

Chesham Bois Parish Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting held remotely at 8.00pm on Monday 8th March 2021

PRESENT: Cllr C Woolveridge (Chairman), Cllr J Bailey, Cllr D Buckingham, Cllr D Conway Read, Cllr J Harbottle, Cllr R Harrison, Cllr R Hartley, Cllr R Heath, Cllr D King, Cllr J Large & Cllr C Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Payne (Clerk), Bucks Cllr Graham Harris and 1 Member of the Public.

61.1 Questions and Comments from the Public. None received.

61.2 Apologies for Absence. None received.

61.3 To Receive Declarations of Interest or Dispensations Relating to this Meeting. Cllr Large declared an interest in agenda item 61.7cii as a member of her family is a member of the theatre company being considered for the theatre workshop.

61.4 To Approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8th February 2021.

The minutes were approved unanimously and will be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

Action: Clerk

61.5 To Receive the Clerk's Report.

a) *Parish Council Elections: Thursday 6th May 2021:* The Notice of Election will be published on 22nd March; the closing date for nominations is 8th April. Buckinghamshire Council have organised a virtual briefing meeting for candidates on 17th March 2021. Council noted the contents of the SLCC's advice note on 'Election Purdah' and NALC's 'Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

b) *Appointment of an Internal Auditor:* Council considered the quotes for the internal audit. **It was resolved to appoint Deborah O'Brien to carry out the 2020/21 internal audit at a cost of £200.**

Action: Clerk

c) *Annual Council Meeting:* Given the election timetable **it was resolved to reschedule the Annual Council Meeting from 10th May to 17th May 2021.**

Action: Clerk

d) *Annual Parish Meeting:* **It was resolved to reschedule this meeting to 24th May 2021.** Council will review this at their next meeting taking into account current covid-restrictions and the impact on the number of residents able to attend.

Action: Clerk

e) *NALC Foundation Status Application:* It was noted that Council's application for Foundation Status had been successful.

f) *Burial Ground Business Rates Valuation.* In response to notifying the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) that the burial ground did not appear on their non-domestic rating list the VOA carried out a valuation and Buckinghamshire Council have issued invoices backdated to 2017 totalling £49,852. A request has been made to Buckinghamshire Council for a repayment scheme for the backdated rates and the inclusion of business rates relief. It was noted that the current invoices need to be paid even if an appeal is sought.

It was agreed that there were grounds to appeal the rating valuation. Quotes from rating surveyors would be considered at the next Council meeting.

Action: Clerk

g) *Remote Council Meetings:* It was noted that the current regulations to hold public meetings remotely expire on 6th May 2021. NALC are working with a number of national bodies to extend the regulations but recommend that provisions be put in place in the event that the regulations are not extended. As the Council office is not large enough to meet current Covid requirements alternative venues are being sought.

Action: Clerk

Cllr Harris left the meeting.

61.6 Finance.

- a) *Finance Working Group Remit:* Council considered the content of the remit. **It was resolved to approve the Finance Working Group remit.**
- b) The financial reports and analysis for February 2021 were noted.
- c) Council considered the bank reconciliation documents at 31st December 2020. It was noted that the NS&I account only provides an annual statement every April. It was agreed that the petty cash account would be closed with the funds being transferred to the Council's bank account. **Action: Clerk**
The section of the Council's standing orders which details the procedure for reconciling bank balances would be amended to take into account the fact that the NS&I account can only be reconciled annually. **Action: Clerk**
- d) Council considered moving the funds currently held in the NS&I account to a different account which provides higher interest rates and regular statements. It was agreed that the Clerk would find out which accounts other councils were using for their surplus funds and Council would consider the need to reinvest funds once this information was available. **Action: Clerk**
- e) The following payments were approved:

Payments	Net	VAT	Amount	Description
Buckland Landscapes	£969.62	£193.92	£1,163.54	Feb 21 grounds maintenance
Chesham Town Council	£1,327.00	£265.40	£1,592.40	Feb 21 verge cutting/footpath strimming/weedkilling
Chiltern Society	£252.00	£0.00	£252.00	Bois Wood site clearance pre-planting
DCK Beavers	£25.00	£5.00	£30.00	March 21 payroll administration
HMRC	£1,320.13	£0.00	£1,320.13	2020/21 Q4 HMRC PAYE/Ni payment
Mrs S Payne	£133.07	£0.00	£133.07	Zoom software/2 x migratory frog signs and clips
Printerland.co.uk	£30.00	£6.00	£36.00	Printer waste cartridge
Ridgeway Woodlands	£1,180.00	£0.00	£1,180.00	Tree planting in Bois Wood and Triangle
SparkX	£65.00	£13.00	£78.00	Lamp 45 - Long Park call out charge
Utility Warehouse	£36.56	£7.31	£43.87	Jan 21 telephone/ broadband
SSE	£476.40	£91.12	£567.52	Streetlight electricity Jan & Feb 21
Your Amersham	£117.00	£0.00	£117.00	BG advert in Your Amersham Jan/Feb 21
Your Chesham	£118.00	£0.00	£118.00	BG advert in Your Chesham Jan/Feb 21
Payroll	£2,297.15	£0.00	£2,297.15	March 21 payroll
		Total	£8,928.68	

61.7 General Purposes – To Receive Reports from Working Groups

- a) ***Common, Woodlands and Burial Grounds Maintenance:*** Cllr Thomas' report was noted.
 - i. *Management Plan:* A dozen young native trees have been planted where the soakaway was installed along South Road, on the Common at Chestnut Lane and behind the War Memorial. The replanting in Bois Wood was complete with the planting of approximately 450 saplings.
 - ii. *Posts on the Common:* A request to install posts to protect the Common outside Wayside, North Road had been received. Council agreed that the area could have post installed similar to those already used along North Road but fewer in number than requested. These would be installed by the Council. The requirement for the posts to have reflectors will be confirmed with the Council's insurers. **Action: Clerk**
 - iii. *Heatherton School Proposal for an Outdoor Learning Environment on the Common:* Issues relating to insurance and organising the usage of the facility were being considered.
- b) ***Burial Ground Management:*** Cllr Large's report was noted.
 - i. *Improve Burial Ground Profile:* The Clerk would contact the Beautiful Burial Ground group and request that the burial ground be added to their 'Burial Grounds to Inspire' page which lists burial grounds that are examples of how to manage biodiversity. **Action: Clerk**

- ii. *Improving the Site Amenities:* The improvement of the burial ground entrance and the provision of additional seating is one of the working group's objectives for the year. Quotes had been sought and would be considered under agenda item 61.9. The possibility of funding from the Amersham Community Board was discussed. **It was resolved that an application for funding towards the Burial Ground Entrance Area project be submitted to the Amersham Community Board.** Action BGM WG

c) **Village Community:** Cllr Bailey's report was noted.

- i. **It was resolved to hold a Common Litter Pick on Saturday 17th April 2021.** Action VC WG

- ii. *Theatre Workshop:* Council considered the possibility of organising theatre workshops on the Common during the summer for local primary school children in recognition of the impact covid restrictions have had on the age group. Invitations would be sent to the four state primary schools in the first instance. The estimated cost would be approximately £300. Council agreed in principle to the organising of theatre workshops preferably during the weekend of the Common Picnic in July and with children being accompanied by a family member. The issues of safeguarding and risk assessments would be addressed further. Action VC WG

d) **Environment & Sustainability:** Cllr Conway Read's report was noted.

- i. *Protect & Enhance Biodiversity:* Council's contractors had been informed of the changes to the mowing regime with the trial areas only being mown every other month.
- ii. *Biodiversity Survey:* Fiona Everingham had agreed to arrange a training session for volunteers interested in surveying the trial area.
- iii. *Promote a Sustainable Environment:* Cllr Conway Read had attended a webinar on a parish carbon footprint tool developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and circulated links to the workshops to Council for their information. The working group would investigate a carbon footprint tool to find out if it can help the parish reduce its carbon footprint. Action: ES WG
- iv. *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:* Cllr Conway Read had been in contact with Sustainable Chesham and Sustainable Amersham to discuss the possibility of pooling resources to run Repair Cafes in rotation in Chesham Bois.

61.8 Planning Committee

- a) The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 11th January & 8th February 2021 were noted.

Pursuant to 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business.

All members of the public left the meeting.

61.9 To consider Quotes for the Remodelling of the Burial Ground Entrance and the Burial Grounds Management Working Group's Recommendation.

Council considered the two quotes. **It was resolved that the quote from Heritage Landscapes contractor A in the confidential report dated 8th March 2021 be accepted to carry out the remodelling of the burial ground entrance. Cllr Large and Cllr King abstained from voting.**

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 8.59pm