

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 21 May 2019, at 7.30 pm in the Green Room, Much Hadham Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllr I Hunt Cllr Mrs P Taylor (Chair)
Cllr Mrs J Liversage Cllr K Twort
Cllr W O'Neill

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr I Devonshire (EHC)
Cllr G McAndrew (HCC)
plus 6 further speakers, and 7 members of the public

The evening began at 7.00pm with social chat, wine and nibbles.

The Chair welcomed those present and advised that the meeting was not a Parish Council meeting, but an opportunity for residents to hear the accomplishments and activities of not only the PC but other committees and organisations in the parish. She referred to the disruption caused by works on the A120 in the past and in the future due to the LH Bypass. Traffic in the village, particularly Malting Lane, would be addressed in discussions with HCC Highways.

In addition, she reported the following PC achievements from the previous year:

- Many of the street lamps in the village now have energy-saving LED lamps and give a much brighter light. The lamp outside the Alms Houses that was knocked into by a vehicle is due to be replaced shortly. The delay was due to claiming on the PC's insurance, which happily was successful.
- The installation of SIDs - Speed Indicator Devices - at the north and south end of the village. The north and south gateways at the 30mph signs were cleaned and re-painted by enthusiastic volunteers too, and with the installation of the new "Welcome to Much Hadham" signs, we are aiming to provide a more definitive entry to the village to encourage drivers to slow down.
- The Public Inquiry into the proposed diversion of Footpath 22 running through the School, to use the boundary path to the south, was held last week. Judgement from the Inspector due in about 6 weeks.
- ...and we've had a reasonably successful year in limiting development to within the village boundary or, in the hamlets, to existing developed sites, and we continue to be robust in opposing unwanted development in the rural areas
- We have posted various signs around the village to encourage dog walkers to use the 9 bins we have around the parish
- Due to the efforts of Neil Clarke and his committee, 4 parking places outside the front of the Village Hall were now successfully leased, bringing in valuable income
- The PC has a new Facebook page, which everyone is invited to follow.
- Finally, significant changes have taken place on the PC over the last year, and with the recent co-option of new faces, a real team spirit has emerged, not always evident in recent years. This augurs well for the future, with much more time for new initiatives to be worked on. The PC is also very happy to hear from residents with ideas for it to address in the future.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D McDonald and Cllr Mrs K Chesters.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 22 MAY 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 May 2018 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3. REPORTS

Village Hall Management

Bill O'Neill read a report prepared by Neil Clarke (Chair of the Management Committee) who apologised for his absence. Bookings are slightly up on last year, but there is still space for more users. Maintenance of the building is still on-going; the soffits and bargeboards were replaced last year, reducing the cost of the external redecoration planned for 2019. Internal decorations were undertaken this year thanks to volunteers and a £300 grant from the PC. The next project is obtaining quotations for replacement of the lower level roofing, prior to submitting a request to Biffa in September for a grant to cover these costs. A new caretaker/cleaner (Duncan Billson) has started. He is keen to help us maintain the hall as a pleasant place for people from the village to gather, and we will be working together to look at some redecoration of the main corridor over the next few months. Thanks were given to all the hard working Management Committee members, and to the Fete organisers, and Recreation Trust for providing the much needed annual grant. In answer to a question about possible use of Solar Panels on the Village Hall, the PC would investigate, and with regard to Broadband/WiFi provision, Cllr McAndrew suggested he might be able to assist with this.

Sports Association

Fred Pavey reported on the activities of the Sports Association. The PC has formed a working party to look into how the Recreation Ground can be best used, managed and financed for the benefit of the village.

He reported on the two Football teams now using the pitch. A new Sunday team started last year, and after a shaky start appear to be settling in. Thanks go to Charlie from the Saturday football team for his help in pitch marking and maintenance.

The Bowling Club struggles with membership and need more active players. The club will be celebrating 100 years next year. The club only moved to its present location in 1949, but started with a green in the grounds of Culver Court in 1920.

The Tennis Club goes from strength to strength with 192 members, half of whom are juniors. The club is in the process of applying for planning permission for a tennis club hut near the courts to provide a much needed changing area, shelter and toilet facilities.

Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Ian Hunt, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, explained the workings of the Steering Group over the last few years, and the plans for its completion during 2019. He produced a Draft copy of the Plan to date. To finish the version that the PC approves and submits to EHC, there is one more consultation to carry out: this is the Pre-Submission consultation. Hopefully this will be from mid-August to end-September.

Before the consultation the Group has to finish editing the draft document and the other required material such as a basic conditions statement, a consultation report and a strategic environmental assessment. All of that material has been drafted and is now being finalised.

Every household will receive a summary of the NP, with full drafts available on line and hard copies. Finally, the NP will be put to a referendum and of approx. 600 held across the country so far, only 3 have failed to be successful.

One final hurdle is waiting for EHC to confirm that any community development will be for the benefit of parish residents (*CLT retains nomination rights*). If that condition is not met, the next best alternative would be to drop Moor Place Gate as a site allocation and instead rely on a windfall allowance to top up the housing delivery.

Cllr Hunt thanked the Steering Group team for the considerable efforts they have made thus far on what, at times, has been an arduous and time-consuming project.

In answer to a question, Cllr Hunt explained the meaning and purpose of the “policies” being developed in the Neighbourhood Plan. These will be the planning regulations which all future planning applications will have to abide by.

PG & GT Preservation Society

Mark Ashwell, Chairman, explained the Society has been in existence for over 40 years with two aims, first to try and help preserve the hamlets for the benefit of the community and second, to organise social activities and to keep the community informed and involved in local events. The Society organised 14 community events last year, with exceptional commemorations for the Centenary of the 1st World War. They also have a full calendar for 2019/20. He congratulated Bobbie Alexander on the successful introduction of a bi-monthly coffee afternoon in the Mission Hall, for all ages. He reported that a Defibrillator has been installed in the unused phone box at Perry Green, and the £5,000 funds from the Henry Moore Foundation for works to the lanes had been reserved, and talks are currently on-going with Cllr McAndrew from HCC Highways and the PC.

Jane Browne gave a little background into the Green Tye Players, and their annual show. Only those who are living or have lived in Green Tye or Perry Green may join, but no auditions are required! The only exception is their accompanist, Bill O’Neill. The show takes a lot of hard work, but is huge fun, and well worth seeing (late March/early April) as a unique entertainment in the parish.

District Councillor

Cllr Ian Devonshire, who was returned un-opposed at the recent elections, reported on 4 major projects being undertaken by EHC.

- Old River Lane area in Bishop’s Stortford to have Arts Centre to revitalise town centre.
- New Leisure Centre at Grange Paddocks.
- Hertford Theatre will be expanded to 500 seats plus 3 cinemas, a café and studio.
- Hartham Pool & Gym will be expanded and refurbished.

He went on to describe one of his new roles as Rural Development Champion.

In answer to a question, the Grange Paddocks pool will remain open while the new pool is built on a separate footprint, to ensure continuity of usage. In response to a further question regarding rumoured opposition by the Rhodes Centre, Cllr Devonshire explained they had been fully consulted, and the Rhodes Centre would become a much larger, better museum.

County Councillor

CLlr Graham McAndrew reported on the recent developments in Much Hadham.

- Three new Village signs
- Speed Indicator Devices (one north funded by the PC and one south funded by HLB)
- New patrol crossing person outside St Andrew's School, is great success

Proposed developments by HLB are:

- Possible School Advisory 20 mph speed limit on Tower Hill
- Repairs to the surface of Footpath 26 (by Congregational Church)
- New Give Way signs and lines at Danebridge Road/Stansted Hill/Watery Lane junction
- Traffic Speed and Volume Surveys north of MH (to consider change of Speed Limit)
- Possible HGV Survey in Perry Green/Green Tye areas
- Possible passing places/widening of lane outside Joyce's Cottage

He also reported that the A120 Little Hadham By Pass was due to start this summer with completion late 2020, and that dog mess was proving a major problem in some areas in the county, so residents are invited to report (including photos if possible) any mess found, to operations.admin@eastherts.gov.uk The more reports they receive, the more likely it is they can take action.

In response to a question about the sanctions available for drivers ignoring the new SIDs and speeding through the middle of the village, CLlr McAndrew agreed there was little that could be done.

The Forge

Jeremy Brown, introduced himself as the new Chairman of the Forge Museum. He thanked Andy Savage for all he had done in the past, and for recruiting Jerry as Chair, as he is a passionate historian and antiquarian; his dream job in retirement.

He reported on the latest acquisitions the Museum hope to make, which will require much fund raising, and all donations are much appreciated. The cottages were due some re-decoration, which hopefully could be done by volunteers this summer. The Forge continues to hold events and activities for all ages, and hopefully the Fish n' Chip van will return later this year. He urges residents to visit this gem of a Museum, in our midst.

Recreation Trust and Fete

John Dodsworth, Chairman, reported on the success of last year's Fete which took over £18,000. The weather was fairly good, and it was estimated approx. 1300 cars (a record) used the Moor Place car park, and the parking at the old Barn School, which were much appreciated. He stressed how much work is done by so few people in the run up to the Fete. There are plenty of volunteers on the day, but the preparation works fall to fewer and fewer, and there is a chance the Fete will be much reduced if people do not come forward to assist. He particularly thanked Tony Bond, who does an incredible amount of work for the success of the Fete, but who needs more help on the committee.

Mr Dodsworth went on to report on the workings of the Recreation Trust, and that due to the success of the Fete together with some private donations, grants totalling £18,500 had been made for 2018/19. The largest amounts as usual went to the Sports Association (£7,700) and the Village Hall (£8,000). Small grants had been made to the Scouts, the Explorers, Busy Weeks, The Riverfly Partnership, Hadhams History Society, Toddler Group, Afternoon Tea Club, Sunday Lunch Club and the Fire Station for the annual servicing costs of the defibrillator.

The River Ash

Cllr B O'Neil reported on the River Ash Branch of the Riverfly Project. He has been a volunteer for 3 years now and is pleased to say his workforce has doubled recently to two. He thanked the Recreation Trust for a grant for some equipment to enable the work to continue. The results of the monthly survey inform on the quality of the water, and should it fall below a certain standard, higher authorities are informed. The main problem is that the rivers are suffering from a lack of water. If we continue to use ever increasing amounts of water, the environment will suffer and food chains will be broken which will affect biodiversity. Population growth, climate change, extraction licences, private bore holes, obsessive washing habits etc are all putting enormous pressures on our environment. The Riverfly Project is a way of reminding everyone that we all need to look after the countryside.

The Chaldean Estate

Neil Budge introduced himself as the new Estate Manager, in post for just over a year. He explained the new hedge management regime, which may appear to be drastic, but will ensure controlled and proper management of hedges in the future. The cutting season lasts only September to January, so they are hard pushed to manage the 5 miles or so of hedges on the estate.

He reported on the crops being grown; barley, wheat, beans and sugar beat. They have also recently planted approx. 10 acres of vines on Barley Hills (just outside the northern tip of the village boundary up Bromley Lane) with a view to making English sparkling wine! The soft fruits being grown at the bottom end of Bromley Lane may also be coming back into the Estate if the grower gives up the tenancy.

In answer to a question, he explained that all the sugar beet goes to British Sugar in Norfolk.

4. RESIDENTS COMMENTS

No further questions or comments were made by Residents.

The meeting concluded at 9.17pm.