

Minutes of a Little Chalfont Parish Council meeting

Held in the Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont

Wednesday 13 April 2016 at 7.30pm

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

Members of the public: Jon Walden; Peter Black; Chris Whitby; Jane Maiden; Ian Beushaw; John Aleison; Nigel Loli; Debra Olleveant.

In attendance: Mrs N Meldrum (Parish Clerk).

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllr M Parker; Cllr G Roberts.
- 2. To accept a resolution that standing orders be suspended to allow any members of the public to speak (10 mins):** A number of members of the public were in attendance to discuss the application for a right of way in Statters Field. Ian Beushaw spoke opposing the application for the right of way. He felt the Parish Council had been foolhardy by not contacting the owner of the field at the outset of the application and that the owner had purchased the land with the intention of preventing development on the land. Mr Beushaw suggested that the application should be withdrawn, but the position should be reconsidered in the event of a change in ownership. Chris Whitby stated that evidence had been gathered from 27 users of the field who supported the application for the right of way. His concern was that the owner, or any future owner, may withdraw the right to use the field and the view of those who oppose the application was quite short term. Peter Black, the chairman of the Long Walk West Residents Association, stated that the field had long been used for walks by local families. The criteria for obtaining a right of way appeared to have already been met. Concerns were raised when part of the field was fenced off and a sign was installed at the entrance to the field. He noted that some people objected to the application due to level of unauthorised parking in Long Walk but he noted that the Residents Association took vigorous steps to prevent unauthorised parking. Jane Maiden had been approached to sign a petition against the application and had been told the field would remain open if signed. She stated that generations of families had walked in the field, and she wanted it to be preserved for many more generations to use. Nigel Loli referred to the parking issues which can arise when there is free access to the field. John Aberson raised the issue of the viability of the right of way, given that the access to the field is from Long Walk which is a private road. Debra Olleveant stated that when she purchased the land she received notification that there was no right of way.
- 3. To receive and approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting and the minutes of the confidential meeting held on 9 March 2016:** Both sets of minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.
- 4. Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Patel declared an interest in Parking Survey (item 16).
- 5. Approval by Chairman of items for any other business:** There were no items of Any Other Business.
- 6. Chairman's Report:** Cllr Drew highlighted the key aspects of the Chairman's report. There were no further comments.

- 7. Clerk's Report:** The Clerk reported on one issue not covered elsewhere on the agenda. The case against the Parish Council regarding the incident at Westwood Park in August 2015 had been closed as the insurers felt the Council had fulfilled their duty of care. The claimant's solicitor had subsequently contacted the Council's insurers asking for further information which had been supplied.
- 8. To receive reports, as appropriate, from members of outside bodies and working parties:** (i) Little Chalfont Community Library. Cllr Griffiths reported that the official opening of the new computer suite was on Saturday 14 May at 10am.
- 9. Statters Field:** Cllr Drew reported the events which had taken place over the last few months with regard to Statters Field. A group of volunteers had gathered evidence from users of the field in support of an application for a right of way around the field. The Parish Council had then submitted the application on the residents behalf. Cllr Drew acknowledged that the Parish Council may have acted hastily, and while it was not necessarily the wrong decision to submit the application, more could have been done to canvass opinion among local residents. Cllr Drew recognised that the owner of the field had every right to make whatever decisions she wished with regard to the field. The point was raised previously that access to the field was via a private road and it was agreed that further investigations would be made on this. It was also noted that a petition had been signed by 60 residents who were opposed to the application for the right of way. A letter from David Grint, the chairman of the Long Walk Residents Association East was read out by the Clerk and listed reasons opposing the application. Following a discussion, it was agreed that it would be helpful for the Clerk to speak with the rights of way officer at Bucks County Council to explore some of the issues raised. Cllr Griffiths proposed that the Clerk should speak with the rights of way officer to obtain further clarification on the issues. This was seconded by Cllr Walford. It was agreed that this would take place quickly and it was suggested that the issue would be placed on the agenda for the May or June meeting. A decision would then be made either to continue with the application or to withdraw it.
- 10. (i) List of payments and cheques to be signed:** The list of payments had been previously circulated. Cllr Drew asked if compensation had been received following the damage to the lamp post in Beechwood Close. The Clerk confirmed that payment had been received.
(ii) Income and Expenditure report: There were no further comments about this paper.
- 11. Update on arrangements for Parish Meeting 25 May 2016.** Cllr Drew reported that two speakers had been confirmed for the Parish Meeting. Marc Lister from the Ambulance Service had agreed to speak about the First Responder system. Matthew Bailes, the Group Chief Executive of Paradigm would also attend. A representative of the Nature Park may also be asked to speak. In addition, there would be a review of the year from the Chairman.
- 12. Estate agency boards:** As highlighted at the last Parish Council meeting, Cllr Drew reported that there had been complaints about the amount of estate agency boards displayed, particularly in Bell Lane. One issue was that sold signs remained in place for a long time. It was noted that at present, the number of boards had declined. It was reported that some large local authorities had applied for an order which allowed them to ban estate agencies from this practice. Another option suggested was to adopt a voluntary agreement with the local estate agencies. Cllr Griffiths suggested writing to the National Association of Estate Agents to find out what the exact code is. Cllr Davis suggested a firm letter could be written to the estate agents. Cllr Patel pointed out it was not just estate agents in Little Chalfont who were using this practice. It was

agreed that a discussion would take place with the two local estate agents in the village to see if something less formal could be implemented. Cllr Davis agreed to visit the estate agents.

- 13. Community Buildings Working Party:** Cllr Drew reported that the last meeting of the Community Buildings Working Party had taken place on 14 March. The latest plans for the community centre and the costings had been circulated to councillors. One of the key issues regarding the plan was that information was still awaited to see if the site of the village hall would remain within the green belt. There was a discussion about the nature of green belt and what defines it. Cllr Drew proposed that the council should ask the architects to draw up the plans in preparation for submitting them for planning permission. However, at this stage, it was suggested that the plans would be submitted when further information about the green belt was available. This was seconded by Cllr Walford.
- 14. Newsletter May 2016:** Cllr Walford reminded councillors that the deadline for the first copy of the newsletter was 15 April. Cllr Rafferty suggested including an article on hedging and vegetation growth. Cllr Griffiths suggested an article about the forthcoming Trim Trail at Westwood Park. Information would also be supplied about data from the MVAS. A contribution would also be received from the LCCA. The LCCA were again kindly organising the distribution of the newsletter and any councillors able to help deliver should contact Adrian Lockyer.
- 15. LAF project to install bollards and other improvements in the village centre:** It was reported that the project was well underway. All of the bollards had been installed. The owner of the Flower Boutique had offered to look after one of the new planters on Nightingales Corner. It was thought that cycle racks would be a useful addition to Nightingales Corner, particularly as the Koho coffee shop attracted many cyclists. Cllr Drew suggested a form of advertising on the racks which could be sponsored by local shops, and the sign could point to their business. Several of the owners in that area of the village had expressed an interest in advertising and / or sponsorship. A quote had been received for signs which could hang from the top of the rack. Further estimates would be sought to see if the idea was viable. It was suggested that the shops could contribute towards the installation and signage. It had previously been agreed that the Parish Council would have a noticeboard in the village centre once again, and the church noticeboard would be moved so the two noticeboards were situated together. The Clerk showed examples of the types of noticeboards which were available. Prices varied drastically and it was agreed that noticeboards in the region of £1200 -£1300 would be reasonable.
- 16. Parking Survey.** It was reported that the informal consultation about the parking restrictions on the lay by in Elizabeth Avenue had ended. All respondents were content with Option 2 which proposed an introduction of limited waiting of one hour in the lay by. The results of this consultation would feed into the formal consultation which was being prepared. It was still hoped that implementation of the parking restrictions in the village would take place by the end of the year.
- 17. External auditors:** It was noted that the review of the annual return for 2015 / 16 will be performed at Mazar's Durham office. The deadline by which local councils must approve the Annual Return is 30 June 2016.
- 18. Air pollution:** Following the discussion at the last meeting, the Clerk had discovered that air pollution is being monitored in Little Chalfont, both east and west of the railway bridge and is within the acceptable levels. Cllr Ingham thought it would be useful to know the exact locations that the monitoring takes place.

- 19. Cleaning contract:** It was reported that Busy Homes, who clean the village hall and the pavilion, had contacted the Parish Council with an amendment to their charges due to the change of the minimum wage. This would be an increase of 60 pence per hour. It was noted that many companies of this type had been affected by the recent changes. Cllr Rafferty asked about the viability of a price amendment during a contract. It was reported that there was a clause in the contract for these type of variations, but this would be double checked. On the basis that the mechanism for the price change was reflected in the contract, it was agreed to accept the price increase.
- 20. Installation of new benches:** It was reported that the Local Area Technician had recommended two locations of the three suggestions made by the Parish Council which would be suitable for the new benches. The first was outside the doctor's surgery on White Lion Road and the second was opposite the doctor's surgery, next to the post box and the bus stop. Suitable contractors were being considered for the installation of the benches and quotes would be sought. The Evening WI had kindly offered to pay for the installation of one of the benches. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the Evening WI and the Scouts, who had refurbished the benches, to thank them for their contributions once the benches had been installed. The installation of the benches could also be included in the newsletter.
- 21. Arrangement with the Library regarding hall hire:** It was reported that the Library were planning a fundraising event in July to be held in the village hall. An agreement exists whereby the Library receives one free event per year in lieu of use of photocopying services by the Parish Council. It had been asked if the Library were eligible for a reduced rate for their second event. No evidence had been found of this system operating in the past. Cllr Drew and Rafferty expressed concerns that if this was agreed it would set a precedent for other organisations. It was agreed that no price reduction would be offered in this case.
- 22. Reports and Notifications:** (i) **My Bucks – April edition** (circulated 4th April 2016) Noted. (ii) **Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations /application for road closures** (circulated 4th April 2016) Noted. It was also noted that road repairs were also taking place on the A404 in the near future which would result in some overnight road closures. (iii) **Purdah guidance for forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner's election** (circulated 4th April 2016) Noted (iv) **National Citizenship Service 2016** (circulated 4th April 2016). Noted.
- 23. Any Other Business:** None.
- 24. Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 11 May 2016 in the village hall at 7.30pm.

Signed..... Date.....