

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 5 July 2016, at 7.30 pm in the Much Hadham Village Hall.

Cllr W Compton	*Cllr C Thompson
*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chairman)	*Cllr K Twort
*Cllr B Morris	*Cllr Mrs P Taylor (Chairman)
*Cllr Mrs M O'Neill	*Cllr Mrs J Liversage
*Cllr W O'Neill	

* denotes present.

In attendance: 16 members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr W Compton and Cllr G McAndrew (HCC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no notifications of urgent business.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that anyone was free to record the meeting, and Cllr Morris confirmed that he would do so.

The Chairman announced the August meeting on 2nd August would be in Green Tye Mission and start with refreshments from 6.45pm.

The Chairman thanked Alex Farmer and her dedicated committee for organising the wonderful Queen's Birthday party on Sunday 12th June, and although the weather could have been kinder, everyone who turned up had a brilliant time.

The Chairman announced the sad resignation of the Clerk, John Ingham, and wished him well in his semi-retirement. He will be with us until the end of August, and there will be an early start to the 2nd August meeting with refreshments beforehand.

The newly formed Staffing Committee will be meeting on Friday 8th July with the express purpose of designing the Job Description, Person Specification, Contract/Salary and

Advertising for a new Clerk. The Public and Press will be excluded due to the confidential nature of the meeting.

The Chairman circulated copy of the Parochial Charities (Almshouses) Financial Statement to 31 December 2015 to all councillors, and thanked James Steel for providing them.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 June 2016 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

6. MATTERS ARISING

Further to item 10 (i) the Chairman advised that a resident had prepared a summary of the Deeds governing the use and management of the Recreation Ground and this would be circulated to councillors.

7. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 20 June 2016 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

8. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Pavilion

Cllr Marianne O'Neill announced that Pen Makes Café would cease trading at the end of the summer term but would run throughout Busy Week.

Cllr O'Neill is now responsible for taking bookings for the Pavilion.

Sports Association

The Sports Association were concerned at the amount of dog mess being left on the Sports Field. New notices were required together with an additional dog litter bin.

Village Hall

It was reported that the works to the Drain/Soakaway and the Green Room floor are in hand. The Village Hall Management Committee are applying to EHDC for a grant of £500 for new chairs for the Green Room and a possible HCC grant of a further £500.

(ii) Environment

Parish Rights of Way

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

(iii) Highways

Cllr Bill O'Neill read out Highways report (Appendix C)

(vi) Media

Gigaclear (fibre optic broadband) still requires the "Hadham Cross" part of the village to reach 30% sign up. They are holding a meeting in the Village Hall on Tuesday 26th July.

The Chairman confirmed that the "unauthorised access" to the MH PC Facebook page had been reported to the police, and read out her final report on the matter (Appendix B).

RESOLVED that the MH PC Facebook page be "moth balled".

The chairman suggested the decision be reviewed in 6 months' time.

The Chairman agreed to investigate obtaining further "activity logs".

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Ian Hunt reported that the Consultation Event held on 18th June had been a great success with well over 100 visitors giving their views and opinions on the propositions and ideas presented there. Results were being collated and summarised for presentation at the next public meeting of the Steering Group on 12th July. The Vision and Objectives had been overwhelmingly approved. There had been a strong consistency of opinion in many areas, which would help considerably with the preparation of draft policies. Total spend to date was £1,540.

9. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

(i) Report from District Councillor (Cllr Ian Devonshire)

Cllr Devonshire provided an update on the progress of the District's Local Plan.

He also suggested that he and Cllr B O'Neill work together to get EH Highways to prioritise the resurfacing and road repairs in Green Tye, opposite Joyce's Cottage.

(ii) Report from County Councillor

No report was forthcoming from Cllr Graham McAndrew.

10. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

A resident was pleased to report that at the Old Station Yard site there appeared to be satisfactory measures taken to transplant the population of slow worms and roman snails.

In response to a question Cllr Hunt confirmed that there would be further consultation exercises, although probably not repeating the questions from the recent presentation as the responses from it had been very clear. It was likely that the next survey would be to help assess the housing needs of the parish.

In response to a question about “access codes” for the PC’s Facebook site, the Chairman advised that there was nothing further to be done or said in this respect as her report was complete and final.

A resident from Green Tye had received a letter from Gigaclear saying they had reached their target in his area to enable work to start later this year.

To general agreement, a resident advised the parish council that it was preferable to work together as a team, a message he had taken to heart from his time as a councillor but still as relevant today.

11. RESPONSE TO SLAA ROUND 4 CONSULTATION

Cllr Hunt had circulated a draft response to the latest consultation for approval. After discussion, it was agreed that some amendments and clarifications would be incorporated, including ensuring that the response for Wheatcroft was consistent with that for the North Leys site, as in each case the access road is unsuitable, and the response could then be sent.

12. PROPOSAL FOR REFURBISHMENT WORKS TO NOTICEBOARDS

RESOLVED that the following refurbishment would be undertaken at total cost of £390, by Richard Kidger: Refurbishment of noticeboard to right hand side of village hall for exclusive use of PARISH COUNCIL (£185). Re-instatement of Noticeboard with new 3” oak posts to new position next to Telephone Box on Perry Green (£205).

13. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7 June be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

14. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

(ii) Financial Statement

The Clerk apologised for the lack of a Financial Statement this month.

15. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no matters of urgent business.

16. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- (i) Review of Standing Orders.
- (ii) Review of Financial Regulations.
- (iii) Three-year plan for the Council.
- (iv) Press and Media Policy Draft
- (v) Complaints Procedure Draft
- (vi) External Auditor's Report
- (vii) Internal Auditor's Recommendations

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 2nd August 2016, at 7.30 pm in the Green Tye Mission Hall

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

***Public Rights of Way Report
for
June 2016
MHPC Meeting 5 July 2106***

1. Mowing of FPs. All done with the exception of: 21,25,and 44. Some of these will have regrown given the weather and they will be closely monitored.

2. Byways 17 and 49. The owner has agreed to replace all the gates with gates to British standard 5709, minimum width 1.52 metres and make alterations to the closing mechanisms and “air lock” areas as reported last month; to make them safe and convenient, particularly with reference to the telegraph pole, the bush stumps and straining wires. He will be removing one of the pair of gates in the middle of the field when he has fenced the northern part of the valley.

The owner also required him to agree to complete the structure authorisation forms for each gate.

If the owner does what he says, we have obtained most of what the PC and horse riders require. As we recognise that this will involve the owner obtaining new materials and employing a contractor again, he has four weeks to achieve all this, and we have asked him to keep us updated with progress.

3. The Mowing Contractor has completed as much as is reasonably possible on all the Parish paths. This year it is a losing battle with such rapid growth.

4. FPs 22 and 28. 22 has been stopped in Wheatcroft field (now identified at long last on the SLAA sites) by Dell Cottage until permissions are sought. Please refer to last month’s report. FP 28, the owner has failed to react as expected. This matter is in hand. Very disappointing so the situation is being monitored and will be acted upon shortly with greater severity.

Blaise Morris, | 4 July 2016

Much Hadham Parish Council Highways report 5th July 2016

We have been in touch with Graham McAndrew and Ringway and are establishing a relationship based on mutual respect and realism.

There is a programme of works scheduled for the next 3 years including resurfacing Church Lane, Malting Lane, Dane bridge Road, Danebridge Lane and the road between Green Tye and Perry Green.

If these roads deteriorate faster then they will rise up the list of priority projects.

Some of the worst potholes in Malting Lane have been repaired as has some of the worst sections of B1004 running through Much Hadham.

The B1004 will be closed later this month for resurfacing work at either end of Much Hadham.

Work is currently being carried out at Snells Corner but the issue of Large vehicles causing damage is an ongoing issue.

The roads in Green Tye and Perry Green need attention and we will continue to press this case.

There have been a number of trees and bushes encroaching into the roads which have been reported to the HCC fault reporting service and these have been attended to pretty efficiently.

I have had a couple of discussions with Bill Bird who used to look after Highways and he has been very informative and helpful.

Finally, the owner of the Horsebox which has been parked near the Old Crown Pub for over a year has moved it at my request. Unfortunately I suspect it will not be long before someone else decides to park a vehicle there, but for the time being the top of Malting Lane is much safer than it was.

B O'Neill 4 July 2016

The original MH PC Facebook page was set up and run by Cllr Bannerman. When Cllr Bannerman resigned in December she closed the Facebook page down for personal security reasons.

In January, the existing PC consisted of four people, myself, Ian Hunt, Jan Liversage and Alex Young. None of us had any idea how to set up a Facebook page, so asked Mari Fleming, then a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group responsible for IT matters, for some help. She kindly set up a new MH PC Facebook page on a purely voluntary basis. She set up a separate e.mail account and password to administer the page, and never passed this information to any other person, including any member of MH PC. She only put on the Facebook page information as requested by the PC, and never “shared” advertisements, or articles from other Facebook pages. She simply provided the technical administration of the site.

On the evening of 27th April, a letter from the MH Tennis Club written in response “to the inaccuracies and criticisms set out in the resignation statements of two of the Much Hadham parish councillors, recently published.” was “shared” onto the MH PC Facebook page by persons unknown. This letter had been on the “Spotted in the Hadhams” Facebook page since December, as well as being printed in the Herts & Essex Observer. There was also a short derogatory remark appended to the letter by a non-resident referencing “resigning councillors”. No names were mentioned there, or in the letter from the MH Tennis Club.

The next morning, as soon as we were made aware of the posting, the letter was removed, as requested by Dr Baxter and Cllr Morris. Unbeknownst to the administrator or any member of the PC, once a “posting” has been deleted from Facebook, all its history and any logged activity is also removed. There is now no record on Facebook of the posting having ever existed.

The administrator contacted Facebook Support in Ireland, by telephone through personal contacts in the IT industry. Facebook discovered there had been an unauthorised access to the Facebook page made through a “back-door”. They provided the activity log of the administrator’s authorised postings, but the activity of the unauthorised access was unavailable. They did manage, however, to track the IP address (a TalkTalk customer), from which the unauthorised access had been made, but due to data protection are unable to furnish any more details.

A full report was compiled by myself, and circulated to the PC, and Dr Baxter and Mr Key, who had reported the incident in the first place.

Although the security of the Facebook site has been enhanced, the Facebook page has since lain dormant, primarily because the administrator has been very ill, and is no longer in a position to administer the site.

On the 4th May, Councillor Compton reported the unauthorised access to the MH PC Facebook page to the Police, apparently at the request of the PC. The incident was logged (Log Number 762), but the police explained that, as a third party, he was unable to report the crime himself, and consequently at the PC meeting of 7th June, Cllr Compton requested that the Administrator do so. As already explained, the administrator is no longer in a position to help us with this matter, and we wish her a speedy and full recovery.

As a result, I have spoken at length to PS Gunstone at the Victim Service Team at Welwyn Garden City Police Headquarters regarding this matter.

I have been told that the unauthorised access to the Facebook page is a crime under the Computer Misuse Act 1990. I have therefore reported the incident to the Police and it has been recorded as Crime Reference Number A5/16/313.

I list below the facts and advice I received from the police, and my conclusions:

1. As Chairman of the Parish Council, the police have accepted the report of this crime from myself, and therefore the Administrator need not be involved.
2. The Facebook Incident Report I compiled on 17/5/16 was sent to the police and Carina Helm of HAPTC (Herts Assoc of Parish & Town Councils). Both considered the report to be extremely thorough and comprehensive.
3. The Police consider this a victimless crime. No names have been mentioned in the disputed posting. If anyone considers they have been libelled then this would be a civil matter and not a police matter.
4. As the crime is a victimless crime, I have been led to believe the police will not investigate further.
5. Should the person who gained unauthorised access to the MH PC Facebook page ever be identified, only the PC could bring charges, as the police do not bring charges in victimless crimes.
6. If the PC has no intention of bringing charges, is an investigation an appropriate use of police time? I got the strong impression from PS Gunstone that it was not.
7. It is my strong inclination therefore, to recommend to the PC that we take no further action regarding this incident, and draw a definite line under this sorry matter.

Penny Taylor
1st July 2016

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCILPAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

668	HCC	39.08	Stationery
669	C Copper	210.00	Hedge cutting - Recreation ground
670	Abel Alarms Co Ltd	175.20	Annual service of alarm system
671	Much Hadham Sports Association	360.34	Electricity supply to Pavilion
672	J Ingham	1,464.24	Salary to 30 June 2016
673	HMRC	366.00	Income tax to 30 June 2016