

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council virtual meeting held on Tuesday,
7th July 2020 at 7:33 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 5 members of the public.

Cllr I Hunt welcomed residents to the meeting, apologising in advance for any technical glitches and reminding those present that it should be assumed that the meeting was being recorded.

In addition, Cllr I Hunt welcomed Cllr Mrs P Taylor back highlighting that whilst she would be formally presiding over the meeting, he would be leading the meeting on her behalf to show how virtual meetings work in practice.

20/86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

20/87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

20/88. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/89. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr I Hunt reminded those present that there is a vacancy for a Cllr and applications are welcomed, and it would be particularly helpful if the hamlets could be represented.

The Chair stated she was pleased to be back and thanked everyone for all their hard work in her absence.

20/90. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 2nd June 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

20/91. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Clerk reported that outstanding items from the last meeting are noted for updates later in the meeting. An updated report is expected for the next meeting.

20/92. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

The following matters were discussed:

- boundary trees: two quotes have been received but clarification of the map requirements for one being pursued. Quotes are: Tim Fuller £945.00 + VAT and PR Newson £925.00 + VAT;
- Pavilion:
 - proposal for a long term daily user of the Pavilion and recreation area from September is being developed. The draft agreement has been reviewed in light of COVID-19 requirements;
 - noted that the above proposal would be on the basis of exclusive use thereby making the Pavilion unavailable to other users, particularly any sports team and the Sports Association have been notified accordingly. Consideration needs to be given to perhaps letting the football teams access the away changing room and outside toilet, and providing alternative storage for football equipment stored in the Pavilion;
 - Velux window had been seen open but checks confirmed it was closed and no water damage inside. It is believed that a football team were training there recently and they are to be reminded to not access the Pavilion;
 - Cllr J Liversage to provide the information required to manage and monitor the risk of Legionnaires disease; and
 - the door handle to the outside toilet has been pulled off – as the toilet is currently locked and bolted;
- litter picks: these are now being undertaken on a Monday and Friday at the Recreation Ground;
- playground:
 - a COVID-19 risk assessment sign to be put up as soon as possible; and
 - the zip line post is being repaired on 9th July; and
- dog fouling: the Clerk has a phone meeting arranged with the East Herts Council officer on 8th July.

Village Hall

On behalf of the Village Hall, the Clerk reported that the Management Committee is seeking to reopen the Hall. To this end, the Management Committee Chair circulated a draft policy to all hirers, asking them to consider how it may impact on them (previously circulated to all Cllrs). As the Parish Council is a user, the Clerk had already stated it would seek to revert to meetings in the Hall once allowed to do so. It may be that hybrid meetings are considered – partly in person and partly virtual – although the logistics of this need to be considered. Cllrs were asked to pass on any thoughts or concerns to the Clerk.

In addition, the Clerk noted that it was unlikely that the Parish Council would be able to use the Mission Hall for its November meetings.

Cllr B O'Neill highlighted that more rubbish had been dumped outside the Village Hall, as well as at the Recreation Ground, and the Clerk highlighted that she would identify the date that the Village Hall bins were to be emptied.

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

Cllr S Smith reported on the following matters:

- Fly tipping: an instance occurred in Bourne Lane a couple of weeks ago which East Herts Council were quick to acknowledge and clear although small items of litter remain. Herts County will be organising a local litter pick to clean up the area;
- Ash Meadow residents: following enquiries from residents at the bottom end of Ash Meadow about the maintenance of areas that are not part of their property, i.e. the grass, shrubs and trees in the areas alongside the road, which appear to be overgrown, Highways have been requested to deal with this as it is the responsible body. In addition, the Housing Association needs to be asked to address the linkways joining the road to Footpath 25 and the Catholic Diocese has been asked to address the overgrowing trees from the Priest's House; and
- Giant Hogweed: despite earlier concerns, the toxic and dangerous Giant Hogweed plant is not present in Much Hadham but it is in neighbouring parishes. This is the critical time of year when the plant flowers and, if not successfully controlled by spraying, the resulting seeds can lay dormant in the soil for up to 20 years.

Cllr B O'Neill confirmed that a quote had been received to reduce the height of the trees and trim the hedges around the Priest's House.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith reported on the following matters:

- maintenance activities: first scheduled mowing and trimming of footpaths and bridleways has been completed and the second phase of the schedule commences next month;
- Footpath 11: progress of the diversion order at Kettle Green Lane impaired by the lockdown measures;
- Footpath 10: local resident concerns regarding encroachment onto their property are being addressed by Herts County. Advice on regulations regarding routing of the footpath, positioning of fences and revised access to the recreation ground have been provided and a response from the resident is awaited;
- extension of gardens: Herts County has commented that some of the new properties at Moor Place have extended their gardens across agricultural land up to the edge of footpath 10 and East Herts Council are investigating;
- Footpath 33 (skirts the northern edge of Great Hadham golf course): flight of steps at its eastern end are in serious need of repair and Herts County has instructed contractors to undertake the work. Similar repairs are being recommended for the steps on Footpath 31 where it meets Bourne Lane; and
- Footpath 29: the bridge, where it crosses Bridleway 28, has a broken plank and damage to its metal mesh surface. This has been reported to Herts County; and
- Footpath 57: repairs to the bridge have been completed.

In terms of the extension of gardens, Cllr I Hunt stated that this is a well known issue, with the Planning Inspector having refused planning permission.

(iii) Highways

Cllr B O'Neill commented that the traffic is getting busier, noting that there had been a crash earlier in the evening at Blackbridge Road. Updates needed to be obtained from Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) in relation to the resurfacing at the entrance to Moor Place Gate and the replacement bollards in keeping with a heritage site.

Note: related matters at 20/95.

(iv) Media

A major increase in activity on the Parish Council Facebook account reported following more posting being undertaken and a paid for boost for the item relating to the Cllr vacancy. The post relating to Giant Hogweed will be updated following the information received earlier this evening.

As always, no debates will be entered into on the Facebook page.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that the first draft of the Strategic Environmental Assessment from AECOM, which had been promised 3 weeks ago had not been received. Following chasing, it is expected any day.

Cllr I Hunt also reported that there had been changes to the landowners' intentions for one of the sites in the Plan, the land south of Culver. The site will not now be developed as two houses for occupancy by the landowners and family. Instead, the intention is to sell it with the benefit of its planning permission. This may lead to more dwellings on the site if a fresh planning application is submitted but it is too early to say with any confidence what will happen. However, the site will remain as an allocation for housing in the Plan.

(vi) Security

Cllr H Maduhu reported that the following information had been received from Leon de Bruyn, PCSO:

- one instance of fly-tipping reported and Environmental Services contacted to remove the rubbish; and
- a noticeable increase seen in thefts from outbuildings, so a reminder to residents to take extra precautions when securing their sheds, garages and barns etc, to remain vigilant to any suspicious behaviour and report incidents using the non-emergency 101 number.

(vii) Other

COVID-19 risk assessments

Cllr I Hunt highlighted that COVID-19 risk assessments are needed in relation to significant Parish Council assets and a wealth of guidance has been produced by government and other agencies.

Cllr D McDonald highlighted that this had been taken into account when drafting the agreement for the potential new user of the Pavilion.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to prepare COVID-19 risk assessments to Cllr I Hunt, Cllr Mrs J Liversage, Cllr D McDonald and the Clerk

Memorial bench

The Clerk explained that a request had been received for permission to install a memorial bench in the village although, as yet, no details received on the potential location.

In discussion, it was noted that there is no policy for this type of request as minimal requests received in the past. It was agreed that when considering requests of this nature in future, the following points need to be addressed:

- who will pay for the memorial bench;
- who will be responsible for looking after it; and
- who will be responsible for paying for any plaque to be attached.

Hill House

Cllr B O'Neill is progressing identifying a contact for maintenance of Hill House given the decline in the property's condition.

20/93. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

County Councillor

Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) provided the following updates:

- roads: Bourne Road up to St Elizabeth's will be resurfaced at the end of July but other roadwork matters are currently on hold. In terms of the A120 bypass, the Albury Road opened last week and the Little Hadham road was closing this week;
- funding: £5,000 has been given to the villages from Much Hadham through to Stocking Pelham which is being held by Little Hadham Village Hall. This money is to support social prescribing and recovery from COVID-19; and
- survey: funded from the £5,000 referred to above, a social connection and internet survey is due to be delivered soon to all households in Much Hadham through to Stocking Pelham, with parish magazines (where applicable), for completion in August.

In response to a question linked to information provided by Cllr G McAndrew as HCC's Stansted Airport representative, it was confirmed that the airport is retraining staff as a result of downsizing. Unemployment rates across East Herts had increased 3- or 4- fold, much of it thought to be linked to the airport but rates across the district were still relatively low compared to other areas.

Cllr I Hunt commented that the local impact on small business is unknown but the hairdressers was not reopening and the tenancy of The Bull Inn is being advertised, although neither is necessarily connected to the lockdown.

Bollards at Moor Place Gate

Cllr G McAndrew reported, following a question, that the relevant officers were not available as yet to discuss this with as current focus remains on closing streets in town centres to enable social distancing.

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

District Councillor

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

- fete: there will be no fete this year but given that the Recreation Trust provide funding in the village, the Trust asked for donations in the July parish magazine;
- Grange Paddocks: good progress is being made on this project. The pedestrian bridge has been installed and the frame for the new building should be up by the end of July/beginning August;
- town centres: these are changing rapidly, undergoing a huge and devastating impact from the pandemic. A review is being undertaken, aiming to revitalise town centres; and
- parking: charging for parking has been reintroduced but critical care workers can apply for free parking.

20/94. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

A resident provided the following helpful advice and information:

- the Almshouses receive Legionnaires reports on a regular basis and the Chair of the Much Hadham Almshouse Charity can be contacted for this information;
- litter bins on the Recreation Ground are overflowing and it was noted that the large refuse freighters cannot get up the entrance slope to empty any larger bin;
- in terms of the Pavilion, if you can allow 72 hours between hires, no deep clean is required;
- the paintwork is peeling on the village sign and the name of the person that made the sign originally can be provided to the Clerk; and
- a contact name to be able to contact the relatives re Hill House was provided.

20/95. STREET LIGHTING

Street Lighting project update

Cllr I Hunt reminded those present that a task and finish group was approved at the last meeting to progress the street lighting project.

The Clerk provided the following update on the project:

- details of the project had been publicised in a variety of ways: the July Parish Magazine; home page of the Parish Council's website; detailed posters on noticeboards around the parish and outside Londis and on the Parish Council's Facebook page and Twitter account;
- publicising the details of the project makes it clear that it is replacing some lights with standard columns and heritage lanterns – like outside Nimney House – and decommissioning and removing others;
- project costs are being finalised with Ringway to ensure that all relevant lights have been included with the right action and cost. Currently, the total cost of the project is around £46,000;
- a survey is currently in progress which is seeking the answer to 2 questions:
 - in favour with proceeding with the project; and
 - in favour of the taking out a loan to do this work now;
- the survey closes on the 15th July and details of how to submit a response are noted on the Parish Council's website – essentially via Survey Monkey or emailing the Clerk. To date, respondents to the survey are in favour of the project proceeding and being funded by a loan; and
- in addition to the survey, over the last 6 months, Cllr B O'Neill has been collecting information through 1 to 1 meetings with parishioners. Full details will be included in the business case but the results indicate support for the proposed lighting plan.

In addition, the Clerk highlighted the next steps. These are:

- to produce the business case for the project, incorporating the costs, the survey results and demonstrating how the proposed loan can be afforded. The business case effectively underpins the application for a borrowing approval;
- hold an extra meeting on the 21st July 2020 to consider the business case and the application for the borrowing approval; and
- providing approved, the application and business case will be sent to HAPTC for review prior to submission to the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government for its approval.

The Clerk reminded those present that the order for the replacement and decommissioning of lights cannot be placed until a borrowing approval is received.

Cllr B O'Neill highlighted that it would be good to keep the old columns so that they could be sold. However, to enable this, the Parish Council would need a place to store the old columns when they are removed. It was recognised that the columns are heavy to move so consideration should be given to identifying any local buyer so that the column can be delivered direct to the new owner. It was noted that no pricing has been developed for selling the old columns.

Replacement light outside Londis

The Clerk explained that the quote circulated with the agenda was incorrect as it included a standard lantern instead of a heritage lantern. A corrected quote had been received, amounting to £1,918.67 + VAT.

RESOLVED to approve the quote from Ringway for £1,918.67 + VAT for replacement street light outside Londis

20/96. VILLAGE SIGN

Cllr I Hunt stated that the Much Hadham village sign, erected for the millennium, had been copied by a local care home with only minor changes being made in terms of images and composition. This is clearly a breach of copyright.

Prior to the meeting, it had been identified that the Recreation Trust had purchased the village sign. As a village asset, the Parish Council is responsible for its care. In addition, Cllr D McDonald had drafted a letter (circulated prior to the meeting and detailed in Appendix A) to be sent requesting that the care home desists from using the copyrighted image.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council's action would be to issue the proposed letter, subject to including a specified period and date for a response to be received by.

20/97. BANKERS

The Clerk explained the reasons for changing the Parish Council's bankers and outlined the reasons behind recommending Unity Trust Bank as the new bankers for both a current account and savings account.

The key feature that makes Unity Trust Bank a good choice is that it allows for a triple level of control which mimics the current process of raising cheques. In addition, no additional fob would be required as security codes are sent by text.

The process for setting up the bank account is all online, including identity checks, and once set up, the switching process can be used to transfer the limited direct credits and credits from the existing bank over. A £500 deposit is required to open the account.

It was also highlighted that more encouragement can be given to receiving money electronically as opposed to cheques since it would become easy to confirm receipt online instantly. Any payment received by cheque can be paid in by freepost.

Finally, it was highlighted that there is a cost associated with using this bank of £6 per month or £72 for the year. In response to a subsequent question, it was confirmed that this fee was inclusive and that there are no additional activity based fees involved.

It was also noted that the Financial Regulations allow for internet banking but that a revised procedure note would be required.

Concern was expressed about the risk of compromising the current separation of control between payments being set up and them being authorised, and how this would be mitigated. The Clerk observed that under both the current and new system, a breach of controls would require collusion between councillors. Following discussion, Cllrs requested further information regarding the online controls including a procedure note.

Approval to change bankers to be deferred to the next meeting.

20/98. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

The Clerk highlighted that the Pavilion electricity is higher than would have been expected in the current circumstances and was due to no meter reading being provided beforehand. The next bill is expected to be lower.

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - JULY 2020

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
1013	MH Sports Association	Pavilion electricity	390.85
1014	MH Sports Association	Alarm system support charge	193.20
1015	C Copper	Cut front hedges & overhanging branches at Recreation Ground	210.00
1016	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (June)	581.10
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (July)	334.00
Total payments			<u>£1,709.15</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 overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix B. There were no matters to highlight.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 7 JULY 2020

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2020	43,057.54	18,742.76	61,800.30
Income	34,052.62	1,210.00	35,262.62
Expenditure	- 11,704.16	- 562.70	- 12,266.86
Closing balance	<u>65,406.00</u>	<u>19,390.06</u>	<u>84,796.06</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>

20/99. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 2nd June 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/100. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/101. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk highlighted the following matters:

- Stansted Airport have submitted proposed design principles to the Civil Aviation Authority (link available on Parish Council website). This is the first part of the national programme to modernise the management of airspace; and
- 75th anniversary of Victory over Japan will be recognised on the 15th August 2020, commemorating the end of WWII. Information relating to this can be found on the dedicated websites: "Herts Memories" (archive network) and "Hertfordshire Heroes" (armed forces website).

20/102. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 21st July 2020 at 7:30 pm to progress the street lighting project and changing the Parish Council's bankers.

The next full Parish Council meeting will be 4th August 2020, at 7:30 pm.

Arrangements for both meetings 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 9:24 pm.

CONTENT OF LETTER TO CARE HOME

I am writing on behalf of the Much Hadham Parish Council as it has been brought to its attention that the image on your business's sign on Hazel End Road has been produced in breach of copyright law. I attach images of the village sign for Much Hadham and the sign which stands outside your care home (below), from which it is evident that the design of the latter is derived from and very closely replicates the detail of the former, the only material difference being that what appears to be an image of St. Michael's church at Windhill in Bishop's Stortford has been substituted for the image of St. Andrew's church at Much Hadham. The village sign was erected in 2000 to mark the millennium and thus pre-dates your sign.

The Parish Council has a legitimate interest in maintaining the exclusivity of the original design, which was commissioned and paid for through the fund-raising efforts of its local residents. Accordingly I must request your undertaking that:

- the sign (and any other signs utilising the design) be taken down;
- neither it nor any similar design will be used in any signs or materials in the future;
- any existing materials (e.g. notepaper, publications, newsletters and marketing or publicity materials) displaying or incorporating the design will be destroyed, and;
- the design or similar design will not be reproduced in the future in any form.

I have been asked to confirm that, provided that you are able to respond affirmatively to the above and that no future breaches occur, the Parish Council does not propose to take the matter any further. Should you not agree, however, I must reserve the Parish Council's legal rights.

I look forward to hearing from you.

IMAGES



MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 7 JULY 2020

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO	COMMENT
	2021	DATE	
	BUDGET	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	161.00	
Other	60.00	9.86	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	12,381.76	Reclaim for 2018/19 + 2019/20
TOTAL INCOME	63,595.00	34,052.62	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,000.00	1,743.30	
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	2,594.40	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	1,336.00	
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	1,222.64	
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	428.93	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	71,060.46	11,704.16	