

DRAFT MINUTES

CHEARSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 16TH APRIL 2018 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

PRESENT

Councillors: Nic Brown (**NB**), John Lewis (**JL**), Julia Witcher (**JW**), Michael Edmonds (**ME**), Martin Hearmon (**MH**), Paul Bown (**PAB**), Michael Hawkett

Parish Clerk: Helen Spurgeon

Parishioners: There were 8 Parishioners

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

PARISHIONERS QUESTION TIME

A parishioner requested an update on the works at Cuddington bridge. The work is due to take place in May.

A parishioner commented on the potholes in Bernards Close which are getting bigger and have gravel coming out of them. The road needs resurfacing. BCC classify the potholes as not deep enough to repair. **ACTION: NB to contact Cllr Clive Harriss for assistance.** It is recommended that parishioners email BCC with their concerns. The councillors to email are Paul Irwin (pirwin@buckscc.gov.uk) and Clive Harriss (charriss@buckscc.gov.uk).

1. APOLOGIES

John Howard (**JH**), Robert Parkes (**RP**), Clive Harriss

2. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2018 MINUTES

The Minutes were **agreed** as a true record and signed by Chairman, Nic Brown.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- **Granite setts.** **NB** confirmed that there is no stipulation to have granite setts across driveways.
- **Stockwell on Church Lane.** Grants: **ACTION: JH to identify 2 or 3 community charities and liaise with Derek Allen regarding work required.**
- **Grit bins.** Bins are to be repaired by Bucks Landscapes and a new one to be located by Stoney Furlong. Work to be carried out shortly.
- **War Memorial repair and conservation.** **ACTION: JL to produce requirement statement for contractors to quote against.**
- **Bus stop.** **ACTION: JH to look at the installation of a noticeboard inside the bus shelter to display children's art work.**
- **GDPR.** Following a discussion with **RP**, Jacqui Porteous questions whether Chearsley PC need a Data Protection Officer.

- **Clerk's laptop and printer.** These have been purchased along with an annual subscription for software.
- **Village tree works.** Two quotes have been obtained for the work on Church Lane.
ACTION: NB, JL and PB to walk Church Lane with Mike Heybrook to see what work is required.
- **Traffic calming works.** There is a new project manager at BCC. A firm indication of cost should be available in around 3 weeks.

4. PLANNING

No new planning applications received.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence outside the Agenda items.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AVDC AND BCC COUNCILLORS

BCC and AVDC are holding meetings on the unitary council proposals for Buckinghamshire. BCC support one single unitary council for the whole county, whereas AVDC support two unitary councils, one for the north and one for the south. **ACTION: Clerk to recirculate the email giving details of the AVDC meetings on 18th and 24th April. NB to attend the meeting on 24th and JL to attend the meeting on 18th, supported by other councillors if they are available.**

7. FINANCE

- The monthly finance report has been circulated to Councillors.
- Orders for Payment
 - H Spurgeon salary £230
 - Bank charges £6.50
 - H Spurgeon expenses £9.71
 - BALC £78.70
- Annual report and accounts 2017/18 have been circulated to Councillors.
- **JL** presented the 2017/18 outturn figures based on **RP's** annual report. The PC did spend fully up to the precept level which reflects a significant spend on significant projects for the village. The closing funds are £21,860, made up of £19,590 committed funds for traffic calming and a general reserve of £2,270.
- Annual governance and accountability return 2017/18:

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2017/18. The PC were able to agree and tick 'Yes' to all of the statements. The PC accepted and approved the Annual Governance Statement.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2017/18. The PC accepted and approved the Accounting Statements.
- **JL** presented the financial plan for 2018/19. According to the current plan the PC will end up with a deficit of £2,645. **JL** would like to end up with a general reserve of approx. £5,000. It was agreed to remove the project of electricity to the Green at a cost of £3,000 and reduce the spend on traffic calming at the horse chestnut tree island from £12,000 to £6,000.

- **JL** confirmed that the electric supply to the defibrillator should be installed in the next few days.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ATTENDING MEETINGS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- **Councillors JL** and **MH** attended the Unitary Council for Bucks meeting run by BCC. Notes from this meeting are appended to the minutes. **ME** expressed his support for two unitary councils.

9. ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

The AVM will take place in the Village Hall w/c 14th May. The format will be similar to last year, with the opportunity for each councillor to present. Councillors agreed to meet on 25th April to prepare for the meeting. **ACTION: NB to circulate an agenda for the AVM.** The AGM will take place on 21st May.

10. PARISHIONERS QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- This is the first meeting in the new Village Hall and councillors would like to record what a great achievement the new Village Hall is.
- The Freight Strategy ePetition has 109 signatures so far.
- **JL** has suggested holding the September LAF meeting in Chearsley Village Hall.
- A discussion took place regarding the proposed **Oxford to Cambridge Expressway**. There are 3 possible routes, one of which will pass very close to our local area. It is government policy not to consult the public.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING in Chearsley Village Hall

- Monday 14th May 2018 at 7.30pm (Annual Village Meeting)
- Monday 21st May 2018 at 7.30pm (Annual General Meeting)

Appendix - Bucks CC Presentation on the Unitary Council proposals. Buckingham Library. 12 April 2018.

Representatives from Chearsley PC were John Lewis and Martin Hearmon.

1. Presentation was led by Martin Tett, Leader Bucks CC. He was supported by 7 other Councillors/Officers, including Paul Irwin and Clive Harriss.
2. A brief history was presented:
 - Work started a long time ago
 - Two options submitted to the Dept. for Communities and Local Government in Jan 17, i.e. one single Unitary Council for the whole County and two Unitary Councils, one for the North and one for the South
 - It took 18 months for the Dept to come up with a response
 - A 'minded to' decision was issued in March 18, in favour of the single council option
 - That decision now open for public consultation until 25 May. A final decision will then be made, probably by July

- New arrangements will go live in 2020
3. Bucks CC is backing the Single Council approach, and most of the evening was about them explaining why they favour that approach. They claim a County wide consensus on the benefit of moving from the current two tier structure to a Unitary arrangement – the disagreement is only about whether it is one or two councils.
 4. They presented 10 reasons to support their position:
 - a. A single council has a stronger voice, especially when lobbying central government
 - b. Better strategic planning by integrating infrastructure, planning and delivery
 - c. Biggest savings - £18.2m every year claimed, and this is said to be very conservative
 - d. Benefit and economy of scale
 - e. Better ability to attract and retain the brightest and best staff
 - f. Removes the risk of fragmenting services
 - g. Protects the education system
 - h. Better integration/alignment of health services
 - i. New council not dominated by one single large centre of population
 - j. Provides essential financial resilience
 5. Several of these reasons appear to me be more supportive of the Unitary concept in general than just the single council preference.
 6. They also talked a lot about ‘localism’ and do seem to have given a lot of thought to how local interests will be taken account of/heard/protected in the new environment. A key plank of the strategy here is creation of Community Boards – which sounded a bit like beefed up Local Area Forums. Wiltshire was held up as a role model of how this concept works.
 7. Planning would also be more localised with local planning and licensing authorities established, although it wasn’t clear how many or what sort of area they would cover. I was concerned that real decision making would not be devolved to such bodies, leading once more to a two tier arrangement, but on questioning they insisted that there would be full delegation of decision making on local issues with only ‘strategic’ decision making held back at the centre.
 8. Other localism offers mentioned (and they stressed ‘offers’ not ‘obligations’) included more local control, return of assets (apparently several were removed many years ago – not sure from where) and of course financial devolution but with support from the unitary council where local expertise may not exist (lots of caution here of course on whether the funding matches the responsibility devolved)
 9. There would also be 19 physical ‘Community Hubs’ across the County providing services to and facilities for community groups. We’ll need more detail of how these will work.
 10. The benefits they envisaged from all this is an upgrading of local (town and parish) councils leading to an ability to attract better qualified councillors
 11. The fixed presentation lasted about 30 minutes and was followed by an intense hour or more of questions. Whilst the questions were probing there did not appear to be great hostility to the single council concept. My personal feeling was that if they deliver on what they promise we should not be concerned if things go this way.

John Lewis & Martin Hearmon (15 April 2018)