

## Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL meeting

**Held on Monday 10th October 2016 at 7.00pm in the Parish Council Office, Denham**

|          |                                            |                 |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Cllrs.   | Mrs M Heath (Chairman)                     | Miss S Jefferys |
|          | Mrs T Riley (Vice Chairman)                | Dr J Newby      |
|          | Mr A Hans                                  | # Mr G Hollis   |
|          | # Mrs K Bowen                              | Mrs S Williams  |
|          | Mr W Davey                                 | Mr S Sproul     |
|          | Mrs M Skelton                              | # Mr A Pamment  |
| Clerk.   | Mr J Coleman                               |                 |
| Co-Clerk | Mr R Hill                                  |                 |
| Bucks CC | Mrs G Quinton MD (BE&BSP)                  |                 |
| Bucks CC | Mrs R Carley Adult Social Care PMO Manager |                 |
| Bucks CC | Mr R Reed County Cllr.                     |                 |

### Public Session

Mr John Coles, resident of Denham Green attended the meeting

#### 1. Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) Unitary Authority

The Chairman welcomed the representatives of BCC to the meeting.

Mrs Quinton (GQ) opened by stating that she had over 30 years' experience in local authorities and thought that unitary councils were the best model to deliver services.

GQ went on to say that if the Bucks Unitary is accepted by the Secretary of State, Bucks CC as we know it will be abolished along with the four District Councils; South Bucks, Chiltern, Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe. There would be a completely new council with new councillors and that the Town and Parish Councils would play an important role in the new set up. The current Bucks CC was broken and expensive and with 50,000 required by 2030 to house a growing population, a new approach is needed. People are living longer and the frail need looking after. Disability too is a factor as more babies now survive more disabling conditions than before.

GQ advised that Government funding to Bucks CC will reduce from the current £88m to zero in 2019, the council has already saved £145m with another £30m to be saved by 2020. These are the reasons why a different model is required. BCC have held a lot of roadshows across the county and conducted residents' surveys. The feedback gained is positive as the model is simpler and cuts out bureaucracy. There will be challenges however, as there is a huge range of capabilities involved.

There are four options available: Option 1. A single unitary council. Option 2. Two unitary councils. Option 3. Three unitary councils, Option 4. Three unitary councils and a strategic authority. Grant Thornton consultants have reviewed the Bucks Unitary Business Case and approved it as the best solution. Option 1. Would deliver net 5 year revenue savings of £45m (£18.2m annual) Option 2. Would deliver net 5 year revenue savings of £17.3m (£10.3m annual) Option 3. Would deliver net 5 year revenue savings of £5.6.1m (£5.5m annual) and

Option 4. Would deliver net 5 year revenue savings of £11.2m (£5.4m annual).

Despite being smaller than counties like Essex, Buckinghamshire is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest contributor to GDP in the country. The cost to set up the unitary would be in the region of £18m which would be repayable over three years. Five councils (BCC plus DC's) hold £1bn in assets that generate £48m in capital receipts.

Council Tax would be equalised over Buckinghamshire to the level of the current Wycombe DC which is the lowest in the county.

The Business case for a single unitary council has been fully endorsed by BCC and a proposal passed to submit the single unitary plans to Government. A decision is expected by January 2017. The plans need the support of town and parish councils.

County Cllr. Reed (RR) advised that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016, 43 members voted in favour of the single unitary council with 6 members abstaining. RR added that he totally supports the single unitary council model in terms of its ability to improve delivery and service. Local enterprise also supports the single unitary model.

Cllr. Heath (MH) asked why a consultation had taken place before consulting at local level. GQ replied that it was an online consultation and that parish workshops will be set up to work through the proposals and how the Community Boards will work will require input from Parish Councils.

MH stated that the Parish Council has problems now contacting anyone at BCC, how will this improve with a unitary authority. GQ replied that there will be a Community hub in our area and a Community Board to manage issues. If no satisfaction can be gained through these facilities, matters can be escalated to her.

MH asked how devolved services will work under the unitary authority. GQ replied that if a service is to be devolved, the Parish Council will be consulted and the relevant funds will be devolved down to the Parish Council.

MH asked if there would be additional money streams to carry out the devolved services we do now. GQ replied that these would come through the Community Boards as they will have the powers to do so. The Parish Council would have executive powers through the Community Boards. Cllr. Riley (TR) gave an example of licencing and would we be able to take this over as a devolved service to provide a revenue stream; GQ replied that they would need to know what needs the Parish Council has. There is £2m of new money available for devolved services over the county. TR asked how this would be distributed; GQ replied that it would be distributed through the Community Boards.

MH raised the issue of meetings and consultations being arranged at short notice; GQ replied that all meetings and consultations would be available on the website. GQ added that the government will hold the new unitary authority to account and that at present too much is wasted on bureaucracy. MH asked how this will change. GQ replied that there will be new appointments with the capacity to do tasks, more people with less duplication. RR gave an example of five area Planning Committees with representations from local councils on the committees. Decisions will be by majority vote. Major strategic planning applications will remain with the Unitary Council. RR added that service delivery will improve.

Cllr. Hans (AH) enquired if the Community Boards will have Service Level Agreements,

(SLA's) in place for Town and Parish Councils. Cllr. Jefferys (SJ) stated that RR had suggested that the Parish Council would sit on the Planning Committee but be unpaid. We would require training to sit on the Planning Committee. GQ replied that it will take two years to address the fine details of the Unitary Authority after the business case has been accepted by the Secretary of State.

Cllr. Sproul (SS) asked how the Community Boards would be set up; GQ replies that it will require input from the Town and Parish Councils. AH was concerned that this would increase bureaucracy not reduce it; GQ assured him that it would not increase bureaucracy.

MH enquired as to the statement regarding Council Tax; GQ replied that Wycombe DC has the lowest Council Tax in Bucks and the Unitary Authority would seek to make this the norm over the whole of Bucks. MH queried where the extra money would come from; GQ replied that the new Council would make the decision. MH asked if we would apply for our precept as we do now; GQ replied that we would apply to the Unitary Authority for our precept.

MH asked if the LAFS would go; GQ replied that they would cease under the new authority.

MH asked if land that was not being used by BCC could be used by the Parish Council; R Carley (RC) replied that it would have to be part of discussions between the Unitary Authority and the Parish Council.

MH said that she would prefer a single Unitary Council but had her doubts as the DC's too want to form Unitary Councils. RR replied that Bucks CC has submitted their Business Case to the Secretary of State and to date had not had sight of the DC's Business Case. RR added that BCC will not exist, there will be a brand new Unitary Authority that will have to follow its Business Case. BCC cannot give micro details at present, however they will be held accountable by Government.

TR raised the issue of grass cutting and weed killing. The weed killing funding has been dropped and we are inundated with calls from residents complaining that we are not attending to visual splays on 50mph roads which are not our responsibility. The TfB call centre refer residents back to the Parish Council on matters that they are not responsible for under the devolved services agreement. The footpath on the A412 between the A40 and Denham station is impassable in places and flooded in others. Nothing has been done and now we are having to pay expensive consultants to carry out a feasibility study on the cost of repairs. SJ added that BCC save money by using Parish Councillors that are unpaid to carry out tasks that were the responsibility of BCC. GQ was unaware that Parish Councillors were unpaid and that they need to know these things. AH asked if there would be a change in the number of Parish Councils; GQ replied that this not a decision BCC or the Unitary Authority can make. RR explained that Parish Councillors can actually be paid. TR stated that we will need more staff to cope with extra devolved services; GQ replied that this is why we need your views. RC said that the point raised regarding the 50mph was not satisfactory but it has at last been resolved. Under the new Unitary, the Community Hubs will oil the wheels locally and serve as a local service point for Town and Parish Councils. MH asked if residents would go direct to the Community Hubs or go through the Parish Council; RC replied that would be what works best. MH remarked that there was a lot of detail to work through.

Cllr. Skelton (MS) stated that the proposal may have gone to the Secretary of State, however we have no information on what lies beneath the plan. GQ replied that you must develop the high level business plan first; the detail will take two years to deliver. You must get the green light on the business plan first. MH asked what happens in the two years; GQ replied that

BCC will close down but it will be business as usual. There will be a shadow authority in place. SJ asked if the shadow authority will be elected; GQ replied that it would be an elected authority. MH had notice in the Business Plan that there would be a big reduction in councillors and this would mean that residents would have a restricted choice when contacting councillors; GQ replied that things are simpler and clearer in a Unitary Authority. RR explained that Denham and Fulmer would have two councillors whereas at present, we only have one. The new Unitary may require less or more councillors. RR added that if the Secretary of State approves the Unitary Authority at the next election, there will be no DC election of councillors. SJ stated that we will have no say if the Secretary of State approves the Unitary Authority; GQ replied that this would be the case.

MS asked if there were successful Unitary Authorities; GQ replied that Wiltshire and Durham had been very successful. MH had heard that Cornwall had been less successful; RR replied that they had taken all 130 councillors into the unitary; GQ stated that despite this, they had still made significant cost savings.

MH thanked GQ, RR and RC for attending the meeting and for answering the questions.

**At this point GQ, RR and RC left the meeting.**

MH asked if anyone had any questions.

SJ was sceptical but said if it worked it would be good to have a one stop shop.

Cllr. Newby observed that although Cornwall had not been too successful, they had still managed to save money.

MH stated that it is important that we attend any conferences and meetings.

SS urged that we make sure that meetings are not held in Aylesbury; MH replied that we would have no say where meetings would be.

Mr John Coles, resident of Denham Green wished to speak to the council regarding parking in Penn Drive and Tilehouse Way. The number 581 bus has encountered difficulties in negotiating these roads due to parked cars. Mr Coles reported up to 12 cars parked in Penn Drive and up to 40 cars parked in Tilehouse Way. Cllr. Heath advised Mr Coles to complain to BCC as it is their responsibility. Mr Coles also raised the issue of the state of the pavement and the rubbish outside the shops in Denham Green. Again Cllr. Heath advised Mr Coles to contact BCC as these issues are outside the remit of the Parish Council.

At this point Mr Coles left the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence  
Apologies denoted by # above.
3. Notification of any Urgent Other Business to be taken under item 20  
Annual Parish Meeting.
4. Matters dealt with under Urgent Action since the last meeting  
None.
5. Agreement to Discuss Matters in **Part 2**  
It was agreed to discuss matters in part 2

6. Chairman's Report

The Chairman had attended the Community Impact Bucks Conference which had highlighted that the Parish Council was not using the correct route to gain help from businesses. Relationships need to be built with businesses and instead of asking for money, we should be asking how they can help us in other ways. These could be areas of social responsibility, expertise in IT or marketing. An example could be a luncheon club without a cook that a local business with a canteen could help out by supplying ready cooked meals.

The meeting with SDDC leader Ralph Bagge had not revealed anything new or specific. TR said that Mr Bagge had advised the meeting to be vigilant.

7. Reports from County Councillor

There was no report over and above County Councillor Reed's input to the unitary debate.

8. Reports from District Councillors

No responses or reports received from District Councillors.

9. Reports from Outside Bodies

The minutes from the SBALC meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016 at Capswood had been circulated to councillors before the meeting and were noted.

10. Correspondence List

No requests for correspondence had been received by the Clerk. Noted by the members.

11. Councillor and Associate Vacancies

The Chairman reported Theresa Moran had agreed to be an associate and will sit on the Communities Committee.

12. Neighbourhood Plan

To note that the SBDC and Chiltern DC Local Plan meeting is going ahead on the 31<sup>st</sup> October at Capswood, followed by the exhibition in the Denham Memorial Hall on the 10<sup>th</sup> November. Cllr. Hans gave his apologies for the meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. Members who attend the meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> October are to meet on Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 7.00pm to agree the contents of the flyers that need to be available for the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> and also the various ways to contact the residents to get as many to the exhibition as possible. It is suggested that the A5 size flyers have the Parish Council's views on one side and some questions to residents on the reverse.

13. Denham as a Single Ward

The Chairman to speak to Kully Tumber at SBDC.

14. HS2

The minutes of the meeting held with HS2 on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 had been circulated prior to the meeting. There is no date set yet for DPC's petition hearing with the House of Lords Select Committee. The BCC petition will be heard on 26<sup>th</sup> October, the Co-Clerk will attend the hearing. Cllr. Heath was not sure whether the Parish Council should proceed with the hearing as the meeting with HS2 had been quite negative. The Co-Clerk had found some useful information on lorry movements and had sent an email to HS2, Cllr. Heath thought that this might mean we get an offer from HS2.

The following correspondence has been received since the last meeting.

1147/16 HS2 Ltd. Confirmation of meeting with Parish council on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016

1309/16 HS2 Ltd. Introductory letter from Luke Nipen, HS2 Community Engagement Officer.

15. Review of Leases and Rents

The following items were noted.

The discussions with Denham Cricket Club over the new lease are ongoing.

The Bowls Club rent review is due in November and is linked to the Retail Price Index.

Noted by the members.

16. Single Person Working Policy

The Solo Protect device has been delivered and needs to be set up. The risk assessment supplied by Cllr. Riley needs to be incorporated into the main Parish Council risk assessment and circulated to all councillors with a view to adopting the risk assessment at the next Full Council meeting.

17. Office Redecoration

It was noted that the main office redecoration is now complete and the lobby, kitchen and toilet are in progress.

18. Approval of Parish Council Minutes

To approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and matters arising.

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were proposed by Cllr. Heath, seconded by Cllr. Riley and agreed with no matters arising.

19. Approval of Committee Minutes

To approve the minutes of the Committees below and matters arising.

Planning Committee Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

The minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were proposed by Cllr. Jefferys and seconded by Cllr. Williams and agreed with no matters arising.

Finance Committee Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016

The minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were proposed by Cllr. Heath and seconded by Cllr. Newby and agreed with no matters arising.

Council Special Budget Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016

The minutes of the Council Special Budget Meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were proposed by Cllr. Heath and seconded by Cllr. Skelton and agreed with no matters arising.

Communities Committee Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016

The minutes of the Communities Committee Meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016 were proposed by Cllr. Williams and seconded by Cllr. Heath agreed with no matters arising.

Services Committee Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016.

The minutes of the Services Committee Meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 were proposed by Cllr. Heath and seconded by Cllr. Newby with the following matters arising: SW asked if the weed killing had been done in New Denham, the Co-Clerk confirmed that it had been done. On page 5 the notices for cars, were they for cars parked in Old Mill Road, The Co-Clerk advised that they were for all areas with parking problems.

Cllr. Riley gave her apologies for the next Services meeting.

MH reported that Cllr. Riley was concerned about being away so often, however Cllr. Heath advised the meeting that Cllr. Riley always answers emails and gives input to matters when away from the area and generally make a big contribution to the Parish Council.

20. Any Other Business

Annual Parish Meeting;

MH advised the meeting that the venue for the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting should be booked now. After discussion it was agreed that the meeting will be held in the Denham Village Memorial Hall. The date 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the start time 7.30pm. Cllr. Heath has a Denham Village Memorial Hall Committee meeting tomorrow at 7.30pm and will mention it then.

The Co-Clerk advised the meeting that the Yoga and Pilates sessions at St Marks Church Hall and the Community Centre in new Denham are coming to an end. Both venues have been very well attended with 32 regular attendees at St Marks and 40 at New Denham. The funding from Active Bucks is no longer available and assistance is required with then hire of the halls for six months if the sessions are to continue. Higher Denham Community association are interested too but we are not sure if they would make their hall available free of charge. Cllr. Riley enquired why we are involved in this activity; Cllr. Heath explained that it is an Active Bucks initiative for older residents. Cllr. Skelton advised that the £3.00 charge per session to the participants is too cheap as other classes charge up to £8.00 per session. Cllr. Williams stated that there is funds available in the Communities budget for such an activity and she will speak to the Church regarding St Marks Church Hall to see if a better rate is available. Cllr. Heath proposed that the Parish Council proceeds with this activity for the elderly, seconded by Cllr. Newby and agreed.

21. Date of Next Meeting

Cllr. Heath proposed that the start time for Full Council meetings be moved to 7.30pm, seconded by Cllr. Williams and agreed.

To confirm the date of the next meeting as **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016 starting at 7.30pm. There will be a prior meeting starting at 7.00pm to discuss the SBDC and Chiltern District Council's Local Plan**

22. Part 2 Confidential Members Only

With no members of the press or public present, it was agreed to proceed to part 2.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

John Coleman-Clerk Denham Parish Council.