

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 5th November 2019, in the Green Tye Mission Hall, at 7:30 pm.

*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)

*Cllr Mrs J Liversage

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu

Cllr D McDonald

Cllr M McPherson-Pottle

*Cllr B O'Neill

*Cllr S Smith

*Cllr Mrs P Taylor (Chair)

*Cllr K Twort

* denotes present

In attendance: F Forth, Parish Clerk and 29 members of the public.

19/179. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllr Mrs H Maduhu, Cllr D McDonald and Cllr M McPherson-Pottle.

19/180. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Both the Chair and Cllr I Hunt declared an interest in cheques to be approved (agenda item 19/189 (i)) and would therefore not be voting on the related motion.

No other declarations were made or applications for dispensations sought.

19/181. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

19/182. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

- Cllr B O'Neill is enthusiastically organising a "sleep out" on 7th December for the "World's Big Sleep Out" to draw worldwide awareness to the Homeless and St Andrew's Church has been offered for this event. Anyone interested in getting involved and sleeping in the church, or outside, that night to contact Cllr B O'Neill; and
- next Sunday is Remembrance Sunday, and the Memorial Service will be at the War Memorial starting at 10.50am. The Parish Council will be represented by the Chair, and those wishing to donate to the cost of the wreath are invited to do so. A resident was thanked for obtaining the wreath for the Parish Council.

19/183. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1st October 2019 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

19/184. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report, circulated earlier by the Chair, was noted.

19/185. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Sports Association

Cllr K Twort stated that the key issue was the dog mess on the Recreation Ground, highlighted by the captain of the Saturday football team, as it is virtually permanently on the ground where children play. Despite existing signs to have "dogs on leads", it has been witnessed that this is not adhered to and consideration needs to be given to how this could be enforced.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that the following action should be taken to prevent dogs being off their leads on the Recreation Ground:

- ban dogs from the Recreation Ground;
- new and larger signs to be put up stating that dogs are not permitted and including a public health warning and details of associated fines;
- seek advice from HAPTC on the appropriate wording for the sign;
- ask HAPTC to circularise other parish councils to identify how they ensure open spaces like this are kept clear of dog mess; and
- publicise in the Parish Magazine and on social media.

Playground

The Clerk reported that it had been confirmed that the repair to the rotting zip wire post would be covered by the warranty issued by Wicksteed, the company that provided the equipment. Wicksteed had requested a report and photos although she was seeking clarification on the depth required in the requested report – the latest half yearly report received at the October meeting has already been sent to Wicksteed.

In addition, the Clerk highlighted that she had taken the opportunity to ask if some of the other items included in the latest half yearly report would be covered by any warranties, namely Woodland Cottage – roof starting to decay, adventure trail – stilt post missing and logs and stone – various logs decaying. In terms of the latter, discussing the proposed action with Broadmead Leisure was still outstanding.

Village Hall

Cllr B O'Neill provided an update on the following matters:

- section of the roof needs repairing but obtaining quotes for the work is proving difficult as it is an awkward job on a badly built roof with potential for significant wood rot underneath the slate and felt;
- still in the process of improving the building's energy efficiency and aim to fund this from grants;
- litter bin at the front of the Hall is looking untidy and highlights the need to consider the issue of bins generally in the parish;
- on the positive side:
 - external decoration completed;
 - new fire door installed;
 - emergency lights and fire alarm back up batteries replaced and tested;
 - stage curtains and back-cloth curtain replaced, funded by Stansted Airport grant; and
 - Broadband being installed by the Phone Co-op in the near future.

The Village Hall Management Committee were thanked for continuing to look after and improve this facility.

(ii) Environment (inc Public Rights of Way (PRoW))

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith reported that the second round of footpath and bridleway maintenance is almost complete, highlighting that the quality of the work was good by the new contractor.

The following specific points were highlighted:

- Footpaths 10/11 – a Road Safety Audit team will be assessing the work carried out at Kettle Green Lane. Once their report is received, and if ok, Herts County Council will start the process for a Diversion Order;
- Footpath 13 – residual elements of the recent crop have grown, masking the footpath, and the farmer has been asked to mark out the correct line; and
- Footpath 26 – partially closed the previous day while the Scouts Hut by the Congregational Church was sprayed with pest control chemicals.

(iii) Highways

Cllr B O'Neill's report covered the following matters:

- a number of banners have been removed from the side of the roads within the parish in recent months by persons unknown, affecting the Drama Group, the Fete, the Horticultural Society and the Faraway Tree Kindergarten. The banners are a popular way of advertising local events and their removal unnecessary especially as usually removed promptly after the event has taken place;

- parish rubbish bins continue to be a problem through overloading and inappropriate types of rubbish. Consideration needs to be given to addressing this, together with the fact that some bins are in a poor condition or sited where no longer needed;
- considering the improvements planned for the passing points on Kettle Green Lane, views sought from the Moor Place Heritage Group and Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) on, among other matters, the proposal to build on land adjacent to the Lane. As yet, no response has been received;
- 34 bags of salt to be delivered to the rear of the Mission Hall, for use on site or distribution throughout the parish as required; and
- to advance the modernisation of the parish street lights, a meeting has been arranged with Ducreux Lighting on 26th November.

(iv) Media

The Clerk highlighted that there are new website accessibility regulations to be complied with and the deadline to be compliant is the 23rd September 2020. Compliance can be proportionate, and a basic test has been devised for use. It was agreed that Cllr M McPherson-Pottle be asked to assist in this test. In addition, it was noted that there would be cost implications if changes to the website were required.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt read his report, included at Appendix A, which provided an update on:

- the volume of pre-submission responses that had been received, indicating that over half had been in relation to the Moor Place Gate housing policy;
- work is ongoing to find a way to summarise and present the data in an informative way to residents;
- identifying and assessing the impact of consultation responses on the draft Plan is still ongoing;
- potential that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report will be required, focusing on the historic environment, which would significantly delay the next steps for the draft Plan, particularly the intention for the Parish Council to submit to East Herts Council before the end of the year; and
- a recent landowner offer of a further site off Kettle Green Lane – the so-called “nature reserve” – exclusively for affordable housing with a substantial donation of land to the community which will be assessed in due course. Potentially, however, this site has a number of compliance challenges.

In response to a question, Cllr I Hunt confirmed that the planning condition to turn the site off Kettle Green Lane into a “nature reserve” was not enforced and the land still remains with the developer.

(vi) Security

Cllr Mrs J Liversage stated that that PCSO Leon de Bruyn had provided a crime report covering October, highlighting that there had been police reports relating to:

- a dangerous dog in Allens Green;
- theft of an unlocked pedal bike in Windmill Way from the rear garden;
- theft of an advertising banner from outside the church on the High Street – as mentioned earlier; and
- theft of tools from a commercial motor vehicle outside an address in Much Hadham.

There was no positive outcome for any of these report as enquiries were either ongoing or there were no leads.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that there was regularity to the removal of the advertising banners – different organisations affected in differing locations.

(vii) Other

Cllr S Smith reported that he had recently been on HAPTC's induction course, concluding that it was an exemplary course with a wealth of material provided. As Cllr Mrs H Maduhu is due to go on this course later this month, this material would be provided to her as some useful pre-reading.

Planters

Cllr S Smith highlighted that the costs of acquiring and installing planters underneath the welcome signs in the village and the hamlets were not unreasonable. However, the main area of concern was watering and maintaining the plants and ensuring that the planters themselves were not stolen or vandalised. It was agreed that volunteers would be sought, by publicising this project in the Parish Magazine etc, and a meeting held during December to take this project forward.

19/186. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

On behalf of Cllr I Devonshire (EHC), the Clerk read the report provided, containing information relating to two matters:

1: On Demand Transport / Rural Transport services

Cuts by the County Council to subsidised bus services together with the way bus services in the UK are legislated mean that increasing numbers of rural areas are being cut off from transport options if the individual lacks access to a car. Community Buses such as the Hadham Hopper and Stortford Shuttle can help. Other alternatives exist such as the CVS led car share scheme which is not running at full capacity.

With an increasing move to 'on demand' services, EHC and Herts County Council will be investigating the possibility of setting up a further on –demand service in East Herts.

2: Environmental Issues

On 24th July members of EHC voted unanimously to make a Climate Change Declaration. This committed the Council to take a pro-active stance towards delivering net carbon neutrality and acting as an exemplar of best practice.

EHC currently produces some 2,800 tonnes of CO2 a year and whilst this reflects a 19% reduction since 2009/10, more needs to be done to be carbon neutral by 2030. Actions taken so far, and planned, include:

- revising specifications for the new Leisure Centres which will reduce carbon emissions by 30%;
- facilitating officers' use of e-vehicles through the provision of five e-pool cars;
- developing plans to swap the Council's diesel-powered vans to e-vans; and
- development of an Environmental Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document;

It was noted that the Council's revised taxi emissions policy was having a significant impact. In the last six months, taxi drivers have swapped 6 vehicles for less polluting EURO 6 standard taxis and the Council had just licensed the district's first electric taxi.

Finally, to promote the switch to e-vehicles more widely, an electric vehicle roadshow was held in September in the Market Square in Bishop's Stortford, with representatives from manufacturers and suppliers of e-vehicles along with the Council's e-car pool partner.

19/187. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Housing target

A resident queried, given Historic England's consultation feedback on the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan regarding the impact of new build on the historic environment, whether East Herts Council should be asked to review the housing target set for Much Hadham given the historic nature of the village.

Cllr I Hunt explained the impact of the SEA report and that it was unlikely that East Herts Council would make any change to the target as it is now encapsulated into the District Plan.

(ii) Publish responses from the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan consultation

In response to a query as to how and when the consultation responses would be published, Cllr I Hunt stated that this information is currently being analysed and categorised. It will be reported back to a public meeting but how it will be presented is undecided. Ultimately, all the responses will be published on the Neighbourhood Plan website.

(iii) Feedback from school children on the Recreation Ground playground

Following the last meeting, school children had been asked to comment on the playground and the results were provided to the Clerk. Key points highlighted were that ninja warrior style equipment was desired and the playground was too muddy.

In addition, it was highlighted that the school are happy to get involved in these types of matters.

The Chair expressed thanks for this information.

(iv) Herts Garden Trust

A resident stated that the Herts Garden Trust had opposed the development at Moor Place Gate although acknowledging that there had been two responses.

In addition, the resident requested that responses from all organisations should be available as the Moor Place Heritage Group are willing to help, highlighting that the Group had published a Heritage Report for this site.

(v) Junk shop in Green Tye

A resident highlighted that, with assistance from the Clerk, a report had been made recently to East Herts Council Environmental Health that this building was derelict and unsafe.

(vi) “Nature Reserve”

A resident queried why there was no enforcement action to make sure the “nature reserve” came into existence if it was a planning condition. Cllr I Hunt responded that Planning Enforcement were aware of this matter but potentially had little scope to enforce now that the houses had been built.

(vii) Comment on planning applications

Following a question from a resident, it was confirmed that comments on planning applications would be taken at the Planning Committee meeting which follows.

19/188. FENCE AT PERRY GREEN BURIAL GROUND

Cllr Mrs J Liversage provided the background to this item. Following discussion, members of the Burial Authority RESOLVED to approve the quote to repair the fence at Perry Green Burial Ground from Weld Design Architectural Metalwork for £480.

19/189. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown below, be duly authorised for payment. The Chair and Cllr I Hunt did not vote due to their declared interests.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - NOVEMBER 2019

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
957	Penny Taylor	Reimburse Pavilion keys & cleaning supplies	92.41
958	MH Bowls Club	Grant (from S106 monies)	1,500.00
959	HAPTC	Training - new Cllr 14/10/19	40.00
960	E.ON	Lighting for war memorial	36.27
961	Martin Adams	Subscription and copying (NP)	29.53
962	Arc-In-Form Architects Limited	Consultancy (NP)	1,000.00
963	Ringway Infrastructure Services	3x street lights (FL59R, FL1R & FL2R)	10,598.76
964	Ian Hunt	Printing £513.12 and land searches £12 (NP)	525.12
965	T Walker	Mow & strim footpaths	640.00
966	FM Forth	Clerks expenses - March to September 2019	699.74
967	Home & Office Fire Extinguishers Ltd	Annual service	290.40
968	D Billson	Pavilion cleaning	80.00
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (November)	334.00
DD	PWLB	Loan repayment	2,693.73
SO	F Forth	Clerk's salary (November)	581.10
Total payments			19,141.06

Cheques will be signed and despatched following the meeting.

(ii) Financial Statement

The financial statement for 2019/20 was tabled. The summary financial position is detailed overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix B. The Clerk highlighted that given the high value of unrepresented items, the bank reconciliation for the current account had been included in the report to provide a listing – effectively the total of the payments approved at the October meeting and the payments approved under the preceding agenda item - and is simply a timing difference.

In addition, the Clerk highlighted that the non-routine financial items highlighted were:

- the insurance claim for the Almshouse light is due to be received next week; and
- by approving the expenditure as part of the previous agenda item, the 3 replacement street lights, approved in 2017, have now been paid for.

Finally, the Clerk highlighted that she would be pulling together the expected outturn and updating the forward financial plan to enable consideration of the 2020/21 budget at the next meeting, bearing in mind that the formal approval of the budget would be at the January meeting. With that in mind, Cllrs were requested to give some thought to any specific projects for inclusion in the budget or any suggestions for any other changes, and provide details to her.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 5 NOVEMBER 2019

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2019	47,134.88	17,037.46	64,172.34
Income	57,338.59	3,610.00	60,948.59
Expenditure	- 44,927.15	- 1,202.00	- 46,129.15
Closing balance	<u>59,546.32</u>	<u>19,445.46</u>	<u>78,991.78</u>

Note: the following items are included in the Total Fund Balances:

(1) Section 106 receipts	<u>4,570.00</u>
	<u>4,570.00</u>

19/190. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1st October 2019 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

19/191. BURIAL AUTHORITY

This item was deferred to the next meeting as the Burial Authority minutes from the 1st October meeting had not been circulated.

19/192. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

19/193. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk highlighted the following matters:

- a Freedom of Information request had been received and responded to in the last month;
- The Bishop's Stortford High School have initiated a consultation on the impact of moving the school slightly to the south, namely disposing of the existing school site, inclusive of playing fields – details are available on the school website;
- Luton Airport are consulting on proposals to make the best use of the existing runway by building a new terminal, infrastructure, public transport facilities and improvements to roads and highways – more details available on the dedicated website: futureluton@llal.org.uk;
- the A120 bypass is continuing to progress. Regular project newsletters are issued which are added to the Parish Council website, along with any letters to residents updating road closure information, and a link to the project page on the Herts County Council website;
- a schedule of dates for the 2020 meetings has been added to the website and the two meetings that do not conform to the "first Tuesday of the month" rule were highlighted; and
- clothing bin information was not circulated after the last meeting but would be a specific agenda item at the December meeting.

19/194. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 3rd December 2019, at 7:30 pm in the Much Hadham Village Hall. It would be preceded by the Burial Authority meeting at 6:45 pm. The Chair also reminded Cllrs to note the 2020 dates in their dairies.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:34 pm.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REPORT

Report presented by Cllr I Hunt, Chair of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

I reported last month that the Pre-Submission consultation resulted in a substantial number of responses. Subject to final checking, 181 resident responses delivered 643 comments. Over half (53%) of these comments related directly to the Moor Place Gate housing policy, amounting to over 16,000 words!

Indirect comments about MPG were also made in relation to perceived conflicts with other policies for Local Green Spaces and Priority Views.

A further 177 comments came from other (non-resident) consultees (of which over half were from either EHC or HCC).

In all we received 820 comments, which is a huge number for a parish NP and a very large spreadsheet!

Nevertheless, it remains the intention to find a way of summarising and presenting all the data as soon as we can in a way that residents will find informative.

This additional volume will be time-consuming to process but the important work comes not from volume but from identifying and assessing those comments that may result in a change to the Plan as drafted. This, of course, was one reason for holding the consultation – to find these improvements. We are working closely with our consultants to ensure that any changes are compliant with the policies of statutory authorities whilst meeting the aims and objectives that residents have for the Plan.

Putting volume issues to one side for the moment, a further obstacle to making quick progress has emerged. As part of the document pack prepared in advance of the consultation, we submitted a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening report which included an assessment of the impact of the NP on the environment, including the historic environment. It concluded that the effects would not be significant because of the mitigation included in the NP policies and thus a full SEA would not be required.

However, Historic England has noted in its response to the consultation that the allocated housing sites are in the Conservation Area and in some cases within the setting of listed buildings. Development of these sites has the potential to have a “significant effects upon the historic environment” they say, notwithstanding our mitigating measures, and so a SEA is required. We had a meeting last week with Historic England to clarify its position on this and other matters but the upshot is that we are considering our options in terms of who should be commissioned to produce this additional report. Advice will also be sought from EHC. A further delay (of months rather than weeks) is likely to arise if we are required to produce a SEA.

So, a consequence of the volume of responses and the potential need for a SEA is that we will not now have a version of the Plan ready for the PC to submit to EHC before the end of the year, which is frustrating.

Finally, I can report that since last month's meeting a landowner has offered a further site off Kettle Green Lane – the so-called "nature reserve" - exclusively for affordable housing together with a substantial donation of land to the community. This will be assessed in due course following the established process but, on the face of it, it comes with significant challenges in terms of compliance with district policies and with those proposed in the Plan. Nevertheless, if it transpires that this or any other site is a viable alternative to one in the Plan, then we would expect to re-consult with residents on its inclusion.

IH 5 November 2019

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 5 NOVEMBER 2019

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2020 BUDGET £	2020 ACTUAL £	
INCOME			
Precept	39,000.00	39,000.00	
Litter Agency	4,085.00	4,209.51	
New Homes Bonus	8,243.00	13,467.00	Significant increase not known of
Pavilion income	750.00	299.00	
Grant	6,500.00	312.25	
Other	95.00	50.83	Insurance claim for the Almshouse light, of £2,147.32, expected by the 14th November
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	-	
TOTAL INCOME	63,673.00	57,338.59	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	6,973.64	4,648.80	
PWLB loan repayment	5,387.46	5,387.46	
Administration costs	2,400.00	1,882.13	
Insurance	3,400.00	1,369.31	
Audit fees	720.00	730.00	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	200.00	35.00	
Election expenses	1,500.00	51.15	Election was uncontested
Maintenance of open spaces	8,500.00	4,318.80	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	2,672.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	650.00	101.06	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Street lighting (replacement programme)	5,000.00	-	
Pavilion	2,900.00	2,429.42	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	-	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	3,000.00	1,500.00	
Neighbourhood Plan	11,000.00	4,805.00	
Capital - street lights	-	11,079.62	£2,247.32 Almshouse - majority of this funded by insurance claim - and 3 street lights replaced in 2017-2018 £8,832.30
Capital (to be allocated)	2,000.00	-	
VAT	5,000.00	3,917.40	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	65,639.10	44,927.15	