

MINUTES of the **Much Hadham Parish Council** meeting held on Tuesday, 3 March 2015, in the Much Hadham Village 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 Godfrey

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 3 February 2015 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Broadfield Close

Cllr Baxter stated that both he and Cllr Mrs Bannerman had had a meeting with Circle Anglia and they had been informed that no further action was contemplated and that there was now no case to answer. There had been some professional shortcomings which had resulted in three members of staff leaving their employment.

With regard to the allegation of abuse, Cllr Baxter stated that he was satisfied that the issue had now been fully resolved and that the residents felt more secure, especially as those members of staff had been removed.

With regard to the recent issue of an Asbo by Circle Anglia against a resident, the Police had confirmed that as far as they were concerned there had been no reason for issuing the Asbo.

A concern had been raised that Circle Anglia might be conflicted in the possible development which might come forward to the rear of Broadfield Close.

Cllr Baxter stated that there were concerns that the field to the rear of Wheatcroft could be opened up for potential development to accommodate approximately 249 houses. As there could be no access onto Kettle Green Road the only access would be through Broadfield Close.

(ii) Flood Plan

Cllr Baxter referred to the Flood Plan which he had made available to members at the last meeting and he confirmed that the equipment had been purchased for approximately £1,000 as agreed by the Council. With regard to housing the equipment this matter would be referred to the next meeting of the Sports Association.

5. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Parish Council Protocol

The Chairman clarified the position regarding members of the public engaging in discussion during the meeting of the Council. He stated that officially members of the public were not allowed to speak during the Parish Council meeting. However, matters of concern could be raised under "Residents' Comments". In addition, at the discretion of the Council, Standing Orders could be suspended to allow discussion on any matter relevant to an agenda item if it was deemed of significant importance.

(ii) Broadfield Way/Close

A resident expressed his concern regarding any use of Broadfield Way as a means of gaining access to any potential development to the rear of Broadfield. The residents of Broadfield Close were mostly elderly and the highway was totally inadequate to take any additional volume of traffic.

(iii) Damage to verges - Green Tye/Perry Green

Mrs Wake (Henry Moore Foundation) referred to the damage to the grass verges in Green Tye and Perry Green which were causing grave concern to the local residents and to the Parish Council. Mrs Wait wished to assure the Parish Council that the HMF was equally concerned with the damage being caused and was in discussion with the contractors on this matter.

The meeting was informed that contained within the planning approval for the development was a highways condition setting out two routes which should be used by vehicles accessing the site (one route for 15 ton vehicles and one for other vehicles). What would appear to be happening was all vehicles were using the non-15 ton route, which contributed to the current problem. An assurance was given that the verges at Snells Corner would be rectified. It was further appreciated that the fault lay with the drivers and, if there were further violations, then members of the public were asked, if possible, to obtain the vehicle's licence number and to contact HMF who would seek to address any problems. Arrangements were being made for a video camera record to be taken this week

Mrs Wake confirmed that she would be meeting with Cllr Bird within the next few days to reassess the current situation.

(iv) Broadband Speed

Concerns were raised with regard to the broadband speed in Much Hadham and to the fact that the Much Hadham exchange was not part of the second programme to roll out the superfast broadband connection. Cllr Morris stated that it was his understanding that there were no plans for the inclusion of East Herts in the roll out programme and the only course of action was to make representations to the Herfordshire County Council and Mark Prisk, MP, regarding the inefficiency of the service.

(v) Proposed development - Millers Way

The Chairman introduced Mr Lake, DLA Town Planning, who had been asked by his clients to undertake a feasibility study into the possibility of developing the land to the north west of Millers Way to accommodate five dwellings. Mr Lake had come to the meeting to give general information only to the public at this stage. His visit was not a consultation exercise. Mr Lake gave a general outline of the proposed scheme to the meeting.

Cllr Morris stated that Much Hadham was a Category I village. The East Herts Draft Local Plan referred to Much Hadham providing 10% of its housing stock, which equated to 89 houses all of which were to be provided in the village. No development had been earmarked for either Green Tye or Perry Green. The 89 houses were in excess of the 49 to which Cllr Carver had referred on numerous occasions. It was disturbing that none of the development currently underway or proposed would count against this figure.

Cllr Morris reiterated his concern that the Parish Council had not embarked on producing a Neighbourhood Plan which he felt was terribly important in setting out where the Parish Council would wish any further residential dwellings to be sited. However, one of the reasons for the delay was that the District Council was behind schedule with the adoption of its current draft Local Plan. Without this in place the Parish Council would not have a benchmark on which to work.

Cllr Baxter gave a potted history on the former coal yard site and he referred to a Section 52 agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 which had been signed on 10 February 1987 by East Herts District Council, Mr B Norman, Mr R Norman and the British Railway Board, which specifically stated that the owners of the site and their successors in title would not be permitted to erect buildings within the site to the north west of the coal yard (ie the site the subject of the proposals).

Cllr Baxter expressed his deep concern regarding what had been taking place on the land over the preceding month and the first indication he had had of the activity had been the removal of mature trees and natural wildlife habitat. Having raised the matter with Cllr Carver, he had been informed that Cllr Carver knew nothing about any proposals to develop the land. Cllr Baxter stated that this was a prime wildlife site and one of the very few natural woodlands on the western side of the village. He felt that it was deplorable that there should be a presumption that development was going ahead.

Mr Lake confirmed that he had not been made aware of the existence of a Section 52 agreement on the land. The land had been put forward under the Strategic Land Assessment merely as a potential area for consideration for residential development. Mr Lake confirmed that he would come back to the Parish Council on the legality of the Section 52 agreement and he was very desirous of working with the Council.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that the Parish Council had been led to believe that a tree survey had been carried out which would appear not have been the case.

The site was situated in a Landscape Conservation Area which had not been indicated as such in the emerging Local Plan. It was of grave concern, not only that the site was being proposed for development, but the fact that this could potentially open up the land, approximately 30 acres, to the north, by providing an access way to a potential development in excess of 200 houses.

In conclusion, Mr Lake was thanked for his attendance.

6. PLANNING

(i) Minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee held on 3 February 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee held on 3 February 2015 be received.

7. HIGHWAYS MATTERS - GENERAL

Members had been circulated with a report compiled by Cllr Bird (see Appendix A) the contents of which were noted.

No further highways matters were raised.

8. PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP

No matters were raised under this item.

9. PAVILION UPDATE

Cllr Mrs Bannerman confirmed that the loan application had been forwarded to the Department of Communities and Local Government and a response was awaited. No action could be taken in letting the contract until confirmation had been received that the loan had been agreed. However, should approval be received before the next Parish Council meeting, members would be duly notified and their approval sought to formally award the contract.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman referred to a concern which had been raised regarding the chosen contractor, GlenPlan, and she assured members that John Clark was undertaking due diligence in this respect.

The Clerk referred members to the minutes of the previous meeting and he confirmed that an application for £80,000 had been submitted and not, as recorded in the previous minutes, £7,000. There was still the uncertainty regarding the Section 106 capital payment of £12,364 and a decision was still awaited as to whether this sum was to be made available for the Much Hadham project. On the assumption that this money might not be forthcoming and to facilitate an early start date for the contract, the full shortfall ie contract value £14,280 less Parish Council reserve/New Homes Bonus £4,280 which equalled £80,000, had been submitted.

10. KETTLE GREEN ROAD RE-NAMING

The Clerk confirmed that an email had been forwarded to the East Herts Council on 28 February seeking an update on the Council's application for re-designation. To date no response had been received.

Members expressed concern in the delay, especially in view of the fact that the cheque had been banked by the District Council. The Clerk was requested to seek a response as a matter of urgency.

11. STATION ROAD TELEPHONE BOX

Cllr Mrs Bannerman confirmed that arrangements had been made for an electrician to visit the site and to carry out electrical repairs. Once this work had been completed the damaged glass would be replaced.

12. FORMER BR STATION YARD - MH DEVELOPMENT

This matter had been fully debated under "Residents' Comments".

13. DOG BIN ON THE RECREATION GROUND - EMPTYING

Members had been circulated with a list of the locations of the dog bins in the parish noting that the bin on the recreation ground had been notified to the contractor. However, concerns were expressed that the bin was still not being emptied and members felt that this matter should be drawn to the attention of the District Council.

14. TENNIS COURTS

Cllr Mrs Liversage referred members to the notes that she had prepared of the meeting held with the Sports Association on 26 February 2015. There had been a reference at the meeting to the Tennis Club and a debate had taken place on instructions that the Parish Council could/could not issue to the Sports Association. There was a feeling that in order to move this matter forward a meeting be convened between the Parish Council and the Tennis Club as soon as possible. Such meeting should be between the Parish Council and the Chairman of the Tennis Club. The Chairman confirmed that this matter was being progressed.

15. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

Members had been circulated with a copy of the draft Model Standing Orders.

The following amendments were made:

Rules of Debate:	para t: "not exceed <i>three</i> minutes"
Meetings generally:	para f: "not exceed <i>twenty</i> minutes"
Meetings generally:	para g: "not exceed <i>three</i> minutes"
Meetings generally:	para w: "period of <i>two and half</i> hours"
Committees and sub-committees:	item v: "Proper Officer <i>three</i> days"
Previous resolutions:	para a: "written notice by at least <i>three</i> councillors"

Having given effect to the above it was RESOLVED that the Standing Orders as amended be adopted.

Note: To note that Cllr Carver and Cllr McAndrew entered the meeting during the discussion on the above matter.

16. BROADFIELD CLOSE - POSSIBLE GRANT AID

Cllr Mrs Bannerman requested the Parish Council to consider grant aiding two projects to enhance the quality of life of the residents of Broadfield Close.

- (i) A start-up sum to assist the residents in providing a sum of money for a known person (Ms E J Simpson) to restart exercise classes, which used to take place sometime ago. Amount requested: £50
- (ii) An amount to pay for vegetable plants which residents would use in the communal vegetable garden. Amount requested: £50

Cllr Morris was a little concerned that the Parish Council and the Council Tax Payers were providing a financial contribution to provide a facility, which he felt should be provided by Circle Anglia. Mrs Bannerman confirmed that the Housing Association had been approached and a negative response had been received.

RESOLVED that a sum of £50 be agreed for each project. In respect of item (i) this was to be a one-off payment.

Cllr Morris stated that an approach should also be made to the Church's Ecumenical Council with a view to securing a contribution from the Hardship Fund. Cllr Bannerman agreed to follow up this suggestion.

Members recognised that there might be an approach from the Ferndale residents who might wish to participate in similar activities, in which case members agreed that they would consider such requests on their merits.

Cllr Morris requested that an assurance be obtained from Circle Anglia that they were happy with these arrangements and he asked that written confirmation be obtained. A suggestion was also made that the question of possible match funding be raised.

17. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts as shown on the attached statement (see Appendix B) be duly authorised for payment.

With regard to cheque number 526 payable to T Fuller in the sum of £348 for tree surgery at Green Tye, the Clerk was requested to notify members of the circumstances surrounding the above payment.

(ii) Financial Statement

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

18. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

19. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Village Hall Management Committee.
- Painting of street lighting columns in the High Street.

20. DATES OF MEETINGS

(i) April meeting

Arrangements were made for the next meeting to be held on Tuesday, 21 April 2015, at 7.30 pm. The Chairman stated that neither the Village Hall nor the Green Tye Mission Hall was available and, therefore, a venue would need to be found. Suggestions made were the school or the Bowls Club.

(ii) May Meetings (Annual Meetings)

The Clerk informed members that the date of the May meetings would need to be altered from 5 May to 19 May 2015. These meetings would take place in the Much Hadham Village Hall.

21. CLERK'S REMUNERATION

This matter was deferred to the conclusion of the Planning Sub-Committee.

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