

Minutes of a Little Chalfont Parish Council meeting

Held in the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Wednesday 13 July 2016 at 7.30pm

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

Members of the public: None.

In attendance: Mrs N Meldrum (Parish 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 (10 mins):** None present.
- 3. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2016 and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2016:** The minutes were agreed and signed by Cllr Drew, who was Chairman of both meetings, as a correct record.
- 4. Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Roberts declared that she was a member of the WI.
- 5. Approval by Chairman of items for any other business:** (i) MUGA. This will be discussed in item 15; (ii) TfB focus group; (iii) Name plates; (iv) GE Healthcare.
- 6. Chairman's Report:** Cllr Roberts reported that she had recently been to an event at the Chiltern Open Air Museum. The Museum had offered to take a group of councillors and the LCCA on a behind the scenes tour of the venue. A number of councillors were interested in taking part in this event. Cllr Roberts will arrange a date for the meeting. Cllr Roberts also reported she had received a kind reply from Roger Funk in response to her letter regarding the successful opening of the Nature Park. Cllrs Roberts and Ingham had also recently attended a workshop on S106. Cllr Ingham suggested this could be discussed at a forthcoming planning meeting.
- 7. Clerk's Report:** All of the issues raised in the report related to items on the agenda.
- 8. To receive reports, as appropriate, from members of outside bodies and working parties:**
(i) Nature Park Management Group. Cllr Drew reported that the opening of the Nature Park had been very successful. The first meeting of the Management Group had taken place. It was recognised the group was in a transitional stage. Many members participated in the original Action Group and in addition new members have been requested. Issues raised for consideration by the Parish Council included the collection of litter within the park and also the possibility of producing a safeguarding policy for some users of the park. (ii) Little Chalfont Community Library. Cllr Griffiths reported that the fundraising Library tea party was taking place at the village hall on Saturday 16 July at 2pm. (iii) LCCA meeting. Cllr Parker reported that there were no additional issues arising from the recent LCCA meeting.
- 9. Financial matters (i) List of payments and cheques to be signed:** Cllr Walford asked about the rent for the Nature Park. Cllr Parker explained that it was a requirement of the lease. Cllr Davis asked if this was an annual fee. This was confirmed by the Clerk. **(ii) Income and Expenditure report:** Cllr Parker asked about the budget line for Parking in the report. The Clerk confirmed that all payments on this project had now been completed and so this line could be removed. **(iii) Balance sheet 30 June 2016.** There were no comments on the

balance sheet. **(iv) VAT Return for quarter ending 31 May 2016.** It was noted that the VAT return had been submitted. **(v) Distribution of LCPC funding to higher interest accounts including transfer of funding to the Nationwide account.** It was reported that the Nationwide account had matured in July 2016 and notification of the details had been received after the last parish council meeting. Following correspondence by e-mail, a decision had been made to set up a new one year Business Saver account at an enhanced interest rate of 1.2%. As discussed at the last parish council meeting, the level of funding in the current account was high. Therefore, it had been agreed that £150,000 should be transferred at that stage to benefit from the enhanced interest rate. The Parish Council voted that this decision should be ratified. Cllr Parker asked if BALC held a list of financial institutions in which parish councils could invest. Cllr Walford confirmed this was not the case. **(vi) Approval of £100 to the LCCA for newsletter delivery.** It was agreed that this donation could be made to the LCCA as thanks for delivering the parish council newsletter. It was recognised that this is a section 137 payment.

10. External Audit report: It was noted that the external audit report had been sent to Mazar's.

11. Internal Audit report: It had previously been reported that the internal auditor had raised a question about the procedures of payments to suppliers and the approval at council meetings. The Clerk had investigated how other parish councils in the area managed these arrangements. There were a variety of practices. Cllr Roberts proposed the cheques should be signed as usual, and a list of payments should be approved at the council meeting. Cheques could then be issued the following day. Cllr Drew expressed concerns about payments made in August as there was no council meeting and suppliers would have to wait a long time for payment. The Clerk suggested that in August the payments schedule could be agreed by email. There would be a small number of exceptional circumstances, particularly for very small suppliers. Councillors confirmed that they were content with this proposal. Existing suppliers would be notified and the new arrangement would commence in September. The Clerk and internal auditor had also discussed online banking for receipts. The Clerk had been advised that it was possible to receive read-only access for the TSB account. This would enable hall users to pay online, rather than only by cheque. Cllrs Walford and Rafferty expressed concerns about the security of the system. Cllr Davis reported that the parish council would be covered by the bank in the case of any fraudulent activity. Cllr Patel asked what the situation would be with regard to deposits, especially if all payments now had to wait to be authorised by a council meeting. Cllr Davis suggested that in these cases refunds of deposit could be issued immediately. It could also be encouraged that deposits should be paid by cheques. The response to Mr Newhouse, the internal auditor would be drafted and circulated to councillors for approval. Cllr Parker would undertake the internal audit review.

12. Parking survey: Cllr Parker reported that during the consultation four issues had arisen for discussion. The locations were Chenies Parade, Dr Challoner's approach road, Beechwood Avenue and Clayton Walk. All of these issues were being handled outside the normal process, but would not impact on the timescale of the project. The exercise was almost completed and a meeting would be arranged shortly to discuss the responses. It was still expected that the implementation would still take place by the end of the year.

13. LAF funding: Cllr Roberts reported there were four suggestions for LAF transportation bids for 2017-18. The proposals were an extension of new bollards on Chenies Parade, clear

signage on the road on Chenies Parade near Filippetos, a red crossing across the approach road for the Nature Park, and a bus shelter on Amersham Road. Cllr Drew felt that the crossing to the Nature Park would not be feasible as it was situated on a private road. Cllr Ingham highlighted that the white lines on White Lion Road adjacent to Beel Close and on the A404 near Oakington Avenue were extremely faint and suggested that these areas may be a candidate for LAF funding. Cllr Drew suggested that the parish council should write to Transport for Buckinghamshire with a list of locations which require repainting of lines as this is TfB responsibility. This list should include a no entry sign on the road at the exit to Chenies Parade. The Clerk had been advised that a bus shelter was unlikely to meet the criteria but the bid would be reviewed if submitted. It was agreed that the proposed new bollards on Chenies Parade were the main focus for the next LAF bid. (ii) Active Bucks Year 2 funding allocation. Information about the Active Bucks survey had been previously circulated. Cllr Roberts reported that there were three options to prioritise as part of the Active Bucks survey. She proposed that the order of priority should be children and young people's activities at Westwood Park, children and young people's team sports at Westwood Park and martial arts in the village hall or school halls. It was agreed that this was the preferred order. The Clerk will submit the preferences on Thursday 14 July in line with the deadline.

14. Community Centre project: Cllr Drew reported that a Community Buildings Working Party meeting had taken place on 27 June 2016. It had been agreed that the project would need to move forward and develop plans for a planning application. There would be another public consultation to view the plans before they are submitted. This would show the public the design of the building and an indication of costs. It was acknowledged that building costs had increased dramatically since the project began. Issues also raised related to the strip of land between the car park and the village hall which is currently owned by CDC. Previously, CDC had responded positively to this proposal. A small amount of Library land would also be required which would also need to be negotiated. Cllr Drew proposed that the parish council should instruct the architects to draw up plans for planning permission and that a public consultation would take place in early autumn.

15. Westwood Park: (i) Tennis machines. Cllr Griffiths presented a paper produced by the Assistant Clerk highlighting three quotes for the purchase of new tennis payment machines. The proposal is for three tennis machines to be installed on the side wall of the pavilion, one for each tennis court. Cllr Walford asked how the machines would be policed. Cllr Griffiths reported that it was on an honesty basis. Cllr Drew reported that the previous meter had taken approximately £1000 per year. Cllr Drew also suggested that due to inflation, the price could increase from £2 to £3 an hour. Cllr Rafferty enquired if there were any solar powered machines. This had been looked into but there were no machines that were suitable. Cllr Drew asked about the visibility of the screen on the machines in order to monitor how long people had left to play. This would be checked again. Cllr Davis asked what would happen if someone put in money before the end of the hour. This would also be examined. Cllr Davis also highlighted that the machines would have to be installed very securely. The Clerk confirmed that this would be the case particularly in the light of vandalism at Westwood Park. It was agreed that the machine with the best visibility would be purchased. (ii) Councillors were content with the signage for the tennis court and approved the expenditure for Punch signs. (iii) Councillors also approved of the signs for the

running track. (iv) Cllr Griffiths reported that the gate at the entrance to Westwood Park was no longer usable. While it would not be used on a daily basis, it needs to be operational in the event of unwanted visitors. It was agreed that a new gate could be purchased and installed. (v) Cllr Griffiths reported that one of the football clubs had requested that the gate onto the field should be opened in case emergency vehicles needed access. It was proposed that a key safe should be installed with each of the football clubs having the code to enable access if required. The code would also be passed to the emergency services. This was approved. (vi) Cllr Griffiths also reported that the Clerks were planning to test the showers for Legionnaire's Disease as part of the ongoing maintenance of the pavilion. Cllr Davis asked about the possibility of having public toilets at Westwood Park. Cllr Drew said this had been examined in the past and the costs of installation and maintenance were very high. He did report that Chesham Bois had installed a natural toilet. It was agreed that further investigations would take place to see if this was a viable option. Cllr Parker raised the issue of parking at Westwood Park and suggested that this should be considered by the Westwood Park Working Party in the light of the current parking survey. Cllr Patel also highlighted that the basketball hoops in the MUGA had no netting and users had requested nets could be installed. It was agreed that nets could be purchased. (vii) The Trim Trail had been installed at the end of June. There had been correspondence from some residents in Westwood Drive about the location of the Trim Trail and the lack of consultation with local residents. Cllr Drew said that in hindsight the parish council could have notified residents and if further equipment was ever installed suggested that notification would take place. Cllr Drew suggested that a copy of the response to residents from the Parish Council should be made available in Lina's newsagents for any interested residents. (viii) The Clerk reported that the ROSPA inspection had recently taken place. Issues highlighted were mostly low risk with a couple of medium risk issues. The Clerks had visited Westwood Park with Mark Richardson from Amersham Town Council and reviewed how some of the issues could be attended to. Larger issues related to uneven surfaces around certain pieces of equipment. It was highlighted that there were several options to deal with this, and the Clerk had obtained one quote in the first instance to get an idea of cost. It was agreed that this issue would be taken back to the Westwood Park working party. (iv) Cllr Griffiths reported that a member of the Westwood Park working party had queried about the future plans for Westwood Park. It was confirmed that the parish council's immediate priority was the development of the new community centre.

16. Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy: The draft version of the Open Spaces consultation document had previously been circulated by the Clerk. It was confirmed that the paper could be sent to the consultant working on behalf of Chiltern District Council.

17. Nightingales Corner: Cllr Roberts reported that the new planter had been installed that day. The flowers had been kindly supplied and planted by Flower Boutique in Little Chalfont. It was agreed that the Parish Council would pay for the sign on the planter indicating sponsorship for a sum of £30. Cllr Roberts explained the proposal to install cycle stands on Nightingales Corner which could be sponsored by local businesses. Koho and the physiotherapist had previously shown an interest in sponsorship in this area. It was suggested that local businesses on Nightingales Corner could be asked if they would be interested in sponsoring a cycle stand for a period of time, for example 2-3 years. It was also suggested that two of the cycle stand on Chenies Parade could also be moved closer to

Filippetos. Finally, it was reported that it had been suggested that a small sign should be included within the triangle to acknowledge the amount of work which the WI undertake in planting and maintaining the area. It was agreed that this could go ahead.

- 18. Street Furniture on Chenies Parade:** The Clerk reported that a complaint had been received from a local resident regarding the street furniture at a shop on Chenies Parade. A letter had been sent, and the situation had been explained to the proprietor. The street furniture had been reduced although residents were still unhappy with the situation. Cllr Parker reported that he had followed up his correspondence with Bucks County Council and Chiltern District Council to check which shops had permission to have street furniture in front of their premises. Cllr Drew explained in the past advertising boards were permitted as long as they were against the wall of the shop. Cllr Ingham asked for guidance on the rules regarding street furniture. It was noted that the advertising sign for the Craft Beer shop was still in position despite a letter being sent. Further communication would take place with the owner.
- 19. Long Walk access:** The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from a resident of Long Walk regarding the increased traffic using the private road and asking for advice on improving the situation. While there was nothing directly the Parish Council was able to do concerning this issue, suggestions to reduce access were discussed such as the installation of a retractable gate.
- 20. St Aidan's Church:** Councillors had met with representatives from St Aidan's Church on a site visit to discuss the proposals. Some councillors acknowledged that the proposals would make a difference to the traffic problems in Finch Lane which occur when the church has a service or an event. It was reported that a small road would be fenced off which would aim to allow much of Finch Lane to remain in its current state. If the scheme was to proceed, a lease would be arranged between the parish council and St Aidan's Church. Following the meeting with representatives from St Aidan's, it was agreed to discuss the issue at a parish council meeting and if there was general support for the idea, further investigations could continue. There were mixed views in the discussion. Cllr Ingham raised that he was unhappy with the proposals which he felt would damage the peace and tranquillity of the area. The covenant had been examined and there was no immediate evidence of restrictions in the area. It was reported that originally the land had been donated to Amersham Town Council. Cllr Griffiths asked for the reasons the land had been donated which may have an impact on the decision. A vote was taken. The majority of councillors expressed their support for the proposal with the proviso that the residents were content with the proposal. It was agreed to contact the church to start some exploratory investigations with Bucks County Council and also the residents. The parish council will also conduct an independent consultation with residents if the scheme was accepted as viable by Bucks County Council.
- 21. Centenary Fields programme:** A letter regarding the Centenary Fields programme had previously been circulated to councillors. It was agreed that there were no viable locations currently in Little Chalfont to nominate as a centenary field.
- 22. Report of meeting on proposed unitary authority:** Cllr Ingham reported that he and Cllr Roberts had attended the recent meeting on the proposed unitary authority and a report of the meeting had been previously circulated. A business case for a unitary authority is currently being prepared. At present, parish councils would remain unchanged but their role

and remit may be altered with the proposed changes. The four district councils in the area were commissioning their own investigation into the proposal. Bucks County Council were operating through BALC to obtain the opinions of other councils. Cllr Ingham had spoken to the BCC officer Paul Hodson and Cllr Noel Brown about the issue. It was felt it would be helpful to express views prior to the deadline to help complete the business plan and consultation. Cllr Ingham had prepared a proposed response to the survey which was circulated to councillors. It was agreed to review the response and discuss the draft on 19th July 2016 at 7.15pm prior to the planning meeting.

- 23. LCCA consultation:** Cllr Roberts reported that she had met with Roger Funk, chairman of the LCCA to discuss how the parish council and the LCCA could work together in the future. It was acknowledged that both organisations have the interests of the village as a priority. However, it was also recognised that there would sometimes be differences of opinion which would mean that some work would be carried out independently. Further consideration needed to be given to the different roles and tasks which could be undertaken by the two organisations. Cllr Roberts reported that volunteering in the village was a high priority for both bodies. Cllr Parker raised the issue of VAT which had previously had an implication. Cllr Ingham highlighted that in some cases, for example the response to the Local Plan, it was important for the two organisations to work together and produce joint document, but that this would not always be the case. It was confirmed that the work within the parish office was that of the parish council.
- 24. Library tea party:** As reported earlier, the Clerk highlighted that the library were holding a fundraising tea party. The question was raised about the charge of the hall hire as the event was a community fundraiser, taking into account the monthly charge to the Craft Fair. It was acknowledged that the Craft Fair did not have exclusive use of the village hall at their time of hire. Cllr Drew felt it would not be sensible to offer a different rate for this event which would set a precedent for other similar events in the future. This was agreed.
- 25. Village Hall assistant and opening hours:** It was reported that two people had been approached to undertake the post on a shared basis, subject to satisfactory references, and both candidates had accepted. Both candidates were available to start the role shortly. The position would entail 2 hours a week to ensure the hall is kept in a suitable condition with a higher rate payable for any emergency call outs by hall users. It was suggested that the village hall assistant could be approached about emptying the litter bins in the Nature Park, an unresolved issue which was discussed earlier in the meeting. Cllr Roberts then proposed that the office hours of the parish office are adjusted for a trial period to allow staff a period of time to work without visitors or telephone calls. It was proposed that the following times would be trialled for three months from September 2016. Mondays would remain open from 9 am – 3pm with the office open from 9am – 1pm from Tuesday to Friday. The Clerk reported that a number of parish councils in the local area operated similar working hours. Cllr Parker asked how residents would be notified about the change in opening hours. The Clerk reported that a message could be left on the answerphone and a notice could be placed on the front door. Appointments could be made to visit the office between 1pm and 3pm. Cllr Drew recognised that changes were required but expressed concerns about councillors contacting the office during this time. The Clerk confirmed that the answerphone would be regularly checked. A log of visitors and phone calls would also be

made during the trial period. Cllr Davis and Ingham also expressed concerns on the proposal. Overall, it was agreed to trial the proposal starting in September 2016.

- 26. Reports and Notifications:** (i) Local Area Technicians, circulated 15 June 2016; (ii) Consultation for BCC flood management, circulated 23 June 2016; (iii) Proposed temporary road closures in the Chiltern area, circulated 29 June 2016; (iv) My Bucks newsletter July 2016; circulated 30 June 2016; (iv) Chiltern District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy consultation , circulated 7 July 2016.
- 27. Any Other Business:** (i) MUGA. This was discussed under item 15. (ii) TfB focus group. Cllr Roberts reported that she had received notification from Cllr Martin about a focus group taking place on 31 August which was being run by Transport for Bucks. Councillors were asked if there were any issues they would like to raise they should inform the Clerk. (iii) Name plates: Cllr Drew asked about the proposal to purchase name plates for councillors to use at parish council meetings. The Clerk confirmed the name plates would be sourced and ordered shortly. (iv) GE Healthcare. Cllr Parker highlighted that GE Healthcare were moving their headquarters from Little Chalfont to Chicago. Cllr Davis reported that she thought this would not have any practical difference to the business in Little Chalfont.
- 28. Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 14 September 2016 in the village hall at 7.30pm.