

## MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 21st May 2024,  
at 8.15pm at Much Hadham Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr B Bird  
Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)  
Cllr J Liversage  
Cllr D McDonald  
Cllr S Smith  
Cllr P Taylor (Chair)  
Cllr K Twort

Plus: Cllr I Devonshire (EHC)  
36 Invitees and 13 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Bill O'Neil

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 23 May 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 May 2023 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3. SHORT REPORT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Chair thanked everyone for coming, and especially thanked the representatives of all the clubs/societies/committees/organisations for repeating last year's success with their interesting displays, generating the sharing of experiences and meeting new people.

The Chair reported the PC had had another busy year, aided by a full complement of 9 councillors, until April, when Kathy Hamilton retired. Kathy was thanked for her contribution to the work of the council, particularly on the Village Hall Management Committee. If anyone was interested in filling the vacancy, please let one of the councillors know.

The Chair listed some of the PC activities, and future projects:

1. Our main project over the last year has been the maintenance of the many trees the PC is responsible for. Trees on both Perry Green and Green Tye greens had already been trimmed and made safe. The biggest project however, is the trees surrounding the Recreation Ground, and the first stage will be completed in the summer holidays.
2. The extension to the cemetery at Perry Green has continued, in preparation for use next year, if required. The ashes garden has been created, and ashes interred.

3. The volunteers were thanked for the successful Clean Up the Village day. A request made to find a few keen parishioners who would take on the task of organising a similar event each year.
  4. East Herts District Council are emptying our village bins reasonably consistently and we have rationalised the provision of dog bins from 9 (the same number as in the whole of Bishops Stortford) down to 7. As these cost the PC nearly £200 each per year to be emptied, this is a sensible saving.
  5. Controlling our costs is important and means that we were able once again to minimise the increase in the portion of your council tax that comes to the parish council – up just 1.4% this year following 1.1% last year.
  6. During the forthcoming year, among other things, our efforts will be; to support the fight against more night flights at Stansted Airport; continuing to monitor the state of the River Ash; to encourage 20mph speed limits where appropriate; and to work with the Sports Association and Village Hall Management Committee on ways to fund these valuable assets of the village, in light of the demise of the village fete.
  7. The Chair confirmed the PC was consulted by EHC on all planning applications and continues to support only sustainable development that preserves or enhances our conservation areas. In the coming year, the new administration at East Herts will be reviewing the District Plan, and the PC will be closely watching out to ensure that any proposed policy revisions are not harmful to us.
  8. The Chair explained there is also still a need to document and register Assets of Community Value identified in the NP, and any volunteers to help with this, would be extremely welcome. If any residents would like to help our parish councillors in any of our endeavours, please contact one of us.
4. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS
- 1) A resident offered a vote of thanks for all the work of the Parish Council, which was gratefully received.
  - 2) A resident asked whether there was more funding available to improve the state of the roads. The Chair explained that the PC is constantly working with HCC Highways, and any faults, particularly potholes, must be reported on the HCC Faults website, preferably with photographs. Bad potholes are usually fixed quite quickly.
  - 3) A resident asked if another Community Event was being planned on the recreation ground. The Chair confirmed there were indeed plans for a "Picnic in the Park" being held early in September, to be advertised in the June parish magazine, and run by a younger group of residents.
  - 4) A resident commented that there was no bus stop beyond the Red Lion until Little Hadham. Whilst in the past drivers had been willing to pick up/drop off at passengers' requests at Spindle Bridge, this was no longer the case. The resident commented that the footway beyond Spindle Bridge was not satisfactorily cleared, so walking to the Red Lion bus stop was impractical. A resident further reported that the fence on the pavement going over the culvert at Spindle Bridge had collapsed and that its temporary replacement was sometimes removed. Cllr Devonshire confirmed this was the responsibility of EHDC and he would follow this up.

- 5) A resident asked if the Fete would ever be resurrected. The Chair said this was unlikely in the previous format, which required extensive parking, which was not forthcoming despite repeated efforts with the relevant landowners. Small events would need to be run in future, to try and fill the funding gap left by the demise of the Fete.
- 6) A resident asked if the PC were fighting the proposed Stansted Airport night flights extension. Cllr McDonald responded confirming the PC were definitely on the case, and had just submitted a response to the consultation on the night flights expansion. Cllr Liversage confirmed that a noise monitor was being installed at her property on the B1004 for the next 3 months.
- 7) A resident asked if the bridge over the River Ash on Footpath 20 (by the Church) was going to be completed, as the safety barriers either side of the bridge were extremely unsightly. The Chair confirmed that these works were not included in the bridge replacement, but were being costed, and would be erected in due course.
- 8) A resident asked if, by keeping the precept flat, the PC was limiting the amount available for providing grants. The Chair replied that, whilst the grants budget was modest, it was only a budget and extra funds could be made available if a case were made. Cllr Hunt added that the PC was able to keep the precept flat as it had sufficient reserves, and also reiterated that grant funding over and above the budget was possible.
- 9) A representative of St Elizabeth's reported that the St Elizabeth's Community Bus, taking elderly people to B/S once a week for a shopping/social trip, was proving a great success, and "life changing" for some users. The Chair was pleased to hear this good news, and thanked the resident.

The chair declared the meeting ended at 8.42pm, and invited everyone to stay and enjoy the refreshments and party atmosphere, for as long as they liked.