

MINUTES OF THE CHRISHALL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**Held on Friday, 28th June 2019 at 7.30pm in the
South Hall, New Village Hall, Crawley End, Chrishall.**

PRESENT: Cllr John Kay (chairman) (resigned at the start of the meeting), Cllr Ian Pitfield, Cllr Jane Holloway (voted Chairman), Cllr Sheena Lashko, Cllr Guy Rackham, Cllr Tracey Slade, Cllr Gillian Eaton, Cllr Paula Parish.

Clerk: Belinda Irons

PUBLIC: 8

19.111 Apologies: Cllr Stephen Foote.

The Chairman read a letter of resignation from Cllr Foote, which expressed Cllr Foote's dismay at the level of nasty behaviour exhibited in meetings and by email, and that he only wanted to work for the greater good. He commented that if the Council continues in this mode, the Councillors will be branded pariahs who had no regard for the good of the village, its residents and their wishes and the greater good. 'Not for me'.

Cllr Kay then read his letter of resignation, stating his belief that the internal report is seriously flawed, that the Parish Council has to take a decision to act apolitically on behalf of the community or follow the direction and agenda set by the Clerk contrary to Standing Orders, and that he has written an extended open report setting out his concerns.

Cllr Kay joined members of the public at this stage in proceedings at 7.32pm.

The Clerk advised the meeting that it had an option to postpone the meeting, or to appoint a chairman for this meeting. *(Cllr Parish advised the meeting that she would record the proceedings)*

PROPOSAL: that Cllr Jane Holloway be elected as chairman for this meeting. PROPOSED: Cllr Slade, seconded Cllr Eaton.

AGREED: Cllrs Parish, Lashko, and Pitfield. Abstained: Cllr Rackham.

MOTION CARRIED BY MAJORITY.

Cllr Holloway took the chair.

19.112 Other absences: Members absent without offering apologies: none.

19.113 Declaration of Members Interests: Pecuniary/Personal:

Cllr Holloway: School Governor

Cllr Parish: Brand Pavilion sub-committee: personal

Cllr Rackham Chrishall Village Hall Committee Chairman

Cllr Slade: Brand Pavilion sub-committee Chairman and
PC representative

19.114 Minutes of the previous meeting: 4th June:

Cllr Pitfield commented the minutes were very long, were not objective, and were biased. The comments made were the Clerk's comments and not what happened at the meeting.

An example quoted was minute point 19.96: 'Cllr Rackham challenged with a sustain monologue', which Cllr Pitfield found disrespectful.

Minutes are supposed to be brief and objective. The Parish Council has not asked for more detailed minutes.

The Clerk, through the Chair, commented that she had been instructed by the Parish Council, to produce accurate minutes, and members of the public had stated verbatim minutes were required. She was in a no-win situation.

Cllr Holloway read a section of the Good Councillor Guide to the meeting, impressing on those present that it was incumbent on Councillors to work for the benefit of the community, that good behaviour was paramount, and that poor behaviour must stop.

16 Hazards

Even in the best councils, things go wrong so one of the most useful resources is the council's clerk. Trained clerks can recognise when something needs attention and if they cannot fix the problem, they will know someone who can.

Risk management allows your council to anticipate where breakdowns and accidents might occur. For example, it is unhelpful if the clerk and councillors (including the chairman):

- are unsure of their respective roles, duties and responsibilities
- don't work as a team or respect each other's roles
- don't communicate with each other
- concentrate on scoring points.

Furthermore, the council will have difficulty if it:

- allows one person or a small group of councillors to dominate its work
- allows a councillor (including the chairman) to make decisions on its behalf
- doesn't listen to and communicate with its community, other local councils, principal authorities, outside bodies
- ignores or antagonises the press
- doesn't have written contracts of employment for staff
- doesn't keep its records in order

Chairman's signature..... 2nd July 2019

- lacks a robust system of financial control
- doesn't manage meetings effectively
- is not well-informed on topics to be discussed.

Everyone in the team is responsible for checking that the council avoids these dangers; ultimately the council is liable. By contrast, well-prepared and well-informed councillors avoid difficulties and spend their energies on serving their communities.

Cllr Holloway made strong comment that the Parish Council should make it a priority to work with the public to ensure it is going in the direction the community wants.

Cllr Slade commented that archived minutes could not be found on the PC website. Cllr Holloway stated a link or button needs to be installed to enable easy access to the minutes.

PROPOSAL: That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agrees the minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2019. PROPOSED: Cllr Eaton, seconded Cllr Parish. AGREED: Cllrs Slade, Lashko & Holloway. AGAINST: Cllrs Rackham and Pitfield. CARRIED BY MAJORITY.

19.115 Public Discussion:

A parishioner expressed her deep concern over the upsetting behaviour exhibited by some Councillors in the meetings. Sensible discussion and debate were needed. Hurtful comments must stop. Councillors must work together for the good of the community.

A parishioner commented that he wanted to work with the Council for the good of the community but was discouraged by poor behaviour.

The Pavilion User Group committee had an inclusive, respectful culture which encouraged healthy debate. All members had an equal voice.

19.116 Proposals to Members

a) Councillors supported this proposal as it removed any doubt about the accuracy of the minutes.

PROPOSAL: That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agrees to audio record every meeting of Chrishall Parish Council commencing immediately. PROPOSED: Cllr Parish, seconded Cllr Rackham. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Proposals for compliance with Audit requirements: The Clerk provided all documents in advance of the meeting by email for consideration. The Internal Audit report was provided to Council on the 4th June.

Internal Audit:

Greenbiro provided a list of documents it required to complete the internal audit. The Clerk provided the documentation and also the additional list of income and expenditure requested by the Internal Auditor. The Internal Auditor also requested supporting documentation around the Robert Reed Hall roof and ceiling replacement to ensure compliance with governing documentation which included quotes and income sources. The Internal Auditor, Greenbiro Ltd, provided a report the contents of which were detailed at the previous meeting.

Cllr Rackham commented that he spoke directly with the Internal Auditor before the meeting on the 4th June 2019, who, he stated, was unaware that a budget had not been set, and that an error had been made by the Clerk regarding the precept. He had raised the Robert Reed Hall roof replacement with her also.

Cllrs Pitfield and Rackham repeatedly referred to the lack of a budget and the error on the precept. The Clerk reminded Cllrs Pitfield and Rackham that the year being audited was 2018/19.

Cllr Slade commented that Cllr Rackham had exceeded his remit as a Councillor, as he should not have contacted the Internal Auditor without Parish Council agreement.

The budget and precept had been properly set in January 2018. The queries raised regarding the lack of a budget and the error on the precept would be assessed in the 2019/2020 audit, but would be highlighted in the 2018/19 budget. The Clerk further commented that the meeting to agree the budget and precept was extremely fraught, and the error had been made at that meeting when the Clerk and Chairman were under severe duress. The Clerk reminded the meeting that she had specifically asked for an interim internal report to be carried out in September 2018, which was not agreed by the Council. Cllr Pitfield had commented at that time that it was not necessary as the Parish Council had met its requirements.

Cllr Holloway commented the budget should have been set and the precept agreed against that budget. This had not happened. The precept had been cut without a budget to support such a cut. She further highlighted a lack of protocol and communication, as the first point of contact should be the Clerk.

b) PROPOSAL: *That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agrees by resolution to accept the findings of the internal auditor and agrees to take appropriate action to ensure any recommendations are implemented.* PROPOSED: Cllr Slade, seconded Cllr Parish. AGREED: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Eaton. AGAINST: Cllrs Rackham and Pitfield. MOTION AGREED AND CARRIED BY MAJORITY.

Financial controls:

Councillors agreed that an interim Internal Audit report would be commissioned for September, and the Internal Auditor would be asked to attend a meeting of the Parish Council so that the Internal Auditor could discuss with Councillors best practice. Councillors further agreed that training in Finance and Audit would be attended to ensure comprehensive understanding of the process and requirements. Cllr Rackham reminded the Clerk to provide the financial documentation ahead of the July meeting.

The Parish Council adopted revised Financial Regulations in January 2019.

c) PROPOSAL: *That Chrishall Parish Council herewith review the effectiveness of the system of financial controls and make recommendations to ensure all risk is minimised.* PROPOSED: Cllr Rackham, seconded Cllr Holloway. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Exercise of Public Rights to inspect the accounts:

d) PROPOSAL: *That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agree by resolution to ensure the electorate is able to exercise its public right to inspect the Parish Council accounts for a single period of 30 working days which must include the first 10 working days of July 2019, and this period will be between 28th June and 12th August) inclusive.* PROPOSED: Cllr Eaton, seconded Cllr Slade. AGREED: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Parish, Pitfield. AGAINST: Cllr Rackham. MOTION AGREED AND CARRIED BY MAJORITY

Annual Governance Statement:

The Clerk read each point to the meeting, explaining what agreement with the statement meant. The following shows Councillors vote against each point:

1. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Slade.
Against: Cllrs Pitfield & Rackham.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish
2. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Rackham, Slade.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton, Parish & Pitfield.
3. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Pitfield, Rackham Slade.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish
4. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Pitfield, Rackham Slade.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish
5. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Pitfield, Rackham Slade.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish
6. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Slade.
Against: Cllrs Pitfield, Rackham.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish
7. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Pitfield, Rackham Slade.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish

8. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Pitfield, Rackham Slade.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish
9. Agreed: Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Pitfield, Rackham Slade.
Abstain: Cllrs Eaton & Parish

Cllr Rackham advised the meeting that the former Chairman Derek Ailes had written to the Auditor with his view of events surrounding the Robert Reed Hall roof replacement. Cllr Eaton commented that all Councillors needed to put their view of events forward for balance, particularly Cllrs Holloway, Lashko, Steven Parish, Stephen Foote, and David Thomas.

e) PROPOSAL: *That Chrishall Parish Council herewith review and agree by resolution the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19.*

PROPOSED: Cllr Slade, seconded Cllr Lashko. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY. The document was signed at the meeting.

Accounting Statement:

The Clerk reminded Council that this form shows how funds have been received and spent in the year 2018 2019.

f) PROPOSAL: *That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agree by resolution the Accounting Statement for 2018/19.* PROPOSED: Cllr Slade, seconded Cllr Rackham. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY. The document was signed at the meeting.

Budget:

Cllr (Mrs) Parish proposed a counter-proposal:

That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agrees and adopts the projected budget produced in January 2019.

The 2019/2020 budget was not agreed at the January 2019 meetings. The budget was prepared by former Cllrs Foote and Parish as a sub-committee of the Parish Council of the time, with the Clerk. The precept should have been set against it, and this did not happen.

Cllr Rackham commented that Chrishall precept was significantly higher than the Uttlesford average. The mortgage for the Village Hall costs each taxpayer £9.00 per annum.

Cllr Holloway commented that the number of assets in other parishes was unknown, therefore a comparison would be difficult to make. However, it is good practice to review and challenge assumptions around expenditure but it should be done with the input of the community. It was agreed it will be an agenda item for the Village Meeting scheduled for September 2019.

COUNTER PROPOSAL: *That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agrees and adopts the projected budget produced in January 2019.* PROPOSED: Cllr (Mrs) Parish, seconded Cllr Lashko. AGREED: Cllrs Eaton, Holloway, Pitfield, Slade. AGAINST: Cllr Rackham. MOTION AGREED AND CARRIED BY MAJORITY.

g) PROPOSAL: *That Chrishall Parish Council herewith agrees to adopt the amended budget proposed by Cllr Rackham:* NOT CARRIED.

19.117 Planning applications

UTT/19/1246/HHF Planning application: response by 10 th July 2019	Faerie Cottage, Crawley End Proposed detached garage and separate detached woodstore: <i>Comment: request UDC consider the previous plan app environmental impact assessment: ACTION: CLERK</i>
UTT/19/0981/FUL Decision awaited	Former Piggeries, Chrishall Grange Road Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 1 new dwelling with detached garage and new farm access
UTT/19/0743/FUL Permission granted	Chrishall Church of England Primary School, Palmers Lane Variation of condition 1 of UTT/15/1275/FUL - to allow extension of period of use of temporary classroom for a further 3 years
UTT/19/0786/HHF Permission refused	1 Crawley End Two storey side, front and rear extensions. Single storey rear extension and detached garage/garden room
UTT/18/2906/FUL	Land East of Long View, Mill Causeway Appeal

19.118 Grievance against Chrishall Parish Council: submitted by the Clerk to the Chairman on Friday, 15th March by email.

The Clerk emailed the original grievance, a letter of objection to a member of the grievance committee, and a 2nd grievance against the Parish Council, to all Councillors for transparency purposes this afternoon.

Councillors discussed the process surrounding the grievance.

It was agreed that independent mediation would be sought as a priority for all parties concerned to discuss the issues. The Clerk and those subject to the Clerk's initial grievance agreed to this course of action.

PROPOSAL: *that Chrishall Parish Council herewith agrees to fund the services of an independent mediator to a maximum of £500 (five hundred pounds) immediately.* PROPOSED: Cllr Lashko, seconded Cllr Eaton. AGREED: Cllrs Holloway, Parish and Slade. ABSTAINED: Cllrs Pitfield & Rackham. MOTION AGREED AND CARRIED BY MAJORITY.
Cllr Holloway will progress on Monday am. **ACTION: JH**

A vote of thanks was offered to Cllr Holloway for progressing this item.

19.119 Date of next Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday

A vote of thanks was offered to Cllrs Foote and Kay for their work on the Parish Council.

3rd September, 1st October, 5th November.

Meeting closed at 9.21pm.