

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 3 February 2015, in the Green Tye Mission Hall at 7.30 pm.

*Cllr Mrs S Bannerman
*Cllr A Baxter
*Cllr T Baxter
*Cllr W Bird
*Cllr W Compton (Chairman)

*Cllr S J Godfrey
*Cllr Mrs J Liversage
*Cllr B Morris (Vice Chairman)
*Cllr A J Young

* denotes present.

In attendance: 24 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Carver (EHC) and Cllr McAndrew (HCC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 6 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 6 January 2015 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Broadfield Close

Cllr T Baxter stated that he had sent an email to Circle Anglia requesting an update. However, to date no response had been received. Concerns were also expressed that no report had yet been made public and members felt that a request should now be made for a report to be made available under the Freedom of Information Act.

For the benefit of the parishioners present, Cllr Baxter gave a resume of the events which had taken place.

(ii) Flood Plan

Cllr T Baxter tabled for members' information a copy of the Flood Plan which he had produced in conjunction with Cllr Bird. The estimated total cost to purchase the equipment amounted to £1,300. Members approved the expenditure and Cllr Baxter was authorised to go ahead and purchase the equipment. Members further requested that the contents of the Flood Plan be included on the Council's website.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Morris stated that things were moving fast in planning terms and it was incumbent on the Parish Council to press ahead with undertaking work to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. It was intended to raise the matter at the Annual Parish Meeting with a request for volunteers to come forward to assist. Without a plan in place, the parish would be vulnerable to development of an enormous nature. The process involved in producing a Neighbourhood Plan was time-consuming and costly and could take well over a year to get to the stage whereby it could be ratified by the District Council. Once prepared and approved by the District Council the Plan would be independently examined. Following a satisfactory outcome the final Plan would be put to a referendum of local electors. If 50% of those entitled to vote were in favour, the Local Authority must adopt the Plan.

Cllr Godfrey stated that residents of Windmill Way had received a notice that the Hertfordshire County Council was proposing to adopt Windmill Way and he questioned why the Council was going to such lengths. A general suspicion was that this could open up land at the top of Windmill Way for future development. There was activity at the site with remedial work being undertaken, including hedge cutting and line painting, and concrete markers were being laid.

5. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Neighbourhood Plan

A question was raised as to what resources the Parish Council had available to fund the preparation of the Plan. Cllr Morris stated that the Council had set aside an initial sum of £10,000 and grant aid was available from Government sources.

(ii) Tennis Courts

A resident expressed her concern that, looking back over previous minutes of the Parish Council, there would appear to be some misunderstanding concerning the funding of the tennis courts. It was pointed out that the Parish Council did not provide any subsidy to the Club. The only funds which had been provided were to the Sports Association to meet the cost of grass cutting the recreation ground and insurance on the buildings. It was stated that there would appear to be a clear lack of communication and the relationship between the Sports Association and the Parish Council was not working well. A question was posed as to whether the Parish Council's representatives were reporting back to the Parish Council the discussions and the resulting decisions of the Sports Association.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman reiterated her concerns, which all along had been the lack of access afforded to the public to a facility which for all intents and purposes was being

run as a private members' club. Cllr Morris referred to the 1947 Deed, which specifically referred to the ownership of the recreation ground being vested in the Parish Council.

Cllr Mitchell (Sawbridgeworth Town Council) stated that the Town Council did not provide any funding towards the running costs of any facility in the parish if the general public was denied access. It must be open to the public.

(iii) Walnut Close Development

A resident requested an explanation as to why the proposed development of Walnut Close had not been discussed by the Parish Council and he stated that rumours had it that "permission was expected in March 2015".

Cllr Morris stated that to date no planning application had been submitted to the District Council. Once such application had been received the Parish Council would be formally consulted as a statutory consultee. Cllr Morris stated that of concern was that Marsden Homes was advertising the houses for sale prior to any planning application being submitted, which he stated was very presumptuous.

(iv) Website

A request was made for up-to-date agendas and minutes of all meetings to be posted on the website.

(v) Pavilion

A question was raised as to why the Parish Council was considering raising a loan to fund the expenditure on the pavilion.

In response Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that, as there was a shortfall in the capital funding, taking up a loan would enable the project to go ahead without delay.

(vi) Lighting at the Village Hall

Attention was drawn to the inadequacy of the lighting in the passageway adjacent to the hall. The delay in the operation of the lighting sensor meant that patrons using the passageway in the evening were in darkness for a few minutes until the sensor was operational.

It was agreed to draw this matter to the attention of Mr Peter Appleton.

(vii) Old Gun Turret

Reference was made to the derelict condition of the structure which, it was felt, would be nice to see restored.

The Chairman stated that this matter would be drawn to the attention of the Much Hadham Historical Society.

(viii) Jolly Waggoners

A resident expressed his disappointment that the planning application had been approved and his disgust at the "sham" planning process in that the concerns of the residents, especially the highways issues relative to the application had been completely ignored with the Planning Officer stating that the highways issues were acceptable. In this respect it was felt that the District Council was treating the residents with contempt. It also seemed quite ludicrous that having granted approval for the application a further amended application had been submitted.

It seemed very much that the action in granting permission for the development was a way of blocking residential development on the site, which it was felt would have been preferable and would now allow more houses to be built in the village.

It was felt that the District Council should be congratulated in that the Authority was consistent in totally ignoring the wishes of the Parish.

Cllr A Baxter felt that the Parish Council could now be justified in requesting that the site be cleared up as a matter of urgency.

(ix) Chaldean Estate

Cllr Morris stated that a decision on the proposed development would be taken at the Planning and Management Committee to be held on Wednesday, 4 February 2015, with the officer recommendation being for approval.

Cllr Carver had been conflicted in this matter and the Parish Council's case was being handled by Cllr David Andrews. County Councillor McAndrew was also looking at the papers.

(x) Foxley Nature Reserve

A brief reference was made to this facility which, it was stated, had been part of the planning application and would allow access to the public. It was pointed out that the nature reserve was on private land and would be self-managing.

(xi) Bench - Ash Meadow

Cllr T Baxter stated that he had had a request from a local resident that when the bench was replaced, she be allowed to incorporate a small commemorative plaque.

Members acceded to this request.

(xii) Street Lighting

The Chairman tabled a report on the street lighting faults in the village and he expressed his concern that, despite lighting columns being reported as out of lighting, the information had been removed from the fault reporting portal. This gave the impression that a repair had been undertaken which was not the case. It would seem that as fast as faults were being reported they were being removed without any action being taken.

The Chairman further stated that a parishioner had reported a number of columns out of lighting to Cllr Carver, who had stated that such information had been emailed to the Parish Council. No such emails had been received.

(xiii) Duckling Green Children's Centre, Sawbridgeworth

A short presentation was given by Mrs Carol King (Herts Community NHS Trust). The Centre (funded by the Hertfordshire County Council) had been in operation for 5 years and was open to all children under 5 years of age between the hours of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. A range of services, including Outreach, was provided which aimed at improving parental skills giving support to both parents and carers to ensure children were given a good start in life. The Centre served the areas of Sawbridgeworth, High Wych, Perry Green, Allens Green and Much Hadham. Currently 600 children were registered with 84 coming from Much Hadham. Every effort was being made to publicise the work of the Centre with a view to increasing visitor numbers. Currently the Centre was stand-alone, however from 1 April 2015 it was to be grouped with three Bishop's Stortford Centres with Windhill School being the lead agency.

In concluding her presentation, the Chairman stated that arrangements would be made for an article outlining the work of the Centre to be placed in the Parish magazine. It was also suggested that the website would be a useful means of providing further publicity. Mrs King was thanked for her presentation.

6. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee of 6 January 2015 be approved and the decisions taken be ratified.

7. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Members had been circulated with a copy of the attached report (see Appendix A) compiled by Cllr Bird and specific reference was made to the following:

- Salt bin at the bottom of Broadfield Close - This bin had remained empty and had been subsequently refilled by Cllr A Baxter. Members expressed their gratitude to Cllr Baxter.
- Concerns were expressed that road closures were not being notified to the Parish Council.
- A pothole was still in evidence in Watery Lane which was now of such proportion as to be a safety issue.
- Members were concerned that, like the street lighting reports referred to earlier by the Chairman, highway faults were also being removed from the system without a repair being affected.
- It was reported that the highway was still sinking at the bottom of Stansted Hill.

8. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

Cllr Morris stated that, due to the time of the year, there was nothing of significance to report. However, he reiterated remarks he had made at a previous Parish Council meeting that the Council was extremely lucky in that it had had a considerable amount of money made available to it to undertake remedial work.

In addition, Cllr Morris reported the following:

- At the moment a perceived right of way at the top of Brands Lane had been fenced off allowing no access.
- The bridge at the ford was in a bad state of repair.

9. PAVILION UPDATE

Cllr Mrs Bannerman informed the meeting that three tender documents had been opened in the presence of the designated Councillors with Mr John Clark also being in attendance. The tender prices were as follows:

Associated Insulation	£215,041.45
Ekens	£189,916.03
Glenplan Ltd	£14,280.00

The Glenplan tender, which members agreed to accept, would remain open for consideration for a period of 13 weeks with a build time of 20 weeks following the receipt of a written order. Cllr Godfrey made it clear that Mr John Clark was acting in an independent capacity on behalf of the Council and the work involved was for refurbishment of the building.

Cllr Morris stated that there was a sum of £12,364 due to the Parish Council by way of a Section 106 agreement in respect of the development at Moor Place. He also

requested Cllr Mrs Bannerman to contact the owner to request a possible financial contribution.

With regard to the funding of the project, the Clerk stated that there was no guarantee that the Section 106 sum of £12,364 would be forthcoming. However, should this materialise and, taking into account the amount set aside by way of general reserve and the New Homes Bonus, a loan of approximately £7,000 would be required. Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that an application would be made in respect of this sum in order to ensure that the project was undertaken as quickly as possible. If a loan was not taken up the start could be severely compromised. Having secured the loan it was intended to undertake a marketing strategy involving fund raising from within the village on the lines of a "buying a brick", ie a plaque sponsorship. The sums raised by this method would offset the total of the loan.

Cllr Morris stated that each year both County and District Councillors were allocated funds by way of a locality budget out of which they were at liberty to make grants for whatever cause they felt deserved support. This should be something which the Parish Council should pursue. There was also nothing to stop the Parish Council seeking funding towards the project by way of Section 106 agreements in respect of future developments which might take place in the parish.

RESOLVED that Cllr Mrs Bannerman liaise with the Clerk on seeking to raise the maximum loan required to ensure that the refurbishment project was undertaken as quickly as possible.

10. PARKING

Members had been circulated with a copy of the response to the Hon Treasurer of the Village Hall which had been compiled by Cllr Tony Baxter. To date no response had been received.

11. TENNIS COURTS

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that the tennis courts were on land owned by the Parish Council and it was deplorable that the general public had no access to the courts at any time during the year. She felt very strongly that the Tennis Club should be told to open the courts up to the public for at least 2 hours per day during the school holidays.

The general feeling was that the Parish Council should not appear dictatorial in this matter and that a meeting should be convened with representatives of the Tennis Club to discuss the Parish Council's desire for the courts to be open to the parishioners who were not Club members with recognition that this in no way would diminish the existing private club already in operation.

Note: It was noted that the next ordinary meeting of the Sports Association was scheduled for 26 February 2015 and the AGM for 23 April 2015.

12. DUCKLING GREEN CHILDREN'S CENTRE, SAWBRIDGEWORTH

This matter had been discussed under 'Residents' comments'.

13. WAR MEMORIAL

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that work was required to be undertaken to the war memorial to repair the brick and flint wall and to address the pavers which were lifting.

Members agreed that the work be undertaken up to a value of £500. However, should this sum be exceeded then the work should be put out to tender.

14. VILLAGE FETE COMMITTEE

Concerns were expressed that the Parish Council had never been asked to get involved with the workings of the Fete Committee. It was felt that an approach should be made to the Committee in order to open up a dialogue with a view to ascertaining how the Parish Council could become involved.

15. TELEPHONE BOX - TOWER HILL

Mrs Bannerman stated that once the refurbishment of the pavilion had taken place, arrangements could be made to relocate the telephone box to a position near the pavilion. It was then the intention to provide a defibrillator to be installed in the box and for the box to be lit.

Members were quick to scotch any rumours that the Station Road box was to be re-sited to Perry Green. The Council had no intention in this regard. With regard to the Station Road box it was agreed for an electrician to make a visit to ensure the adequacy of the lighting.

16. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts as set out in the attached statement (see Appendix B) be approved and be duly authorised for payment.

(ii) Financial Statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached statement (see Appendix C) be received.

17. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

- 8 -

18. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Village Hall Management Committee.

- Painting of street lighting columns in the High Street.
- Review of Standing Orders.
- Clerk's remuneration.
- Update on the re-naming of Kettle Green Road.
- Station Road telephone box.

19. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, 3 March 2015, at 7.30 pm in the Much Hadham Village Hall

20. CLERK'S REMUNERATION

Deferred until the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45 pm.