

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 4th February 2020, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, Green Room, 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 3 members of the public.

20/17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

20/18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

20/19. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/20. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

- a request for the person who has twice removed the new Much Hadham sign, and knocking the posts down, at the south end of the village to please let the Parish Council know what the issue is so a mutually acceptable site may be found;
- local councils are being encouraged to organise events to mark "VE 75" during the 8th to 10th May. It is possible that the Green Tye and Perry Green Preservation Society or The Bull Inn have planned events so a request for any suggestions to pass along. Cllr B O'Neill to make enquiries at the Prince of Wales and the Clerk to ask whether St Andrew's Church have any related plans;
- good news for church goers and residents of Church Lane as the trees will be pollarded next week; and
- next month's meeting will be at the Green Tye Mission Hall and include an opportunity to chat to Cllrs over a cuppa (and cake from the Afternoon Tea Club), starting at 7.00 pm.

20/21. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7th January 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

20/22. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Clerk reported that the revision of the report was nearly complete and that items requiring an update would be covered in subsequent agenda items.

20/23. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

Between Cllr K Twort and Cllr D McDonald, the following updates were received:

- maintenance/repair work is being undertaken in the Pavilion to address the problems with the wall heaters and some broken door handles. It is believed that the problem with the showers not draining properly has been resolved;
- a report for the action required on the boundary trees is in progress following a recent walk round the Recreation Ground with the arborist contractor; and
- the next Sports Association meeting is on the 11th February when an update on the Tennis Hut is expected. The Hut project is being reviewed due to funding constraints for the Hut and utilities.

In addition, the Chair reported that she had been in touch with the Sunday football team regarding the poor state of the Pavilion. As yet, no reply has been received.

Dog fouling

The Clerk reported that the outstanding actions are being progressed. A contact at East Herts Council has been identified to discuss dog control matters.

Playground

The Clerk highlighted that the information from Wicksteed, covering the date that the zip wire would be fixed as well as some options to enhance the current playground for consideration, is still outstanding. The Wicksteed contact has promised this information for the 5th February.

Village Hall

Cllr B O'Neill provided the following update:

- broadband is now working in the Main Hall and a booster is on order to allow it work in the Green Room;
- it is still proving difficult to get quotes for the roof repair. The pitch of the roof is too shallow and repairs to rotten timbers underneath are likely but can't be quantified until the existing roof is removed. In addition, the intention will be to seal each slate tile which will add to the cost. To change the roof pitch will be too costly; (incorporates comments received from the Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee and response to questions)
- still seeking a proposal to provide solar panels and electric car charging points in the car park from a solar energy consultant; and
- the Hall is being well used, especially in the evenings and perhaps consideration could be given to incorporating the Pavilion into the letting programme.

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

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith reported that:

- Footpath 10/11 Kettle Green Lane – developer's scheme for the road crossing, by Dell Cottage, is being checked to ensure it is in line with the originally agreed specification and whether any further works required to make it safe due to the steepness of the slope and visibility down the Lane. The consultation on the diversion order is still expected soon;
- Bridleway 52 and Restricted Byway 42 – these are across fields which have been ploughed by the landowners making the surface unusable. Both are to be reinstated when conditions allow; and
- Bridleway 28 – following the last meeting, it has been identified that the problem faced by horse riders at the 2 new gates is that these shut too quickly, preventing the horses from getting through. The closing speed of the gate closers needs to be reduced. An alternative route around these gates was proposed but turned down as on private land. Finally, a wobbly handrail has been repaired where the path crosses a culvert just where it enters Mill Wood.

Planters

The Chair reported that the Working Party needed to invite more people to get involved with this project, to include maintaining the planters. In addition, the phone box at Tower Hill will be part of this project.

(iii) Highways

The Chair highlighted that there had been a further Highways meeting on 20th January involving Cllr S Smith, Herts County Council (HCC) representatives, Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) and herself. The next meeting would be in May.

Cllr S Smith firstly reported that the fence and fallen tree at Winding Hill had been dealt with by the landowner. In addition, the pothole has been repaired by HCC and further trees, owned by HCC, have been identified that will be pollarded or removed.

In terms of the Highways meeting, Cllr S Smith provided the following updates:

- Kettle Green Lane passing places project – shortfall in funds has been identified. HCC will push ahead with applying funds, obtaining a detailed design for the chosen option (2) and gaining a quote;
(Note – “funds” refers to section 106 monies allocated for this project and a shortfall has arisen as these funds were shared between HCC and East Herts Council (EHC). Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) will investigate with EHC if their share has been spent, and if so, what on)
- 20mph speed limit at Tower Hill - two “School 20 when lights show” signs will be installed by the end of March. The north sign is already in place but the south sign is being moved nearer the pavement so it can be seen;
- Malting Lane/Danebridge Road – a volume, speed and direction survey was completed during November 2019 and the results are now available. In essence, the results showed that speeds were not excessive. However, there are some issues with where the device was placed in Danebridge Road i.e. at a point where drivers need to slow down due to the sharp bend in the road. Residents have also raised concerns about the large vehicles (HGVs) using these roads. Weight restrictions are not possible, as the refuse trucks need access, but advisory signs at the entrance to Malting Lane and at the north end of Danebridge Road could greatly reduce usage by HGV’s etc and will be applied for by HCC. Finally, the time restrictions for using Malting Lane differ at each access point which will be investigated; and
- flooding – in recent months, serious flooding has occurred at several places, the most notable being at Water Lane with the demise of several vehicles. It is suggested that adequate warning signs, or in the worst cases early positioning of road closure signs, would go a long way to preventing such accidents.

In response to a question regarding the flooding, it was confirmed that HCC had taken on board the comments. It was also highlighted that the silt movement arising from flooding causes drains to be blocked which then leads to more flooding. Cleaning of drains and gullies is undertaken on a 3-year programme. Finally, it was also highlighted that it was important to report flooding to HCC, specifying that the road was flooded and not the drains/gullies as the latter results in no action being taken.

Cllr B O'Neill reported that instructions are being given to Ringway to undertake the street lighting project work scheduled for this financial year. In response to a question, it was explained that the grouping of the work to be done has been on the basis of cost and ease: firstly, obsolete lights; secondly, street lights where tops chopped and replaced with lanterns and finally street lights where columns need to be replaced.

Following the suggestion that the theft of the village sign should be reported to the police, it was confirmed that HCC had done that, as only the owner of the item stolen can report the crime to the police.

(iv) Media

The Chair reported that maintenance of the Facebook page and updating of the website were ongoing matters.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that following a conference call with AECOM, the consultants, named individuals have been allocated to produce the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which will typically take 16 weeks from start to finish. The SEA report will make recommendations for any additional policies or changes required for the Neighbourhood Plan to be environmentally sound and enable the statutory consultees and East Herts Council to support it.

On a separate matter, many residents will be aware that the owner and occupier of the former Barn School site sadly passed away last month. It would be premature to speculate what might become of the land – it depends on who will inherit it and what their intentions for it are, neither of which are known. It is, however, a fact that the land is, for residents, the preferred potential development site, should it ever become available. However, it could be many years before its position is clarified so, for now, there are no changes to be made to the draft Plan arising from this news. Nevertheless, as might be expected, endeavours will be made to contact the legal representatives so that the Parish Council's position is made known to them.

Finally, the Parish Council made a further grant application Locality for £1,250 to cover consultancy expenditure to 31 March, the end of our financial year. It leaves a balance of £2,006 to apply for in the new financial year.

Following a question, Cllr I Hunt confirmed that the deadline to submit the Neighbourhood Plan to East Herts Council is March 2021.

(vi) Security

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that there had been 7 crime reports in January:

- two criminal damage;
- four thefts from motor vehicles; and
- one theft of a pedal bike.

For most, no suspects identified although some had enquiries outstanding.

In addition, it was reported that PCSO Leon de Bruyn had put up an 'ECHO' poster on the Village Hall notice board but had then run out. The Chair agreed to print out a poster to put up in Londis.

Finally, Cllr H Maduhu referred to a recent OWL report highlighting that there are rogue traders around, cold calling and offering roof cleaning. Those present were reminded to check before using, with www.which.co.uk trusted trader scheme being suggested for the checking.

(vii) Other

The Chair reported that she had sent an email to the landowner of Moor Place regarding the trees at the rear of the War Memorial site, highlighting that these are hanging a long way over the War Memorial.

20/24. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) had given his apologies for tonight but had provided a report, the key item being East Herts Council's grants programme for 2020/21 is now open for funding for community organisations and, for the first time, individuals and informal groups without a constitution are able to apply for up to £300. The deadline for applications is the 31st March via grants.admin@eastherts.gov.uk and additional information is available at <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/community-wellbeing/funding-community-organisations-and-individuals>.

The Chair outlined that any application made has to meet a priority of East Herts Council and these are detailed on their website.

20/25. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Community Grants

The Village Hall Management Committee Chair highlighted that it is difficult to obtain grants if your organisation is considered "rich" and if you are placed in an area that does not suffer from deprivation. That said, he did note that grants have been periodically obtained in the past.

(ii) Ownership of the Recreation Ground and the Village Hall

A resident asked whether the Parish Council owned the land at the village hall and the Recreation Ground. The Clerk replied that the Parish Council is the custodian trustee in both cases.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plan pre-submission consultation responses

A resident highlighted that the responses by the statutory consultees to the pre-submission consultation of the Neighbourhood Plan had not yet been published, although acknowledged that it is not a process requirement until the final report has been completed. In their view, as part of good governance, publication should be undertaken as soon as possible. The resident also claimed that a number of statutory consultees had published their responses on their own websites.

Cllr I Hunt outlined the reasons why the consultation responses have not been published, referring back to the process planned at the start of the pre-submission consultation. It was always intended that there would be a response published with each comment received e.g. action to be taken. This analysis had been largely completed but then the adverse feedback from EHC and Historic England led to the dropping of Moor Place Gate. Together with the resulting use of a windfall allowance, and the call for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), it is now unclear what the final responses would be to many of the comments received. Hence, they were not yet ready to be published. Given that an SEA is now required, it is prudent to wait for that report before proceeding further with publishing the consultation feedback.

The resident reiterated that, as there could be a long delay before the next formal stage, it was important for residents and Cllrs to see the responses from the statutory consultees now.

The resident also referred to the potential for development on land at Hill House and asked for clarity on the possible housing numbers.

20/26. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

The Clerk highlighted that the cheque for Weld Design (981) should have been described as payable to Mr K Lunniss, the owner of Weld Design.

RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown overleaf, be duly authorised for payment.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - FEBRUARY 2020

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
980	E.ON	Lighting for war memorial	36.27
981	BA Mr K Lunniss (Weld Design)	Repair to Perry Green Burial Ground fence	480.00
982	BA MH Landscapes	Maintenance at burial grounds Jul - Dec '19	1,080.00
983	Govresources Ltd	Planning advice and support (NP)	1,800.00
984	Lynne Mills	Website hosting and domain name (NP)	143.12
985	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning	80.00
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (February)	334.00
SO	F Forth	Clerk's salary (February)	581.10
Total payments			<u>4,534.49</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 overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 4 FEBRUARY 2020

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2019	47,134.88	17,037.46	64,172.34
Income	59,650.88	5,000.00	64,650.88
Expenditure	- 56,785.83	- 2,582.00	- 59,367.83
Closing balance	<u><u>49,999.93</u></u>	<u><u>19,455.46</u></u>	<u><u>69,455.39</u></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>

Cllr I Hunt suggested that as the budget for grants and donations had not been spent, consideration be given to making contact with The Almshouse Charity as they had deferred

their application from September 2019. The Chair agreed to get in touch with the Charity Chair.

20/27. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th January 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/28. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/29. CLERK'S INFORMATION

No matters.

20/30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 3rd March 2020, at 7:30 pm in the Green Tye Mission Hall. This will be preceded by refreshments at 7 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:32 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 4 FEBRUARY 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	2,353.12	Insurance claim for the Almshouse light of £2,147.32 received
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	-	
TOTAL INCOME	63,673.00	59,650.88	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	6,973.64	6,392.10	
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	3,674.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	650.00	685.60	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Street lighting (replacement programme)	5,000.00	-	
Pavilion	2,900.00	2,971.96	
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	10,193.14	
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	5,137.76	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	65,639.10	56,785.83	