

Little Chalfont Parish Council
Minutes of a Meeting Held on Tuesday 15 July at 7.30pm
In the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont HP8 4UD

Present: Cllr M Dale, Cllr B Drew, Cllr C Gibbs, Cllr D Marshall, Cllr A Tate, Cllr G Smith and Cllr F Wilkinson

In attendance: Mrs J Mason, Clerk

Mr J Brooks, Chairman, Friends of Little Chalfont Library

1. **Apologies for absence:** These were received from Cllr C Ingham.
2. **Approval of minutes :** The minutes of (i) the Parish Council meeting held on 10 June 2008 and (ii) the extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 24 June 2008 were approved and signed as a correct record
3. **Suspension of standing orders:** It was agreed that standing orders should be suspended and there followed a presentation by the Chairman of the Friends of Little Chalfont Library, Mr J Brooks. Mr Brooks confirmed that the Council had already received his Chairman's report and his 2 June letter to the Clerk enclosing a proposal for funding. His aim tonight was to run through what is involved in running the library and the costs incurred in that process.

He reminded the Council that the library had become a Community Library in February 2007 after a hard fought campaign. The first year had been dominated by training the volunteers, setting up systems and procedures and linking the IT system into the Buckinghamshire County Council systems. They were independent of BCC and had received generous contributions from GE Healthcare, Amersham Town Council, the Village Society and individuals in the community. Latterly, they had won funding from the lottery and of course the Parish Council. Services had been improved and footfall had increased. However, continued sources of significant funding were crucial for the future viability of the Library. The annual costs are £20,000 and income £8,000 leaving a deficit of £12,000. He circulated the library's reserves policy and emphasised the prudence of having reserves at a level that enabled an orderly run down of the service should circumstances dictate this. In response to questions from Councillors he stated that income was derived from grants, the till and gift aid, augmented by social events, open gardens, book sales and other such activities, many organised by the invaluable group of volunteers. Further fund raising ventures were being planned. He emphasised that the library was at the heart of the community with the needs of villagers at its core, serving people from a wide diversity of backgrounds. To this end the library's objectives mirrored many of those espoused by the Parish Council. He hoped that the Council would be able to continue to contribute to funding such a key community activity.

4. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Dale asked the Council to note that his wife was a library trustee.
5. **To consider the request from the Chairman of Friends of Little Chalfont Library for funding**
A variety of options were debated, including: allowing the library to sink or swim on a business basis; granting the funds unconditionally, and, matching funding to monies raised

by the library committee. It was agreed that the service provided was excellent and that the library was indeed at the centre of the community. The work of Mr Brooks and his volunteers had resulted in a considerable asset for the village rather than the dereliction that could have resulted when BCC withdrew funding. It was agreed that work on the development of the library was still in its infancy and that match funding might be an onerous burden at this stage but could perhaps be considered in the future. It was agreed therefore that for this year the Council would give Friends of Little Chalfont Library a grant of £6000.

- 6. Chairman's Report:** Cllr Wilkinson reported on the following (i) *Signs* – he had met with Ken Moloughney from BCC and had agreed the location of four signs bearing the words “Welcome to Little Chalfont Please Drive Carefully”. These would be erected in the Autumn, following appropriate consultation, at the following locations: bottom of Cokes Lane near Household Waste Depot; on Nightingales Lane just inside the boundary; near the offices in White Lion Road and at the existing sign location towards Chorleywood on the A404. (ii) *Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils* - membership had now been paid and a website, helpline and newsletter are available. (iii) *Air Traffic Presentation:* Tim Bamber, an air traffic expert, would address the 2 September meeting (iv) *Community Events*- He had presented prizes at the annual prize giving of the Little Chalfont Drama Workshop and had been impressed by the calibre of performances. He would be presenting a Marion Orpen prize at the end of term assembly at Little Chalfont Primary School on 23 July. (v)*Maintenance* - The Triangle work had been well received and the next visit by the BCC community gangs would take place over the coming fortnight; the Clerk would report work required to the gang supervisor. (vi) *Amersham Town Council* – a meeting with Amersham Town Council representatives was scheduled for 16 July. (vii) *NAGS* - Various community groups and the Council had written to police representatives about the disappointing meeting held on 25 June 2008. (viii) *Request for informal Meeting with Carol Castle CDC* - he had invited Carol Castle to discuss the village hall site.
- 7. Clerk's Report and Financial Matters:** Dealing with Parish matters the Clerk reported that public concerns tended to centre on verges, litter, vandalism, grass cutting and parking. Later in the year she hoped to be able to move to fixed opening hours for the public. The hall was been well used and an on-going booking for Mondays (usually quiet) had now been secured. Regarding the hall refurbishment, the builder was currently on holiday although he had pencilled in dates in October for the work. The pavilion continued to be subject to sporadic acts of vandalism and would be the subject of a rather belated Spring clean and spruce up shortly. The playground was being inspected regularly and arrangements were to be put in hand for an annual inspection by the manufacturers. Two bins and a bench at the park also needed replacing. Safety checks had been booked with British Gas for the three boilers. An electrical inspection of the hall would be implemented prior to the redecoration. Over Wimbledon the tennis court meter had earned £200.50. The Parish's involvement in Village day had gone well and she had thanked both ATC and CDC for work they had undertaken on the Council's behalf.

Turning to Finances, the bank reconciliation for June was circulated and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk advised the Council that she had made contact with the external auditors to ensure compliance with various year end deadlines. They had been very helpful but had advised her that on the basis of income, the Council were now classed as intermediate and as such had a further set of auditing requirements. These had subsequently been e-mailed to the Parish office and she was now working on them. To enable the annual return to be completed and signed off the following were agreed:

Exercise of Electoral Rights: Notice to be dated during the next week and inspection period 20 August – 17 September (dates already agreed with External Auditors).

Figures for Section 1 Statement of Accounts: These were circulated and it was agreed they would form the basis of the return which would be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk. There was a brief discussion about item 9 which would be included in the asset register together with an explanatory note from the Clerk.

Section 2 Annual Governance Statement: The content was circulated and agreed. With regard to section 8 it was agreed that the Clerk should include an additional note relating to ongoing discussions with ATC.

Section 4 Internal Auditors report: Mr V Morris, Internal Auditor had completed and signed this section of the form.

8. Reports from Council representatives on the following groups:

(a) Village Society: Cllr Dale referred to a letter that had been sent from the Chairman of the Village Society and Cllr Wilkinson undertook to coordinate a response in consultation with the Clerk.

(b) Revitalisation Group: Cllr Drew reported that Village Day had been a success and a really enjoyable event for all involved.

(c) NAG: Cllr Smith concurred with comments made by the Chairman in his report and added that BLARA had also written to the Chief Inspector on the issue of the 25 June meeting.

(d) Website: Cllr Marshall confirmed that most Councillors were now using the littlechalfont-pc.gov.uk addresses. Any Councillors requiring further advice should contact him.

(d) Village Hall Management Committee: Cllr Drew informed the Council that the Committee had met the previous day and were going to prepare proposals simplifying the Hall hire charge schedule.

9. Consultations and notifications:

(1) Proposed Public Payphones Removals – Gill Gowings 25 June letter had previously been circulated and included a proposal to close a payphone in Chalfont Station Road. The Council were of the view that it would be preferable to retain this facility and the Clerk undertook to clarify if both boxes at this location were being removed or just one.

(2) Consultation on Proposed Changes to Airspace: Terminal Control North – response on behalf of CDC from Cllr Graham Sussum 17 June 2008. This was circulated to Councillors.

(3) BCC 14 May letter re temporary closure Cokes Lane 23 July for approx 3 days – this was circulated to Councillors.

(4) BCC 20 June 2008 letter – Changes to Waste Permit Scheme wef 1 July 2008 – this was circulated to Councillors.

10. **Update on A- boards** – Councillor Wilkinson reported that he had now liaised with the remaining businesses (Citygate, Chalfont Flooring and The Cape) on the positioning of A-Boards.
11. **Christmas Lights:** The Clerk reported that BCC were developing new regulations on the licensing of Christmas lights and hanging baskets. She undertook to have the electrical point on the Triangle inspected. Councillors confirmed that the lights were the property of the Revitalisation Committee.
12. **Councillor Allowances:** Cllr Wilkinson had previously circulated the independent review of Councillor allowances dated March 2008. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the clerk would research the practice in other nearby Councils.
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: There were no members of the public present.
14. **Discussions with ATC:** As already reported, a meeting was scheduled for 16 July.
15. **Amendment to Meeting Dates:** It was agreed that the Planning Committee meeting scheduled for October should be moved from 28 October to the new date of Thursday 23 October. (In the Library).
16. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 2 September 2008 in the Library.

.....Signed

.....Date