

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council virtual meeting held on Tuesday,
4th August 2020 at 7:30 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 4 members of the public.

20/108. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllr Mrs J Liversage,
Cllr Mrs H Maduhu and Cllr D McDonald.

20/109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

20/110. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/111. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

- a Cllr vacancy still exists and everyone is encouraged to spread the word regarding this; and
- a social connection and internet access survey is running throughout the villages of Albury, Much Hadham, Little Hadham and the Pelhams using a grant received from Cllr G McAndrew (HCC). Everyone is encouraged to complete this survey by 21st August and the key players involved were thanked for their enthusiasm and hard work.

20/112. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meetings held on 7th July 2020 and 21st July 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

20/113. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Clerk highlighted that it had been a busy month therefore the updated report was not available. The following updates were provided:

- the application for the street lighting borrowing approval had been assessed by the Department of Housing, Communities & Local Government and further information requested, primarily in relation to the selection of contractor for the project. The public consultation aspect of the project had passed assessment;
- a comprehensive note in relation to the action that the Parish Council could take in response to dog fouling had been circulated to Cllrs to consider. Clarification is still required as to whether the existing Public Spaces Protection Order covers the Recreation Ground and whether East Herts Council signage can be used;
- a response from Countryside Properties to the letter sent regarding the copyright of the village sign is expected by 10th August;
- no further action has been taken in relation to the repair of the village sign as waiting for a Cllr to provide up to date photos to use in obtaining quotes;
- the zip wire post has been replaced and in the process of arranging for the seat to be reattached; and
- the playground's ROSPA compliance report is expected by the end of August.

20/114. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

Cllr K Twort reported that the Pavilion would be discussed later in the meeting (agenda item 20/118) and a meeting is arranged with the Sports Association Chair for 6th August to discuss the Pavilion agreement.

In addition, Cllr K Twort reported that the outside toilet door handle had been repaired. It was suggested that consideration should be given to something like a traffic light system to indicate when the toilet was in use.

Village Hall

Cllr B O'Neill reported that the Village Hall is still shut. In addition, a request had been received to move the bench by the noticeboard to the bus stop where there is no seating, particularly as the bench in its current location was not usable. This was agreed in principle but a site visit to be undertaken to consider the practicalities.

The Clerk highlighted that a Village Hall meeting to progress opening the Hall was being held this evening.

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

Cllr S Smith reported on the following matters:

- land west of Footpath 11 and south of Kettle Green Lane – observation by a resident of people socialising on this site was followed up. Presumption is that the people involved owned one of the plots and it was a temporary visit;
- dog fouling – causing concern with many residents in the village and surrounding countryside. As mentioned by the Clerk earlier, East Herts Council have provided recommendations for signage and these will be installed as soon as possible;
- litter – notable increase in litter around the parish and suggestion made that residents volunteer to collect litter near their own homes, a practice followed by Cllr S Smith near his home.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith highlighted that there were no new issues to report, with all previously reported matters now work in progress. The diversion order for Footpath 11 at Kettle Green Lane is still being held up by current COVID-19 measures.

Cllr S Smith also provided an update on the work being undertaken by the landowner at Moor Place which seeks to ensure people follow Footpath 10 correctly. A secure gate is being installed at the brow of the drive from Moor Place Gate as well as a fence the length of the western side of Footpath 10. Appropriate signage is also being considered to remind users of the footpath that they are crossing private land, that cycle riding is not permitted and that dogs should be kept on a lead. Herts County Council will also install new signs for the footpath. The remaining issue to address with the landowner will be clarifying and signposting the access to the Recreation Ground from Footpath 10, incorrectly assumed to be at the western gate.

(iii) Highways

Cllr B O'Neill reported that the Give Way sign at Malting Lane had been replaced and spray patching/resurfacing had been completed at Perry Green. In terms of the bollards at Moor Place, still waiting for input from Cllr G McAndrew (HCC).

The Chair highlighted that a Zoom meeting would be organised to catch up with Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) and Highways.

An update on the street lighting project was provided as part of an earlier agenda item (Minute ref: 20/113).

(iv) Media

None.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that the unofficial final version of the Strategic Environmental Assessment from AECOM had been received. It concludes:

“Overall it is considered that the (Parish Council) takes a proportionate approach to delivering sustainable new development where possible, whilst protecting key aspects of the natural, built and historic environment that contribute to the overall sense of place and quality of life in Much Hadham.”

No changes to the current draft Plan are required as a result of the assessment and the final version of the assessment will be available on the NP website once received.

Changes will now be made to the draft Plan that arose from the consultation completed last Autumn. The residents’ responses to the consultation are now available for viewing on the NP website, including statistical analysis and proposed text changes.

Note – text changes are draft and may be edited further as all the changes to be made are consolidated.

Cllr I Hunt also reported that Hill House, and the land formerly known as the Barn School, was being marketed, highlighting that it is too early to say what will become of the site but it’s clear that Hill House needs significant money spent on it. The site was not made available for inclusion in the Plan by the previous owner. However, mindful that it has development potential, the Plan includes it as a reserve site and includes an indicative plan, the main purpose of which is to ensure community uses, and landscape and natural environment protections were incorporated into any future site designs.

Finally, Cllr I Hunt stated that he expected the final Plan to be considered at the October 2020 Parish Council meeting for submission to East Herts Council. East Herts Council would then undertake its Regulation 16 consultation but that currently could not happen until May 2021 due to COVID-19.

(vi) Security

On behalf of Cllr H Maduhu, the Clerk reported that the PCSO had provided the results of speed checks undertaken at the North end of the village that day: 100 vehicle speeds were recorded and 5 vehicles will be receiving advisory letters - 2 of which are local keepers.

The speed check tests are being undertaken within Much Hadham and surrounding areas as this was highlighted as one of the new Local Police Priorities for this quarter.

In addition, there had been one reported offence since the last meeting: theft of marquee pegs from a marquee in the open field of the school. Access was via the footpath and no suspects were identified.

(vii) Other

Cllr B O'Neill reported that the 800th anniversary celebrations for St Andrew's Church had been cancelled but the sponsored bike and hike planned for that weekend was still happening and he would circulate details. In addition, he suggested a sponsored local walk on Saturday 12th September, from St Andrew's church to St Thomas' church, the Congregational Chapel and back to St Andrew's church.

20/115. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

None.

20/116. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Survey thank you

A resident thanked Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) for sponsoring the survey referred to earlier (Minute ref: 20/111) as well as helping to deliver it.

(ii) Pavilion agreement

In response to a question seeking clarification of the exclusive use of the Pavilion, Cllr I Hunt commented that this would be covered at the specific agenda item (20/118).

(iii) Footpath 10

A resident commented that Footpath 10 had always been up the drive from the gates to the stile. Cllr S Smith agreed that this is how it is recorded on the definitive map but the Moor Place landowner believes it should not follow the drive. Herts County Council is discussing this with the Landowner.

(iv) Pavements and overgrown trees

On behalf of a resident, the Clerk reported the following concerns:

- dog fouling on pavements not being cleared up by owners;
- poor and uneven surface of pavements; and
- overgrown trees on triangle at the top of Station Road, near the post box and old telephone box.

The Chair agreed to report the issues relating to the pavements to East Herts Council. It was agreed that dog owners needed to be reminded to clear up after their animals.

Cllr S Smith agreed to follow up the issue regarding the overgrown trees.

It was also highlighted that cars parking on pavements was an issue in Windmill Way and agreed that this would be reported to the PCSO.

(v) Skate park presentation

The Clerk reported that the intended skate park presentation by a resident had been postponed to the September meeting.

20/117. COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENTS

Cllr I Hunt highlighted that the risk assessments were undertaken to develop protocols to manage the COVID-19 risk, drawing on Government guidance available. The risk assessments, which were circulated prior to the meeting, covered the Pavilion, the outside toilet, the playground and the Parish Council's employee. Outside spaces were not in scope and risks relating to physical meetings were not assessed as yet.

It was also highlighted that some additional expenditure would be incurred to ensure risks were addressed and Cllr I Hunt would be monitoring that actions were undertaken. Further work is being undertaken on the risk assessment relating to the employee therefore this draft was withdrawn.

RESOLVED to amend the motion detailed on the agenda to exclude the risk assessment relating to the Parish Council's employee.

RESOLVED to approve the COVID-19 risk assessments, excluding that for employee protection.

20/118. PAVILION

On Cllr D McDonald's behalf, Cllr I Hunt outlined the background to the proposed agreement with Faraway Tree Kindergarten for the Pavilion, including the impact on other users.

Following discussion, taking into account comments received from the Sports Association, RESOLVED to amend the motion detailed on the agenda to delete the word "exclusive".

RESOLVED to approve entering into an agreement with Faraway Tree Kindergarten Ltd for the use of the Pavilion from the 1 September 2020 for a period of 12 months for a monthly fee of £780.

20/119. BANKERS

The Clerk reiterated that moving to online banking would follow the process that is currently in place for making payments, namely:

- Clerk would set up the payment – like writing a cheque; and
- two Cllrs would authorise the payment online – like two Cllrs signing a cheque.

Unity Trust Bank offer a number of access and authority levels and the Clerk stated that the controls proposed for the Parish Council were:

- “view and submit” for the Clerk – allows access to the account and to set up payments; and
- “view and authorise” for Cllrs identified as signatories – allows access to the account and to authorise payments but unable to set up payments.

In response to questions previously asked, the Clerk highlighted that:

- no financial limits will be established in relation to Cllrs authorising payments online, just as there is no financial limit set for an individual cheque payment;
- should the Clerk be unavailable for a sustained period of time, authorised signatories can contact the bank to amend the existing mandate;
- a roster to identify which Cllrs will be authorising which payments will not be established – simply agree at each meeting, after payments have been authorised, who will subsequently authorise online;
- the Risk Register does not need to be updated for online banking as the Risk Register refers to payments being made in accordance with Financial Regulations. Financial Regulations allow for online banking and may need to be reviewed; and
- as the application is all online, there is no bank mandate form to review in advance. The mandate follows the same lines as any other bank.

It was agreed that the procedure for operating online banking would be approved at a later date.

RESOLVED to appoint Unity Trust Bank as the Parish Council’s bankers.

RESOLVED to approve the following Cllrs as signatories:

- Cllr I Hunt;
- Cllr B O’Neill;
- Cllr S Smith; and
- Cllr K Twort.

RESOLVED to approve administrative access for the Clerk.

RESOLVED to approve the closure of the NatWest current and business reserve accounts.

20/120. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

The Clerk highlighted that she had reported to the earlier Burial Authority meeting that there had been an issue with the invoices from Castle Water. Castle Water had replaced Affinity Water from 1st April 2020 but had failed to set up the accounts in the correct name and were billing for water usage in advance. Despite a request to not process the direct debits on the 25th June, the sums were collected. As the Clerk's complaint was not dealt with promptly, Castle Water will be crediting the accounts with £30.

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - AUGUST 2020

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
DD	BA Castle Water	Water for Perry Green Burial Ground	25.52
DD	BA Castle Water	Water for St Andrew's Burial Ground	19.99
1017	CDA Herts	Membership fee	35.00
1018	E.ON	Lighting for war memorial	35.87
1019	BA MH Landscapes:	Maintenance at burial grounds Apr - Jun '20	540.00
1020	T Walker	Hedge cutting - Causeway	175.00
1021	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (2 months)	160.00
1022	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (July)	581.10
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (August)	334.00
Total payments			<u>£1,906.48</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 overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A. There were no matters to highlight.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 4 AUGUST 2020

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2020	43,057.54	18,742.76	61,800.30
Income	34,052.62	1,760.00	35,812.62
Expenditure	- 13,122.71	- 1,050.63	- 14,173.34
Closing balance	<u>63,987.45</u>	<u>19,452.13</u>	<u>83,439.58</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>

20/121. PLANNING

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

20/122. BURIAL AUTHORITY

The minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 9th June 2020 had not been circulated therefore this item was deferred until the September meeting.

20/123. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/124. CLERK'S INFORMATION

None.

20/125. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 1st September 2020 at 7:30 pm. Arrangements to be confirmed but likely to be in the same format as tonight.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:45 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 4 AUGUST 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	2,324.40	
PWLB loan repayment	5,387.46	2,693.73	
Administration costs	3,300.00	930.00	
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	2,769.40	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	1,670.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,100.00	68.32	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Street lighting (replacement programme)	6,100.00	-	
Pavilion	3,400.00	1,382.64	
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	528.22	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	71,060.46	13,122.71	