

## The Lee Parish Council

### Minutes of the THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING (APM) held in The Lee Parish Hall on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 7.30pm

<b>Present</b>	Councillor R Fowler (Chair)	RF
	Councillor D Chinnery	DC
	Councillor C Little	CL
	Councillor S Moule	SM
	Councillor C Perry	CP
	Councillor C Sully	CS
	Councillor A Weir	AW
	Mrs H Farrelly (Clerk)	HF
	County Councillor T Birchley	TB
<b>Speakers</b>	Sarah Green MP	SG
	Claire Gresswell, Headteacher of Lee Common School	CG
	Revd Chris Hayward	CH
<b>In Attendance</b>	34 members of the public	

#### 1. PRESENTATION TO THE PARISH

Cllr Fowler (Chair of the Parish Council) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

This is the first public meeting for a considerable amount of time due to the Covid pandemic and Cllr Fowler welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting. Meetings are usually held annually, with the last one being held in May 2019, before Covid lockdowns. The minutes of the meeting were accepted and have been published to the website.

The purpose of the meeting was to allow residents to get together and review local matters of interest and/or concern. The theme for the meeting was 'New Beginnings' and three speakers have been invited to talk.

#### 2. SARAH GREEN MP

Cllr Fowler opened with the following introduction:

*'Ahead of this evening, I had a look back at the political history of The Lee. Prior to the Domesday Book, The Lee was part of the Aylesbury Hundred, which by the end of the 14th century had absorbed the Risborough and Stone Hundreds. From 1553 until 1885, the parliamentary borough of Aylesbury representing the "Three Hundreds of Aylesbury" returned two MPs to Westminster, but it wasn't until the 19th century that any was aligned with any particular political party.*

*Following the Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885, The Lee was part of the Aylesbury county division of Buckinghamshire. The first MP, Ferdinand de Rothschild, held the seat for the Liberal Party for a*

*year before joining the breakaway Liberal Unionist party in 1886 which subsequently merged with the Conservative & Unionist party in 1912. With the exception of 1923 when it was held by Thomas Keens, a Liberal, the Aylesbury seat has been held by the Conservative party ever since. In 1974 The Lee became a part of the newly formed Chesham & Amersham constituency which, until the death earlier this year of Dame Cheryl Gillan, had always returned a Conservative member of parliament.*

*We now not only have “new beginning” with a new MP, but a change of political alignment. Some residents will think this is a good thing, others will think it is a bad thing. Whatever your view, all will agree it really is a New Beginning. To tell us more about her aims and aspirations, and how she plans to represent and engage with her constituents, I’d like to introduce Sarah Green MP’.*

Sarah Green gave a general introduction to the meeting highlighting her new role as MP for Amersham and Chesham and the key issues and areas of concern that are being discussed and addressed.

A number of members of the public highlighted the continued problems that HS2 building works are causing the rural villages, especially with a considerable amount of lengthy road closures and increases in HS2 traffic.

The changes to the electoral boundaries was also raised and Cllr Fowler agreed to forward The Lee Parish Council’s response to the consultation of proposed changes to Sarah Green for information.

#### **4. CLAIRE GRESSWELL, HEADTEACHER OF LEE COMMON SCHOOL**

Cllr Fowler opened with the following introduction:

*‘I tried to find out a little about past head teachers of Lee Common School, and the different challenges they faced.*

*100 years ago teachers were very much stricter and less empathetic than today. The school at that point used to cater for children up to school leaving age of 14, and the staff seemed more concerned with beating obedience and knowledge into the children than nurturing them – these days they’d be arrested.*

*One of the heads was Mr Spearman who had a wooden leg as a result of injury in WW1. Protheses a century ago weren’t what they are today, and the children could hear him coming so would sit up straight and be very good.*

*Sports Day used to be held in the Park – with the children using the gate in the hedge and assembling just behind the school. One of the head’s responsibilities at that time was to go out in the morning and clear the cowpats from the area to be used for races*

*I have also heard tell that one of the previous heads used to help communication between the children and the Borrowers who lived under the floorboards: the children would put notes through a tiny hole in the floor, and next morning they would have a reply from the Borrowers. The head also used to be the guardian of the dragon who lived in the boiler room to ensure the children wouldn’t go in there.*

*I'm not sure if all these responsibilities were on her job specification, but to hear about the current hopes and challenges of a head of Lee Common, I'd like to introduce Mrs Gresswell as she's known in school, Claire Gresswell'.*

Claire Gresswell gave a brief summary of her working life before joining Lee Common School (LCS) in 2020. The meeting heard that Claire had worked in the corporate world before retraining to become a teacher, with her most recent post before Headteacher at LCS as Deputy Head at a school in Prestwood.

Upon joining the School, much work was needed to raise the standard of the site and, assisted by many volunteers and hard work, the buildings and grounds have been transformed.

The School has suffered in recent years with dwindling pupil numbers which has been due, in part, to low birth rates and lack of marketing to promote the school further afield. With the Parish Council and community as a whole behind the School, the School staff and Board of Governors are building a community of learners through nurturing and learning through play in a positive climate.

Local community links are being re-established and the School is on an upward trajectory again.

## **5. REVD CHRIS HAYWARD**

Cllr Fowler opened with the following introduction:

*In the late spring of 1953, our village became for a few brief minutes the most important place in the country.*

*Somewhere was needed to host the rehearsals for the Coronation of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second. The venue had to be secluded yet close to London and the people involved had to be sworn to secrecy with no publicity and no press releases – fortunately social media hadn't been invented.*

*The Lee fitted the bill and the vicar at the time, the Revd John Carter, had been a pupil of Doctor Fisher, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Somehow things were kept quiet and on a few Sundays, the Parish Church gained an extra member of the congregation – the Archbishop of Canterbury. When the rehearsals took place The Vicar's wife stood in for the Queen with a little paper thing for a crown, and there were also 'doubles' for the Archbishops of York and Durham.*

*Whether The Lee will play a part in future coronations is not known, but maybe our next speaker will have some insights. Ladies and gentlemen, Revd Chris Haywood.*

The meeting heard that whilst the theme for the meeting was new beginnings, for Revd Chris Haywood and his wife, it was also a reconnection. Mrs Hayward had been brought up in nearby Hawridge so Revd Hayward's appointment to the area has been to familiar ground.

The meeting heard about the plans taking place to re-establish the church at the heart of the community with various services and festivals being planned. The Church has also seen numbers decrease and it is hoped with a renewed engagement with residents and connections with the School that this will encourage people to return to the church.

Event ideas include a pop-up nativity, community cinema and support for after school clubs, all of which are being considered.

Revd Hayward encouraged members of the community to engage with the church and also to offer any assistance in running any of these types of events.

**6. PARISH COUNCIL**

Cllr Fowler gave a brief overview of the Unitary Authority structure and how the Parish Council supports residents on local issues.

**7. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from the public.

**8.** Cllr Fowler thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**The meeting ended at 9.00pm**