

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 25th June 2019, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, Green Room, at 7:30 pm.

Cllr Mrs K Chesters	*Cllr B O'Neill
*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)	*Cllr S Smith
Cllr Mrs J Liversage	*Cllr Mrs P Taylor (Chair)
*Cllr D McDonald	*Cllr K Twort

* denotes present

In attendance: F Forth, Parish Clerk and 17 members of the public.

19/110. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllrs Mrs K Chesters and Mrs J Liversage.

19/111. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

19/112. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair highlighted that this extra meeting was being held as the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Cllr I Hunt, would be absent from next week's meeting and his presence was needed for the specific agenda item – to agree formally to initiate the next phase of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Consultation.

This consultation is expected to open on the 12th August and run for seven weeks. This is a week more than the statutory minimum due to the holiday season. Everyone will be able to comment on the content of the Plan which will be made available to the public at that time.

Prior to moving on to the next item, Cllr I Hunt provided the following additional information:

- a brief summary of the work that had been undertaken over the last 4 years to be at this stage, highlighting the wealth of information that is available on the dedicated website - <https://www.muchhadhamnp.com/> - and explaining that a rigorous process had been followed;
- not only have potential development sites been identified but also potential sites for protection as Local Green Spaces and Priority Views (see Appendix A);

- that the purpose of the Regulation 14 consultation is to invite residents and stakeholders to comment on a draft of the Neighbourhood Plan in advance of it being submitted to East Herts Council for independent examination;
- all Cllrs had attended a detailed briefing on a draft of the Plan which also an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions;
- documentation required for the consultation will be formally approved at the August Parish Council meeting and it was agreed that the draft Consultation Statement would be added to the website later this week;
- all households will receive a summary document of the policies with an explanatory statement by the commencement of the consultation. The full version of the Plan will be on the website and up to 15 hard copies will also be available at an open day during the consultation period;
- feedback on the Plan will be via a survey form and a validation requirement is that name and address details are completed. Forms will be retained and available for public inspection;
- feedback responses will be collated and published, including the Steering Group's response to the comments made. If the volume of responses is overwhelming, a summary will be produced; and
- consultation process for statutory consultees is detailed in the legislation and there is discretion to add to this for organisations specific to Much Hadham. For example, the Sports Association, the Moor Place Heritage Group and the Preservation Society in the hamlets.

Cllr I Hunt also thanked the Steering Group members for the resilience and tenacity with which the work had been completed.

19/113. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Transparency of consultation responses

Cllr I Hunt was thanked for the summary of the process to date and the knowledge that there will be transparency in terms of the consultation responses received. In response to a request for a definition of what would be considered an "overwhelming volume", Cllr I Hunt responded that it was not possible to define as there is no way to judge what the volume of consultation responses will be.

(ii) Action after consultation

A resident sought clarification regarding whether the consultation process could lead to significant changes being made in the Plan, for example, to remove a proposal.

Cllr I Hunt responded that it would depend on the volume and nature of the comments made. The Steering Group would be collating all responses received and will suggest what action should be taken for each. The Parish Council will decide what amendments, if any, will be made to the Plan.

Cllr I Hunt confirmed that the consultation process was the same as that used by East Herts Council when it consulted on the District Plan, and other pre-submission consultations. Finally, he assured those present that the Plan would not be forwarded for referendum unless it was considered that the majority of the parish would vote for it.

(iii) Moor Place Heritage Group

The statement made on behalf of the Moor Place Heritage Group are attached as Appendix B.

(iv) Tennis Club lights

The Tennis Club Chair stated that the Moor Place Gate development could result in limits on the floodlights or their timing, to the detriment of the members. Cllr I Hunt acknowledged the issue and responded that the lights would probably be a specific point within any planning application, addressed through conditions or the orientation of the houses. It was presumed that any studies to assess the light nuisance would be the responsibility of the site developer.

(v) Process to include the Moor Place Gate site

A resident stated that, as a recent arrival, she noted discord between the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and a number of residents, and asked how the Moor Place Gate site had been included in the Neighbourhood Plan in those circumstances.

Cllr I Hunt explained that the website carried all the details of the process, which had started with a survey of parishioners of the positives and negatives of the village, and also what improvements were wanted. This highlighted a desire for smaller homes and truly affordable housing. As a result of the call for sites, several sites were proposed by landowners and these were assessed using pre-defined criteria and ranked – the technical assessment. These sites were consulted upon to generate an overall ranking based on the technical assessment and public opinion. These rankings were used to determine sites that in total would meet the minimum target number of houses and this site was the last on that approved list – one of the sites chosen was bound to be last on the list but that didn't mean it was unsuitable.

Cllr I Hunt reiterated that the initial consultation had identified the key objectives for the Plan which included the creation of affordable housing (supported by over 90% of respondents). The Moor Place Gate site was the only available site upon which affordable housing could be developed. This site would be donated, free of charge, to the parish so, with no land cost, genuinely affordable housing could be built. The rest of the housing in this development would be marketable housing.

The resident expressed the view that the land was not “free” as the “cost” to the village was in giving up the rest of the site for development.

(vi) Definition of affordable housing

Following a request, Cllr I Hunt explained that the definition for affordable housing is that used by East Herts Council.

(vii) Windfall allowance

In response to a resident's suggestion of letting the usual planning activity take its course to meet the target, Cllr I Hunt explained that a minimum 54 houses have to be built and sites have been identified to ensure that this will be achieved. In addition, the Parish Council cannot make use of the windfall allowance as East Herts Council have made it clear that the allowance cannot be used if sufficient sites have been identified to achieve the target, as is the case here.

It was also reiterated that the proposal for Moor Place Gate is for 15 houses in total, 9 marketable and 6 affordable. A previous proposal for this site had been for more houses on both sides of the drive, and had been rejected.

(viii) Discussion of the Plan at this meeting

Concern was raised by a resident that the Plan was not being discussed at this meeting. Cllr I Hunt explained that the agenda for this meeting was about process only. The consultation enables the detailed content of the Plan to be considered by the residents and for them to provide feedback using specific forms.

The Chair commented that there is significant misunderstanding regarding the Plan and the consultation will enable meaningful debate to take place on its content, including at the open day.

(ix) Nomination rights

A resident queried why the windfall allowance cannot be used when, if the nomination rights for the affordable housing are not retained locally, then the Moor Place Gate site would potentially be removed from the Plan.

Cllr I Hunt confirmed that it would be a condition of the development of the Moor Park Gate site that nomination rights would be retained locally, so that it could be ensured that it was local residents who should be favoured for the affordable housing in line with residents' wishes. If control of the nomination rights was not retained locally, that would be contrary to the residents' wishes and the Parish Council would not support the development of the site. As there are no alternative sites that can be used for affordable housing, the site would be removed from the Plan. The windfall allowance would then become available if no other suitable sites came forward in the meantime.

(x) Model or drawing of Moor Place Gate

Clarification was sought from a resident as to whether the statement made at the December Parish Council meeting to have a model or drawing for the Moor Place Gate site at the consultation would be adhered to.

Cllr I Hunt confirmed that he could see the benefits of having a model or drawing but having considered the point since the December meeting, it had been decided not to progress this. The design and layout of the properties was a matter for a future planning application so any model or drawing was likely to mislead.

(xi) Closing comments by residents

Cllrs were asked to consider the residents in its decisions and not greedy builders.

The Chair reminded those present of the significant developments that had been successfully fought against in recent years. She also urged everyone to read the Plan before drawing their conclusions.

19/114. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllrs expressed support for the Plan. In response to a question from Cllr K Twort, Cllr I Hunt stated that if another site became available after the Neighbourhood Plan had been approved that might be better suited for development so that Moor Place Gate could be replaced, then a new Plan would need to be developed – and the whole process redone.

Prior to voting, Cllr I Hunt stated the Steering Group had completed all it could, and it was time for the residents to be given an opportunity to respond to the Plan prepared on their behalf. He highlighted that the Plan combines environmental and housing development policies to deliver on the aspirations for the parish, protection for open spaces and views, genuinely affordable housing, and policies to increase the protection of heritage assets and assets of community value.

RESOLVED to instruct the Steering Group to complete the editing of the draft Neighbourhood Plan document and then proceed with the Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) Consultation as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made.

19/115. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 2nd July 2019, at 7:30 pm in the Green Tye Mission Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

PRE-SUBMISSION NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROPOSED SITE LIST**LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

The following sites contribute to local amenity, character, historic significance or green infrastructure and are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- L1. Great Leys
- L2. Lower Park
- L3. Elsie's Meadow
- L4. Ash Meads
- L5. Court Orchard
- L6. Mission Hall Field

PRIORITY VIEWS

V1 St Andrew's Church from gate by bus shelter on B1004

V2 Moor Place Drive from B1004

V3 Footpath 10 view from Moor Place Drive to Dell Cottage

V4 South east from Kettle Green Lane railway bridge

V5 Henry Moore's reclining lady from public bridleway 14

V6 Sidehill Wood from west of Chalkdells Farm

V7 South east from River Ash ford to Sidehill Wood

V8 Sidehill House across meadows to Malting Lane

V9 Malting Lane – Old Malt House south across meadows

V10 Sidehill Wood bridleway towards Culver

V11 Prince of Wales pub from south west of the Green Tye village green

V11 Green Tye village green from west to east

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SITES

Supply Source	Minimum Supply:
Completions since 1 April 2017 (listed in Appendix D)	19
Approvals not yet started (listed in Appendix D)	4
Priest's House (see section 4.6.1)	7 (net)
Hopleys (see section 4.6.2)	10
Moor Place Gate (see section 4.6.3)	15
Bull Inn (see section 4.6.4)	5
South Plot, Culver (see section 4.6.5)	2
TOTAL	62

IH 24/6/19

Moor Place Heritage Group – Residents’ Comments 25th June 2019

Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for village residents to contribute to shaping the future development of this village. Moor Place Heritage Group are in no doubt that it is an important document for the village. That is exactly why we are fighting for a plan that contains policies that the vast majority of this community can support.

We are concerned that earlier consultation results supporting the inclusion of ‘community housing’ and the meaning of ‘sustainability’ may be confused or misunderstood, but what is very clear, is that Moor Place Gate was voted the least popular site for development back in September 2017.

We believe the decision to include Moor Place Gate in the draft plan, due to the appeal of community housing, has been taken with inadequate opportunity for open discussion and debate with the very people this plan is meant to reflect the views of - the parish residents. The minutes of the June 2018 consultation event do not accurately reflect the negative feeling and comments on the suitability of this scheme, neither do the minutes of the recent Public Meeting of 28th May. Public communications appear defensive of the inclusion of the Moor Place Gate scheme as a decision that has been endorsed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group alone.

Moor Place Heritage Group are therefore concerned that the draft plan, that is about to be formally approved for publication and consultation tonight, contains a significant development on a sensitive site that is sadly very unpopular to many parish residents. It is simply the right idea on the wrong site.

We all want to vote ‘yes’ in the referendum, so we are trusting that the formal consultation in August and September will finally give residents the chance to be fully heard, and their views, whatever they are, considered in an open, balanced and fairly recorded way.