

Minutes of a Little Chalfont Parish Council

Held in the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Wednesday 9 December 2015 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr M Davis; Cllr B Drew (Chairman); Cllr I Griffiths; Cllr C Ingham; Cllr M Parker; Cllr V Patel; Cllr G Roberts; Cllr J Walford.

Apologies: Cllr D Rafferty; Cllr D Phillips

Members of the public: None

In attendance: Mrs N Meldrum (Parish Clerk)

- 1. Apologies for absence:**
- 2. To accept a resolution that standing orders be suspended to allow any members of the public to speak (10 mins):** Not applicable.
- 3. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2015:** The minutes were approved and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.
- 4. Declarations of Interest:** The advice of the Monitoring Office at Chiltern District Council was noted, stating that Councillors with property in the Parish should have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in relation to discussions under item 10, Budget Preparation and Precept. Completed forms from all councillors had been received. 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 10 was approved.
- 5. Approval by Chairman of items for any other business:** (i) Statters Field; (ii) Waste Transfer Station; (iii) Bucks Transport Plan.
- 6. Chairman's Report:** Cllr Drew highlighted the issues raised in his report including Small Business Saturday and one hour free car parking in Snells Wood car park.
- 7. Clerk's Report:** The majority of issues were covered elsewhere in the agenda. The Clerk reported that following previous correspondence with councillors, the electricity supply for the street lighting had been renewed with Southern Electricity following the receipt of three quotes from different suppliers.
- 8. To receive reports, as appropriate, from members of outside bodies and working parties:** (i) Little Chalfont Community Library. It was reported that the committee of the Library had accepted the grant of £3000 from the Parish Council. Consideration was taking place of the long term position of the Library's finances. (ii) Westwood Park. It was reported a discussion had taken place about parking issues at Westwood Park, particularly on the entrance strip at the weekend and a number of measures had been suggested to address the problem. The Trim Trail would be ordered shortly. (iii) Nature Park. 100 trees had recently been planted in the park. An application for funding from SITA had been made and the outcome was expected in the New Year.
- 9. (i) List of payments and cheques to be signed:** Cllr Griffiths commented that the council was holding a larger reserve than was recommended at the BALC induction course. It was explained that the reason for this was due to the plans to build a new community centre. It was highlighted that several payments made were subject to Section 137. This includes the

grant to Little Chalfont Community Library, the donation to the LCCA for delivery of parish newsletters and the £25 book token for the Marion Orpen award. These payments are within the Council's limit of £36,888 for such payments.

(ii) Income and Expenditure report: Cllr Parker also noted that the budget for the Employers National Insurance and Administration did not appear to be correct. It was agreed this would be taken into account during the budget discussions for 2016-17.

(iii) Financial Services Compensation Scheme: It was reported that Parish Councils were now included in the compensation scheme. The level of protection within a bank account was changing from £85,000 to £75,000. A number of banks were offering an amount of money to be withdrawn from the bank accounts without being subject to the early withdrawal fee. Following discussion with the banks which held the Parish Council's accounts, it transpired that due to the nature of the accounts, the Parish Council was not subject to a withdrawal fee. Cllr Parker asked if the Skipton Building Society offered any suitable accounts for parish councils. Cllr Walford asked if all of the parish council's bank accounts were still on five separate licences. Cllr Walford also asked if there was a central body who could advise on bank accounts for parish councils. It was suggested that NALC may be able to assist with this enquiry. Cllr Walford volunteered to research the different bank accounts available to parish councils. Further investigations into the impact of the change to the Financial Services Compensation scheme would also be made.

10. Budget Preparation 2016/17 and Precept: Cllr Drew gave an overview of the process for applying for a precept. The difference between the precept and the grant was also explained and the potential impact on residents if the grant did not exist. It was agreed to check with CDC when the decision about the level of grant would be made. The initial proposals for the budget were shown on the screen. It was noted that the architect costs for the community centre project were unclear as it was dependent on the progress of the project. Cllr Ingham made a suggestion that an allocation could be made in the budget to improve the condition of the street lights in the village. The Clerk will investigate the cost of painting the street light columns. This is a task which could be rotated around the village over a number of years. More information is currently required about the one hour free car parking charges from CDC for 2016-17. Cllr Drew reported that the issue of the one hour free parking was on the agenda for the CDC cabinet meeting which proposed a change to the way in which the costs are worked out. At present, it was unclear when the new system would begin. It was noted that the doctors and opticians advertise the free parking option. The possibility of local businesses contributing to the cost of the free parking was also discussed. Cllr Parker agreed to raise this at the next LCCA meeting. Another issue raised was the possibility of lighting the underpass at Beel Close. Advice had been sought from Forde and McHugh about the use of the supply. It was not possible to use London Underground's electrical supply. Additional sources of funding for the project also needed to be considered. The 2016-17 budget would be circulated in advance of the January meeting so that a decision could be made about the level of the precept.

11. Parish Meeting 2016: Following investigation of local school dates, it was confirmed that the Parish Meeting would be held on Wednesday 25 May. Guest speakers would be discussed at a future council meeting. Initial suggestions included a representative from the Ambulance Service about the First Responder Scheme or defibrillators, and a representative from the Nature Park.

12. **Arrangements for tendering exercises:** The grounds maintenance contracts are due for renewal in 2016 and it was proposed that three tendering specifications should be advertised for (i) the provision of gardening and associated work in Little Chalfont; (ii) the maintenance of sports grounds and other recreational facilities; (iii) provision of a range of services devolved from Buckinghamshire County Council. This was agreed. Cllr Griffiths and Cllr Davies agreed to assist with the tender exercise, looking at specifications, and examining the tender applications. The recommendations will be put to the February parish council meeting.
13. **Nature Park Lease:** It was reported that Cllrs Drew, Parker and Roberts had met to discuss the latest version of the lease. A number of questions and points for clarification had been raised. A meeting would be arranged with the solicitor prior to Christmas to discuss these issues. It was reported the lease would commence just before the Nature Park opens.
14. **Nature Park website:** Cllr Drew explained that the Nature Park website was being developed by Keiron Brown who also produces the Library website and will eventually be taking over the LCCA website. The Nature Park Action Group had requested that the Parish Council fund the maintenance of the site at a cost of £474 over 6 years. It was asked if this would be part of a larger request for funding but this was not thought likely. Cllr Roberts proposed that the Parish Council should fund the website. This was seconded by Cllr Ingham. There was a vote to approve the funding, the majority of councillors were in favour.
15. **Vice-Chairman's Badge:** Cllr Drew raised the issue of a badge of office which he wears when attending events on behalf of the Parish Council. When the Vice-Chairman attends events for the Parish Council she currently has no formal identification. It was agreed that a badge of office in the region of £200 would be purchased.
16. **LAF funding of Nightingales Corner:** Cllr Drew reported that a number of LAF funded projects had been stopped due to financial constraints at Bucks County Council. However, the LAF funding of Nightingales Corner was ringfenced from the previous financial year and was allowed to continue. A verbal quote had been received regarding the purchase and installation of bollards from Bucks County Council and a quote had also been received from Amersham Town Council. Further investigations would be made about the cost of purchasing the new bollards. Cllr Drew also raised that KoHo, the new coffee shop, had offered to make a contribution to the costs of new cycle racks to be sited in the area outside. The issue of advertising for local businesses could also be addressed potentially with sponsorship of the cycle racks. It was questioned how popular the cycle racks are and it was confirmed that others in the village are used on a regular basis.
17. **Local Devolution:** Cllrs Roberts and Griffiths attended the Town and Parish Council conference on Wednesday 25 November. Cllr Griffiths reported that there was much information about central government devolving services to local authorities covering a whole range of services such as planning, flytipping, gullies, meals on wheels. Cllr Griffiths circulated a paper about devolved services. Cllr Griffiths also raised the issue of looking after vulnerable people in the community. Cllr Roberts reported publicity about checking on your neighbours which could be included in the next LCCA newsletter.
18. **Chiltern Heights meeting with Paradigm and Thames Valley Police:** Cllr Ingham had attended a 'Have your say' with Paradigm Housing and Thames Valley Police at Chiltern Heights on Saturday 21 November. A problem of speeding with Chiltern Heights was raised with drivers, mostly not residents of the area, driving too quickly where children play. It was

suggested a poster campaign may help to alleviate the problem. Paradigm will be costing out the scheme. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be able to make a contribution to the campaign if a viable proposal was produced. The Clerk will contact Paradigm Housing with regard to the proposal. A second issue was raised regarding the lack of wheelie bins in the area. Paradigm Housing undertook to send copies of their correspondence with CDC about the issue. To date, no information had been received.

- 19. Flooring issues in the village hall:** The Clerk reported that no further problems had occurred with the flooring in the village hall. Adjustments had been made to the thermostat and signs had been placed to remind hall users to keep the hall at a constant temperature. The Clerk had met with two builders about improving the ventilation in the village hall. One quote had been received, another gave advice on improving the ventilation through other methods. It was agreed that no further action would be taken at present, but that the situation would continue to be monitored.
- 20. Grants and Donations:** Following the last Council meeting, further information had been sought from the Chiltern Citizens Advice Bureau about the usage of the service in Little Chalfont. Councillors were satisfied with the response provided. Cllr Parker proposed that £1000 should be granted to this organisation. This was seconded by Cllr Ingham and agreed.
- 21. Parking Survey:** Cllr Parker reported that no further information had been received about the progress of the formal parking consultation. However, it was likely that the yellow lines would be implemented in Burtons Lane in January. An issue was raised about repairs which were required and how the timing would fit with the implementation of the lines.
- 22. AED Defibrillator and First Responder Scheme:** Following the last council meeting, further information had been obtained about the grants available for the purchase of a defibrillator. In particular grants were available from the British Heart Foundation. Cllr Drew proposed that the Parish Council progress this initiative as soon as possible. All councillors agreed with this proposal. The location for the defibrillator was discussed, with outside the village hall being the most likely venue.
- 23. Clean for the Queen:** Cllr Drew noted that the Clean for the Queen initiative would take place on 4-6 March 2016 to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. It was suggested that a working group should be organised comprising of a number of groups in the village, including the Parish Council, the LCCA, the WI, the uniformed groups and the local schools. It was proposed that a meeting should take place early in the New Year to discuss how this event should be organised, and identify the hotspots and potential costs involved.
- 24. Reports and Notifications:** None.
- 25. Any other business:**
 - (i) Statter's Field:** It was reported that evidence had been collected from a number of users of Statter's Field and had been given to the Parish Office. It was expected that the application for the right of way would be submitted before Christmas.
 - (ii) Waste Transfer Station:** Cllr Drew reported that he had drafted a letter to Cllr Isobel Darby, Leader of Chiltern District Council, requesting the CDC do not grant a lease to for the Waste Transfer Station. This letter would be circulated for comment.
 - (iii) Consultation on Transportation:** Cllr Drew drew councillors' attention to the consultation on Buckinghamshire's draft Local Transport Plan.
- 26. Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 13 January 2016 at 7.30pm in the village hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont.