

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
LONDON COLNEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT CALEDON COMMUNITY CENTRE, CALEDON ROAD, LONDON COLNEY,
WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2018 AT 6.45 pm.**

Present: Councillors M MacMillan; K Gardner, D Gordon, M Mortuza, A Osborne and H Pakenham

In attendance: E Payne, Interim Clerk
Cllr Peter Cook, Chairman of Colney Heath Parish Council
4 Members of the public

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 Cllr Gardner raised the missing bollard at the end of Alexandra Road which means drivers can exit this road straight onto the A1081 bypass. She had raised it as a safety matter with the Police. The Clerk had chased this matter prior to the meeting and had been advised it was not a police matter, but a Highways concern. The Clerk will raise this with Cllr Gordon.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is customary for the Chairman of the Council to comment on the previous years' activities of the Council and I do this tonight with considerable enthusiasm and pride in the efforts of members and staff

Some people mistakenly believe that all the money spent by the Parish Council is raised in taxes; nothing could be further from the truth. Councillors and officers between them are responsible for raising an additional £100,000 of income from events, activities and rents throughout the year. This is by no means incidental income, but is reached through pro-active planning, hard work, incredible initiatives and outstanding operational skills.

We are able to reach many thousands of villages with major events like Larks in the Parks, our very own village day; then there is fireworks night, followed by a new initiative, turning on the Christmas lights. We also manage to get sponsorship for these community activities.

- It's about bringing the community together;
- It's about sharing what we have and enjoying it together;
- It's about sharing the resources we raise for the benefit of the maximum number of people

Activity Centre could easily be inserted into our title as we consider success throughout the past 12 months; what about our lunch club on Tuesdays and Thursdays, or the weekly seated exercise group, coffee mornings; chiropody clinics; healthy walking programme; musical evenings; and subsidised tennis lessons.....to name a few .

All this comes about through the enthusiasm and willingness of staff and Councillors to 'go the extra mile' (without seeking recognition or recompense).

To all of you who have walked the extra mile, probably a marathon or two, I offer sincerest thanks for helping to create a strong brand of parish council and for providing top class service with a smile - when under immense pressure

This gratitude is even more important when there is illness in our Council family and the remainder need to 'step up to the plate' We were distraught when our Clerk told us about her cancer, but one year on Irene Casper has recovered and has taken retirement. We wish this remarkable lady a healthy and happy retirement. We also express our thanks to another remarkable lady who stepped in as interim clerk – and Emma has now been appointed as our Parish Clerk; she joined us at a difficult time; hit the ground running and hasn't stopped

We like to publicise what we do as a Council through our parish magazine and have given the public a commitment to issue a budget edition annually. Our four editions are well read and praise is considerable from the public, except for one or two who suggest our superb publication is propaganda and a waste of ratepayer's money. I firmly disagree, especially as 75% of printing costs are covered by advertising and our news is real news impacting on the lives of our citizens.

Our statutory environmental responsibilities are practically 'nil' but our public duty/responsibility is huge. People expect us to be their voice and we are without spending an enormous amount in the process. We campaigned responsibly and firmly with the public over the Hertsmere village and St Albans district plan proposals. Sure we did not develop a neighbourhood plan over which the chief planner said there was no guarantee of acceptance. We did not have to spend £30,000+ of ratepayer's money to know that we did not want three new developments going onto Shenley Lane. One politician decided to snipe from the side-lines using the 'Campaign for Colney' as a political front... and angered many villagers recently. It seems that there is only one way to do things according to this small group...their way or not at all. Well I have news for you. We will do it our way and let the people decide. We will apply to the Govt. for the finance they have recently made available for neighbourhood plans, making savings for local people whilst forging ahead with our positive environment strategy

Regarding councillor participation in events and strategic management. There has been illness amongst the members which sometimes made us 'a bit thin on the ground.' It is good to see Cllr Hopkins on the mend. And then there is our very remarkable Councillor..... Dreda Gordon, who had cancer, survived it, and last week Dreda was given the all-clear. We are delighted with the news and look forward to receiving your wise council, once again.

A warm welcome to Cllr Mohammed Mortuza who won last week's by election following the resignation of Chris Flynn. Mo, we are delighted to have your enthusiasm and energy to add to the councillor group. Many congrats to Katherine Gardner on her re-election as our district councillor.

In conclusion, I commend this report and the work of officers and members. I commend the objectives we are setting for the next 12 month, for if they are carried out with the same enthusiasm and commitment over the last 12 month, we will have done our very, very best and end up with a satisfied village that is content with its parish representation.

- 3.1 Cllr Gardner thanked Cllr MacMillan for his leadership steering the Council during the previous year.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 Mr Peak expressed his disappointment in the public participation in the village litter pick. It was commented by Members that there is a lot of participation that does go in the village with attendance at other events, as is demonstrated during the year.

4.2 Cllr Gordon is concerned about the amounts of rubbish on The Bell roundabout, and has had no success in making complaints to the CEO at Hertsmere BC. The Clerk was asked to contact the CEO and seek assurances that this area would be litter picked.

4.3 Mr Peak reported that he struggled to get hold of councillors when the parish council office wasn't open and it would make life much easier for residents if there was one point of contact for all councils. Members responded that the area is not a unitary authority and considered that if the parish council officers are not able to assist residents with their queries, then they are signposted to the relevant authority.

5. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 7pm.

Signed:

Date: