

# COLESHILL PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Meeting and AGM of Coleshill Parish Council held on Thursday 31st May 2012 at 8.00pm in the Village Hall, Coleshill

Present: Cllr Colin Lambert (Chairman), Cllr David McGhee, Cllr Terence Prideaux, Cllr David Smith (AGM only), Cllr Dick Ware and Cllr Lynn Woodgate.

District Cllr Graham Harris attended as did four members of the public.

### The AGM

1. Cllr Lambert was re-elected as Chairman
2. The Chairman's report is attached
3. The RFO's report is attached. Following delivery of the report and, as previously announced, Cllr Smith resigned and left the meeting

### The Residents meeting

The following positions were allocated:

1. RFO: the Clerk
2. Planning: Cllrs Lambert & Ware
3. Play Area: Cllr Woodgate
4. The School: Cllr Woodgate
5. Tennis & Cricket Clubs: Cllr Prideaux
6. Village Hall: Cllr Prideaux
7. Website: Cllr Ware
8. Newsletter: Cllr McGhee
9. Open Spaces: Cllr McGhee

### The Parish Council meeting

1. Apologies for Absence received from County Cllr David Schofield.
2. Minutes of the last meeting (15<sup>th</sup> March) after two corrections, were proposed for signing by Cllr McGhee and seconded by Cllr Woodgate and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr McGhee requested a change to the effect that CDC Councillor Burton had been given background information on the Penn Festival but had not responded to our request for help. Cllr Ware requested a clarification of the subject of the e-mail from Mr McCallum – this was regarding the response from CPC towards the planning application submitted by his neighbours at Windmill Farm.

3. Democratic Period began at 20:28.

4. Meeting reopened at 20:56.
5. Declarations of Interest: none received.
6. Matters Arising

- Cllr Ware read out a statement consequent on Cllr Smith's resignation. As he had not been present at the March meeting, Cllr Ware wished to comment on the remarks made by Cllr Smith giving the reasons for his resignation. Cllr Ware inferred that the "comments" referred to by Cllr Smith related to the remarks he had made at January's meeting in relation to our failure to follow our adopted Financial Regulations in allowing the RFO to be on the bank mandate. Cllr Ware was sorry that Cllr Smith felt "aggrieved". The remarks he had made were in no sense personal and he was certainly not impugning Cllr Smith's integrity or accusing him of a conflict of interest when he made them. He had every confidence in Cllr Smith's probity. The point he wanted to make was simply that, if we had adopted certain financial regulations, we should follow them.

The Chairman then intervened to say that the situation was gray on whether or not the RFO could sign but Cllr Ware pointed to Regulation 5.1 which seemed to him unambiguous on the point.

Cllr Ware was ready to discuss whether, in a small Council like Coleshill's, it might indeed be appropriate for the RFO to be one of the two required signatories. If there was agreement on this, the correct course of action would then be to modify the Regulations accordingly. Councillors agreed to come back to the point at a later meeting.

- Cllr Prideaux queried whether the assertion in the Clerk's report in the March meeting that e-mail should not be used for decisions was wise. With infrequent meetings there is a case for some decisions to be made using this medium with the caveat that we should be aware of the importance of our decisions being made in the public domain. Cllr Ware suggested that were this to be adopted the Standing Orders would need modification and that decisions would need retrospective ratification.
  - Cllr Ware remarked, in reference to para 10 of the previous minutes, that, although he concurred with the view that anonymous correspondence should not be read out in order to avoid giving it credence, Cllr Ware nevertheless felt that general issues worthy of CPC consideration could conceivably be brought to light by such means. To say that we would "ignore" it in all cases perhaps went too far.
  - Cllr Ware agreed with those who felt that, given the specific circumstances of the LEAF grant, appropriate procedures had been followed. It would have been impossible to convene a proper public meeting in the time available; the Chairman had established a quorum and Councillors' approval by e-mail; a Councillor had agreed to take responsibility in the Chairman's absence; and the decision had then been formally approved at the Council's next public meeting. He proposed, however, that an additional Standing Order be written to cover such eventualities in the future and the Clerk agreed to prepare a draft.
7. Tennis Club lease has been signed by the three Club trustees and been engrossed by the Council's solicitor. Cllr Prideaux noted that the latter had been less than diligent in handling the matter.

## 8. Planning

CllrWare reported that there had been a number of small applications recently, to none of which had we objected. Appeals against the rejection of two earlier applications (for new glazing to the rear of Hunters Moon and for a new 2-storey roadside frontage at Windmill Farm) had been dismissed by the Secretary of State. A decision was still awaited from CDC on the application for retrospective permission for the erection of a carport at Wallers Oak.

We continue to monitor closely any possible abuses of the planning application process and to draw it to the attention of the District Council.

Request from Mr Barber for the Council's blessing for accessing services across the forecourt of the Village Hall. This was given.

Cllr Prideaux asked if there had been any progress on the suggestion of planting a tree for the Jubilee. Cllr Lambert advised that this was being discussed by the Commons Management Committee, along with an alternative suggestion of an Village Orchard at the Cricket Ground.

Cllr Prideaux noted that he had heard about a proposed attempt to close Coleshill Lane by the Heimann family. The Clerk advised that this had been discussed at a Winchmore Hill meeting, but no formal application had been submitted at that time.

## 9. Finance

The closing bank balances of the Council as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 were £12,895.50. Income in the fiscal year was £9,312.35 and expenditure £6,691.92.

### 9a Change of Bank

Cllr Prideaux enquired as to the status of the LloydsTSB bank account. After much time and some incompetence by LloydsTSB, new signatories to the account have been accepted but there is consideration of moving the Council's accounts to the Co-Operative Bank.

## 10. Website

There was discussion about filtering of information from third parties to inclusion onto the website.

Cllr McGhee confirmed that the village blog had been suspended until a procedure could be agreed to filter information prior to it being passed to the web master for publication. This was necessary to ensure that only information relevant to the village was published. As part of this filtering it was felt that certain information should be edited.

A view was expressed that this task should be undertaken by the Clerk, but the Clerk felt that it was outside of her role to edit publically available information. After much discussion it was agreed that this issue would be resolved at or before the next meeting.

Cllr McGhee requested that agreed but unapproved minutes should be placed on the village website. This would aid prompt public understanding of our discussions and allow time for villagers to consider any interventions they might want to make during the next Democratic Half-Hour. It was agreed that standing orders would be amended to allow this.

It would, however, be made clear that such minutes remained draft and provisional until approved at the next full meeting.

11. Newsletter

Cllr Ware reported that the summer edition would be circulated this coming weekend, in time for the Jubilee. Referring to another agenda item, he said it would contain a helpline phone number which villagers can use to complain about any excessive noise emanating from the Penn Festival in July.

12. Co-option process. The Chairman explained the process of filling vacancies on the council. Once the notice is published, there is a period of 14 working-days in which 10 electors for the area can request an election. This must be sent in writing to the Returning Officer at CDC. If a by-election is triggered by 10 electors, it must have a polling day within 60 working-days of the publication of the notice of vacancy. If there is no request within 14 working-days, the vacancy can be filled by co-option. This co-option should take place as soon as is practicable after the end of the 14 working-day period. The first vacancy process started on the 29th May; 14 working days will complete on the 20th June. CDC will advise of any responses.

To expedite the process an EGM could be held after the 14 day period to co-opt a new member provided that there are the regulatory three days after the process completes to provide adequate notice of the meeting.

13. Penn Festival is scheduled to take place on 6, 7 & 8 July. Cllr McGhee updated the council on his meetings and engagements with both CDC and the organizers. It quickly became clear that the mood of the meeting was one of dissatisfaction with the attitude of CDC and the chairman emphasized to District Cllr Harris that the lack of response from the higher body was a matter of deep concern as to the relationship between the two levels of government. Cllr McGhee, somewhat more forcefully, provided more colour to the various engagements and made clear that the organizer, whom he approached directly, showed greater understanding of local concerns. It remains that the relations between CPC and CDC require reparation.

14. Correspondence. A letter had been received from Ros Pearce asking the Council to take up with the appropriate body the state of New Road.

**Action: Clerk**

15. Councillors' Reports

Cllr Woodgate:

The recent May Fayre held at school raised £2500. After the half-term break there will be a trip to Watford Synagogue, behind the scenes visits to Waitrose and Sainsburys and a Green Day when children will bring a lunch with as little waste as possible (the older children will weigh the waste and compost what they can).

The older children also hope to do a litter pick in the Village.

Our annual Sports Day will have an Olympic flavour with "armour" and "chariot" races. The end of year concert is aptly named "The Glorious Games" and all are warmly invited to the dress rehearsal on Monday July 9th at 11am. Our end of term Church service is on Thursday 19th July at 11am and villagers are very welcome to attend.

Cllr Prideaux:

The engrossed Lease was forwarded to the Clerk of the Council and was signed by members of the Council.

The tennis courts have been repainted.

The Cricket Club's new season has just started with no report yet to be tabled. [The first four league matches have been won]. The pavilion hosted a village newcomers' party.

Cllr McGhee:

Cllr McGhee confirmed that through direct negotiations with the festival organizers, agreement had been reached that they would take a number of measures to help reduce the noise impact to Coleshill. Also a telephone number has been published to allow residents to complain if they are subject to noise nuisance. If this number is used, the sound desk operator will immediately reduce output level by 3db until it has been verified if maximum noise levels have been breached.

Cllr McGhee indicated that this agreement had been reached without any help or support from CDC Councillors or officers. CDC Councillor Harris was present at the meeting and was made aware by the chairman of CPC's frustration at the unwillingness of CDC to reply to emails/correspondence from Coleshill CPC. Councillor Harris agreed to ensure that CDC were again made fully aware of the serious dismay felt by CPC because of the absence of help from CDC.

It was made clear that CPC do not object to the holding of Penn Festival but had sought from the outset to minimize the noise impact to Coleshill residents.

#### 16. Clerk's report

Any Other Business (AOB) as an item on the agenda. In the past there had been an AOB item on the Agenda, however as no decision could be made on any item brought up under this heading (as for any item raised during the democratic period). The item had been removed. If the Council wish for this to be re-instated, that could be done.

A letter had been received from Cllr Nick Rose, Leader of CDC regarding the development of working relations with District, Town and Parish Councils. Opportune in light of the issues the Council are experiencing with CDC.

Cllrs were requested to complete the 'Declarations of Interest' forms and return them to the Clerk.

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

19<sup>th</sup> July at 8pm.

### **DEMOCRATIC PERIOD:**

Sally Poole asked if the Parish Council were responsible for the repairs to the village roads in particular, the state of the road at the junction of Magpie Lane and Chalk Hill. The Clerk advised that this was the responsibility of Bucks CC and that there was a link on the Village Website where Villagers could report the problem direct to Bucks CC.

Several residents asked if CPC had approached BCC about the poor state of roads in Coleshill.

The Chairman confirmed that CPC had raised the problem with Bucks CC Cllr David Schofield, but he felt that complaints made directly from residents to BCC would carry more weight.

One resident asked if CPC might consider using local funds for road repairs. The Chairman confirmed that this could not happen though funds were available for local enhancements to the village such as maintenance of the common.