

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 7th January 2020, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, Green Room, at 7:35 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 6 members of the public.

20/1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absences were received and approved from Cllr K Twort (Note – received during item 20/3 and reported prior to item 20/4).

No apologies were received from Cllr M McPherson-Pottle so his absence was not approved.

20/2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr I Hunt declared an interest in a cheque to be approved (agenda item 20/11 (i)) and would therefore not be voting on the related motion.

No other declarations were made or applications for dispensations sought.

20/3. PRESENTATION BY HERTS POLICE, INCLUDING CRIME REPORT

The Chair welcome PCSO Leon de Bruyn and Scott Hague from Herts Police.

PCSO Leon de Bruyn provided the following update:

- staffing changes: PC Katie Piper replaces PC Nicky Hunt who has replaced Sargent Duncan Wallace due to retirement; and
- crimes since the beginning of December: hare coursing at Allens Green (1 out of 4 arrested); public order offence at Kettle Green Lane; crime attempted during flooding at Bourne Lane and theft of number plates resulting in cars being cloned.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that people should always report theft of a number plate by calling 101 as the police will make enquiries and it also makes the police aware of the risk that plate might later be cloned.

Scott Hague introduced the new communications platform – ECHO – which seeks to gather information from members of the community about what is important to them. The information collected is sorted and is more readily available to senior and junior officers alike and will be used to set policing priorities for Safer Neighbourhood Teams. ECHO was launched last summer, and it is still being rolled out across Hertfordshire.

Whilst crime should still be reported, via 999 or 101, ECHO differs to that as it shows patterns of crime which can lead to action being taken. An example was provided of how a significant level of feedback regarding vehicle crime in a specific area resulted in increased police patrols which have had an impact.

Reporting on ECHO is anonymous, particularly if through the website as IP addresses are not retained. Mechanisms to feedback to the community are still being developed. It is possible that actions taken will be reported back via social media or through Parish Council meetings.

[To access ECHO: text **66099** and start with the word **EHRural** then your comments or visit www.bit.ly/ehrrural-police]

20/4. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair thanked PCSO Leon de Bruyn and Scott Hague for their presentation on the new ECHO system.

20/6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd December 2019 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

20/7. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Chair highlighted that the report is still being reworked and the Clerk indicated that a number of outstanding items would be covered by subsequent agenda items.

20/8. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

Cllr D McDonald stated there was nothing to report.

Pavilion

The Chair highlighted that reports had been received that the showers were not draining properly and 2 of the 4 electric wall heaters were not working. Cllr K Twort had organised for these items to be addressed.

Dog fouling

The Clerk reported that actions were outstanding, mainly to speak to the East Herts Council dog control section regarding the sign wording and what actions they take to enforce a ban. In addition, the Clerk still needs to investigate why the Parish Council was not included on the Public Spaces Protection Order last year.

Playground

The Clerk stated that she and Cllr K Twort had met with the representative from Wicksteed. After that meeting, the Clerk was to receive details regarding when the zip wire was being fixed as well as some options to enhance the current playground for assessment by Cllrs and school children. As yet, nothing has been received and this will be chased.

Village Hall

Cllr B O'Neill had nothing to report.

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

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith reported that a fallen tree had been promptly cleared from Bridleway/Footpath 28; Herts County Council were investigating a horse rider's observations that it was hard to open the 2 new gates on this bridleway; several way marker posts had been replaced/repared and the wet weather had resulted in a number of footpaths being churned up.

Planters

The Chair reported that 1 volunteer had attended the planned December meeting regarding this project. Investigations into the costs and how the planters would be looked after are underway.

(iii) Highways

The Chair reported that a 3 new village signs had been installed. However, the sign near the gates at the south end of the village had been removed for the second time. A request was made for the person doing this to contact the Parish Council to discuss why this is an issue. The request will also be made via the Parish Magazine and Facebook.

The Chair also reported that the next meeting with Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) and Highways was scheduled for the 20th January.

Cllr B O'Neill provided an update on the street lighting project. Based on allocating approximately £5,000 to this project each year, completion is expected in 2028.

The following points were also made:

- 12 vehicles were stranded in the recent floods;
- flood caused soil deposits on the B1004 near Danebridge Road and on Danebridge Road which will be raised at the next Highways meeting;
- issues have been reported with speeding traffic on the B1004 at the bottom of Station Road and it was suggested that this is reported on ECHO;
- the Clerk confirmed that no response had been received from the owner of the broken fence and overhanging trees on Winding Hill (Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) subsequently offered to speak to the owner); and
- Stansted Hill will be closed sometime in February.

(iv) Media

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that she would be taking on responsibility for the Facebook page shortly. In addition, she would be looking to revamp the Parish Council website and ideas from others welcomed. Finally, consideration would be given to using Instagram.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reminded those present that last month he had reported that a formal request from East Herts Council (EHC) for a Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA), triggered by Historic England, was expected but not yet received.

In the meantime, the Environment Agency had finally reviewed the SEA screening opinion that the Parish Council consultants prepared as part of the Pre-Submission consultation. The Agency have stated that they would also want to see a SEA because of the potential for development near the ford to increase flood risk and because of the “moderate” ecological status of the River Ash, which any nearby development should seek to improve on.

Natural England has confirmed that it does not require a SEA as the Neighbourhood Plan does not present any adverse environmental effects on the landscape and related matters.

A bid for technical assistance has been submitted to Locality – the grant awarding body – and a conference call has been arranged with consultants AECOM next week. This call will cover the purpose of the SEA and how it might be conducted. Hopefully, this will put the Parish Council in a position to move quickly once the formal request from EHC to proceed is received. Note – although two requests for a SEA, only one report is required.

Finally, Cllr I Hunt stated that he would be meeting the Community Development Association in Hertford to highlight the lessons learned in relation to community-led housing.

(vi) Security

Covered by PCSO Leon de Bruyn earlier (minute ref: 20/3).

(vii) Other

Tidy up Much Hadham

Cllr H Maduhu reported that she had discussed how Tidy Up Bishop's Stortford (TUBS) operated. Should Much Hadham wish to set up a similar scheme, the TUBS Co-ordinator was willing to help out in a consultative capacity. It was highlighted that the scheme was low input, it just needed two good volunteers.

20/9. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) reported on the following items:

- the larger projects in Bishop's Stortford were progressing: with the favourable County Court judgement, the multi storey carpark at Northgate End can proceed and the load weight survey on the entrance bridge to Grange Paddocks had been completed;
- he offered to talk to the owner of the broken fence and overhanging trees on Winding Hill; and
- he would be interested in helping out any "tidy up Much Hadham" project.

20/10. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Kettle Green Lane

Residents made the following points relating to Kettle Green Lane:

- Footpath 10/11 diversion;
- state of the road;
- parcels of land before the bridge being sold for potential development, Wheatcroft west;
- nature reserve; and
- Neighbourhood Plan.

Discussion in relation to these points is reflected overleaf.

Footpath 10/11 diversion – residents stated that the new access to Footpath 11 has been illegally put in. In addition, that the police have been contacted twice due to children playing at the top of this footpath and running down into the road. Cllr S Smith highlighted that the consultation is imminent regarding the new footpath. In addition, it was noted that Herts County Council is still trying to get the landowner to reinstate the bridleway beyond Moat House at the top of Kettle Green Lane (52/53) but potentially the landowner could be contacted directly by residents if they are concerned.

State of the road – the Chair stated that the use of S106 monies is being addressed but it takes time.

Parcels of land before the bridge being sold for potential development, Wheatcroft west – matter not discussed further.

Nature reserve – this land is not owned by the Parish Council. It was a condition of the Moor Place Park planning decision that the nature reserve be created but it has not been enforced and this has been raised with East Herts Council via the Planning Committee. Reference was made to the locked gate at the bottom of Kettle Green Lane and those present were reminded that this is privately owned.

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr I Hunt highlighted that an offer was made by a landowner to develop part of the nature reserve site in Kettle Green Lane but this had been rejected by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group after informally receiving an adverse opinion from Historic England.

20/11. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown below, be duly authorised for payment. Cllr I Hunt did not vote due to his declared interest.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - JANUARY 2020

| Chq etc | Payable to | For | Amount |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 977 | MH Sports Association | Pavilion electricity | 317.67 |
| 978 | Ian Hunt | Planning magazine subscription | 299.00 |
| 979 | MH Village Hall | D Billson - Pavilion cleaning | 80.00 |
| SO | M Windmill | Litter Agency (January) | 334.00 |
| SO | F Forth | Clerk's salary (January) | 581.10 |
| Total payments | | | <u>1,611.77</u> |

Cheques will be signed and despatched following the meeting.

(ii) Financial Statement

The financial statement for 2019/20 to date was received. The summary financial position is detailed below and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 7 JANUARY 2020

| | Parish Council £ | Burial Authority £ | Total £ |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Opening balance - 1 April 2019 | 47,134.88 | 17,037.46 | 64,172.34 |
| Income | 59,650.52 | 3,610.00 | 63,260.52 |
| Expenditure | - 53,631.34 | - 1,202.00 | - 54,833.34 |
| Closing balance | <u>53,154.06</u> | <u>19,445.46</u> | <u>72,599.52</u> |

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

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) Section 106 receipts for sport or recreation | <u>4,570.00</u> |
| | <u>4,570.00</u> |

(iii) Precept 2020/21 and Forward Financial Plan

The Clerk reminded those present that an initial budget and forward financial plan was discussed at the December 2019 meeting. Since that meeting, Cllr B O'Neill had obtained an update on the cost and timing of replacing the street lights which results in the expected outturn for the current year increasing by £750 and the budget for the next financial year increasing from £5,000 to £6,100.

The other change made was to phase the increase to the precept. The budget for approval, and forward financial plan, recommends that the precept is increased to £43,000 for 2020/21, and increased to £44,000 and then £45,000 in the following two years. The proposed budget and forward financial plan would enable the Parish Council to maintain an appropriate reserves balance of around £30,000.

East Herts Council had also provided the tax base information, and this had been included on the documents. The tax base for the next financial year had actually decreased and the proposed precept of £43,000 results in a Band D equivalent tax of £44.67 – an increase of £4.65 or 11.6% in comparison to the prior year. Cllr I Hunt explained that whilst the parish had seen an increase in the number of new houses, there had also been an increase in the number of residents receiving single persons discount which lowers the tax base.

The Chair commented that the precept had been kept purposely low by previous administrations.

Options for obtaining feedback on the areas that the Parish Council should be spending money were considered and these may be taken forward before setting the budget for 2021/22 financial year.

RESOLVED to approve the budget presented for 2020/21 and determine the precept at £43,000.

RESOLVED to approve the forward financial plan.

Note: the forward financial plan, which includes the budget for 2020/21, is attached at Appendix B.

20/12. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2019 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/13. BURIAL AUTHORITY

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 3rd December 2019 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/14. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/15. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk highlighted the following matters:

- East Herts Year of Culture was launched on 10th December which aims to put the spotlight on arts, culture and heritage across the district and everyone is encouraged to get involved; and
- a reminder that the A120 newsletters continue to be added to the Parish Council website.

20/16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 4th February 2020, at 7:30 pm in the Much Hadham Village Hall. This will be preceded by the Burial Authority meeting at 6:45 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:32 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 7 JANUARY 2020

| (Parish Council only) | FULL YEAR | YEAR TO | COMMENT |
|--|------------------|------------------|--|
| | 2020 | DATE | |
| | BUDGET | 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 | Whilst higher bonus due to more housing, updated information from East Herts Council not provided when budget set. |
| Pavilion income | 750.00 | 309.00 | |
| Grant | 6,500.00 | 312.25 | |
| Other | 95.00 | 2,352.76 | Insurance claim for the Almshouse light of £2,147.32 received |
| VAT reclaimed | 5,000.00 | - | |
| TOTAL INCOME | 63,673.00 | 59,650.52 | |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Staff costs | 6,973.64 | 5,811.00 | |
| PWLB loan repayment | 5,387.46 | 5,387.46 | |
| Administration costs | 2,400.00 | 2,446.13 | |
| Insurance | 3,400.00 | 2,183.11 | |
| 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 | 3,340.00 | |
| War memorial (lighting and maintenance) | 650.00 | 651.06 | |
| Street lighting (energy and maintenance) | 2,000.00 | - | |
| Street lighting (replacement programme) | 5,000.00 | - | |
| Pavilion | 2,900.00 | 2,891.96 | |
| 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 | 8,550.02 | |
| 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 | 4,656.03 | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 65,639.10 | 53,631.34 | |

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

FORWARD FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 TO 2024/25

ASSUMING PRECEPT INCREASES TO £43,000 FOR 2020/21. ADDITIONAL PRECEPT INCREASES IN SUBSEQUENT TWO YEARS.
INCOME - CAUTIOUS APPROACH
EXPENDITURE - LIMITED INFLATION

| | 2018/19 ACTUAL | 2019/20 EXPECTED | 2020/21 BUDGET | 2021/22 BUDGET | 2022/23 BUDGET | 2023/24 BUDGET | 2024/25 BUDGET |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| INCOME | | | | | | | |
| Precept | 39,000.00 | 39,000.00 | 43,000.00 | 44,000.00 | 45,000.00 | 45,000.00 | 45,000.00 |
| Litter Agency | 4,086.91 | 4,209.51 | 4,235.00 | 4,275.00 | 4,315.00 | 4,355.00 | 4,395.00 |
| New Homes Bonus | 9,804.00 | 13,467.00 | 10,000.00 | - | - | - | - |
| Pavilion income | 1,428.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Grant | 18,443.59 | 3,500.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 | 300.00 |
| Burial fees (ring fenced to Burial Authority) | 4,760.00 | 4,100.00 | 2,640.00 | 2,640.00 | 2,640.00 | 2,640.00 | 2,640.00 |
| Other | 149.39 | 2,228.15 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 195.00 | 60.00 |
| VAT reclaimed | 9,753.37 | 6,167.59 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 |
| | 87,425.26 | 73,672.25 | 66,235.00 | 57,275.00 | 58,315.00 | 58,490.00 | 58,395.00 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | | | |
| Staff costs | 6,663.84 | 6,973.20 | 7,000.00 | 7,070.00 | 7,140.00 | 7,210.00 | 7,280.00 |
| PWLB loan repayment | 5,387.46 | 5,387.46 | 5,387.46 | 5,387.46 | 5,387.46 | 5,387.46 | 5,387.46 |
| Administration costs | 2,863.52 | 2,900.00 | 3,300.00 | 3,350.00 | 3,400.00 | 3,450.00 | 3,500.00 |
| Insurance | 3,793.88 | 3,800.00 | 3,900.00 | 3,900.00 | 3,900.00 | 3,900.00 | 3,900.00 |
| Audit fees | 720.00 | 730.00 | 730.00 | 740.00 | 750.00 | 760.00 | 770.00 |
| General Data Protection Regulation compliance | 335.00 | 35.00 | 35.00 | 35.00 | 35.00 | 35.00 | 35.00 |
| Election expenses | - | 51.15 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Maintenance of open spaces | 7,183.82 | 8,400.00 | 21,800.00 | 15,000.00 | 12,000.00 | 10,000.00 | 10,000.00 |
| Litter Agency | 4,008.00 | 4,008.00 | 4,008.00 | 4,008.00 | 4,008.00 | 4,008.00 | 4,008.00 |
| War memorial (lighting and maintenance) | 652.01 | 690.00 | 1,100.00 | 700.00 | 710.00 | 720.00 | 730.00 |
| Street lighting (energy and maintenance) | 4,437.79 | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Street lighting (replacement programme) | - | 16,829.62 | 6,100.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 |
| Pavilion (running expenses and maintenance) | 2,883.17 | 3,700.00 | 3,400.00 | 3,450.00 | 3,500.00 | 3,550.00 | 3,600.00 |
| Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure) | 300.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 1,000.00 |
| Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded) | - | 1,500.00 | 1,500.00 | - | - | - | - |
| Village Hall improvements | 9,832.65 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Neighbourhood Plan | 7,525.95 | 11,850.02 | 2,000.00 | - | - | - | - |
| Capital - Roller shutter at Pavilion | - | - | 2,000.00 | - | - | - | - |
| Capital - Bollards at Moor Place Gate | - | - | 800.00 | - | - | - | - |
| Speed Indicator Device (capital) | 5,100.00 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Capital - laptop | 524.17 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Capital (to be allocated) | - | - | - | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Burial ground (ring fenced to Burial Authority) | 1,972.19 | 2,602.00 | 2,500.00 | 2,540.00 | 2,580.00 | 2,620.00 | 2,640.00 |
| VAT | 6,167.59 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 5,000.00 |
| | 70,351.04 | 77,456.45 | 73,560.46 | 61,180.46 | 58,410.46 | 56,640.46 | 56,850.46 |
| SURPLUS/DEFICIT | 17,074.22 | - 3,784.20 | - 7,325.46 | - 3,905.46 | - 95.46 | 1,849.54 | 1,544.54 |
| BALANCE BOUGHT FORWARD | 47,098.12 | 64,172.34 | 60,388.14 | 53,062.68 | 49,157.22 | 49,061.76 | 50,911.30 |
| Add SURPLUS/less DEFICIT | 17,074.22 | - 3,784.20 | - 7,325.46 | - 3,905.46 | - 95.46 | 1,849.54 | 1,544.54 |
| BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD | 64,172.34 | 60,388.14 | 53,062.68 | 49,157.22 | 49,061.76 | 50,911.30 | 52,455.84 |
| BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD RELATES TO: | | | | | | | |
| Parish Council | 47,134.88 | 41,852.68 | 34,387.22 | 30,381.76 | 30,226.30 | 32,055.84 | 33,600.38 |
| Burial Authority | 17,037.46 | 18,535.46 | 18,675.46 | 18,775.46 | 18,835.46 | 18,855.46 | 18,855.46 |
| | 64,172.34 | 60,388.14 | 53,062.68 | 49,157.22 | 49,061.76 | 50,911.30 | 52,455.84 |
| Remember in relation to the Parish Council balance: | | | | | | | |
| ~ Section 106 monies for sport or recreation | 6,070.00 | 4,570.00 | 3,070.00 | 3,070.00 | 3,070.00 | 3,070.00 | 3,070.00 |
| ~ earmarked for Neighbourhood Plan (2018/19 grant bal) | 2,455.50 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| ~ earmarked for 3 replacement street lights | 8,832.30 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| LEAVING AVAILABLE FOR PARISH COUNCIL | 29,777.08 | 37,282.68 | 31,317.22 | 27,311.76 | 27,156.30 | 28,985.84 | 30,530.38 |
| Tax base | 940.05 | 974.57 | 962.60 | 962.60 | 962.60 | 962.60 | 962.60 |
| Band D equivalent | £41.49 | £40.02 | £44.67 | £45.71 | £46.75 | £46.75 | £46.75 |