

COLESHILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of meeting held on Thursday 2nd August 2012, in the Village Hall

Present - Cllr Richard Ware (DW) (Chairman), Cllr Lynn Woodgate (LW), Cllr David McGhee (DM), Cllr Terence Prideux (TP), Cllr Sarah Parker (SP), Cllr Carol Hallchurch (CH) and the Clerk

RW opened the meeting. He said that he was delighted to see so many people present and hoped this might be the start of something that will continue. He trusted that we can now all move forward with a fresh start.

1. **Appointment of new Chairman and Vice Chairman**

- RW told the meeting that, because the majority of Councillors were fairly inexperienced, there was a general wish amongst Members that, because he had the most experience, he agree to take on the Chairmanship. DW said that he did not wish to be the permanent Chairman, but was willing to act in this capacity for the next six months or so (or three meetings) to give Councillors as a whole time to get to know the ropes and each other.
- For DW to take on the role of Chairman, proposed by DM, seconded by CH. DW said that Members also thought it would be a good idea to reintroduce the position of Vice-Chairman in order to help spread the workload. Sarah Parker was proposed by TP, seconded by LW.

2. **Apologies for absence** - none

3. **To approve Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting held on 29th June 2012**

Minutes were approved as a true record, and signed

*4. **Democratic period**

DW told the meeting that a new arrangement will be in place from the next meeting, to hold the Democratic Period at the end of the meeting. He explained that if this were the case, anything discussed during the meeting, or any decisions taken, could be debated if so wished. The Council's next meeting would also be better informed as to residents' concerns.

- Jonathan Eardley had to leave early and therefore wanted the meeting to know that he was organizing a petition to send to CDC about the impending sale of the Red Lion. As the pub was considered an important part of village life, he wanted to make sure that CDC were made aware of the strong local feeling.
Cllr Graham Harris (CDC) pointed out that there was a District Council meeting on 14th August and he could present the petition on behalf of the residents of Coleshill.

Frank Auton offered a vote of thanks to the Parish Council. Whilst planning the Jubilee celebrations, an issue of bridging finance became evident and CPC was asked if they could help. As a result of a donation of £500, the organisers were able to offer the celebrations free of

charge. Mr. Auton passed on thanks for the speed of action on this by the Parish Council. DW thanked Mr. Auton in turn for all his hard work in organizing such a successful event.

5. **Declaration of Interests** - Nothing to report.

6. **Appointment of new Clerk**

DW told the meeting that there had been three applicants to fill the vacancy and that Penny Harris had been selected. Penny has been Clerk for Hedgerley PC for eleven years and has also worked on a temporary basis for Chalfont St. Peter PC. The Chairman welcomed Penny to the Council.

7. **Remaining vacancy for Parish Councillor**

DW reported that, as CPC only had six Members at present, there was one vacancy. He explained that if ten or more villagers wrote to the District Council requesting an election, then one would be held. Council was aware of one expression of interest in the vacancy so far. One point to take into consideration was that elections are expensive (a figure of £2,500 had been quoted), although there will be Police elections in November and it might be possible to share the cost of an election with them. If there was no call for an election, the Council would co-opt to fill the vacancy at its next meeting.

DW said that anyone wishing to stand should write to the Clerk with a brief description of themselves and why they think they would make a good Councillor.

8. **Allocation of Councillors' responsibilities**

Planning – DW, CH

Open Spaces and Website – DM

Cricket and Tennis Clubs and Village Hall – TP

School and Play Area – LW

Newsletter – DW

9. **Review of current working practices of the Parish Council**

DW said it was necessary to go through the rules and regulations to make sure that the Council is acting in conformity with them. Clerk to look into this.

10. **Planning**

- Members were told that since the last meeting there were very few outstanding items. There were two proposals for garages, Grove Mill and Cherry Tree Farm. CPC had no objections to either.
- Interestingly, CDC had approved Grove Mill but not Cherry Tree Farm on the grounds that it would alter the view from the main road.
- A car port had been built at Wallers Oak in December but no planning application had been put in. CDC investigated and decided it was an illegal development. It had been discussed at a Planning Committee and an enforcement order was issued as several issues had come to light.
- There are currently no outstanding applications in the village.

11. **Finance**

- DW said that, as is the general rule in Parish Councils, the new Clerk will also be the Responsible Financial Officer.
- Meeting was told that there was over £12k in the bank at the present time. A fuller report by the new RFO will be presented at the next meeting.
- Councillors also agreed to leave things as they were as regards the current banking arrangements and saw no reason to change at this time.

12. **Communications with residents**

Chairman said he hoped for better two-way communication with parishioners. Derek Higgins said it had been suggested to have a village forum on the website, although there might be difficulties in establishing an effective filtering system. Councillors nevertheless agreed it would be good to get more people using the website and the idea would be pursued further with interested parties. The Chairman would also ensure that there was a regular Parish Council section in the newsletter.

13. **Jubilee Celebrations – tree planting**

- There was a small surplus of funds remaining from the Jubilee event, which is to be returned to the Parish Council. It could be used to plant a Jubilee tree or trees. An orchard might be feasible, with a corner of the Jack Adams Field as a possible site. The possibility, with costings, will be investigated further.
- As Chairman of the Commons Management Committee, Chris Wege reported that the first major task to be undertaken before Christmas is the clearance of the overgrown trees at the substation on Windmill Hill. The aim is to clear the entrance to the Common to make it more open and inviting.

*4a Because the speaker had to leave before the close, the Chairman allowed an extra comment outside the Democratic period –
Lindsey Haubner said she found it rather surprising that she had heard from the previous Clerk that she had not received a thank-you letter from the Council. The Chairman responded that he was in fact already intending to say something on the matter at the end of the meeting.

14. **Christmas Lights, replacement**

TP is going to view the lights to see exactly what the condition is. For replacements, Councillors agreed that all-white lights would be preferable. It is hoped a more realistic cost will be forthcoming as opposed to that previously mentioned.

15. **Village Life Questionnaire**

SP felt that, as part of the Council's greater engagement with the community, a village questionnaire would be a good idea. With the encouragement of other Councillors it was agreed that she will pursue this together with Councillor Hallchurch.

16. **Councillors' Reports**

- Penn Festival – last year’s event had created noise nuisance and generated complaints. After CPC becoming more involved in the planning stage for this year’s event, an agreement had been reached with the organisers to impose certain noise reduction methods. The District Council checked the sound system to ensure the limits were within the agreed levels. It was recommended that the Parish Council write to CDC asking for these changes to be incorporated for future events.
- Grazing was a success last year. It is hoped to have the cows back again this year, probably in September. The plan is to divide the Common into four sections with the trough (which has kindly been donated by Mr and Mrs Peiser) in the centre. A topping-up water supply has also been arranged.
- Tennis and Cricket Clubs –
 Cricket Club - TP informed the meeting that the existing overhead power cables were going to be placed underground, approximately one metre deep, subject to the Council granting a wayleave to Eastern Electricity. The work is not expected to be done before October/November.
 Tennis Club – TP said that we had now granted the club its new lease. One of the changes means that we are now the owners of a small strip of land on which there is unfortunately a Scots pine which will need attention at some point. TP mentioned that the team is 25 points clear in the season and they have done very well.
- School –
 LW said that the school year had now finished and a ‘thank you’ tea had been held. There had been an end of year church service, saying good bye to the children going on to new schools. There is a full intake for the coming year and the term starts on 4th September. Term starts with a trampolining course.
- Play area –
 LW said that the play area was looking good. The annual safety inspection had been carried out and all risk areas continue to be low.

17. **Time and Date of next meeting**

Thursday 20th September 2012. Councillors also agreed the following meeting for Thursday 8th November.

Democratic period -

Florence Krebs wanted to know if the trees around the electricity substation will be replaced. Response was that there would have to be a period before replacement trees could be planted as the ground would remain poisonous for new planting for 12 months.

Heather Auton commented that she used to look at the CPC website every day for the weather report, which is now no longer included. The re-introduction of a similar “hook” might encourage greater regular use.

Mrs Auton also asked that from now on we tried our best to re-member that “the cricket field” should properly be referred to as the Jack Adams Field.

Gillian Sach wanted to know if there was anything that could be done to make broadband available at her end of Bottrell’s Lane.

Tony Barber had been asked by the Cricket Club to find out if the Parish Council would consider replacing the gate posts, and possibly install a pedestrian gate at the same time. It was agreed that this would be done and quotations for the work sought.

Referring back to Mr Eardley’s earlier comments from the floor, the Chairman agreed that the Parish Council would write supporting his petition. The Clerk pointed out that in the eyes of the District Council a petition is only worth the number of sheets of paper, not the number of names and it was therefore preferable for residents to send individual letters as well.

The Chairman said that following the resignation of the previous Chairman, Clerk and RFO, he would like to record the Parish Council’s appreciation for their hard work and long service on behalf of the village. To do this formally had not been possible until now, as we had been without a Chairman and Clerk to take the necessary action. Councillors agreed that letters of thanks should be sent and the general sentiment of appreciation was echoed by many villagers.

Meeting closed at 9.40 pm.