

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 6 October 2015, in the Green Tye Mission Hall at 7.30 pm.

\*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 Mrs P Taylor  
Cllr A J Young

\* denotes present.

In attendance: 18 members of the public.

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Godfrey, Cllr Young, and Cllr Devonshire (EHDC).

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

## 3. PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION – NEW COUNCILLOR

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the recently elected Councillor, Mrs Penelope Taylor, and wished her a pleasant association with the Parish Council during her term of office.

Cllr Mrs Taylor agreed that she would take on the following representative duties:

- Footpaths
- Community and Business

## 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1 September 2015 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

## 5. MATTERS ARISING

### (i) Kettle Green Lane

To note that the new nameplate was now in-situ.

## 6. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

### (i) Pavilion

Two residents referred to this project and raised the following questions and assertions:

- Pavilion building and on-going expenditure.
- The ongoing maintenance costs and accountability.
- An allegation that expenditure had been incurred on a number of items without the authority of the Parish Council.
- A question as to how certain items of expenditure were being met, ie payment for the cleaner.
- Why a TV and coffee maker had been purchased? All of these purchases were alleged misrepresentations of the use of funds of the fund raising activities including the "buy a brick" campaign. Some people had thought "buy a brick" had been literally a campaign to pay for the fabric of the building.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that the total cost of the refurbishment work, together with the architect's fees, had been met and no further sums were due on the contract which, she pointed out, had been completed on time and within budget. To date approximately £13,000 had been raised by way of donations - £5,000 from the Chaldean Trust, £4,400 from Play Much Hadham and numerous donations from the general public – many of them had been from supporting the "buy a brick" campaign, which had been well advertised in the village and on websites. Some of these funds had been earmarked for and subsequently spent by the Pavilion Committee on those essential items (tables, chairs, locks, cleaning products, crockery and cutlery) and some incidental costs (cleaning products, toilet rolls, etc) needed to make the pavilion operationally effective. The latter items although not capital costs, were necessary for bringing the building into viable use. At no time had there been any misrepresentation to members of the public. The raising of funds was for the pavilion, which included the purchasing of items to be able to fully utilise the building.

Currently there were no outstanding items of expenditure and there was approximately £6,000 left in the Pavilion Account (managed through the Parish Council).

The Chairman pointed out that should receipts from use of the pavilion and donations accrue to a substantive amount, then repayment of the loan was, of course, an option, bearing in mind that early payment penalties, should such a decision be made, might be incurred. Such a decision would be made by the Parish Council.

Mr John Carey, a members of the public and Vice Chairman of the Pavilion Committee, pointed out that he had bought the TV out of his own funds as a donation. Cllr Mrs Bannerman also pointed out that the coffee maker was purchased by the person who was going to provide beverages to the mothers and toddlers after school hours.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that the refurbishment of the pavilion had been a time consuming and exhausting project in terms of time spent by all the Pavilion Committee members and other volunteers. Every effort had been expended in seeking to ensure that the building was opened in time for the fete in order to maximise potential fund raising. This had been achieved and a great success. To date there had been three meetings of the Pavilion Sub-Committee who had overseen the decisions made and were actively seeking to expand the sporting activities. It was the stated intention of the Pavilion Committee to continue to raise funds and, as the Parish Council was committed to reducing the outstanding loan by any Section 106 money received, members would discuss officially any surplus donated money also to further reduce the loan. Cllr Mrs Bannerman reiterated, following a further question, that there were no ongoing costs relating to the structure of the building. The Chairman reiterated that no monies had been spent post-completion of the project out of precepted funds and there had been no illegal payment.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman took great exception to the inference in the line of questioning from certain residents of financial impropriety and she offered to repay funds to a member of the public who had stated that she felt she had been misled by the 'buy a brick' campaign. The offer had not been accepted.

(ii) Footpath to Dell Cottage

A question was raised as to why the footpath had not been reinstated.

In response it was stated that the owner of the property was in the process of seeking a diversion order.

(iii) Church Lane

Concerns were expressed that the owner of the new house in Church Lane had laid approximately 150 feet of new kerbing on Church Lane. The kerbing had encroached onto the road reducing the width of the road, had inhibited the passage of traffic down Church Lane and had affected the parking of the cars of church goers.

Cllr Hunt stated that on his advice the owner had been in contact with the HCC Network Team who had approved the work undertaken.

(iv) Yewtree

Reference was made to the granting of permission for <sup>Seven</sup> ~~five~~ houses in the Grade II Star listed garden with concerns being expressed regarding the condition of the Grade I listed wall, which was in a bad condition and in need of urgent repair.

(v) Ferndale – Footpath to the Church

Concerns had been expressed by a resident of Ferndale regarding the uneven surface of the footpath to the church, which was hazardous for elderly people.

Cllr Mrs Taylor confirmed that she would take up this matter with East Herts Council.

(vi) Future Meetings – Hospitality

The Chairman expressed a view that it might be a nice gesture if members of the public could meet informally with members of the Parish Council prior to Parish Council meetings and that as an experiment this should be trialled prior to the November meeting.

7. MUCH HADHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH CHARITIES

The Chairman introduced Mr James Steel, supported by *Mrs Margaret Bevan* ~~M. H. H. H.~~, who gave a short presentation on the almshouses and an explanation on the workings of the Almshouses Trust.

In conclusion both Mr Steel and *Mrs Bevan* ~~M. H. H. H.~~ were thanked for their attendance.

8. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee held on 1 September 2015 be received and the actions taken be ratified.

9. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Highways - General

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

With regard to the overgrown vegetation, members sanctioned the actions concerning the draft letter.

Cllr Key informed members that two volunteers, out of four volunteers required, had come forward to attend the training sessions as a prerequisite to the 'Smiley Face' campaign scheme being introduced. It was hoped that the remaining two volunteers would be found.

(ii) Parish Paths Partnership

Cllr Godfrey had reported on the following matters:

- Footpath from Scout Hut to Malting Lane

The gate onto Malting Lane, which had been provided by the Parish Council many years ago, was now causing damage to the owner's fence. A request had been received for the gate to be reversed and re-hung so that it opened onto the breezeblock wall on the other side of the fence. Repairs would also be required to the damaged panels. The cost of the proposed work would be in the region of £150.

Members agreed that funding be made available.

*MR*

- Footpath near Dell Cottage

The developer had put in an application to divert the footpath to the rear of the cart lodge, passing along the hedgerow parallel with Kettle Green Lane and re-joining where the development driveway started. This would appear to be a sensible and practical solution.

- Field connecting the tennis courts and Moor Place Park

A resident had asked Cllr Godfrey to investigate the stile in the middle of the field, as it did not appear to be the regulation height. The matter had been referred to Nicholas Maddex, Rights of Way Officer, for his observations. Nicholas had made an inspection of the path on which there were two stiles, one of which was found to be a little higher, although not too high to comply with British Standards. It had been observed that remedial work would be required. It had also been confirmed that it was County Council policy to replace stiles with gates if stock was not present. A suggestion was made that the Parish Council could arrange to provide two kissing gates from its Parish Paths money with possible financial assistance being provided by the developer.

Members were supportive of the suggestion to take the matter forward.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan

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

(iv) Courses attended

Cllr Hunt read out a report that he had compiled on courses he had attended in September and opened his speech by stating as follows:

"I'm a firm believer that the only way we can do a good job as parish councillors is if we are trained in the necessary knowledge and skills. Winging it is an insult to the electorate and a poor way of discharging our duties and exercising our powers. So this month I attended 3 half day courses."

His report covered topics covered in the below mentioned three courses:

**Basic Councillor 2**

Cllr Hunt felt that this was very timely as it largely comprised a case study on providing additional sports ground facilities. Best practice included, for example, holding public meetings to determine what support there was for various proposals, determining early on what funding was available, identifying which organisation or group of residents was best placed to manage the project and so forth. Cllr Hunt would recommend this course to any councillor involved in, not only sports ground investments, but any significant projects.

MS

## Mapping

The course covered in some detail the use of Ordnance Survey material and, as a result, Cllr Hunt had obtained for the parish a licence, at no cost, to use OS material. The next step would be to test and acquire parish mapping software so that the OS data can be used.

## How to Respond to Planning Applications

Provided an overview of the planning system and the policy framework. There had been a case study from which Cllr Hunt had learned that the challenge for the Parish Council in objecting to development proposals was not to simply list objections, but to say how they outweighed other material considerations that might favour the development, so that the balance of the material considerations swung in the favour of the Parish Council.

### 10. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING (five new houses adjacent to Old Lordship Cottages)

Correspondence had been received from East Herts Council seeking the Council's views on the developer's suggestion to name the new road "Luxford Place".

Cllr Hunt informed members that there was a new development in Sawbridgeworth named "Luxford Place, which could cause confusion and "Place" was felt to be inappropriate wording for the type of development. It would also appear to be contrary to East Herts Council's policies on street naming and numbering.

*Luxford is also the name of a sister company of the developer*  
It was agreed to leave the suggested name to East Herts Council with a request that whatever was agreed was suffixed "Close".

### 11. PARKING IN MUCH HADHAM

Cllr Key stated that the indiscriminate parking in the village was getting worse and he cited Hadham Cross, Malting Lane, Kettle Green Lane with its junction with Walnut Close and Windmill Way as prime examples. Of concern was that, if the current problems were not addressed, then with the completion of the Bishop's Stortford North development the traffic problem would not only be exacerbated, but parking restrictions might be introduced to the detriment of local parishioners. Cllr Hunt stated that parking and traffic related matters ~~would~~ *could* form part of the Neighbourhood Plan briefing and be driven by residents.

Cllr Key asked that parking be put on the agenda as a standing item. The Chairman agreed that this was an important issue for the village that required vigilance.

### 12. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

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

13. PAVILION UPDATE AND RECREATION GROUND ACTIVITIES

(i) Building

Cllr Mrs Bannerman and Cllr Key confirmed that the pavilion was now open for business and that two football clubs were using the facility and several bookings for private functions had been received.

(ii) Pavilion Committee

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Mr Carey to participate in the discussion.

John Carey, Vice Chairman of the Pavilion Committee, gave members a resume of what had transpired since June when the Parish Council had in principle agreed to the setting up of a Pavilion Committee.

Since the original inception, the Committee had met on four occasions and representation consisted of two Parish Councillors, two members of the Sports Association and two members of the public. Whilst no formal constitution had been agreed by the Parish Council, nevertheless, the newly formed Committee had at a meeting of the Parish Council had formal recognition and it had been made aware of its obligations under the Parish Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. It was recognised that the minutes had not been formally presented to the Parish Council and, therefore, were not on the website, which was a technicality which would be addressed.

Members were reminded that the primary object of the Parish Council, having resolved to refurbish the pavilion, had been to ensure that work was completed in time for the fete to be held on 31 August 2015, an event which would be instrumental in raising money for the building (to reduce the loan and to provide essential outfitting costs). Mr Carey was pleased to report that in a very short period, a matter of 6 weeks, the building, following completion, had been outfitted with tables, chairs, cutlery, TV and coffee machine, etc.

There had been considerable interest shown in the building and both regular and casual bookings were being taken. It was proposed that the Pavilion Committee, being a Sub-Committee of the Parish Council, would be self-funding and would continue to seek outsider grants/donations. The sole intention of the Committee was to seek to encourage a greater use of the building and the recreation ground by the youth of the parish and to ensure as many activities as possible were offered to make use of the facilities. Cllr Key was actively seeking to reinstate cricket and was seeking outside funding – not looking to the Parish Council for funds. The Committee would be considering applying for charitable status if this was found to be legally possible.

Mr Carey acknowledged that now the pavilion had been open for some six weeks, he had recognised that it was now time, as had been planned, to put forward an updated constitution and terms of reference for its operation, which he proposed to do for the November Parish Council meeting.

The Chairman thanked Mr Carey for his report and endeavours and with regard to the drafting of the updated constitution and terms of reference of the Pavilion Committee to be above suspicion, he asked Cllr Hunt, who was acknowledged to have such skills, to work with the Pavilion Committee to that end.

Cllr Hunt stated that he was prepared to do so, but before he committed himself he wanted to make some conditions and request assurances. Cllr Hunt then read to the meeting from a prepared statement. [REDACTED]

In summary, Cllr Hunt initially stated that, before providing assistance to the Pavilion Committee (as requested by the Chairman), he would want an assurance that the residents who had raised matters relevant to the pavilion project were afforded a civil response and that they would not be treated in future in the way he perceived they had been treated by Parish Councillors this evening. He would want the Pavilion Committee to have the full support of the Sports Association and he would want to see total transparency and full accountability before he offered any assistance.

Cllr Hunt <sup>raised concerns about</sup> [REDACTED] perceived failings on financial accountability, agendas, minutes and action of Pavilion Committee meetings, good corporate Governance, lack of a Constitution and terms under which the Committee was working.

The Chairman took great exception to the diatribe of Cllr Hunt, which he stated was baseless in its accusations and deeply offensive to the Pavilion Committee (of which he was Chairman). He stated that, on the contrary, tremendous credit should be afforded to the Pavilion Committee members, certain of whom had devoted a great deal of their time, effort and their own finance to see that the pavilion was delivered effectively, on time and on budget and with the wherewithal to enable it to commence its use.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that the work performed by her and a number of other Committee members had been entirely for the benefit of the Much Hadham public [REDACTED] She felt that Cllr Hunt's remarks had been highly offensive and potentially slanderous.

The Chairman asked all parties to consider whether there was any reason why they could not work together in future for the betterment of all parishioners, but particularly children who use the recreation ground for sporting endeavour. He felt that perhaps everyone should go home, look in the mirror and ask themselves whether they were acting in the best interests of the village.

MS



(iii) Section 106 Agreement – Moor Place Development

The Clerk informed members that he had spoken to Mr Will O'Neill (EHC) who had informed him that the recommendation for payment to the Parish Council had been discussed by the Corporate Team on 29 September 2015. The decision had been to refer the matter back to the Accountancy Team for further analysis. The matter would be referred back to the next meeting of the Corporate Team scheduled for 13 October 2015.

14. VILLAGE GREEN – PERRY GREEN – TO CONSIDER HMF PROPOSALS

The Chairman informed members that both he and Cllr Mrs Bannerman had met with the new CEO (HMF), who had agreed with the suggestion as proffered by the Parish Council/residents regarding the provision of kerbing.

Members agreed that HMF be an agenda item for forthcoming meetings.

15. PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

The concerns mentioned at the last Parish Council meeting had been addressed and Cllr Mrs Bannerman explained that a private subcontractor, The Isle of Wight Computer Geek, could be <sup>Purchased</sup> hired for £190 ██████████ to manage the website in the future. Cllr Mrs Bannerman explained that, while the website was functionally fit for purpose, she suspected that there was no-one on the Parish Council who had the time or the skills to update it with new information and manage it generally. Furthermore, it was questioned whether it was in the best interests of the parish that any Parish Councillor should be given that responsibility given the importance of the website in terms of communication and the likelihood that anyone given the responsibility could leave the Parish Council.

It was unanimously agreed and RESOLVED to go forward with the proposal to hire The Isle of Wight Computer Geek Company.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman informed members that in the meantime all the minutes from 2015 up to and including August were now on the website.

16. VILLAGE HALL MATTERS

Cllr Key stated that he was chasing the contractor regarding the repairs and maintenance to the guttering.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that both she and the Chairman had had a meeting with the Village Hall Managers concerning the work required to the floor of the Green Room and at the moment the result of the grant application was awaited.

Cllr Mrs Bannerman stated that she had not pursued the small grant application for the pavilion, as she had been informed that the Parish Council could not apply for two grants in one year.

17. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(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.

18. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

19. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Parish Council's grant policy (November meeting).
- Pension Regulator – Workplace pension scheme (November meeting).
- Calendar of meetings for 2016 (November meeting).
- Operational and financial risk assessments (November meeting).
- HMF – all forthcoming meetings.

20. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Andrew', written in a cursive style.