

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 1 September 2015, at 7.30 pm in the Much Hadham Village 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: 20 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Devonshire, EHC, (arrived late) and Cllr McAndrew, HCC.

2. PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

Members were informed that, as two nominations had been received by the District Council, an election would take place on 24 September 2015. One of the candidates had subsequently indicated that he wished to withdraw his nomination. However, as the formal notice had not been received by the District Council before 27 August the legal process was such that a contested election would have to take place.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 August 2015 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Residents' Comments, item (iii) Minutes of meetings

The Chairman confirmed that the minutes of the meetings held in June and July of this year were now on the website.

6. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Planning – Two-storey side extension at Dell Cottage

Concerns were expressed that the owner of the above property had built over the public footpath and, despite this matter having been reported to the Herts County Council and the East Herts Council, no action had been taken.

Cllr Godfrey stated that he had been in discussion with Nicholas Maddex, HCC Rights of Way Officer, who was pursuing with the owner the submission of an application for a footpath diversion order.

(ii) Elections

A resident stated that, despite the costs which would be incurred in the forthcoming contested election, this was the price of democracy and she felt that it was only right that the Parish Council should consist, whenever possible, of elected members and not co-opted members.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that, whilst it might be desirable to embrace the democratic process, it had proved increasingly difficult in the past to persuade people to put their names forward as candidates despite advertising in the Parish magazine and on social media.

(iii) Pavilion – Finance/Refurbishment

A question was raised as to whether the public had been asked to contribute to the financial outlay on the pavilion which, it was stated, was tantamount to £5 per head of the population of the Parish. The Chairman confirmed that the full financial implications of the pavilion refurbishment had been discussed on numerous occasions by the previous Parish Council.

A further question was raised as to how the Parish Council was able to secure planning approval for the installation of velux windows in the pavilion. The Chairman stated that planning approval for any development was the prerogative of the Planning Officers/Development Control Committee of the District Council where the Parish Council had no involvement. However, as the windows were facing away from the road, would not cause an overlook and the structure was not a listed building, these factors would have been a material considerations in the decision reached.

(iv) Re-painting of lamp columns

In view of the very high cost, a request was made for the Parish Council not to embark on painting the lamp columns as from a visual inspection it would appear that a number merely required washing down.

The Chairman stated that this matter would be re-visited.

(v) Verge – Church Lane

A resident of Church Lane enquired as to the delineation of ownership of the verge in the vicinity of the church.

Cllr Hunt agreed to meet with the resident to discuss this matter.

(vi) Pavilion

A resident congratulated the members of the Parish Council on the very successful refurbishment work which had been carried out on the pavilion and which, she stated, would be of great benefit to the whole of the Parish. The Chairman was also thanked for the talk he had given at the opening ceremony.

(vii) HMF Proposals/Highways issues

A resident reported on a meeting which had been held between members of the Perry Green and Green Tye Society and the Henry Moore Foundation in which a number of issues had been raised. Concerns had continued to be expressed regarding the damage to the verges which HMF had confirmed would be addressed. New landscaping plans were in progress for the northern part of the village green at Perry Green which would be submitted to East Herts Council for approval and which would leave the northern section untouched. It had also been mentioned that there was a boundary issue on the Common Land which would need to be agreed between the Parish Council and HMF. The Perry Green and Green Tye Society had expressed a desire to look after the village green, but would need the approval of the Parish Council before proceeding.

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council had always been fully supportive of the wishes of the villagers and it would continue to be so provided the proposals were within the legal framework. The Chairman requested that any proposals be submitted to the Parish Council.

Note: Cllr Devonshire entered the meeting.

With regard to reparations, there would appear to be an impasse. However, it was hoped that full and proper repairs would be carried out at Snell's Corner, Tyler's Corner and the green at Perry Green. In this regard it was hoped to engage with Cllr McAndrew with a view to expediting the repairs necessary. However, the suggestion by HMF to allocate £5,000 towards the repairs by laying turf did not in the view of the Perry Green and Green Tye Society constitute a full and proper repair and kerbing might be more appropriate. The Chairman stated that it was recognised that kerbing would be more costly, but not exorbitant. It was hoped that this would not be an issue in any future discussions between the residents and HMF, which should proceed initially to arrive at a solution as it was unclear as to the merits of kerbing.

Cllr Young stated that a statement from the village was required to formally set out the requirements prior to any formal meeting with Cllr McAndrew and Ringway. Prior to this it would be advisable for a private meeting to be convened to establish precisely what was required and what could be actioned.

7. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee held on 7 July 2015 be received and the actions taken be ratified.

8. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Highways

Cllr Young stated that the Parish Council was not responsible for the maintenance of the highways and footways, which were the responsibility of the County Council and the District Council.

- Perry Green/HMF – The Parish Council was committed to working with HMF and a meeting had recently taken place to review the various problems which had been raised at previous Parish Council meetings.
- Fault reporting – It was emphasised that, despite some highway problems being perceived as relatively minor, it was well worth the effort of reporting such faults which would be investigated.
- ‘Highways together’ – At a recent highways meeting it had been learned that under the ‘highways together’ programme it was now possible for Parish Councils to undertake minor highways work. A letter of enablement would be required in order for this matter to be pursued. It was stressed that there would be no financial recompense for any work which the Parish Council might undertake under this scheme. Nevertheless the merits would be investigated.
- Malting Lane – A meeting had taken place with a resident of Malting Lane on the question of the difficulties being experienced in parking. It was hoped that suitable signage would help to alleviate the majority of the problems being encountered. It was envisaged that the signs would be erected within two weeks.
- The Ford – To note that the County Council had agreed to replace the sign at the ford and to erect advance warning signs.
- Kettle Green Lane – Whilst the change from road to lane had been agreed, it was still evident that the road sign indicating Kettle Green Road was still in-situ. There had been a misunderstanding as to which authority was responsible for providing the sign and for discharging the cost. This matter had now been satisfactorily resolved in that Cllr McAndrew had agreed to arrange funding from his locality budget.
- Walnut Close – New signs had been agreed and would be erected at this location.
- Cllr Young stated that Parish Councillors did report on highways matters which they had personally observed. However for additional information to be reported, there was a heavy reliance on parishioners to provide as much information on highways problems as possible no matter how minor.

- Lamp post 59 – Cllr Hunt referred to correspondence received from the Hertfordshire County Council which confirmed that, not only was the lantern required to be replaced, but upon inspection the whole lamppost would need to be changed. Two costed options had been provided which ranged from £3,200 to £4,100. The Chairman requested that Cllr Hunt liaise with Cllr Devonshire with a view to ascertaining whether there would be outside funding available to provide for this work.
- Broadfield Way – Concerns had been expressed regarding the parking in the pinch points. This was a matter which had been taken up with Karen Broad. Unfortunately, there would appear to be no resources available to target this recurring problem.
- Fly-tipping – A resident referred to the amount of straw which had been deposited on the highway from farm vehicles. Advice had been received that this constituted fly-tipping and the matter had been passed to the District Council to action. Cllr Devonshire confirmed that he would also arrange to take the matter up with the District Council.
- Broadfield Way – A resident referred to the speed of traffic in Broadfield Way and the amount of indiscriminate off-road parking. This constituted a traffic hazard to the residents of Broadfield Way from the practice of vehicles parking on the footway thus forcing elderly people and mothers with pushchairs onto the road. Cllr Young agreed that he would take this matter up with the resident raising this concern.

(ii) Parish Paths Partnership

Cllr Godfrey reported on the following:

- FP33 – Collapsed stile replaced.
- FP23 – Vegetation cleared.
- Bridleway 28 – Request had been made to clear the fallen tree.
- FP47 – Repairs to the bridge had been requested.
- Kettle Green Lane/Dell Cottage – Nicholas Maddex was pursuing the footpath diversion order.
- FP22 – Members had been circulated with details concerning the diversion of FP22 near St Andrew’s Church of England Primary School. As the possibility of a footpath diversion had been raised with the previous Parish Council, who had raised no objections, members confirmed that they also had no objections.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hunt informed members that he had purchased two domain names for the Neighbourhood Plan website (muchhadhamp.co.uk and muchhadhamp.org.uk) and to date approximately £370 had been spent on administrative costs. Members had been circulated with draft terms of reference and the constitution for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (see Appendix A). The terms of reference document set out the purpose and aims of the Steering Group and was an enabling document. The constitution was the document that gave the Steering Group its structure and rules of operation.

RESOLVED that both documents be formally adopted by the Parish Council.

(iv) Other – Village Hall

Cllr Key reported on a recent meeting held with the Village Hall Managers which had reviewed the proposed work to the soffits and facias and guttering as previously reported. Following an investigation it had been ascertained that the only work required was the replacement of the gutters at a cost of approximately £370.

Of more concern was the condition of the Green Room floor which, because of long term water penetration, now required major remedial work. Two quotations had been received to carry out the work in the sum of £13,000 and £10,000. As previously reported a grant application would be made to East Herts Council with a view to securing grant aid towards the cost of the work. There were other issues which would require attention in due course, ie the men's toilets and the drainage to the hall.

The Chairman stated that the Village Hall was the Parish Council's largest asset and in the past the Parish Council had relied on the Management Committee to carry out, not only the administrative functions, ie bookings etc, but also to be responsible for the structural repairs. The Parish Council was now trying to work with the Management Committee with a view to coming to a satisfactory and amicable solution on the delineation of responsibility for Village Hall. It was pointed out that ultimately, as the Parish Council was the owner of the building it was legally responsible for the structure.

9. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

In the absence of Cllr McAndrew, no County Councillor report was forthcoming.

Cllr Devonshire reported on the following:

- The East Herts Council's Executive Committee had confirmed the designation for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- New signage had been agreed for various locations in the parish. However, one of the signs near the Crown and Falcon could not be included because it was to be sited where a Parish Council litter bin was in-situ. Cllr Godfrey stated that the owner of the property adjacent to the bin had requested its removal. Cllr Godfrey agreed to liaise with Cllr Devonshire on both the relocation of the bin and the erection of the sign.
- Having discussed the replacement of lamp column number 59, Tower Hill, with Cllr G McAndrew, it had been established that unfortunately there would be no money forthcoming from the County Council to finance the work.
- The gulleys near Hinkleys and Nimble House would be cleansed and the accumulation of debris in the High Street would be addressed.
- Cllr Devonshire commended the Parish Council on all the hard work undertaken in connection with the pavilion refurbishment.
- Cllr Devonshire was fully in support of the proposed diversion of FP22.

10. PAVILION UPDATE

(i) Building progress

Cllr Mrs Bannerman confirmed that the building work was now completed and the project was within budget.

(ii) Pavilion general

There had been a good turnout at the fete, which had gone well with lots of complimentary comments having been received regarding the refurbished pavilion. A great deal of interest had been shown in the pavilion and many bookings had been taken. Members were reminded that bookings could be taken in the conventional way or on-line.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman had spoken to Claire Pullen, East Herts Council, and she was hopeful that the Committee might qualify for a small capital project grant to fit out the pavilion with furniture (circular mobile tables and fold-away chairs). The maximum seating was 40. At present no kitchen had been provided.

Fund raising at the fete had gone extremely well with the “buy a brick” being very popular with a total of £1,500 having been raised and the “Go for me” campaign had raised a total of £404 with further sums expected. A donation of £4,449 had been received from Play Much Hadham with a very generous donation of £5,000 having been received from the Chaldean Charitable Trust.

The management of the pavilion would now be under the auspices of a Pavilion Committee directly responsible to the Parish Council. A caretaker, booking secretary and treasurer had already been appointed, the funding of which would be met from the Pavilion Committee funds.

Unfortunately, one football team had been lost. However, there was still a Saturday (under 11s) children’s team. Cricket was also mentioned as being a sport which it was felt should be encouraged and this would be pursued.

The Committee was committed to ensuring that the pavilion provided a much needed facility for the Parish and every effort would be made to utilise fully the facilities offered by the recreation ground.

Cllr Devonshire stated that he would pursue with officers of the District Council the payment to be made to the Parish Council under the Section 106 agreement.

Members confirmed that it was their intention that all of the Section 106 money, when received, would be utilised in reducing the current £80,000 PWLB loan.

11. MUCH HADHAM PAROCHIAL CHARITIES - VACANCY

RESOLVED that this matter be deferred to the next meeting.

12. VILLAGE GREEN – PERRY GREEN – HMF PROPOSALS

To note that this matter had been discussed under “Residents’ comments”.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT ASESMENTS

Cllr Hunt had circulated to members a draft management assessment in respect of the operational and financial risks. This had been occasioned by a qualified report having been issued by the External Auditor as being a requirement to comply with the Audit and Financial Regulations. Cllr Hunt stated that he would need to discuss the content in depth with the Clerk and he asked that a review of the assessments be discussed at the November meeting.

Members were happy to accede to this request.

14. INTERNAL AUDITOR’S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Clerk referred members to the enclosed schedule of recommendations (see Appendix B) and he gave an update on the following:

R1 and R5	To be actioned.
R3	Noted.
R2, R4 and R6	Actioned.

A further report would be provided at a future meeting following action being taken in respect of R1 and R5.

15. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS, FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND CASH FLOW

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

(ii) Financial Statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached schedule (see Appendix D) be received.

(iii) Cash Flow Statement

The Clerk informed members that both he and Cllr Hunt had reviewed the Council’s finances and he confirmed that a cash flow projection would suggest that the Parish Council’s finances were more than sufficient to ensure that no problems would be encountered during the remainder of this year and that a reasonable balance would be achievable at the end of the financial year.

16. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS 2014/2015/EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

The following matters had been raised by the External Auditor:

(i) Additions acquired during the year not included in the Annual Return, namely:

Flood Plan equipment	£909
New gates on the Recreation Ground	<u>£1,425</u>
	<u>£2,334</u>

The Clerk confirmed that the total fixed assets currently recorded on the 2014/2015 Annual Return (£206,471) would be restated on the 2015/2016 Annual Return. Members confirmed the Clerk's proposal.

(ii) Risk Assessments

The Council had not undertaken a risk assessment during the financial year 2014/2015, which constituted a breach of Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

Cllr Hunt confirmed that this matter was currently under review and would be addressed during the current financial year.

RESOLVED that noting the above which required action, the Annual Return be approved.

17. URGENT BUSINESS

Dogs – Hadham Mill

It was reported that dogs in the ownership of the above property had caused the death of a number of sheep.

18. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Parish Council's grant policy.
- Pension Regulator – workplace pension scheme.
- Calendar of meetings 2016.
- Risk Assessments (November meeting).
- Much Hadham Parochial Charities (vacancy).

19. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, 6 October 2015, at 7.30 pm in the Green Tye Mission Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.35 pm.