

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council virtual meeting held on Tuesday,
1st September 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 no members of the public.

20/126. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

20/127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

20/128. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/129. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

- there is still a vacancy for a Cllr and everyone is asked to encourage residents to consider applying;
- the social connection and internet access survey is still running and the deadline for responding has been extended to the 16th September. To date, over 200 responses have been received online; and
- in the absence of the Fete, residents and friends of the parish are encouraged to donate so that local facilities, clubs and societies can still be supported. Further details are available on the Parish Council's Facebook page and in the August parish magazine.

20/130. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 4th August 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

20/131. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

No outstanding report to consider but a number of matters to be covered in subsequent agenda items.

20/132. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

The Chair reported that the agreement for Faraway Tree Kindergarten to use the Pavilion had been signed and she expressed her thanks to Cllr D McDonald for his efforts as well as the other parties involved. The start of the agreement had been delayed from the 1st September whilst Ofsted complete their process for approving the move and it was agreed to allow a fortnight's grace before revisiting the charge for the current month. In addition, it was agreed that invoices would be raised for each monthly charge.

It was noted that an equine tabletop charity event had been successfully held recently at the Recreation Ground with a further event being planned for Widford.

Village Hall

The Chair reported that an enquiry had been received to use the Pavilion as the base for a pop-up tea shop which was not possible due to the agreement already in place with the Kindergarten. In response to the suggestion, the Clerk confirmed that discussions are currently underway with the Village Hall Management Committee as to whether the Village Hall can be used instead.

Dog fouling

The Clerk reported that she had received confirmation of the 3 offences where an East Herts Council anti-dog fouling sign can be used: fouling; dogs on leads when directed and failing to produce a receptacle for picking up dog faeces. In addition, the Clerk reminded those present that a list of available signs had been circulated and more can be obtained when required, with those already held to be delivered to Cllr S Smith. Consideration to be given to installing a dog poo bag dispenser near the dog bin on the Recreation Ground.

Note – this matter considered further as part of the next agenda item.

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

Cllr S Smith reported on the following matters:

- dog fouling – need to choose the signage to be used and where it should be placed to be most effective, on the Recreation Ground and around the village. In discussion, it was agreed that Cllr S Smith would work with another Cllr, the Sports Association Chair and a dog walker to determine the optimum placements for the signs;
- litter – still causing concern where no bins are available, namely down the lanes and along footpaths. Apart from continuing to encourage residents to look after their local area, no deterrents are known of; and
- grass verges, shrubs and trees – enquiries are still in progress to identify who is responsible for maintaining grass verges, shrubs and trees at Ash Meadow and the top of Station Road.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided an update on the following matters:

- repairs – repairs to the bridge on Footpath 29 and the flight of steps on Footpath 33 have been completed;
- diversion order for Footpath 11 at Kettle Green Lane – this is still being held up by COVID-19 measures;
- bridge across River Ash, along Footpath 20 – required repairs to the bridge have been delayed as the Environment Agency has expressed concern that the work will impact on wildlife. Options are being considered, either a temporary repair or to close the footpath;
- maintenance – the second seasonal round of footpath maintenance is in progress; and
- diversion order for Footpath 56 – the owner of Old Park Barn is seeking a diversion order to move the footpath away from crossing the garden to running through Old Park Farm. This is where the footpath ran before the house was built.

Planters

The Chair reported that COVID-19 had prevented progress with the project to have planters in the village and in the hamlets, as well as plants in the Tower Hill telephone box. Whilst noting the concern raised by Cllr Mrs J Liversage that it is difficult to get volunteers for these types of projects, the Chair's view was that starting slowly and building up a group would result in achieving the long term aim of demonstrating pride in the village.

(iii) Highways

Cllr B O'Neill reported that there had been flooding in Danebridge Road with the resultant run-off causing the gullies to be blocked. A number of local residents had commented that the flooding at least slowed the traffic down although it was noted that it would make the Lane icy in winter.

In relation to the borrowing approval application for the street lighting project, the Clerk reported that no decision had been received as yet.

(iv) Media

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that a post seeking donations in lieu of the Fete had been added to the Parish Council's Facebook page. In addition, she provided engagement statistics from recent posts as well as the growth in overall page likes since May 2020.

Cllr I Hunt suggested, given the statistics, that a proper communications policy should be developed to capitalise on this engagement and to get Parish Council messages out to residents.

Cllr B O'Neill requested that details of the church "bike and hike" across Herts be added as well as the details of the local circular walk proposed between places of worship in the parish, both happening on 12th September.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that work was in progress to incorporate all the text changes arising from the consultation and feedback on the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan to create the Post-Submission version of the Plan. In addition, consideration is being given to whether changes are required in response to Examiners' recent comments on other local Neighbourhood Plans or as a result of an increased focus nationally on design issues.

In addition, Cllr I Hunt reminded those present of the Government's proposals to completely reform the planning system, with top down house building targets, zoning of areas for development and much-reduced scrutiny of planning applications. Whilst these changes are concerning, there appears to be increased encouragement for neighbourhood planning, with plans to make it less onerous and more localised, and with greater emphasis on design considerations, all of which are positive steps. He concluded that the use of neighbourhood planning as a permanent feature of the planning policy landscape looks to be secure.

(vi) Security

CLlr H Maduhu reported the following crime statistics, provided by PCSO Leon de Bruyn:

- burglary at a farming business premises where a JCB was stolen. The JCB was subsequently recovered but it had sustained damage;
- criminal damage to a car in Broadfield Close as the side indicator lights were pulled out from the body of the car; and
- a phone was stolen from a car whilst the owner was talking to the driver.

In addition, a “Community Voice” event had been held outside the Londis to explain about ECHO and how the feedback received can influence policing priorities each quarter. General feedback and concern related to speeding through the village, particularly at the top end of Much Hadham towards/from Widford. Several speed checks have been undertaken in this area and notifications to speeding motorists have been sent.

Finally, it was noted that there have been crimes in neighbouring villages where gates accessing farm and fielded areas had been removed, creating an open access to private land.

(vii) Other

None.

20/133. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

None.

20/134. RESIDENTS’ COMMENTS

Skate park presentation

A young resident of the village outlined the concept of a skate park at the Recreation Ground, referencing the information that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following key points were made:

- would cater for young children through to young adults;
- can be used for bikes and scooters as well as skateboards;
- cycling is popular and popularity is growing for scooters and skateboards;
- survey undertaken in the village, asking 100 people of all ages and 89 said yes to a skate park;
- health benefits exist, including encouraging youngsters to get out to beat childhood obesity;
- acknowledged that there is an increased risk of drugs and alcohol around skate parks but this can be policed by parents and grandparents;

- likely that only local residents would use the park as neighbouring towns already have skate parks;
- the park may attract graffiti which could be fine if properly done;
- low risk of anti social behaviour, particular as the activity would be visible and bad behaviour would be challenged and discouraged;
- potential for floodlights so that the park could be used all year round but these would be on a timer, maybe set at 30 minute intervals, so not permanently left on;
- a number of options for a skate park design and materials exist, and these are dependent on the funds and space available. Examples were provided prior to the meeting, together with a link to further information;
- Recreation Ground suggested as the location as it is a central point for leisure and sport in the village although noted that surveys would be required to ensure suitable in relation to other facilities in the area;
- acknowledged that could be an expensive project and suggestions made for sources of funds, for example Section 106 monies, fund raising activities etc.

The young resident was thanked for his presentation and in response to questions from Cllrs, the following addition points were made:

- the survey of 100 people was mainly adults;
- expectation that bad behaviour would be challenged by parents, grandparents and other users of the park and, if necessary, by the Police; and
- health and safety considerations would be part of the design and build together with notices that people use the skate park at their own risk.

Cllr I Hunt commended the presentation, highlighting that it would be a good community project, noting that Skateboard England had published documents about designing and building skate parks, including advice on how to get such a project going. In addition, he suggested that involvement would be needed from the Sports Association, users and parents as well as the Parish Council. A project team from these sources could generate a viable proposal to seek funding.

Cllr B O'Neill noted that it would need to be made out of concrete which can be noisier but less dangerous than if made from wood. In addition, he suggested that maybe the Great Hadham Golf Club could be interested since already have a hilly section or perhaps Ash Valley which is just out of the parish. Finally, he reminded those present that a proposal a number of years ago had been met with objections.

20/135. INSTALLATION OF MEMORIAL BENCH

The Chair outlined that this agenda item was “to consider a request received for permission to install a memorial bench on the Recreation Ground, by the Playground”, with the final decision being made in conjunction with the Sports Association. Whilst there are no guidelines as such for this type of item, the expectation is that the bench would be paid for by the donor and be maintained by the Parish Council.

The following options were considered:

- have a formal agreement with the donor that they pay for the bench and for its upkeep so long as the family are in the area to do this;
- once the maintenance responsibility falls to the Parish Council, it can then decide to retain and maintain the bench or remove it;
- the Parish Council to specify the type of bench to be installed, with consideration being given to the standards set by East Herts Council for benches although this could be expensive; and
- installation of any bench needs to be in line with relevant health and safety requirements.

Finally, it was agreed that before the Parish Council could make this decision, the family to be asked to provide a detailed proposal for a hardwood bench, how it would be installed and clarification of all the costs that the family would cover.

20/136. PAROCHIAL CHARITIES ACCOUNTS (known as Much Hadham Almshouse Charity)

RESOLVED to receive the Parochial Charities Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019. It was noted that the Constitution for the Charity is being updated and thanks were expressed to the Trustees for their hard work.

20/137. COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENTS

RESOLVED to approve the COVID-19 risk assessment relating to Employee Protection.

20/138. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - SEPTEMBER 2020

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
1023	CPRE	Annual membership	36.00
1024	GeoXphere Ltd	Parish Online mapping software (NP)	108.00
1025	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (August)	80.00
1026	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (August)	581.10
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (August)	334.00
DD	ICO	Data protection fee	35.00
Total payments			£1,174.10

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. There were no matters to highlight.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 1 SEPTEMBER 2020

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2020	43,057.54	18,742.76	61,800.30
Income	49,441.74	7,260.00	56,701.74
Expenditure	- 14,296.81	- 1,050.63	- 15,347.44
Closing balance	<u><u>78,202.47</u></u>	<u><u>24,952.13</u></u>	<u><u>103,154.60</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>

In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that the application for the last phase of Neighbourhood Planning grant was still in progress.

20/139. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 4th August 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/140. BURIAL AUTHORITY

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Burial Authority meetings held on 9th June 2020 and 4th August 2020 be received and decisions taken be ratified.

In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that the outstanding burial receipt of £5,500 had been received.

20/141. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/142. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk provided the following information:

- East Herts Council were seeking a winning design for posters to encourage drivers to turn off their engines whilst waiting in car parks; and
- the latest project newsletter for the A120 Bypass has been received and will be added to the Parish Council website shortly. Work is progressing and the A120 will be closed for the first 3 weekends in October. Cllr Mrs H Maduhu to add the closure information to the Facebook page.

Cllr I Hunt requested an update on the COVID-19 risk assessment actions for next months meeting.

20/143. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 6th October 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 9:02 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 1 SEPTEMBER 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	15,389.00	
Pavilion income	1,000.00	-	
Grant	300.00	161.00	
Other	60.00	9.98	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	12,381.76	Reclaim for 2018/19 + 2019/20
TOTAL INCOME	63,595.00	49,441.74	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,000.00	2,905.50	
PWLB loan repayment	5,387.46	2,693.73	
Administration costs	3,300.00	966.00	
Insurance	3,900.00	756.00	
Audit fees	730.00	-	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	35.00	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	21,800.00	2,769.40	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	2,004.00	
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	1,462.64	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	-	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	1,500.00	-	
Neighbourhood Plan	2,000.00	90.00	
Capital - Roller shutter at Pavilion	2,000.00	-	
Capital - Bollards at Moor Place Gate	800.00	-	
VAT	5,000.00	546.22	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	71,060.46	14,296.81	