

## **MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 5 April 2016, in the Green Tye Mission Hall.

\*Cllr W Compton

\*Cllr B Morris

\*Cllr I Hunt

\*Cllr Mrs M O'Neill

\*Cllr Mrs J Liversage

\*Cllr Mrs P Taylor (Vice Chairman)

\* denotes present.

In attendance: 38 members of the public.  
Plus Cllr Devonshire

### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

#### (i) Chairman

RESOLVED that Cllr Mrs Taylor be duly elected Chairman of the Parish Council.

#### (ii) Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Cllr Hunt be duly elected Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

Note: Both the above appointments would be until the Annual Parish Council meeting to be held on Tuesday, 3 May 2016.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

Cllr Morris gave notice that he would be recording the proceedings of the meeting.

### 4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman paid tribute to the former Chairman, Alex Young, who she stated had contributed a great deal to the Council and a number of the initiatives promoted by Alex would be taken forward by the Council.

A warm welcome was extended to Cllr Compton.

A reference was made to the fact that there were still three vacancies on the Parish Council and an election had been called for 5 May 2016. The Chairman expressed a hope that residents would come forward to fill the vacancies in order to obviate the need for yet another election.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1 March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

6. MATTERS ARISING

None.

6 URGENT BUSINESS (Agenda item 12)

Cllr Hunt moved a motion a motion under Standing Order 10 (vi) to change the order of business on the agenda and take item 12 Urgent Business now. This was to receive information about the proposals for residential development of land belonging to Chaldean Estates from the representative of their agents, Strutt and Parker. The reason for hearing the presentation was to enable residents to have the information before agenda item "Residents' Comments", rather than subsequent to it.

This was emphatically not a public consultation at this stage.

On a vote this motion was carried.

Cllr Hunt stated that under the terms of this agenda item, which was merely to receive information, councillors could ask brief questions to clarify what they would hear. No decisions were being taken this evening.

It was further RESOLVED that under Standing Order 10xv the order of business be suspended.

PRESENTATION

The Chairman introduced Mr Nichols of Strutt and Parker who was acting as agent for the Chaldean Estates.

Cllr Compton stated that the invitation to Strutt and Parker had been on the understanding that a brief overview of their clients' proposals was to be given to the meeting. The platform did not represent a public consultation exercise and it was hoped that a public meeting would be called at a later date at which a full consultation exercise could take place with members of the public.

Mr Nichols opened by stating that he wished to allay any fears that residents might have concerning the 4 sites which had been identified as being possible sites which could be developed in the future. He appreciated that the parish was engaged in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and Chaldean Estates was merely putting forward the sites as an exploratory exercise to ascertain whether they had any development merits. Mr Nichols stated that any land development should respect the local landscape and Chaldean Estates wanted to be a good neighbour and would fully engage with the Parish Council. A plan was circulated to members of the audience showing the 4 sites in question, viz:

- (i) Outside the parish, at Barwick Ford.
- (ii) North of Spindle Bridge.

- (iii) Behind Bramleigh Cottage off Kettle Green Lane.
- (iv) Triangular site to the west of Millers View.

Cllr Morris stated that with regard to one of the sites, west of Millers View, consultants had been observed marking out the site for potentially the provision of 20 houses.

Cllr Mrs Liversage sought an assurance that Chaldean Estates would listen to the wishes of the Parish Council and that, if none of the sites proposed were acceptable to the Parish Council, they would not be pursued. Mr Nichols stated that Chaldean Estates wished to work with the Parish Council and would want to do things the right way.

Cllr Morris stated that all of the 4 sites identified were outside the village envelope (East Herts Local Plan 2007) and he queried whether any other sites had been identified within the village envelope. An assurance was given that no further sites had been identified. Cllr Morris also referred to rumours concerning the possible provision of a Care Home for the elderly and an extension to the village school. Mr Nichols stated that he was not aware of such rumours. He did confirm that Chaldean Estates was not trying to jump the gun and was not considering any planning submission. The merits of the sites proposed were being considered and there would be full engagement with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr Compton sought an assurance as to whether it was the intention to call a public meeting at a later date. Mr Nichols responded in the affirmative.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked Mr Nichols for the information imparted to the Council.

## 7. MEMBERS' REPORTS

### (i) Sports Association

Cllr Mrs Liversage stated that there had been no further meeting of the Association since the last meeting of the Parish Council. Members were asked to note that the Annual General Meeting of the Association would be held on Thursday, 14 April 2016. This meeting would not be open to the public.

### (ii) Pavilion

Cllr Mrs Liversage informed members that Mr John Clarke had made a further inspection of the premises and he had identified a number of snagging issues. The builder had increased the height of the threshold to the showers. However, it was uncertain whether this had addressed the water overflow problem. Once the snagging issues had been addressed a final certificate would be issued to allow the release of the retention money.

The Building Control Officer had made an inspection of the pavilion and he had signed off the building as having been completed.

The lady who ran the coffee shop had asked to re-open for two afternoons a week (Wednesdays and Fridays) as an experiment which was very encouraging.

(iii) Highways

Cllr Hunt gave an update on the highways issues, which were contained in the attached report (see Appendix A).

In response to a question from Cllr Compton, Cllr Hunt stated that there was no need for residents to report street light faults on the B1004 as the County Council's regular inspections identified and addressed such faults. However, street light faults on other roads should be reported using the online Highways Fault Reporting site, which was very easy to use and appeared to be effective.

(iv) Parish Paths Partnership

Cllr Morris gave an update on the recent work undertaken as contained in the attached document (see Appendix B).

With regard to FP26, Cllr Morris referred to the damage being caused to the owner's fence by the gate and he requested authority to arrange for remedial work to be undertaken. Cllr Morris was informed that the Council at its meeting held on 6 October 2015 had resolved for work to be undertaken in the sum of £150.

RESOLVED that delegated powers be given to Cllr Morris to arrange for the necessary work to be undertaken.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hunt gave an update on the Neighbourhood Plan as contained in the attached report (see Appendix C).

Cllr Compton enquired whether it was the intention to publish the Plan in advance of the emerging District Plan or to wait until the District Plan was published. Cllr Hunt stated that the Neighbourhood Plan would proceed at pace and a decision would be taken as to when to publish once the Plan was nearer completion. A meeting with East Herts Council's Neighbourhood Plan Officer was due to be held later this week at which this and other issues would be raised.

(vi) Village Hall

Cllr Mrs Liversage informed members that the Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall Manager was scheduled to take place on 28 April 2016. The meeting would not be open to the public.

(vii) Other matters

Cllr Hunt referred to the poor condition of the notice boards generally throughout the parish and, especially the notice boards in Perry Green and Green Tye. Quotations would be sought to undertake remedial work and would be reported back to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

(viii) Facebook

The Chairman stated that the Much Hadham Parish Council facebook site was not intended to be a vehicle for a questions and answer exchange. It was there as a means of relaying factual information. Should members of the public wish to ask a question on any subject relating to Parish Council activities, then they were advised to channel their questions directly to the Parish Council for the members or the Clerk to address the issues raised.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr Devonshire reported on the following:

(i) Planning

He reiterated what had been previously stated in the meeting that current planning policy precluded development outside the village boundary and any such applications coming before the District Council would be refused. However, a reference was made to an exception which had been made in respect of the development of 3 homes at Old Station Yard which, although being outside the village boundary, had been granted permission on the basis of sustainability.

(ii) Potholes

In driving through the villages of Green Tye and Perry Green, Cllr Devonshire had been appalled at the uneven road surface and the number of large potholes. Cllr McAndrew (HCC) had been made aware of these concerns and had been asked for an explanation as to why there would appear to be no expense spared in maintaining a high standard of repair to potholes in Bishop's Stortford at, what would appear to be, the expense of the rural villages.

Members of the public were urged to use the fault reporting system as often as possible.

(iii) Emerging Local Plan

It was now envisaged that the Plan would be produced towards the end of 2016. There was now a degree of urgency in that the Government had made it known to local authorities that where the publication of a Local Plan was being delayed, consideration would be given to engaging another local authority to complete the task on its behalf. It was this threat which Cllr Devonshire felt would accelerate the present procedure.

A question was posed as to the timing of the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Hunt confirmed that a decision to publish would be taken once the situation regarding the emerging Local Plan was clarified.

With regard to the house building target, Cllr Devonshire confirmed that the next 15 years was set at 54 houses, being 10% of the existing housing stock. However, recent permissions granted in respect of 12 houses would count against this target.

9. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Chaldean Estate Development Proposals

A request was made for Strutt and Parker to convene a separate meeting to give a formal presentation of its proposals in respect of the sites identified in the village as potential sites for development. It was further requested that Mr Nichols be asked for a written statement of what he had said this evening.

Clarification was sought as to whether Chaldean Estates was linked with any other proposed developers.

Concerns were expressed regarding a remark made during the presentation of technical support being made available to the Neighbourhood Steering Group. In addition, a question was raised as to whether the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had met with Mr Morrison in November and had been made aware of the potential development sites now being put forward. The Chairman of the Steering Group stated categorically that no discussion had ever been undertaken with the Chaldean Estate on any of their proposed plans for future development within the parish. The email to the Clerk had been the first he had learned of the proposals.

(ii) Notices

Reference was made to a notice which had been written by a Parish Councillor and had been displayed on the parish notice board and circulated by email giving advice on how complaints received from residents would be dealt with.

The content of the notices and the suppressive intention was felt to be offensive.

The Chairman stated that the action taken by her had been to seek to draw to a close the inappropriateness in the content of emails emanating between Councillors and the public and to move forward in a constructive and positive way. It was worthy of note that to date only one person had registered his complaint about the said notice.

(iii) Danebridge Road and Snells Corner

A request was received for urgent remedial work to be undertaken to the potholes.

(iv) Handrail – bottom of Ash Meadow

A request was made for a repair to be effected.

(v) Website

Concerns were raised as to why 6 October 2015 minutes were not on the website.

The Chairman stated that the amended minutes had now been made available to her by the Clerk and she gave an assurance that the minutes would be on the website within the next week.

(vi) St Andrew's Church – Wall

Members' attention was drawn to the amount of ivy attached to the church wall, which, it was felt, was undermining the structure.

It was felt appropriate that the ivy remain attached to the wall but action be taken to cut the stems at the base. It was agreed to contact Much Hadham Landscapes with a view to having the work carried out.

(vii) Chaldean Estates Development

Clarification was sought as to the means of accessing the sites identified in the earlier presentation.

(viii) Jolly Waggoners

A question was raised as to the future of the site in that no action had been taken to undertake the planned refurbishment since the owners had been granted planning permission.

Cllr Morris stated that he was given to understand that the owner had had a personal injury which had precluded him from progressing the development.

(xi) Public Footpath - Dell Cottage

Cllr Compton enquired whether the Parish Council had objected to the changing of the footpath route. The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council had raised no objection.

10. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Sub-Committee be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

11. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts as set out in the attached statement (see Appendix E) be duly authorised for payment.

(ii) Financial Statement

Cllr Compton questioned why the cost of training had been met from the Neighbourhood Plan fund, which he stated had been set aside for the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. Such expenditure should have been met from a different budget.

Cllr Hunt responded that the expenditure was in respect of delegates fees for Neighbourhood Plan workshops organised by HAPTC and, as such, he felt that the expenditure was a legitimate expense to be met from the £10,000 earmarked.

Cllr Hunt referred to the financial position of the Council as at the end of the financial year and he stated that the Parish Council's funds were earmarked and there was nothing left over. The Clerk stated that the implication was that the Parish Council was insolvent, which was factually incorrect.

Cllr Hunt replied that he was not saying that the Council was insolvent or running out of cash, but that there were no spare funds, including the forthcoming precept income, that were not already earmarked for future spending.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

Already discussed.

13. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- To consider changing the Parish Council's current banking arrangements.

14. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, 3 May 2016, in the Much Hadham Village Hall. This meeting would be the Annual Parish Council meeting.

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.