

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 4 August 2015, at 7.30 pm in the Green Tye Mission Hall.

Cllr Mrs S Bannerman (Vice Chairman)
*Cllr T Baxter (Chairman)
*Cllr S J Godfrey
*Cllr I Hunt

*Cllr M P Keogh
Cllr R D Key
*Cllr Mrs J Liversage
*Cllr A J Young
Vacancy

* denotes present.

In attendance: 16 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs Bannerman, Cllr Key, Cllr Devonshire (EHDC) and Cllr McAndrew (HCC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

The Chairman informed members that ten electors had submitted by the deadline of 24 July 2015 a request for an election to fill the vacancy in the office of Councillor.

The deadline for the receipt of nominations would be Thursday, 27 August 2015, with a poll taking place on 24 September 2015 should there be more than one nomination.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 July 2015 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

5. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Public seat – Ash Meadow

To note that no action had been taken to erect a memorial plaque on the public seat.

(ii) Footpath at end of Two Bridges

Cllr Godfrey stated that he would check to see whether the footpath was still overgrown.

6. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Telephone Box – Tower Hill

A question was raised as to whether a decision had been taken with regard to the future of the telephone box.

Cllr Godfrey stated that it had been the intention of the Council to re-position the box onto the recreation field once the refurbishment of the pavilion had been completed.

The Chairman agreed to ascertain the cost of re-siting the box.

(ii) HMF proposals

A resident referred to the HMF's proposals relating to the green at Perry Green of which the Perry Green and Green Tye Preservation Society had only recently been made aware and which had afforded no time for public consultation with the local residents. In addition, to the proposals on which the Society had a number of issues, concerns were expressed regarding the tight deadline of 24 August 2015 in which to respond and the likely implications consequent upon the deadline not being met.

The Chairman also expressed his concern that the Parish Council had only recently been made aware of the proposals despite an assurance made at the last meeting of the Parish Council held on 7 July 2015 that details of the proposals would be made available to the members shortly after the meeting.

In order for a meaningful response to be submitted to HMF, the Chairman suggested that the Preservation Society arrange for local residents to be made aware of the proposals and that an early meeting be convened between members of the Parish Council and representatives of the Society to formulate a response.

A resident of Perry Green expressed his concern that, despite an assurance being given by HMF that local residents would be kept fully informed of all developments relating to the Foundation (current developments and related matters), no communication had been received whatsoever regarding the proposals now being proffered by HMF.

(iii) Minutes of meetings

A resident expressed concern that the minutes of the meetings held in June and July did not appear on the website.

The Chairman gave an assurance that this matter would be addressed as quickly as possible.

7. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee meeting held on 7 July 2015 be received.

8. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Highways

Cllr Hunt read out the contents of the attached report (see Appendix A).

Cllr Young referred to the following matters:

- Concerns had been expressed by a resident of Malting Lane regarding the speed of traffic, and the danger exacerbated by the overgrown signage along the lane. The Hertfordshire County Council had indicated that the problem of the signage would be addressed. However, the speeding traffic problems were another matter, which would require a more long-term solution.
- Reference was made to the matter raised by a resident at the last meeting suggesting that the de-restriction sign at the bottom of Bromley Lane be re-positioned to a point near the Ash Valley Golf Club. This matter had been raised with the Hertfordshire County Council. However, the current criteria for such a proposal had not been met. However, there might be a case to be made once the development on the former HCC depot had been completed, when the matter could be re-appraised.
- Concerns had been expressed with regard to the speed of traffic through the village and the possibility of the introduction of traffic calming measures. However, the Hertfordshire County Council would take no action at the present time in changing the signage unless there was evidence of accidents having taken place in the area. In order to be able to provide a case in the future, a request was made that parishioners report on all accidents/incidents which occurred, preferably backed up with photographic evidence.

(ii) Parish Paths Partnership

Cllr Godfrey reported on the following matters:

- A complaint had been received from a resident that the litter bin situated at the corner of her property had been damaged and was causing water penetration to her property. It was agreed to ask Cllr Key to undertake an investigation. Cllr Godfrey agreed to provide Cllr Key with details of the complaint.
- An email had been received from a resident drawing attention to the fact that the developer of the Moor Place estate had built a cart-lodge on part of FP11, thus denying the free flow access along the right of way. It was questioned whether the developer might need to apply for a footpath diversion to regularise the situation.
- A report had been made to Environment Agency concerning a blockage of the river near the ford. Cllr Godfrey was happy to report that the matter had been actioned promptly and the blockage had been removed.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hunt read out the contents of the attached report (see Appendix B).

The Chairman wished that it be placed on record his and the Council's gratitude to both Cllr Hunt and Cllr Young for the excellent initial start that had been made in progressing the proposals for initiating a Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED that Cllr Hunt be given delegated powers to incur expenditure up to £300 on the purchase of promotional material.

(iv) Other

Cllr Keogh informed members that the Pavilion Committee was working towards introducing children's football training sessions in early September and various items of start-up equipment would be required (storage facilities, goals, flags, etc), which would cost in the region of £1,200.

RESOLVED that a sum of up to £1,200 be made available.

9. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

In the absence of both Cllr Devonshire (EHDC) and Cllr McAndrew (HCC) no reports were made available.

10. PAVILION UPDATE

(i) Building progress

Members were informed that building work was progressing very well and in all probability the work might be completed on or before 20 August. The Chairman expressed his pleasure at the quality of the build. He also referred to a very generous donation of £5,000 which had been received from the Chaldean Estate Charitable Trust towards the cost of the pavilion for which the Parish Council was extremely grateful.

(ii) Pavilion Committee

Members were informed that two meetings of the Pavilion Committee had taken place with a further meeting planned for two weeks time.

The Chairman confirmed that the Pavilion Committee would report directly to the Parish Council.

11. MUCH HADHAM PAROCHIAL CHARITIES

The Chairman informed members that a vacancy had arisen on the above Charity with a request having been received for the Parish Council to consider appointing one of its members.

Prior to this matter being considered by the Parish Council, the Chairman stated that an invitation would be extended to Mrs Alison Silley to attend the next meeting when the matter could be fully discussed.

Therefore, it was RESOLVED that the matter be deferred until the next meeting.

12. VILLAGE GREEN – PERRY GREEN

To note that this matter had been covered under “Residents’ Comments”.

13. GRANT APPLICATION TO EAST HERTS COUNCIL – MUCH HADHAM VILLAGE HALL

Members were informed that the floor of the green room would require extensive repairs and re-laying due to water penetration. Cllr Key had obtained a quotation to undertake the work in the sum of £10,150 and he had suggested that this would seem an ideal time to submit a grant application to East Herts Council to defray the expenditure.

RESOLVED that the Clerk arrange for a grant application to be submitted to East Herts Council.

14. VILLAGE HALL PARKING AND SIGNAGE

The Chairman informed members that he, together with Cllr Mrs Bannerman and Cllr Key, had had a very positive meeting with members of the Village Hall Committee.

Briefly the following points had been discussed:

- General concerns regarding the parking issues to the rear of the hall.
- Repairs required to the building, soffits and fascia to the exterior and the repairs required to the floor of the green room.
- Matters of a general nature, including the relationship between the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council both financial and managerial.
- The need to agree on a firm plan of the work to be undertaken to the hall in the long term.

The Chairman stated that the dialogue afforded by the meeting had been very helpful in making each party aware of the other party's points of view. It was recognised and appreciated that the village hall played a vital role in the sound welfare of the Parish and complemented the pavilion.

The Village Hall Committee had done a commendable job in looking after the village hall for which the Parish Council was extremely grateful.

The Chairman stated that he was looking forward to working with the Village Hall Committee and he was heartened by the apparent willingness to work together in the future.

15. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENTS

Members had been circulated with a copy of the current risk management assessments which the Clerk stated should be reviewed annually. The External Auditor had raised the matter having ascertained that the Council had not undertaken a review during the financial year ending 31 March 2015. It had been pointed out that failure to carry out a review would be in breach of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011.

RESOLVED that this matter be deferred.

Cllr Hunt was requested to undertake a review and present his recommendations to the next meeting of the Council.

16. EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Clerk stated that it was incumbent on the Parish Council to periodically review the position of the Internal Audit and whether they were happy to continue with the present Auditor's services.

Members were referred to the Internal Audit reports which had accompanied the annual financial accounts, which they felt to be very comprehensive and very informative.

RESOLVED that members were more than happy to approve the continuation of the services of the Internal Auditor.

17. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Members were referred to the attached recommendations of the Internal Auditor (see Appendix C).

The Clerk confirmed that the following items remained to be actioned:

- R1 Amendments to both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- R4 Review of Financial and Operational Risk Assessments.
- R5 Review of burial fees.

18. SMALLER AUTHORITIES TRANSPARENCY CODE

The Clerk informed members that as the Council's annual turnover exceeded £25,000 the Code did not apply to the Much Hadham Parish Council.

19. LITTER BIN – CORNER OF MALTING LANE

To note that this matter had been raised earlier under item 8 (ii) Parish Paths Partnership

20. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts as set out on the attached statement (see Appendix D) be duly authorised for payment.

(ii) Financial statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached financial statement (see Appendix E) be noted.

The Clerk referred members to the current financial situation and to the overdrawn position and he stated that further sums were still due on the contract, together with architect's fees. However, following the generous donation of £5,000 from the Chaldean Estate, together with the VAT to be reclaimed on the capital payment made to date, the financial position would not give any rise for concern.

The Clerk further stated that in addition to the financial information given to members it would be useful to have a projection of the total financial situation of the Council as at the end of the financial year (31 March 2016). To this end Cllr Hunt had offered to assist the Clerk in the preparation of the necessary information.

21. URGENT BUSINESS

(ii) Stop Harlow North

The Chairman referred to an email received from Mr Morris in which reference had been made to the proposed development for Harlow North and to a request that any Neighbourhood Plan for Much Hadham should take account of the effect this intensive level of development would have on the Parish.

(ii) Stop Stansted Expansion

The Chairman stated that Stop Stansted Expansion was continuing with its campaign to ensure that no future expansion took place at Stansted Airport and that the Parish Council would continue to lend its support.

22. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Parish Council's grant policy.
- Pension Regulator – workplace pension scheme.
- Much Hadham Parochial Charities.
- Risk Management Assessments.

23. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, 1 September 2015, at 7.30 pm in the Much Hadham Village Hall.