

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council virtual meeting held on Tuesday,
2nd June 2020 at 7:35 pm.

*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)

*Cllr Mrs J Liversage

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu

*Cllr D McDonald

*Cllr B O'Neill

*Cllr S Smith

Cllr Mrs P Taylor (Chair)

Cllr K Twort

* denotes present

In attendance: F Forth, Parish Clerk and no members of the public.

20/69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllr Mrs H Maduhu, Cllr Mrs P Taylor and Cllr K Twort. In Cllr Mrs Taylor's absence, Cllr I Hunt chaired the meeting.

Cllr B O'Neill arrived at 7:38 pm, during item 20/74.

20/70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

20/71. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/72. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that no request had been made for an election following advertising the vacancy created by the disqualification of Martin McPherson-Pottle from his role as a Cllr in May. The Parish Council can now fill this vacancy by co-option and any person interested can contact the Clerk or any Cllr for information.

20/73. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

The Chair reminded those present that the April meeting was held prior to the regulations being in place for a virtual meeting but was a practical way to consider current matters and ensure payments to suppliers were made. RESOLVED that the minutes of virtual meeting held on 7th April 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings with all decisions made therein ratified and the minutes be signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 5th May 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

20/74. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Clerk highlighted that most outstanding matters would be covered by subsequent agenda items. The following specific points were discussed:

- requirements for opening an account at the Unity Trust Bank, bank recommended by the Clerk, had been clarified and changing bankers will be on the July agenda;
- actions with East Herts Council's dog control team are being pursued in relation to the Recreation Ground and it was agreed proposal would be sent to the Sports Association to comment on; and
- the outstanding report would be issued after being updated following this meeting.

20/75. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

The following matters were discussed:

- litter bins: a resident had highlighted that litter bins are overflowing on the Recreation Ground. This is considered a seasonal/COVID-19 issue and the litter picker is to be asked to pick twice a week from now until the end of summer. It was noted that it wasn't feasible to remove the rubbish bins (to encourage people to take litter home) and nor was it possible for a commercial sized bin to be installed as the refuse freighter cannot get up the incline to empty it;
- Bowling green: a resident reported that teenagers had been playing football on the bowling green and were chased off;
- playground:
 - the annual ROSPA playground inspection, for compliance with standards as opposed to the maintenance review carried out by Broadmead Leisure, is being undertaken during July/August. It is anticipated that the report will be available for the September meeting; and
 - Wicksteed are progressing the zip line repair in preparation for the playground being released from pandemic lock down. There had been a change in staff at Wicksteed which resulted in the delay;
- boundary trees: in order to be able to progress the tree maintenance plan, another company has been contacted and a quote to undertake the tree survey is expected shortly; and
- Pavilion: the letter from Environmental Health regarding the risk of Legionnaires Disease in unused premises was discussed. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs J Liversage would investigate and identify the action required.

Village Hall

On behalf of the Village Hall, the Clerk confirmed that the £10,000 grant had been received. In addition, whilst the Hall is closed, the Management Committee Chair has been decorating the hallway.

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

Cllr S Smith reported that an unknown liquid had been seen emanating from the escape ducts in field that now covers the old gravel pits, near foot and bridle paths 28, 29, 30 and 31, which was reported to Herts County Council (HCC). It is assumed to be an expected occurrence from waste material and therefore not dangerous to the public.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith reported on the following matters:

- HCC contractors are currently mowing, trimming and generally making good footpaths and bridleways on their proposed schedule. This will be done again in mid to late summer;
- progress on the diversion order for Footpath 11 at Kettle Green Lane currently not known;
- whilst good to see villagers making use of footpaths and country lanes, correct behaviour in relation to dog fouling is not being followed nor is the requirement to keep dogs on leads in areas close to the village. This is despite the numerous reminder signs. In addition, walkers and dogs have ventured off footpaths onto private property and, in one instance, resulted in wildlife being killed. Installation of more strongly worded signs to be progressed;
- notable increase in the volume of litter in the hedgerows, footpaths and country lanes. Everyone should remember to take their litter home with them; and
- reminder for cyclists that it is permissible to cycle on bridleways but not on footpaths.

Following discussion in respect of the gate at the top of the Recreation Ground, by the tennis courts, it was agreed that the Parish Council would accept a sign on the gate stating “private land beyond this gate” if the private landowner would cover the sign cost.

(iii) Highways

No matters to report.

Note: related matters at 20/78 and 20/79.

(iv) Media

None.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

The Chair reported that the first unapproved draft Strategic Environmental Assessment is expected in mid-June.

(vi) Security

In the absence of Cllr Mrs H Maduhu, the Clerk read the report provided by PCSO Leon de Bruyn which covered the following items for May:

- theft - at lakes in the Trimms Green area. Suspects removed from one of the lakes for suspected fish poaching;
- criminal damage –later discovered at another lake in Trimms Green, damage had been caused to some garden furniture;
- non-dwelling burglary – 3 outbuildings at a residential learning facility were broken into and a chop saw removed;
- dwelling burglary – a residential property was broken into in Danebridge Road, where an electric scooter was been removed from the garage; and
- Public Order offence – there has been an instance of a public order offence following a reported breach of pandemic regulations.

In addition, there appeared to have been an increase in criminal activity across East Herts (in particular thefts from out-buildings) throughout the lockdown period, as well as increased reports of lockdown breaches. The Police urge communities to remove valuable belongings where they can or consider stronger security measures for the outbuildings. With Government lockdown regulations being relaxed slightly from Monday 1st June, it is hoped that this will ease the number of breach reports.

(vii) Other

The Chair reported that he had been made aware of the declining state of Hill House where nature is beginning to take over and therefore some maintenance is required. Cllr B O'Neill agreed to seek a contact for the maintenance.

20/76. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

There was no report from Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) but he had sent his apologies.

Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) reported that he had given a grant of £4,000 to the group supporting communities through COVID-19 covering Much Hadham, Little Hadham and the Pelhams. He also reported that Highways have been focused on the priority town centre closures for social distancing purposes so other highway related matters are currently on the back burner.

In response to a request, he agreed to look into the need for contemporary replacement bollards at the Moor Place Gate entrance (see item 20/78) and provided an update on the legal situation regarding the travellers at Little Hadham.

Note: Cllr G McAndrew effectively attended for this item only.

20/77. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

None.

20/78. MOOR PLACE GATE – ENTRANCE RESURFACING

The Chair and Cllr B O'Neill highlighted that the entrance to Moor Place Gate was being re-surfaced in late July which provided an opportunity to reinstate the bollards at the same time – a capital project agreed in this year's budget. In discussion with Ringway, Cllr B O'Neill had been informed that standard concrete bollards would be installed. However, a request was made for the bollards to be more in keeping with the heritage site and this is being considered.

20/79. STREET LIGHTING

Cllr B O'Neill reminded those present that the Parish Council had been moving to replace the street lighting on a phased basis with funding through the precept which has meant slow progress. Limited investigations have identified that seeking to fund the remainder of this project through a loan is affordable and would facilitate all of the work being completed in a short period. Consultation with residents would be required before a loan application could be made.

In discussion, it was highlighted that given there are modern traffic signs on the High Street, replacement street light columns should be the standard ones as opposed to heritage ones although the lanterns would be heritage. This would keep the project affordable. An example like this is already in place opposite Nimney House.

RESOLVED to form a task and finish group to progress upgrading the Parish Council's street lighting, including public consultation and preparation of a business case for its funding by loan. Group to consist of Cllr B O'Neill (Chair) for design and liaison with supplier, Cllr Mrs H Maduhu for public consultation and the Clerk for the business and financial case.

20/80. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - JUNE 2020

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (May)	334.00
1009	East Herts Council	Annual dog bin charges	1,421.28
1010	C Uwins	Repayment of Sunday Lunch Club March to December	240.00
1011	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning	80.00
1012	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (April + May)	1,162.20
Total payments			<u>£3,237.48</u>

Cheques will be signed and despatched following the meeting.

(ii) Financial Statement

The financial statement for 2020/21 to date was received. The summary financial position is detailed below and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A. It was highlighted that the VAT refund in excess of budget was not a windfall gain to the Parish Council but simply the refund of VAT paid in the preceding two financial years.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 2 JUNE 2020

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2020	43,057.54	18,742.76	61,800.30
Income	33,882.04	330.00	34,212.04
Expenditure	- 9,995.01	- 562.70	- 10,557.71
Closing balance	<u>66,944.57</u>	<u>18,510.06</u>	<u>85,454.63</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>

20/81. STAFFING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr D McDonald as a substitute member to the Staffing Committee.
Note – Cllr D McDonald did not participate in the vote.

20/82. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 5th May be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

Following a question from Cllr Mrs J Liversage, the Chair stated that planning permission for the site of The Junk Shop at Green Tye had been refused for design reasons.

20/83. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/84. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk highlighted the following matters:

- a letter has just been issued to residents in relation to the A120 bypass highlighting that the Albury Road will remain closed 24/7 for a further month – this is on the Parish Council's website;
- the Almshouse Trust is modernising its Trust deed and have confirmed that these changes will not affect the right of the Parish Council to appoint four representative trustees. Following consultation with Cllr I Hunt, the Almshouse Trust will be informed that the Parish Council supports the changes; and
- the Village Hall Management Committee have no objection to reinstating a bin for the litter picking with the Parish Council covering the cost until the Hall reopens. The cost will be £81.12 per quarter for one bin to be emptied on a fortnightly basis. It was agreed that the Clerk should organise this.

20/85. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 7th July 2020, at 7:30 pm. Arrangements to be confirmed but likely to be in the same format as tonight if restrictions are not lifted. Any suggestions for improvement on the meeting format can be sent to the Clerk.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:59 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 2 JUNE 2020

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2021 BUDGET £	2021 ACTUAL £	
INCOME			
Precept	43,000.00	21,500.00	
Litter Agency	4,235.00	-	
New Homes Bonus	10,000.00	-	
Pavilion income	1,000.00	-	
Grant	300.00	-	
Other	60.00	0.28	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	12,381.76	Reclaim for 2018/19 + 2019/20
TOTAL INCOME	63,595.00	33,882.04	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,000.00	1,162.20	
PWLB loan repayment	5,387.46	2,693.73	
Administration costs	3,300.00	895.00	
Insurance	3,900.00	756.00	
Audit fees	730.00	-	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	-	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	21,800.00	2,384.40	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	1,002.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,100.00	34.16	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Street lighting (replacement programme)	6,100.00	-	
Pavilion	3,400.00	689.40	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	-	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	1,500.00	-	
Neighbourhood Plan	2,000.00	-	
Capital - Roller shutter at Pavilion	2,000.00	-	
Capital - Bollards at Moor Place Gate	800.00	-	
VAT	5,000.00	378.12	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	71,060.46	9,995.01	