

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**HELD ON TUESDAY 2nd MAY 2023 FROM 7.30PM AT RACKLEYS CHILTERN HILLS**

ATTENDANCE: Cllrs - Mr M Detsiny, Mrs M Dunning, Mr G, Coulter, Mr S Achurch, Mr C Harries, Mrs D Graham, Mr W Hunt, Mr J Nicolson, Mrs J Osborn, Mr C Stewart, Mr K Wright.

Mrs H Glasgow, Clerk

ABSENT: None.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCILLOR – M Turner

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 24

Chairmans Annual Report

Councillor Detsiny welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He went onto to say that people are the greatest asset but generally an afterthought.

We were deeply saddened to learn of the deaths of two of our previous Parish Councillors, Allan Simmons and Lorraine Smith. They both served on the Parish Council for 5 years, they were hard working, hugely popular and will be sorely missed.

We are incredibly lucky to have Mark Turner, Dominic Barnes and Zahir Mohammed as our Buckinghamshire Councillors representing the Parish.

All councillors work hard but Callum Stewarts contribution is quite amazing. Whatever the problem we turn to Callum, and he must save us a fortune in professional fees.

But our most grateful thanks must, as always go to our wonderful Clerk. A Clerk's workload is enormous, and the range of skills needed huge. Above all Hayley is always cheerful and always approachable. Hayley is the public face of our Council. She makes our lives better and she does the same for all who come into contact with her, thank you so much.

We have adopted three important new policies:

1. Environmental Sustainability - to put into writing how we might better protect our precious local environment.
2. Working Principles - a set of behaviour standards to improve how we work together as a council or when work with Parishioners.
3. A policy designed to protect councillors or any council employee from harassment or bullying.

We have taken the initiative to be one of the first rural communities to access ultra-fast broadband. There have been teething problems but soon 90%+ of the parish able to access it if they want. Many thanks to John Nicholson and others for their work on this.

Thanks to Keith Wright's efforts we have made considerable progress in improving our 3 allotment sites and producing updated tenancy agreements.

Buckland Landscapes have been our suppliers for over 5 years. they have done an excellent job, but we had to send the contract out to tender after all this time. Council decided to re-appoint Buckland's.

Street lighting is important, it helps us see at night and keeps us safe. We own 250 streetlights, and we pay for electricity. This year did a survey of all columns to check safety, and many were very old. We also plan to replace all bulbs with LED, these are brighter and use 40% less electricity. So far replaced 105.

I mentioned our environment, we are already affected. The Parish Council spent nearly £20k cutting down trees damaged by dry summers and wet winters. LEPC own Commons so this will only get worse.

We owe a huge vote of thanks to a resident and her team who do an amazing job battling the curse of litter and the particular curse of the nitrous oxide canisters.

Another grateful thanks goes to Katy Dunn for editing Clarion. Katy is a great journalist and there cannot be any better parish magazines in the whole of the UK. Katy somehow also finds the time to be our voluntary commons warden.

Our planning team of Simeon, Will and Callum go out in all weathers to look at every single planning application affecting our Parish. There are probably around 100 applications every year. If they object, they write a detailed reason why to the planning officer.

We have organised a number of presentations to inform Council and Parishioners of on-going news and issues:

LESA - success of their event to celebrate the 70th Jubilee.

Lane End Village Hall - management structure. They need to modernise the building built 1920 and also there is some difficulty in getting lettings. They have become dependent on the village fete and the Lane End Players.

The Village Fete have had difficulties caused by cancellations because of covid.

The Lane End Players, we learnt of their astonishing success and all the work they do in developing young local talent.

Hey Broadband, we have two presentations on progress.

Boundary Commission – there was a fascinating debate between local Bucks Councillors as to where ward boundaries should be in 2025.

But there two presentations that stood out in my memory :

The Headmaster of Great Marlow School - there are about 100 pupils at Great Marlow who went to Lane End Primary School. I asked the Headmaster, Mr Kevin Ford, to find out from them what they liked and disliked about Lane End and what facilities they would like. Essentially, they liked their friends, they worried about drugs litter and bullying. Their crying need was for recreational facilities suitable for their age group, just somewhere to play and use up energy.

Community Matters, we received quite a heart-breaking talk from Barbara Ewing and Lucy Smith who run Community Matters out of Holy Trinity Church. A number of families referred to them by Social Services has nearly doubled to 40 and is increasing all the time. Poverty is one issue but this fuels emotional despair. Community Matters not only provide food but also an outlet for people just to talk. Many people accessing this, our parishioners, have got jobs but still can't make ends meet and are ashamed.

Finally, a brief update on Chalky Field. This is probably the biggest non- event of our year. Just short of two years ago our chosen developer applied for planning permission. The process has been bedevilled by endless delays in the planning system.

Numerous changes of personnel in Bucks Council planning, each new consultee asking for changes not wanted by his predecessor. The Parish Council have spent many hours discussing our priorities for spending sales receipts and are aware parishioners will have their own clear ideas. But until we are clearer about the timing of the planning process there is no point in starting an extensive consultation. Can I stress, that we have a duty to consult widely and will most certainly do so.

I would like to end on a personal note regarding the proceeds of any sale of chalky fields. I believe there is a huge difference between projects people want and projects our community needs. We know of many worthy projects people want but I think three stand out head and shoulders as being needed –

-Childrens play area

- Help for our amazing primary school - facing continued budget cuts.

- New recreational facility for young people,

These three groups are our future!

Questions –

A Parishioner asked about the broadband provider Gigaclear. They received correspondence from Gigaclear asking them to sign up to their broadband.

Gigaclear is a company that will rent some of the lines that F&W supply, they will do this to multiple companies. The Parishioner said he cannot get through to Hey Broadband, Cllr Nicolson will contact Hey Broadband re this.

A Parishioner mentioned re the scheduled litter pick. There is litter pick at 9.30am on Monday 8th May, meet in the car park by the school.

Finance

Cllr Coulter gave a report re the finances.

General:

- PC has 2 Budgets for administrative purposes -
 - Revenue Budget – Main PC Budget
 - Capital Budget – Major Projects and Capital Expenditure
- Main Focus is on Revenue Budget
- In 2022-23 a balanced Revenue Budget was set.

Revenue Budget: Income £192,600

- Majority of PC's Income comes from the Precept (Rates) – c. 90%
- In 2022-23 Income was £4,000 over Budget
 - Largely due to Grants and Donations received for the planned Children's Play Area
 - Clarion Income was c. 10% below Budget (£500)
 - Allotments Income was c. 15% below Budget (£250)

Revenue Budget: Expenditure £192,600

- The 3 largest items of expenditure are:

- Clerks Salary
- Open Spaces and Commons
- Street Lighting

Cumulative total - £101,000.

- In aggregate these 3 items account for slightly more than 50% of total expenditure
- In 2022-23 Expenditure was £15,000 over Budget
 - Woodland Maintenance was £17,000 over Budget.
 - Street Lighting Repairs was £7,000 over Budget.
 - Professional / Legal Fees was £8,500 over Budget.
- These and other smaller overspends were partly balanced by surpluses on a number of budget lines with a net outcome of an overspend of £15,000.

Capital Budget:

- Largely funded by drawing on reserves: £43,000 in 2022-23
- Major Expenditure was the LED Replacement Programme
 - Over 100 old style lanterns replaced by LEDs.
 - This has led to a 40% reduction in electricity supply costs or a saving of c. £6,500 per year.

Questions –

Parishioner requested a hard copy of the figures. Clerk to include and make available within the minutes.

The meeting was closed at 8.03pm.

The next Full Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 10th May 2023.