

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 1 December 2015, in the Much Hadham Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

*Cllr Mrs S Bannerman (Vice Chairman)

Cllr Mrs J Liversage

*Cllr T Baxter (Chairman)

*Cllr Mrs P Taylor

*Cllr I Hunt

*Cllr A J Young

* denotes present.

In attendance: Approximately 40 members of the public.

Plus Cllr I Devonshire (EHDC)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs Liversage and Cllr G McAndrew (EHC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2015

Minute 7, Resident's Comments, page 3, last paragraph, last line

Delete: "The Association does not have members"

Insert: "The Association does not want to have members"

Having given effect to the above amendments, the minutes were confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and were signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Parish Council website

It was reported that the October minutes were not yet on the website. Cllr Mrs Bannerman agreed to chase.

5. RESIGNATIONS

The Chairman read out the contents of the letters of resignations received from the following members:

Cllr Key, Cllr Keogh and Cllr Mrs Bannerman (see Appendix A)

Mr John Carey, Vice Chairman of the Pavilion Committee, also read out his letter of resignation.

Following on from the aforementioned, the Chairman also tendered his resignation and he requested that his resignation speech, which he had intended to give, but subsequently declined, be included as an appendix to the minutes. (see Appendix B)

Following the above resignations all the above members vacated the meeting, which was then adjourned for five minutes. Following the interval the meeting was reconvened with approximately 30 members of the public present.

5(a) Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED that for the duration of this meeting, Cllr Young be appointed Chairman.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman felt that enough had been said in the earlier proceedings of the meeting and that it was time for the existing members to move on and thus ensure a smooth transition to enable a new Council with new members to take the business of the Council forward.

The Clerk referred to a letter which had been received from the Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services, East Herts Council. This letter referred to the deliberations of the Council's Standards Sub-Committee, which had recently met with regard to complaints in respect of the Code of Conduct (see appendix C).

7. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

- (i) The Chairman of the Sports Association stated that contrary to what had been said earlier in the meeting, the Sports Association had never refused the use of the grounds to any sporting activity. There had been a number of incidents which had taken place where it had been suggested that the Sports Association had been uncooperative. The Chairman stated that this had never been the case. The Chairman further stated that any member of the Parish Council was more than welcome to discuss any matter appertaining to the recreation ground and he would look forward to having the opportunity to engage in a bridge building exercise.
- (ii) A resident stated that this evening had witnessed a sad event in the history of the Parish Council and she felt it to have been a sad and tragic affair. Never in over 50 years association with the parish had she felt so miserable. The resident paid tribute to the Village Hall Committee, who, she stated, had worked so hard over the years in looking after the building. Indeed it was only latterly that the Parish Council had begun to show an active interest in the building. She also stated that she took great exception to any criticism which had been levied at the Village Hall managers who, she stated, worked tirelessly to ensure that the Village Hall was a facility which could be enjoyed by not only the residents of the parish but also other organisation from outside the parish.

- (iii) A request was made that the proposals of the Perry Green community (an Environmental Development Plan) for maintaining the corner of the Perry Green land, details of which had been forwarded to the Parish Council, be an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting.
- (iv) A resident referred to planning application 3/15/2349/ARPN, which members confirmed would be referred to the next meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee.

8. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee held on 3 November 2015 be approved and the decisions contained therein be ratified.

9. PARISH AMBASSADORS/REPRESENTATIVES

Members had been circulated with a copy of the current list of portfolios holders. In view of the depleted number of members and in anticipation that the situation would remain the same until five new members were appointed, it was agreed to defer appointments until a more appropriate time.

The Clerk pointed out that as a result of the current situation, the Planning Sub-Committee at present would not be quorate and he suggested that in the interim Cllrs Penny Taylor and Alex Young be appointed to the Sub-Committee to enable the business of the Parish Council to be conducted. Members confirmed their agreement to the appointment.

At this juncture, some members of the public vacated the meeting with 27 members remaining.

10. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Highways

Cllr Young referred to the attached report (see Appendix D), which he had compiled.

(ii) Parish Paths Partnership

Proposed diversion of part of FP10 and FP11

To note that an application to divert part of the footpath at the road junction of Moor Place and Kettle Green Lane had been received. Comments on the proposal would be formulated in due course.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hunt gave members an up-date on the two meetings which had taken place since the last meeting of the Parish Council and he confirmed that Lynne Mills had been proposed as the new Finance Officer. Members confirmed the appointment.

Census data had been collected and analysed and a Communications Co-ordinator was being sought to report progress to parishioners on the information gathered.

Key stages of the Project Plan had been identified in order to complete the Neighbourhood Plan, which would run parallel with the emerging Local District Plan.

Consultation would take place shortly with a view to preparing a vision for Much Hadham to include the acceptable housing provision and the aspirations of the residents.

Expenditure to date had been minimal, although it was anticipated to draw down up to £1,000 to cover incidental expenditure.

The next meeting of the Steering Group was scheduled for Tuesday, 8 December.

11. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr Devonshire referred to the following matters:

- (i) Following the events of the evening, there was now a chance for the Parish Council to re-set itself and to move forward. Cllr Devonshire also made a plea for the members to please work together and to interact with both him and Cllr Mc Andrew, as a lot could be achieved if all concerned worked in harmony.
- (ii) A lot of emphasis tonight and at other meetings of the Parish Council had referred to transparency, which was, stated Cllr Devonshire, very important at all levels of Local Government. This was very evident in the workings of the District Council and he cited instances for example relating to financial decisions where at least seven different tiers of scrutiny were in operation. Therefore, it was important that transparency was in evidence in all matters relating to the Council's activities.
- (iii) With regard to the emerging District Plan, Cllr Devonshire informed members that the draft document would be out to public consultation in early 2016 with a submission to the Government Inspector in October 2016. The deliberations of the Inspector would be completed by February 2017 and the new Plan would, hopefully, be adopted in July 2017. This would be in line with the timetable for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- (iv) Reference was made to the "Clean up the Village" initiative which was being promoted by the District Council and a request was made for volunteers to come forward. It was proposed that a Sunday in January 2016 be set aside for the clean up. East Herts Council would supply all the equipment necessary and would arrange for the collection of the bags of litter at the end of the day.

12. PAVILION UPDATE AND RECREATION GROUND ACTIVITIES

(i) Financial position

Cllr Hunt tabled the attached documents (see Appendix E), copies of which he made available to the residents present.

Cllr Hunt was pleased to report that following a scrutiny of the information presented by the Clerk, he was now confident that the Parish Council would not, as he had suspected, run out of money at the end of the year and he felt that the finances of the Parish Council were reasonably sound.

(ii) Section 106 payment

Cllr Devonshire enquired as to whether the Parish Council had received the £12,810 Section 106 money and he was informed by the Clerk that a formal demand had been submitted to the District Council and funding was awaited. The Clerk was requested to notify Cllr Devonshire should the funds not be forthcoming.

(iii) Fire risk report

The Clerk tabled for members' information a copy of the recent fire risk assessment report which had been undertaken on 12 November 2015. Members received the document and they confirmed that they would scrutinise the contents to ascertain whether there was any action incumbent on the Council.

This matter to be referred to the next meeting.

(iv) Pavilion Committee

The members were conscious that there was now no Parish Councillor representative on the Committee and they felt that this matter should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

(v) Building

With the resignation of the members of the Pavilion Committee, a number of issues would need to be addressed as a matter of urgency, viz:

- Confirmation that the existing cleaner was prepared to continue with her duties.
- To confirm the arrangements being made for the hiring of the pavilion and to ascertain whether the existing Booking Secretary was prepared to continue with her duties.
- Employment arrangements for the lady who operated the café.
- A number of repairs were required to be sorted out with Glenplan.

(vi) Pavilion Committee – Terms of Reference

Cllr Mrs Taylor had produced a draft terms of reference for members' information.

It was agreed that this matter be deferred to the next meeting.

13. MEMBERS/OFFICER PROTOCOL

Members had been circulated with a draft copy of the above document for discussion.

RESOLVED that the document be adopted.

14. VILLAGE HALL MATTERS

Members agreed that an early meeting be convened with Mr Neil Clark to discuss the future working relationship between the Village Hall managers and the Parish Council.

It was intended that a bridge building exercise be undertaken in order to ensure a more harmonious relationship between the two organisations.

15. PARKING – MUCH HADHAM

Cllr Devonshire requested that two members of the Parish Council meet with him and a representative of Hertfordshire Highways in order to discuss the matter of parking in the village.

16. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Members had been circulated with a copy of a draft document which had been compiled by Cllr Young.

RESOLVED that this matter be deferred until the next meeting.

17. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Clerk had circulated to all members draft copies of the above documents for discussion.

RESOLVED that both the Clerk and Cllr Hunt arrange to meet to discuss and review where necessary the contents and for the matter to be referred to the next meeting for further discussion.

18. PENSION REGULATOR – WORKSHOP PENSION SCHEME

The Clerk informed members that, under the new regulations, which were mandatory on all Parish Councils, the Council would need to write formally to the Clerk giving him the opportunity of receiving a pension under the new regulations. It was important to note that the post holder could request to opt out of the scheme.

Following the reply from the Clerk, the Council would need to complete a declaration of compliance whereby the employer informs the Pension Regulator that it had complied with its statutory duties for automatic enrolment.

It was important to note that the employer (the Council) cannot complete the declaration of compliance until it has legally passed the staging date (1 April 2016). Currently an employer has five months from the staging date to complete the declaration.

The Clerk gave advance notice that he wished to opt out of any future pension arrangements.

19. REVIEW OF GRANTS POLICY

The Clerk had circulated to all members a revised version of the document which incorporated the suggested amendments of Cllr Hunt.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the grants policy be adopted.
- (ii) that the Clerk arrange to make available a formal grant application form to be appended to the policy document.

20. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER

Members had been circulated with a copy of a letter from East Herts Council outlining the District Council's plans to introduce a Public Protection Order in East Herts.

RESOLVED that the contents of the document be noted.

21. DRAFT PRECEPT 2016/2017

The Clerk had circulated to members a copy of the first draft of the precept for the financial year 2016/2017.

Members agreed to meet off-line to formulate their views on the content of the draft and to decide what additional items were required to be included for consideration.

22. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

The Clerk advised members that none of the existing members appeared on the bank mandate and that he was the only signatory. Consequently, none of the cheques in settlement of the invoices presented for payment this evening could be signed.

The Clerk stated that he would engage with the bank as a matter of urgency to put in place a signing regime until a full and composite mandate was in place.

(ii) Financial Statement

RESOLVED that the contents of the attached statement (see Appendix F) be received.

23. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

24. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- (i) Amendments to Standing Order (refer for discussion following the election of new members – possibly May 2016.)
- (ii) Pavilion Committee – Terms of Reference and Appointment of Representatives.
- (iii) Parish Ambassadors and Representatives.
- (iv) Draft Precept 2016/2017.
- (v) Staffing Committee.
- (vi) Operational and Financial Risk Assessments.
- (vii) Perry Green Environmental Development Plan.
- (viii) Pavilion Fire Risk Report.

25. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2016

RESOLVED that the dates and venues as set out on the attached document be approved. (see Appendix G)

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

MICHAEL KEOGH

App 1

"With regret, I wish to resign. I can no longer tolerate the hostilities between Councillors and between the PC and various groups within the village, which are deeply counterproductive."

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Chairman's Resignation Letter.

01/12/2015

Dr A D Baxter

App
Dear Parish Councillors and members of the public, In addition to the statements of former Councillors Key, Keogh and Bannerman, and John Carey, Vice Chairman of the Pavilion Committee, I would also like to make a brief statement.

The events of the past two months since October 6th have been very satisfactory to any but a few of the participants and to the parishioners as a whole. The whole atmosphere of angst, abuse, distrust and ill temper has not been good for the village and the Parish.

To sum up very recent events, there were several Code of Conduct complaints made as a result of the October 6th Parish Council meeting, an event that was noxious to me and to many people who attended. These Code of Conduct complaints were submitted to the EDC Standards sub-committee and there was a meeting of that committee on the 24th November, which subsequently made their judgement. In short, the complaints against Cllr Bannerman were dropped as the sub committee acknowledged that she had apologised immediately. The complaints against Cllr Hunt were deemed to 'not to contain sufficient evidence' to warrant further action and recommendations. Whilst I respect the decision of the sub committee, I have to say I find it hard to understand why seven letters of complaint containing detailed content, facts and concerns about Cllr Hunts behaviour were not found to be deserving of further investigation. The complaint by Mrs Farmer, pertaining to the Pavilion Project and people associated with it was deemed by the standards sub-committee to be worth further investigation in accordance with the Code of Conduct procedure. The details of Mr Jeff Hughes, the Monitoring Officer of EHC, report will be covered later in the meeting under Chairman's comments.

I personally and sincerely welcome this investigation and I will do all I can to support the process. I am very confident that the actions of the Pavilion Committee will be found to be entirely above board and that the needless allegations and accusations about their conduct will be found to be groundless. The level of vitriol directed against the Pavilion Committee by certain individuals was entirely unjustified and disruptive to a committee whose actions were blameless in trying to provide a valuable new asset to all Parishioners. Those individuals should, in my opinion, close their eyes to hide their shame.

Among the many things that disturb me about all these events is the manner in which the EHC standards sub-committee was convened, how it operated, how they divulged their conclusions and the consequences of the publication of their findings in the press as a result.

I cannot in all consciousness accept that the EHC standards sub committee's procedures and policies in dealing with these complaints, which prevent those people subjected to complaints from the opportunity of making their own comments on any accusations or allegations in return. I will come

back to this in a moment but I am now considering taking legal action against the standards sub committee and will be reporting their performance to their own Code of Conduct Committee - which of course is somewhat ironic. I do not feel that it is appropriate that whilst I am dealing with this matter that I continue as Chairman of the MHPC and at the end of this statement I will stand down as Chairman and resign as a Parish Councillor.

To further explain the aforementioned statement, Cllr Bannerman and I received notification of the accusations / complaints 5 days - which was the bare minimum by law before the date set for the sub committee hearing. On inspection of the paperwork containing the complaints of Mrs Farmer, I could clearly see that there were numerous inaccuracies, falsehoods and errors in her text. I contacted the MHPC solicitor from Tees Law to ask advice on how we should proceed as I had major concerns about the contents of Mrs Farmers complaint and also that Cllr Graham McAndrew who is known to the Parish Council and some of the complainants was perhaps conflicted to sit on the sub committee for that reason. I asked for a few days delay to clarify these points and the solicitor spoke to Jeff Hughes of EHC who had been named on the correspondence. Mr Hughes said that the standards sub committee would consider the complaints and if minded to do so consider the matter in a private meeting without press and public present. Mr Hughes said that myself and or Cllr Bannerman need not attend and that the sub committee was merely going to make recommendations as to whether further investigations were necessary. He specifically advised our solicitor that if the affected councillors made written submissions in respect to the complaint / allegations at this stage, these would not be placed before the sub committee at the initial hearing. Mr Hughes did not accept that Cllr McAndrew was conflicted and would be part of the sub committee and not replaced as requested.

On Thursday last week I heard that the decisions had been made from a Parishioner who had read them in the Herts and Essex Observer. No one from EHC had the courtesy to inform me directly. The article repeated several of the falsehoods and errors in Mrs Farmers complaint but these were stated now as evidence and not opinion. Mr Hughes followed up with a written account of the meeting and recommendations sent to me which also referred to evidence presented and not opinion.

The concerns we had about this matter were forwarded to our District Councillor Ian Devonshire. Cllr Devonshire responded:

Hi Selina,

I don't understand how this has got into the public domain, as I was advised not to attend this sub committee meeting as it was a private consultative meeting. I have not yet read the local paper but I fully understand that this will have caused unnecessary stress. Happy to talk if you want.

Ian Devonshire.

I find it extraordinary that our village District Councillor was advised not to attend this meeting, an important meeting concerning his home village as it was a private consultative meeting and yet the meeting went ahead at the 11th hour as a public meeting. I find this very strange and worrying. It is also worrying that the press reported an entirely one sided view of the matter without having heard another account or checked the veracity of the statements.

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I believe I am in a much better position to challenge the decisions and statements which I may consider to be wrong by East Herts Council and any future Much Hadham Parish Council by being freed from the restrictions of being involved with the Parish Council especially as Chairman - and it is on a matter of principle concerning the recent activities of the standards sub committee of EHC and the continuing disruptive behaviour of Cllr Hunt that I hereby resign.

Thank you for your attention.

Richard Key

App A

Dear Chairman,

I joined the MHPC with only solid and honest intentions. I have lived here nearly all my life. So unlike many I do have an understanding of the village and the people who live here. I wanted to improve the sporting provision for children and the village as a whole, and also to support Selina in helping finish the wonderful Pavilion and to carry on improvement work to the other assets the village own.

It became clear early on that the new Parish Council had a team that had a multitude of skills that if used effectively could lead to huge improvements to the assets of the village and the running of the PC in general.

What is clear to us all now is that a small group of people do not want change in Much Hadham they want the Status Quo. What is the Status Quo?

No children's sport at the recreation ground, a facility that let's not forget was given first and foremost for the use by children of the Parish.

No Cricket, so many came up to us during the run up to and during the opening of the Pavilion and expressed the hope of Cricket returning. When discussions started with a cricket club with the view to using the facility the Chairman of the SA stated 'I am a VP of that club and it will never happen'. I was shocked.

People ask why no grants were applied for in respect of the Pavilion project. The reason?

Because no children or young people play sport on the sports field or use the pavilion.

We had the potential to apply for multiple grants to Sport England for all the equipment and upgrading of the playing surfaces and there was a small chance, if, the Pavilion was multi-sport to pay off the loan on the Pavilion as a whole project. This will not now happen.

I feel that the Chairman of the SA and a few members of the tennis club are doing the village a great disservice, Charity Commission records show £150,000 spent in 9 years and what does the village have to show for that? Just this week nearly £1000 of fete money will be spent on three light bulbs on the tennis courts, yet this publicly owned facility remains the domain of a private club, locked and hardly used, why?

The two football teams who use the ground were the only people who thanked the PC for the work that had been done to the Pavilion. Not one kind word, not one positive statement has been made by the SA. The footballers were thrilled and have looked after this wonderful facility. The public whom we serve were delighted except a small group of people hell bent on suggesting without any evidence there has been some conspiracy to defraud, outrageous, but why?

The maintenance of Village hall which is an asset of the Parish council has been in the hands of an unelected and unaccountable group the Village Hall committee. It is plain for all to see what an appalling job has been done, tens of thousands of pounds to be squandered on unnecessary work while the Green Room floor lay rotting. The Gents toilets stink and have not been updated since I was a child, £90,000 spent in a 6 year period. It's a disgrace, its time the PC took control of its own assets.

I have tried to work with Ian Hunt, but following his approach to doing business and working with colleagues he has received a litany of complaints. This resulted in an EGM where a vote of no confidence was made against him. He made a qualified apology but not in public, some

of whom he had insulted who had after all, only put their hands in their own pockets, and to raise money free of charge for the new Pavilion, why would he do that? Why would he behave in such a belligerent fashion?

I am sorry, but I cannot continue to give my time to this village if myself and my colleagues are to be subjected to verbal abuse, nasty emails, unreasonable and uncooperative behaviour. We should all be working for the same aims. Instead, those accountable in law are treated to a barrage of abuse. Every single piece of correspondence will demonstrate that it is the PC that has bent over backwards to cooperate and work with these sub committees.

Councillor Hunt quite obviously will not make an apology and resign.

I cannot and will not work with this man; it is with great regret, that I feel I must resign.

Richard Key.

1st December 2015

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Dear Chairman

Please consider this my resignation letter. I would like to read this statement and attach it to the minutes of this meeting in its entirety.

This statement has been prepared with the assistance of a solicitor and each word has been approved. This is detailed because it represents an accurate account of the pavilion set up and aspirations of the Pavilion committee including those who have already resigned from the Parish Council and intends to clear up the accusations levelled at the Pavilion Committee and particularly myself for the sake of those parishioners who cannot believe what they are hearing amongst the High Street chatter... and for good reason they are not believing what they hear. I would like to thank all the people who have sent emails, and called to express their support for myself and those others on the pavilion Committee since the Oct 6th meeting and since the article in the paper was published. It was quite overwhelming.

When I put my name up for election to the Parish Council over two years ago, I did so because I was made aware at the school gates of a great deal of dissatisfaction at the lack of use by children of the Recreation Ground. There was a swell of feeling that the Sports Association was run by three lobbying groups who looked after their own interests before those of the Parish as a whole; men's football, tennis and bowls. These concerns were expressed to me directly by residents.

After I was elected I was asked by the Chair if I would like to take on refurbishing the existing run down and not fit for the purpose, pavilion. I said I would be pleased to do that. We managed to get a pavilion completely renovated and opened on time and on build-budget. It took a huge amount of personal effort and time from several of us to ensure this was the case. We did this because we wanted to create a facility for our generation to use and for generations to come.

On top of that, after some research into fund raising I devised and executed a donation scheme called Buy a Brick which would help to tie in the children of the Parish to the Pavilion in terms of them taking responsibility for the building if they felt some sort of ownership of it rather than being excluded. It was an opportunity to donate specifically to a parish asset and by the names of those who donated being written on the "brick wall" it was a visible community statement of asset ownership.

This idea took a considerable effort to develop, design, advertise and implement through setting up the on line donations and much behind the scenes action that no one ever sees or hears about. All of this was done with great enthusiasm and excitement about the new building taking shape and getting finished on time and a lot of help and ideas came from Helen Baxter and Lisa Keys, who in the process became friends. Fete day came and we opened with a flurry of manic activity and with the wall already set up so that people could come and sign their names on the wall for a donation if they wished. It was a huge success and many came that day and paid £10 per "brick" to write their name on the wall. Kids and adults ranging from 6 months to 99 years old have their names on this wall now.

The ultimate aim was to ensure that this pavilion was well maintained and looked after going forward and protecting this community asset. To this end a Pavilion Committee was formed in the summer of 2015. This committee was a subcommittee of the Parish Council with delegated powers as represented in the minutes.

Myself and Tony Baxter asked John Carey to come on as Vice Chairman because his energy, time and enthusiasm for the pavilion and the Rec ground was well known. He has three young children and wanted them to have the use for the Pavilion and the field as they grew up. He was a chartered accountant and in fact is my families chartered accountant and as such had the required skill set to assist with the finances. We then asked Mike Keogh to come on as a parishioner and in fact shortly after that he put himself forward for co-option to the Parish Council. Likewise Richard Key joined as a Parish Councillor as he had joined the Parish Council also with a view to establishing cricket on the Rec ground again and promoting that sports ground. Annica Farley was asked if she would help set up a booking system and despite being very busy she said would set this up for someone else to then take over and manage as needed. All these people were giving up many hours and worked tirelessly which is why the PC needed them to be on the committee in the first place.

Once we had the pavilion up and running and a fully functioning booking system and self funding the intention was to for a couple of us to step away to concentrate on other parish matters but it was essential that a system of responsible management was in place before that could happen. Hence the Pavilion committee has been working tirelessly to ensure that this is the case.

It was and still is, intended that the Pavilion becomes self sufficient so it can sustain itself financially and to achieve that, we needed to collect an income. To collect an income we needed to furnish it and make it fit for this purpose. We needed to protect the building by buying locks and ensuring that we are within insurance regulations, Fire regulations and Health and safety. We needed to provide toilet paper and cleaning materials and a cleaner for

John Carey and myself have acted as Caretakers. We met people that needed access and made sure the building was locked back up and often in unsociable or awkward times. We did it for free. We have not hired a caretaker in order to keep the costs down. Ideally we should have a caretaker and ultimately if we can achieve enough rental this is what should happen rather than rely on volunteers who have no real reporting obligation. The cleaner that cleans the pavilion is a local lady who was totally flexible and is paid for by the money that any rental incurs. She only cleans if there has been use of the building and that is then paid for by the hirer so she is no cost.

Another local lady Jill, opens up the outside toilet at 2pm on weekdays, cleans and locks it again at 4pm and is paid £10 a day. In the holiday she opened at 11am and cleaned and locked at 4 pm so that children and families in the play ground could access a toilet for a greater part of the day- still for £10 a day. This has provided a huge amount of community involvement in the play ground and the Rec after school. Families stay longer to play and

kids get fresh air and exercise. Family time is spent outside and the children have social interaction and play-time which is what the space should be all about.

We were thrilled. Thrilled as the majority of the Parish and those who donated money for Buy a Brick. The £10 cleaning bill for the playground and the the fixtures and furnishings did not come for free as any reasonable person would realise. These were paid for from the pot of money that came in via the marketing strategy including Buy a Brick. We used the concept to engage with people to ask for donations privately. One was with a gift of £5000, a very significant contribution to the campaign with the request that his name was not acknowledging on a brick. The other was The Play Much Hadham group who gave us £4448.00 towards the cost of the toilet that would service the playground that 'Play Much Hadham' had built and also towards the veranda for kids and parents to shelter under whilst using the playground and recreational field. Rachel Lawson who represented that charity has received a confirmation of this from the PC.

All this money went into one account and that was the Much Hadham Parish Council bank account. The private cheques, the cash donations, the Go Fund Me online donations all went into the only account that the Parish Council has. This is not precept money raised through taxation. These are donations. It is accounted for as donations and an account of income and expenditure has been kept in a running tally by the Vice Chairman of the Pavilion Committee John Carey. This was in coordination with our very experienced Clerk John Ingham. All receipts were kept and handed into John Carey for logging and then were checked again by John Ingham for reimbursement. Only John Ingham has the cheque book. No cheques have been written without the proper signatures of which there have to be at least two, and none without an accompanying receipt.

The work was a huge team effort from the Pavilion Committee with The Key family, The Carey family, The Baxter family and the Keogh Family and Annica Farley, who also spent their own time, donations, fuel and energy on these expeditions as well as hours on line and on the phone trying to work out where the best deals were, Costco trips for cheaper cleaning supplies and researching the cost of the tables and chairs trying to keep costs to a minimum all for the benefit of the Parish pavilion. A significant amount of free labour was provided by us all and our children. Calum and Richard spent a whole weekend and follow up every evening preparing and bedding in turf around the pavilion to ensure it looked great for the opening despite this not being the remit of the Pavilion committee.

The Pavilion was finished on August 28th. Three days early and on budget. A dishwasher and fridge was donated by John Carey.

With the Pavilion built everyone was happy; kids and parents happy to have a toilet to use whilst in the play ground, parents happy that their kids are outside playing, church lunch happy as they have tables and chairs to sit around, children's parties and footballers with great new change rooms; all happy.

We have a lady who wants to sell cake that she's made at home and coffees that she has made so she bought a machine with her own money. She set up her mobile cake and coffee business and pays money to the pavilion at the same rate as everyone else of £10 per hour.

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She very kindly saved us a trip to Ikea and spent her own time and buying cheap and easily replaced, white crockery for the use of the pavilion. She has been refunded for this.

She is a local Mum with two very small kids at the local school. She had noticed there is nowhere for local parents to go to after the school run for a social gathering with the children and somewhere for parents and also dog walkers to meet and chat, compare notes and their young children interact.

We thought this was a great idea. The community spirit and support that we all aspire to live amongst, in a venue others aspire to have and with someone who benefits as an entrepreneur and offering a service as well. This provides the Pavilion with £20 per day income from 9-11 am Monday to Friday, That's £100 per week. That pays for the cleaner for the outside toilet which is £50 per week and leaves £50 extra which goes into the account on the plus side.

And there we were! Self sufficient to a degree within less than 4 weeks and providing a free service to the families of this community covered by the café rent alone. We have rent from the Café, the footballers and parties, lunches etc all within four very short weeks.

However, since then there have been allegations made by a member of the public in an open committee meeting on Oct 6th that the Pavilion Committee had misappropriated tax payers money. The specific allegation was the Buy a Brick money was there to repay the loan but was infact being used to pay the toilet cleaner which was not what they wished their donation to go towards. As I have previously stated, all monies raised through donations have been used to finance the setting up of the pavilion and establishing it as a venue to rent with the rental income thus supporting its running costs. The exact penny that was raised through the Go Fund me site and the selling of the 'bricks' is still in the bank account. That member of the public had site of the accounts and the running costs have always been transparent to the Clerk for the entire 5 weeks that the furnishing etc occurred.

One particular resident along with One Councillor, has decided that none of this has been done to their liking or in a format that they approve of. Ironically this resident was on the parish council themselves and could have rebuilt the pavilion and set up the committee as they saw fit at the time but did not. Instead we are baited at each meeting and with emails in between meetings. On the particular occasion of the meeting on Oct 6th, and due to accusations of this resident, we had no choice but to request our solicitor to write a "cease and desist" letter in response to the allegations made as to financial wrong doing.

However, during this time and since my joining the Parish Council, there have been several attempts at trying to get the Sports Association and some of its members to understand that they were viewed as non contributing and in fact exclusionary of the Parish residents to no avail. I made no secret of the fact that I thought that this process was deeply flawed and benefitted no one other than the three existing inhabitants of the Rec Ground and Sports Association. This was a group who clearly did not want change and particularly not if it involved sharing. It demonstrated no initiative to encourage sport.

5

Since challenging the Sports Association there have been readings of the 1947 and 1949 Deeds when the land was given to the Parish and also many questions asked by some, as to the use of the Rec ground by a private tennis club and the lack of benefit of the rec ground as a whole to the Parish and particularly the children who were mentioned specifically in the deed. It is quite clear that the land was intended as a community asset.

This line of enquiry and my point that in my view there has been a dereliction of duty on the part of the Sports Association towards the Parish not been popular with some members of the sports association although I would like to say that the gentlemen footballers have been really helpful since we started the last leg of the pavilion and have treated it like gold since its opening.

The fundamental problem we have in the parish is very simple. There is a conflict that is derived from the makeup of three parties and their legal and social responsibilities.

There are assets that you the parishioners own. The main assets you own are the Village Hall and the Pavilion and Recreation Ground. The assets are owned by the Parish Council on your behalf and are therefore responsible for them.

However, the management of the Rec Ground and until Aug 31st 2015, the Pavilion, is the responsibility of the Sports Association. They are not answerable in any proper fashion to the Parish Council, which is you. The Deeds written state that the grounds are to be for the benefit of the school children and others. There is no method of redress however when the Sports Association does not do what is stated in the deeds.

There is a huge conflict of interest in having a ground being run by a group of people that lobby for their own interests and not necessarily those of the Parish. There is no neutral party but a group of individuals who, unless they are selfless and community spirited, look after the ground, tennis courts and bowls club for themselves.

A simple request to allow children one free hour of tennis a day during the school holidays started what we have here today. A few people, and by no means the majority of the members of the tennis club, who seem to demonstrate a sense of entitlement so great that sharing is beyond them. The deeds didn't specify that the children should get free access but the courts are empty most of the time, most days. Sharing was free. After one and half years of trying there has been 6 free hours given under the supervision of a tennis instructor who was there to promote the club getting new paid members. The idea was that the kids didn't have to become members.

If this parish wants to have fully functioning and maintained assets there needs to be some work done to bring the deeds in line with accountability. There is little scope to remove the existing SA body and until some of those personnel are changed there will always be conflict.

6

It is with great regret that I am resigning but the campaign to derail all the good that has been done by building the pavilion and the appalling way I feel myself and the members of the pavilion committee have been treated makes it impossible to continue. I wish I could say I am leaving you the shiny new pavilion in safe hands but in my view I am not. Cllr Hunt has already proposed that the pavilion be handed back to the Sports Association so I have no doubt that this will soon become a venue for the use of the tennis club and not much else.

As George Orwell said:

"The further a society drifts from the truth the more it will hate those that speak it".

John Carey

App A

Dear Chairman

I have lived in the village for over 8 years now and have kept myself pretty low key. I run several diverse businesses and have a strong commercial skill set. I get things done.

In April this year I was approached by several members of the PC and asked if I could help Cllr Bannerman see the tail end of the pavilion refurb project through to its delivery for the August fete and help set up its booking, marketing and ongoing maintenance and management thereafter.

I gladly agreed – a way to serve the community that would draw on my skills but I also saw it as an opening to help deliver something that I and many other have long thought is missing from this village – sport and activity for children and youth.

With three young children of my own – I have travelled far and wide to provide sport activity for the oldest (now 10) and would love to see a new burst of activity at the pavilion and recreation ground for my upcoming two who are 3 & 1 respectively.

At the May PC meeting we accepted our appointments (there were other reps from the SA and village members on the committee along with SA reps) and agreed to report back to the June meeting with our thoughts on our headline terms of reference – which we did and this was agreed by the PC at the June meeting.

During the summer the Pavilion Committee held several meetings, chaired by myself, which all immediately took a strange turn. From thinking we were all pushing for the same thing – to deliver on the Deed from 1947 and provide activity for the children (and others) of this village – the members of the SA did not want the Pavilion Committee to get involved in any kind of promotion of activity either in the pavilion or on the grounds – when we sought football teams and other sporting activities, these were strongly discouraged and rebuffed by the SA. This mystified me – what harm would it do to have MORE activity. When we asked for junior pitches to be marked, this was also denied and refused point blank. Why?

Despite this weird stand-off, I took on the role of VC with some gusto – we had a pavilion to deliver, and, thanks to Cllr Bannerman, the builders and her close support team (other Cllr's wives etc) the pavilion opened to a fanfare on the fete day as required – on time and to budget. What an impressive building it is too, I am sure no one can argue with that.

In late August and early September we collected donations, raised funds – as agreed, the pavilion needed to be fit for purpose and ready to take bookings.

All expenditure made from that point was on essential items – either to make the building safe and secure, ensure it was insured at all times or was kitted out to basic standards for rental. Again, all in our remit as agreed at the June PC meeting that I attended. We also opened the external toilet for parents and kids to use after school – this, of course, necessitated a caretaker/cleaner to be engaged. All within our remit and delivering on that kind 1947 deed.

We welcomed childrens parties, the two football teams, church groups and private parties – all loved the new surroundings – but we were hamstrung about introducing sport as the SA had told us it was not our job to even promote such. Sadly the secondary vision of my children on the field in a couple of years playing organised sport (of some kind!) was fading fast – but we kept on promoting the use of the pavilion, setting up a booking and payment system, engaging a cleaner and welcoming a café opening most mornings of the week.

During this period – the SA wrote to the Chairman (they NEVER wrote to or spoke to me or even copied me in - invisible?) and said they wanted nothing more to do with the Pavilion Committee (in its current form) and would not attend any more meetings – but they would like the minutes....(curious!) which I continued to send.

I attended the PC meeting on 6th October 2015 to give a full verbal and financial update on the pavilion – what money we had raised, what we had spent and what we had achieved. We were proud of what we had achieved. I co-incidentally had been out of the country for the previous three meetings (July, August and September) but minutes had been circulated to ALL pavilion committee members (SA included).

Before my slot, this was usurped by accusations from the floor – mainly from one of the ex-Pav Comm/SA members (Ms Alex Farmer) that money had been misspent, no one donated to the pavilion to pay for a cleaner, no one wanted a telly for kids to watch, no one wanted a coffee machine and the Pavilion Committee were acting in some way dishonestly. Quite whose opinions these were it was not clear.

This was then quickly followed by a long speech from Cllr Hunt saying the same but in much more detail also accusing us of not following procedure, not disclosing expenditure or meeting minutes. Give me a chance – it was only five weeks after the opening ceremony, we were a bit caught up in delivering a project not writing its life story! And why had no one asked me for any of this – public meeting ambush? I think so.

I attempted to rebut the accusations in the room but was so shocked that they had been made and with no official standing on the room, I couldn't do very much. How could a set of VOLUNTEERS who had given their substantial time and money to a fantastic village asset with ONE COMMON GOAL in mind be treated in such a way?

That evening I asked Cllr Hunt and Ms Farmer to meet with me so I could dispel their inaccuracies and falsehoods and start again. Ms Farmer did not respond, Cllr Hunt then entered into a 16 email exchange where he accused my colleagues and I of many other things on top of what he had publicly stated.

I immediately wrote a letter of complaint to the Chairman and EHDC demanding a retraction and apology – none has ever come from Cllr Hunt, nor has he had the temerity to come and speak to me or any other person on the Pavilion Committee, to find out the TRUTH. Therefore the assertion that there was impropriety in our actions has been left to spread throughout the village. Our conduct has been nothing but honourable.

3

My personal opinion, based on many months trying to work as one with my fellow villagers on this project is as follows:

The SA are in dereliction of duty on two pretty fundamental counts:

they let the previous pavilion fall into disrepair and will do so to this one if it is left in their control
My babies were weighed in the old pavilion and it was disgusting. In my honest opinion, time alone did not do all the damage, I build and maintain houses, neglect is what ruined that pavilion.

They are also actively discouraging any activity on the recreation field of MH aside from the cosy, existing, elitist arrangements – Bowls, Tennis and the two Football Teams. Why? I am mystified – they have seen off all and every attempt to get children on those fields (I have my own evidence of this as well as emails and personal statements from the recent past).

The good people who donated that field and set out the terms of use must be spinning in their graves at what has been allowed to happen.

Lastly, the SA and a small group of very driven (driven by what I don't know) individuals seem to want to spitefully push back on any progress trying to be made with the pavilion by attacking those making such progress – a little group rich, elitist, unwelcoming, spiteful, bullying and repulsive people I have never seen the likes of.

After thinking my family were here for life, I have put my house on the market. I don't want my young children being schooled and raised alongside such people as it may rub off. I resign my post as VC of the pavilion committee.

John Carey

1-12-15

AppC

Mr J Ingham
Clerk – Much Hadham Parish
Council
Chequers
Nasty
Ware
Herts SG11 1HP

Your contact: Jeff Hughes
Ext: 2170

Date: 30 November 2015

Dear Mr Ingham

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Council's Standards Sub-Committee met recently to consider complaints that some members of Much Hadham Parish Council had breached its Code of Conduct.

The allegations were considered in accordance with the procedure approved by the District Council – which has jurisdiction over such matters. They were centred on the behaviour of certain members at a meeting of the Parish Council held on 6 October 2015.

In considering the complaints and information provided by the complainants, it was evident to the Sub-Committee that the debate at this meeting became heated.

Standards Sub-Committee agreed that I should notify Much Hadham Parish Council that it would encourage all persons involved with that authority and the pavilion project to conduct meetings in a moderate and mutually respectful manner. Whoever was chairing meetings should use that office to achieve this objective. All members of an authority should treat their fellow members with respect and, where meetings become heated, a Chairman's discretion be exercised to call for a temporary adjournment to facilitate further debate in a moderate and calm manner.

The Sub-Committee expressed a view that transparency in all forms of government was an important principle and noted the entitlement of elected representatives to call for transparency and accountability in relation to the expenditure of the public's money. Insofar as it fell within the Sub-Committee's remit, I was requested to notify Much Hadham Parish Council of its view that all concerned with the issue at the heart of the complaint ("the pavilion project") should ensure full transparency in relation to the associated decision making processes and financial activities and be welcoming of questions, whether from residents or councillors, designed to elicit transparency. The Sub-Committee considered that you, as the proper officer of the parish council, had a particular responsibility to ensure that the activities of the authority were fully transparent to all parishioners.

The Sub-Committee further agreed to request me to offer to provide training to Much Hadham Parish Councillors on the provisions of their code of conduct, particularly as they apply to debate at meetings of the authority.

I'd be grateful if you could bring the content of this letter to the attention of your Authority at a formal meeting as soon as possible and advise me whether or not it wishes to accept the training offer.

Yours sincerely

Jeff Hughes

Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services

jeff.hughes@eastherts.gov.uk

MHPC – Highways Report – 1 December, 2015

Black Bridge Lane

We are arranging for a site meeting to be held next week (7 – 11 December) to review the continuing problems with drainage, and try to identify solutions. This will be attended by Ringway, HCC's contractors, local residents, and members of the PC

Kettle Green Lane

The dangerous pothole downhill from the Moor Park entrance was reported, and a temporary repair was effected within 24 hours. We continue to monitor the progress of the building work at Nimney Bourne, where mud is being brought on to the road from time to time despite the hardstanding laid at the site entrance.

Church Lane

The flooding after heavy rain appears to be getting worse so we will add this to our agenda when next meeting Ringway / HCC. It is not known if this is connected to the recent kerbing of the right hand side at that point. Clearing the drains is potentially work that we could undertake ourselves.

Culverts and Flooding

The grilles protecting the culverts on Cox Lane and Bromley Lane were clogged with leaves and branches, presenting a serious risk of flooding. They were both cleared by volunteers, under the terms of the Council's Letter of Enablement.

The burst culvert at The Hall (opposite The Bull) has been reported to HCC, but it is the responsibility of the Hall's owners to repair it.

Snell's Corner

The volume of water flowing along the left side of the B1004 has been getting worse, even without heavy rain, so this too will be added to the agenda.

Perry Green and Green Tye verges

HCC (Paul Patmore) has provided a paper with costed options for Joyce's Corner: the main ones being a road widening, so that permanent surfacing replaces the potholes (and the concerns around consequences for the speed of traffic are appreciated), or filling and levelling the potholes with a medium compound that will take vehicle weight, if necessary, but be distinct from the road surface so as not to represent a widening.

This paper is now being considered by ~~with~~ members of the hamlets communities.

Street Lights

A fairly comprehensive updating of HCC's highways reporting for street light faults has been carried out including, for example, Windmill Way, Station Road and Church Lane.

The issue of street lighting is one that we will need to debate fully at some point – the general condition of the lampposts, coverage (which is a debate about balancing the safety of pedestrians with the need to avoid light pollution), whether HCC will offer LED lighting and whether we want it, etc. There are no simple answers to these questions, and currently no funds to invest in solutions either.

AJY / IH – 1/12/15

App E

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PAVILION REFURBISHMENT COST AND FUNDING

	£
Refurbishment contract	(114,280)
Architect's fees	(6,656)
Fixtures, fittings and furnishings	(3,264)
	<hr/>
	(124,200)
<u>Funded by:</u>	
Public Works Loan Board	80,000*
General Reserve	20,000
New Homes Bonus	10,039
Chaldean Trust	5,000
Play Much Hadham	4,449
Buy A Brick	2,888
	<hr/>
	122,376
	<hr/>
Shortfall (met from contingency budget for 2015/16)	(1,824)
	<hr/>

Notes:

* The loan is over 20 years at 3.08%. Half yearly repayments £2,693.73 payable 20 May / 20 November. £12,809 (Section 106 agreement money) will reduce the £80,000 loan wef May 2016 and half yearly repayments will reduce correspondingly.

Figures are unaudited, ex-VAT, and as at 29 November 2015

App F

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Financial Statement as at 14 November 2015

	Parish Council	Burial Authority	Total
Income	205,647.81	13,720.56	219,368.37
Expenditure	173,523.65	1,157.42	174,681.07
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	32,124.16	12,563.14	44,687.30
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Fund Balances

Barclays Bank Business Reserve Account		47.46
Nat West Reserve Account		28,448.20
Nat West Current Account	18,876.57	
<u>Less:</u> Unpresented cheques: Parish Council	3,731.93	
	<hr/>	
	15,144.64	
<u>Plus</u> not yet credited	1,047.00	
	<hr/>	
		16,191.64
		<hr/>
		44,687.30
		<hr/>

Note:

£20,000 earmarked as contribution towards refurbishment of the pavilion.
£10,000 earmarked for providing a Neighbourhood Plan.
£10,039 New Homes Bonus received from East Herts Council (earmarked towards
refurbishment of the pavilion).
£40,039

App G

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL
SUGGESTED CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

2016

- Tuesday, 5 January, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Tuesday, 2 February, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Tuesday, 1 March, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Tuesday, 5 April, at Green Tye Mission Hall
- Tuesday, 3 May, at Much Hadham Village Hall (Annual Meetings)
- Tuesday, 7 June, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Tuesday, 5 July, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Tuesday, 2 August, at Green Tye Mission Hall
- Tuesday, 6 September, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Tuesday, 4 October, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Monday, 7 November, at Much Hadham Village Hall
- Monday, 5 December, at Much Hadham Village Hall