend in the future. He went on to report that the White Lion Road site was now concentrating on diagnostics. It was anticipated that work on the effluent pipe-line would be completed in December. He reminded the Council that the company also had an annual budget of £50,000 available in the form of grants to community groups. (f) Village Hall Management Committee Cllr Drew Reported that the Committee had put forward the suggestion that a speakers lectern should be bought and a clip on microphone.
8. **Budgets 2008/09 and 2009/10:** The Chairman's note circulated by e-mail on 27 October 2008 was discussed and the contents of Alison Howes' 28 October letter (Head of Financial Services, Chiltern District Council) re precept requirements were noted. Possible future capital projects were discussed although it was agreed that such discussions could not be taken much further at this stage pending the outcome of discussions with ATC and an assessment of the impact of the market town health check. In the meantime it was agreed to replace the item of equipment removed from the playground, utilising the existing foundations. It was agreed that the precept would be decided at the December 2 meeting at which time the Chairman will present several alternatives.
9. **New bank Accounts.** (1) It was confirmed and agreed to appoint HSBC as bankers to the Council and to approve the opening of the new business banking account. The terms set out in the Bank's Business Banking Terms and conditions were accepted. (2) Similarly, it was confirmed and agreed to appoint NatWest as bankers to the Council and to confirm and approve the opening of a new business banking account as set out in the Bank's Business Banking Terms and conditions. (3) It was agreed that for both accounts there will be a requirement for any two of the signatories to sign cheques or issue instructions to the relevant bank. The Clerk will not be a signatory. However, the Banks will be requested by two signatories to allow her to give instructions, move monies, and, request and receive any information about the accounts to ensure the responsible management of the Council's finances.
10. **Councillor Allowances:** It was agreed that the Clerk should respond to Harvey Patterson's 27 October letter suggesting a notional annual expenses allowance of £50 for Councillors

and £100 for the Chairman. This would be on the basis that those who did not wish to claim did not have to, whilst ensuring that those who might find the inevitable expenditure a burden were not deterred from standing for office. The money could be claimed with receipts from the Clerk to cover items such as ink cartridges, stationery and mileage at the prevailing Inland Revenue non-taxable limit (currently 40p).

11. **To consider applications for grants / donations:** Following the finalisation of the policy at the 7 October meeting the Clerk had written to all the organisations who had requested money asking them to resubmit their application providing the information requested in the policy. As a result, four organisations had sent in applications: Help the Aged; Good Companions; Dial-a-Ride and the Chesham Mayor's/Salvation Army Christmas Lunch Fund. After a discussion it was agreed to award the following:

Good Companions - £150

Christmas day lunch - £100

Dial-a-Ride - £200

The Clerk was asked to inform the organisations of this outcome and send the appropriate cheques. It was also noted that there was still £500 ring fenced in the budget for donations to young people's organisations.

12. **Consultation and notifications:** The following were noted and appropriate actions agreed as indicated.

- Communities and Local Government – Communities in Control: Codes of Conduct for local authority members and employees – a consultation. Reply to 9 October letter due 24 December 2008. Clerk to draft a reply.
- Chiltern District Council- Harvey Patterson's 23 October letter re Town and Parish Council representatives on standards committee. This was circulated and anyone wishing to be nominated should contact the Clerk.
- CDC Annual Business Meeting – Thursday 20 November 2008. To be circulated placed on notice Boards.
- South East England Regional Assembly- review of Gypsy and Traveller needs. Reply due 21 November 2008. Clerk to draft reply.
- Communities in Local Government -Communities in Control: The making and Enforcement of bylaws.
- BCC – Martin Tett's 3 November letter – Update on the Buckinghamshire County Council Energy from waste Initiative.

13. **To consider a resolution 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.** No members of the public present.

14. **Update on Discussions with ATC:** Cllr Wilkinson reported that he and the ATC representatives were happy to accept the proposed mediator, Richard Pushman, Deputy Chairman of Buckinghamshire County Council. The following resolution was agreed unanimously:

That Little Chalfont Parish Council authorises its Chairman to enter a mediation process with the representatives of Amersham Town Council, with the purpose of agreeing a solution to the ongoing dispute over transfer of reserves. That the mediation process shall be under the Chairmanship of Mr R Pushman, Deputy Chairman of Bucks County Council. That the Council agrees to the submission of any information asked for by the Chairman of the process. That the Council will accept the conclusions of the Chairman, with one reservation, that, as a minimum, it will retain the sum of money already agreed and handed over by ATC.

15. **Date of next meeting** – Tuesday 2 December 2008 in the Village Library.

Signed.....

Date.....