

PARISH OF CHOLESBURY-CUM-ST LEONARDS

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held at Cholesbury Village Hall on Monday 12th May 2008

Present: Cllr Blomfield (Chairman), County Cllr Mrs Birchley, District Cllr Mr Rose, PC 6150 Mutch (Neighbourhood Specialist Officer for Chesham Rural), Mr Reynolds (St Leonards Parish Hall Management Trustees), Cllr Allen (Cholesbury Village Hall Management Committee), Cllr Brown, Cllr Horn, Cllr Newall, Cllr Coates and three members of the public.

Apologies were received from Parish Cllr Sanger and the Parish Clerk, Mr Clarke.

1. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting** held on 16th April 2007 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
2. **Matters Arising** – None.
3. **Parish Council Chairman's Report.** The Chairman reported the Parish Council's activities for the year. His report is attached to, but does not form part of, these minutes. The items he mentioned which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda were: the allotments, all of which had been taken up together with a previously grassed-over one; Buckland Common, for which a grant had been sought to enable regular mowing of the lower half to keep down the tougher weeds; and planning applications, of which the demolition of existing houses for rebuild caused concern to the Council and many residents. A Parish Appraisal had been aborted due to lack of interest
4. **Parish Council Financial Report.** The Chairman, in the Clerk's absence, presented draft accounts for the year ending 31st March 2008. Comments from the floor showed the significant increase in grants to the halls was well received. The increasing in savings building up was to meet unforeseen expenditure and as a safe margin.
5. **St Leonards Parish Hall.** Mr Michael Reynolds reported a busy year with most activity focusing on the improvement works. The kitchen installed a year ago had been described by visitors as "the best ever" in several halls they had used. The new heating system now works efficiently and economically. Last year's fete had raised a record £5,700 but a sum of at least that was needed from this year's for ongoing building works. Rear doors had been replaced thanks partly to an £800 grant from Bucks County Council, and the Little Bears' play area had been fenced off to protect it from dog fouling. Application for a grant for new goal posts had been made to the Football Association. In the absence of a Lottery grant for the extension an appeal to 250 local houses had yielded 72 cheques (over £45,000) towards the target, and to avoid rising costs the Trustees had authorised the contractor who did the kitchen to start the extension in March. Breakthrough to the hall would be made during the summer holidays. Present funds permitted only the barest building work to be done: more were needed for fittings and decoration to the standard the Trustees would like. The Trustees thanked all the individuals and corporate members for all their help, specifically the Matthews family for the playing fields and supplying the bricks, and Allen Farms for the maintenance.

6. **Cholesbury Village Hall.** Cllr John Allen reported that refurbishment work had continued in the past year. The two main items of expenditure had been the new cupboard doors in the kitchen; and the stripping, sanding and waxing of the floors in the meeting rooms.
7. **Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England Combined School.** Cllr John Allen (standing in for Jones) reported that an Ofsted inspection was due any day and the school hoped to be rated at least as well as its excellent report last year. A self-evaluation form had been completed. Most of the children came from Chesham and places continued to be in great demand. £400,000 had been spent in trying to improve facilities. This July another classroom will be started and plans were in hand to improve facilities for staff. The Travel Plan would not be reactivated because Bucks County Council has not awarded the grant the school had requested. Parental commitment was strong despite the relative lack of local village children in the school.
8. **Chiltern Local Area Committee.** Cllr Chris Brown reported that, in addition to its original remit to deal with traffic management, road footpaths, public transport concessionary travel, parking etc, the forum had in the past year also addressed matters such as support in the community for older age people and youth groups; sustainability issues such as waste and recycling; and Health Services including the Chesham Health Zone. Local roads had been reinstated on the winter maintenance salting and gritting programme with greater commitment secured to concentrate on school transport routes. Pressure to get Bucks CC to address the key concern of potholes had recently led to an allocation of £3.25m for potholes, patching and general highway refurbishment. The parish will work to ensure the money will be spent on the priorities identified by *local* people. The disposal of domestic waste at recycling centres was now working reasonably well after the Committee had registered concerns to Bucks CC about their original proposals. The Chiltern Traffic Management Project was about to result in re-siting of speed limit signs, plus installation of village entry and directional signs by March 2009.
9. **Neighbourhood Action Group.** Cllr Caroline Coates reported that the “NAG” for the Chesham Rural area, which covers the ‘horseshoe’ area north of Chesham from Hyde Heath to Latimer, had been launched on 1 May. Representatives from county, district and parish councils were there with some members of the public who agreed to serve on it. Its purpose is to take action on ‘quality of life’ issues bothering people in the community. Of the three top issues (speeding, fly-tipping and potholes) of concern to residents it had decided to tackle potholes first. Speeding and fly-tipping would be addressed at the next meetings. It emerged that some people claimed not to know what was already being done by their Parish Councils on, for example, potholes, so communication needs to be improved and parishioners should ‘nag’ their councillors if they wanted to find out or get action moving. PC Mutch added that the NAG members not the police decided the topics for action. For potholes, councils needed to tell their parishioners when the gangs would be in their area. The first step in addressing speeding was to gather evidence to determine the worst area to tackle first. He warned of a spate of current burglaries specifically to find car-keys to steal parked cars which are more popular for thieves than implements. He would investigate how to speed up the warnings on Ringmaster and endorsed the use of the villages’ on-line “Grapevine” to spread the word quickly.

He answered questions from the floor on fly-tipping, litter, and suspicious vehicles and gave details of how best to contact him and the PCSOs in his team.

10. **Widow Turpin Charity.** Cllr John Horn reported that so far this year the administrator, Aston Clinton Parish Council, had not awarded a sum to this parish and needed to be reminded to do so. Our Parish Council had decided in November 2006 that any sum received should be passed to the Thursday Club to assist their social function within the villages.
11. **Bucks County Council.** Cllr Mrs Patricia Birchley reported that the Council had had to levy a 4.5% increase in Council Tax due to a poor settlement by Government. Nevertheless the county had been assessed as giving good value for money. It was concerned about the 9,500 new houses due to be built south of Aylesbury for which no supporting infrastructure was in place. She had written to national newspapers about the NATS new flight paths but the issue had not sparked interest; it needed a dynamic press officer. Since the meeting at Cholesbury on 6 May she believed a better understanding existed about road repairs. The Commission for Social Services inspection should help people retain their independence in their own home and not have to go into care. Feedback from NAGs and Local Area Committees was making the County Council more aware of issues causing discontent. She had become a governor of the Mental Health Trust for Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Her portfolio now included Transport for older people.
12. **Chiltern District Council.** Cllr Mr Nick Rose reported that people who wished to object to the NATS new flight paths would find good advice on the The Lee's website (TheLee.org.uk). The Bucks Locality Consultation (part of Getting Closer to the Community) had a deadline of end May for Bucks CC's proposal to split Chiltern into four Local Area Forums. The effect could be to split parish councils which would be to the detriment of the community and the effectiveness of parish council. The Council was reviewing proposals for parking in Chesham and Amersham. The introduction of two-wheeled bins and fortnightly refuse collection would be extended to all areas in 2011 under government and EU pressure: no decision had been reached yet on an incinerator. Kerbside collection of cans and plastics for recycling would be introduced.

The Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Chairman.....

Date.....