

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF GREAT AND LITTLE CHISHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Venue: Village Hall
Date: 21st January 2016
Time: 7:30pm
Chairman: Andrew Gardiner
Parish Councillors: Clements, Coney, Ridge, Loukes, Dring
District Councillors: Cllr Hales, Cllr Barrett
Clerk / Proper Officer: Sarah Scott
Start Time: 19:30pm

1. Apologies for Absence (and reasons)

Cllr van de Ven – prior commitment
Cllr Harrison – prior commitment

2. To receive any declaration or Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest of Councillors

There were non declared.

3. Approval of the Minutes of 18th November 2015 (already circulated)

These were approved by the Parish Council as a true and accurate account of proceedings and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

5. Finance

The Clerk took the Council through the finances. Future expenditure was discussed, such as speed humps for the playing field entrance road and other projects (painting the Village Sign) to be awarded. The Chairman duly signed the finance sheet as a true record of finances to date.

Precept: The Council discussed the Precept, as there were currently healthy reserves, it was proposed that the precept for 2016/17 remains the same at £22,500 – this was unanimously resolved.

6. Telephone Mast

There was no news yet from Shared Access. With regard to the Playing Fields, the Chairman and Clerk are meeting with Adams Harrison to discuss the reversion clause on the playing fields.

7. Planning

The application for a house in Malting Lane is going to appeal.

To date, there had been no submission for a new dwelling in the garden of 6 New Road.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk is to resend the Neighbourhood Explained documents to the Council for them to comment on. The Clerk to ask Alison Talkington to attend the next meeting or another meeting to discuss the virtues of a Neighbourhood Plan.

8. Speedwatch

The Clerk to pass the speed gun to Martin Gruselle to test speeds at the windmill.

Damaged railings in Heydon Road – the Clerk to chase highways.

9. Windmill Trust

Cllr Dring has nothing new to report on.

10. Lock-Up

Cllr Coney to obtain quotes for the lock-up.

The Church has shown an interest in using the Beir in the Church – it will need doing up.

11. County and District Councillors Reports

District Councillors reiterated that they be invited to any planning meeting.

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County Councillor Report

December grant settlement: The Chancellor's final decision on grant settlements to local councils brought even worse news to Cambridgeshire than expected. We will receive £5 million less than anticipated, in addition to the £15 million reduction previously forecast. This news puts even greater pressure on councillors as they reach their final decisions in January and February on tax levels, spending reductions and service cuts. The Council can increase tax by up to 2% without a referendum; the Chancellor said that an extra 2% increase would be permitted, provided it is spent on social care. Even with the extra £4.8 million that would bring, the Council will have to make massive savings. Unfortunately a majority of County Councillors have said they do not support raising council tax by that extra 2% - UKIP is against any form of council tax rise (even with inflation) and the Conservatives have matched the UKIP position on social care. I have written to Heidi Allen who is supportive of the rise for social care.

It has been confirmed that local authority revenue support grant from central government will be discontinued (that's what we are experiencing), and it is estimated that by 2020 George Osborne will have cut council funding by 79%.

Since sending our email newsletter with detailed information about 2016-17 public service cuts arising from diminishing local government finance, several Great Chishill residents have taken the trouble to write to councillors asking them to support the social care tax rise, for which many thanks. If the parish council would be minded to do so, that would be much appreciated.

Headline cuts: winter gritting (significant cut, though network details not yet worked out), ending of post-16 education transport support, highways maintenance (all aspects including drainage systems), public health programmes carrying out prevention role that save the public purse, library closures, community transport and bus subsidies (if there is a reprieve this year it will happen next year for sure). There are many aspects of council services that are tied up in long-term contracts (waste, street lighting, broadband) which puts greater pressure on those areas not bound. Anything that is not statutory will be first to go.

Broadband: the Superfast Broadband rollout is not working for some residents in Barley Road. The person who has contacted me is now in detailed conversation with the County team who are trying to unpick the problem and pressure BT to sort it. What was most concerning was that BT had said not only could they not upgrade the service, but they could not support any service at all and recommended ending their contract with that household. Clearly not acceptable!

Youth Clubs: Just for information, the Melbourn Area Youth Development (MAYD) Youth Club is doing very well, a couple of children from Chishill have been attending (as well as others from other villages including Barrington, also outside of the MAYD umbrella and also with its own thriving youth club). It is really encouraging that there are several good clubs in the area that accommodate secondary school friendship groups.

Bus Users' meeting: This has now been firmed up for March 14, 7:30, Great Chishill Village Hall. I have asked Royston and District Community Transport and the County Council's transport officer to attend. The latter is a new appointment resulting from a successful bid for grant funding to help shape new localized transport services. Sounds a bit like what we've seen before but I think is much better. Central government has created a new fund called 'Total Transport' designed for local authorities losing local subsidized services to create new more collaborative arrangements, and Cambridgeshire's bid was successful.

12. To Accept Notices & Matters for the next Agenda

There were none.

The next meeting is on 17th February 2016.

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 20:19.