

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council virtual meeting held on Tuesday,
3rd November 2020 at 7:30 pm.

#Cllr Mrs K Hamilton
*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 and # denotes co-opted at the meeting (Minute ref: 20/164)

In attendance: F Forth, Clerk and 7 members of the public.

20/158. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None. Cllr K Twort joined just after the meeting started.

20/159. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr S Smith declared an interest in the grant application from the Tennis Club (agenda item 20/168). Those present were reminded that he had a dispensation to participate in the discussion, but not vote, in respect of all business relating to the operation of the Tennis Club on the Recreation Ground.

(Dispensation granted 1st October 2019 – Minute ref: 19/163)

20/160. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/161. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

- the results of the communications survey have now been delivered to everyone in the parishes of Albury, Much Hadham, Little Hadham, Stocking and Furneux Pelham. A number of residents are already benefitting from additional help in becoming less isolated. Linked to this, the Chair congratulated Claire Uwins, on behalf of the Parish Council, for her British Empire Medal, awarded for her community work during the pandemic. Claire has been working for the good of residents for many years, and this recognition of all her hard work and efforts is well deserved;
- there is no formal service at the War Memorial on Sunday 8th November and the Chair will be laying a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at about 10.00 am that morning. The local resident who supplied the wreath was thanked for providing it;

- five Cllrs had lunch at the Village Hall during October to support the efforts to create a pop up café which is proving a great success. The owner was wished well in her endeavours; and
- a reminder that another month of lockdown is due to start and the Parish Council will continue to operate as usual.

20/162. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 6th October 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

20/163. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report circulated by the Chair was noted. The following matters were specifically considered:

- copyright ownership of the village sign – the Clerk confirmed that no response had been received from the developer following sending the information that confirmed the Parish Council had copyright. It was agreed that the Clerk would send a chase email;
- dog fouling – a number of signs are now around the village but it was agreed that there was still more to do. Signs to be placed on the railings outside the Recreation Ground and on the footpath near Cllr Mrs J Liversage’s property;
- playground – update to be provided as part of the specific agenda item;
- tree management plan – the Clerk confirmed that PR Newson had been instructed to do the work and that they would be providing help to her in order to produce the map required;
- bus shelter repair – the Chair had obtained a further quote and this would be circulated with the other two quotes; and
- changing bank account – the Clerk reported that the application was in progress;

20/164. CO-OPTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR

Kathy Hamilton was welcomed to the meeting and given an opportunity to introduce herself. Following this, it was RESOLVED to co-opt her as a Parish Councillor and she indicated her willingness to sign the appropriate governance documents with the Clerk after the meeting.

20/165. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Playground equipment

The Clerk had circulated the annual play equipment report (ROSPA) summary report together with the latest inspection report from Broadmead Leisure. She highlighted that there were no high risk items but two pieces of equipment were now a moderate risk as maintenance work was required: 4 seat swings and the zip wire.

Cllr B O'Neill highlighted that there is a trip hazard in the area that needs to be dealt with and this would be highlighted to the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that Broadmead Leisure had stated that the frequency of their inspections needed to increase given the age of the play equipment. Following discussion, it was agreed that quarterly inspections should be undertaken. The Clerk will ask Broadmead Leisure to undertake its next inspection, take into account the findings from the ROPSPA report and provide an updated costed schedule of works required.

Finally, the Clerk confirmed, as reported at the August meeting, that the rotten post in the zip wire structure had been replaced and Broadmead Leisure would be asked to reattach the seat.

Saturday Football Club

The Clerk had circulated a paper outlining the background to the request for a refund. This provided the reasoning for why the refund should only be £60 and not £300. RESOLVED to approve the repayment of £60 to the Saturday Football Team to cover the period when the Pavilion was not available due to COVID lockdown.

It was also agreed that the charge for the current season would be re-visited in early 2021.

Recreation Ground

No additional matters to report.

Village Hall

Cllr B O'Neill stated there was nothing to report.

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

Cllr S Smith commented that the weather in October had again included high winds and extensive rainfall resulting in fallen trees, branches and local flooding. He also noted that the recent publicity relating to dog fouling had impacted as no issues had been reported to him lately by residents although three instances had been notified to the Chair.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided an update on the following matters:

- Bridleway 28 – report of a large tree blocking the bridleway found to be incorrect when inspected;
- Footpath 39 – footpath crosses a patch of land south of Dane Wood where the landowner has requested a gate at the southern end as he intends to populate the newly enclosed area for livestock. It was noted that installation of a gate would prevent the recent illegal use of the footpath by horse riders;
- diversion order for Footpath 11 at Kettle Green Lane – progress still stalled at Herts County Council until they have staff in place to take forward;
- bridge across River Ash, along Footpath 20 – still no news yet as to when repair work will be carried out given the impact on local wildlife issue. Bridge remains open but may have to close if becomes structurally unsound; and
- ploughed footpaths – landowners have been notified to reinstate the walking surface as far as possible but in many cases, this will have to wait until the crop planted reaches a certain height and thickness.

(iii) Highways

Cllr S Smith stated that the recent heavy rains and resultant flooding had caught a number of motorists out who attempted to navigate along Watery Lane and through the ford into Malting Lane. He reiterated again the need for signage to warn motorists and, instead of temporary warnings, perhaps fixed signs at the ends of both Malting Lane and Danebridge Road with emphatic language to warn of what to expect at times of heavy rainfall. It was noted that this type of signage needed to be requested from Highways as it was not the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The Chair reported that a virtual meeting between the Parish Council, Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) and a Highways representative had taken place on the 9th October. Notes of this meeting had been circulated to all Cllrs and the following key points were mentioned:

- Kettle Green Lane passing places – proposed work costs £45,000 but funding of only £30,000 allocated therefore a shortfall still to be addressed;
- Village sign at southern end – given the last two new signs have been removed by person(s) unknown promptly after installation, Highways will consult with neighbouring residents before installing a third new sign;

- Hadham Cross junction – still no progress on the installation of double yellow lines at this junction;
- Church Lane – enforcement action regarding white poles still in progress but it has been confirmed that Herts County Council own the verge;
- Malting Lane/Danebridge Road – still need to push for signage to strengthen traffic restrictions. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs H Maduhu should ask PCSO Leon de Bruyn whether the Police could spot check compliance with the one-way system during rush hour;
- gully drains – some improvements in the drainage had been seen despite the level of rain;
- bollards – broken wooden bollard at the squeeze near Culver discussed and Cllrs did not object to a “bendy plastic” version as an alternative replacement;
- Winding Hill – Herts County Council still clarifying who is responsible for what in that area;
- Joyce’s Corner – HGV survey still needs to be undertaken once COVID free; and
- St Thomas’ Triangle – works to be undertaken along side the kerb facing the church.

(iv) Media

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu provided the latest statistics for the Parish Council Facebook account. In addition, she reported that she had attended a useful “Social Media Skills for Cllrs” course which highlighted social media as an opportunity for Cllrs to engage and communicate with local residents. It was recommended that Cllrs post pictures of themselves, either individually or as a group, as well as posting video interviews of themselves. This will be considered and linked to updating the Parish Council website.

It was also noted that less than 2% of town and parish councils use Instagram.

As yet, Cllr Mrs H Maduhu has not joined the Parish Council to the “Nextdoor” website but will investigate this further.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that most of the text and policy changes have now been made to the Neighbourhood Plan, following the Pre-Submission consultation. The main element remaining is updating the Proposals Map and then the usual proof-reading, formatting and so on required to make it presentable. A Steering Group meeting is expected later this month to approve the final version of the Plan before presenting it to the Parish Council for sign off and submission to East Herts Council.

(vi) Security

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that PCSO Leon de Bruyn had provided the following information:

- during October, only one crime had been reported: theft of number plates from a vehicle whilst parked outside the residential property;
- Community Voice continues to be promoted and 6 events have been held across the local rural areas so far; and
- the last Police Priority meeting has identified hare coursing, fly-tipping and speeding as the local priorities and police patrols have been increased in the area.

In addition, Cllr Mrs H Maduhu highlighted, more broadly from OWL alerts across the local area, the following points:

- a new hotline has been launched to stop fraudsters illegally targeting COVID stimulus schemes via an initiative between the Government and the independent charity Crimestoppers. The public can call a new COVID Fraud Hotline (0800 587 5030) anonymously and free of charge to report suspected fraudulent activity; and
- the last week has seen an increase in both burglaries and attempted burglaries, and in all cases, it has been by forced entry or attempted entry by prising open doors or windows, both at the front or rear of properties. Tips to prevent burglary are:
 - check downstairs windows and doors are securely locked before you leave or go to bed;
 - use a “Fake TV” or timer switches on lamps to give the impression someone is at home;
 - don’t leave keys, phones or other valuables on window sills or in any other visible place;
 - secure UPVC doors by lifting the handle and locking it to engage the security features;
 - consider using a doorbell camera, interior camera or a monitored burglar alarm;
 - securely lock rear gates, sheds and garages; and
 - keep tools and ladders locked away, as they could be used to break into your home.

(vii) Other

None.

20/166. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

No reports received as both Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) and Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) had given their apologies for tonight’s meeting.

20/167. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Flooding

A resident commented that if a car becomes stuck in flood water, cars behind are forced to stop too. Engines in modern cars automatically cut out when stopped, which can then result in water entering the exhaust system, so they become disabled too. The resident was supportive of signage being installed to warn motorists of flooding risks.

20/168. GRANT APPLICATION FROM TENNIS CLUB

The Chair reminded those present that the Tennis Club had applied for a grant of £4,500, to be funded from s106 monies, and a completed grant application with supporting documentation had been circulated prior to the agenda. The grant is to help finance the building of a hut on the Recreation Ground. A representative from the Tennis Club was also present to answer questions from Cllrs.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- the Lawn Tennis Association has been approached for funds but its grants are being focused towards helping clubs survive the impact of COVID;
- Tennis Club members are being asked to support the Club through the East Herts Lottery as a form of fundraising;
- the Club will still be receiving the £2,000 previously promised from the Stansted Airport Community Trust fund;
- an application for a grant from East Herts Council will be made in January 2021 which the Club are fairly confident they will receive;
- fundraising activities have been limited this year due to COVID but a number of activities are planned for the coming Spring;
- overall, the Club is confident it can reach its financial goals for the hut;
- whilst it might be argued that the grant application is too early, securing this grant assists in subsequent funding applications;
- overall costs are clear in the two quotes obtained but a Cllr raised concern that materials costs had risen by 15% in the last week;
- the Tennis Club would undertake to return any grant awarded if the building did not go ahead and would accept being awarded a grant on the basis of it being subject to the project being fully funded and completed within a certain time frame;
- the reasoning behind the need for a hut was re-visited as a suggestion was made that an eco waterless composting toilet could be installed at far less cost instead. It was highlighted that the hut would be connected to the main sewerage system by gravity feed and this will save £3,000 on the costings provided (confirmed after the application had been submitted); and
- whilst the Club has 206 members, 105 of those are junior members therefore the Club do not consider it appropriate to ask all its members to cover the £4,500 being requested but will be asking members to support fundraising activities.

In terms of funding from the s106 balance, the Clerk confirmed that this has no impact on the proposed 2021/22 budget as it is funded from an earmarked balance and not the precept. In addition, she confirmed that spending to date from the balance had been for remedial works to the Pavilion (around £7,000) and a grant to the Bowls Club (£1,500).

At the end of the discussion, it was agreed that the grant application decision would be deferred until the December 2020 meeting to enable Cllrs to consider and discuss the application further.

20/169. STANSTED AIRPORT

RESOLVED to object to the proposed expansion of passenger numbers at Stansted Airport by Manchester Airports Group.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to prepare and submit objections on behalf of the Parish Council to Cllrs D McDonald and B O'Neill.

20/170. STREET LIGHTING PROJECT

The Chair reported that the Parish Council had received the borrowing approval for a loan not exceeding £40,000 and this was noted. In terms of the next step, the Clerk highlighted that the borrowing approval was valid for one year so the loan must be taken out before 16th October 2021 and a simple application form is submitted to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) a few weeks prior to when the funds are required. In addition, the Clerk highlighted that if the Parish Council does not borrow the full amount approved, the Department for Housing, Communities & Local Government needs to be informed.

RESOLVED to approve the quote from Ringway for £43,029.72 + VAT for the replacement of 34 lights as detailed in the Parish Lighting Business Case.

20/171. INTERNAL CONTROLS

The Clerk apologised that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was late this year. She reported that the Internal Audit report, Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and the effectiveness review were available on the Parish Council's website. [Website: <http://www.muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk/parish-council/accounts/>]

(i) Internal Audit

The Clerk highlighted that the annual Internal Audit review had been completed for the last financial year, 2019/20, and the conclusion was that the Parish Council had the expected controls in place and no recommendations were made. Page 3 of the AGAR 2019/20, completed by Internal Audit, and the supporting detailed report were noted.

(ii) Review of effectiveness

The Clerk reported that the effectiveness of the internal controls in place from April 2019 to March 2020 had been reviewed and no issues had been identified. This review underpins the Annual Governance Statement for the last financial year which is part of the next agenda item.

RESOLVED to approve the review of the effectiveness of internal controls for 2019/20.

In addition, the Clerk highlighted that in the next review two controls would need to be identified as ineffective since the Annual Governance and Accountability Return had been late this year.

20/172. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) AND ACCOUNTS

The Clerk highlighted that the unapproved, subject to external audit, AGAR and detailed financial accounts were available on the Parish Council's website.

[Website: <http://www.muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk/parish-council/accounts/>]

(i) Annual Governance Statement

The Clerk highlighted that the Annual Governance Statement reflects that the Parish Council has a system of internal control in place, as reflected by the review of effectiveness approved under item 20/171(ii). In addition, she highlighted that questions 1 and 4 of the Annual Governance Statement will be answered as 'no' next year as a result of the AGAR being late this year.

RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20, Section 1 in the AGAR.

(ii) Accounting Statements and year on year comparison

The Clerk highlighted that there are two versions of the annual accounts. A summarised version is documented in the AGAR, Section 2, which is supported by the detailed Financial Accounts. To assist understanding, a report had been circulated with the agenda to clarify the sources of information for the accounts, key being the monthly financial statement to each Parish Council meeting.

In addition, to support the understanding of this financial information, there is a year on year comparison, related to both formats of the accounts, that explains significant movements, which was noted. The version relating to the AGAR is submitted to the external auditor.

RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statements, Section 2 in the AGAR and the detailed Financial Accounts for 2019/20.

20/173. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - NOVEMBER 2020

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
1033	E.ON	Lighting for war memorial	36.27
1034	Home & Office Fire Extinguishers Ltd	Annual service	222.00
1035	T Walker	Mow & strim footpaths	640.00
1036	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (October)	80.00
1037	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (October)	581.10
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (November)	334.00
DD	PWLB	Loan repayment	2,693.73
Total payments			<u>£4,587.10</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.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 3 NOVEMBER 2020

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2020	43,057.54	18,742.76	61,800.30
Income	76,131.22	7,982.00	84,113.22
Expenditure	- 20,285.58	- 1,050.63	- 21,336.21
Closing balance	<u>98,903.18</u>	<u>25,674.13</u>	<u>124,577.31</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>

(iii) Initial 2021/22 Budget and forward financial plan

The Clerk had circulated the initial 2021/22 Budget and Forward Financial Plan with the agenda papers. Cllr I Hunt encouraged other Cllrs to provide thoughts and ideas for debate prior to the next meeting.

Note – the 2021/22 Budget and Forward Financial Plan will be approved at the January 2021 meeting.

(iv) Bank reconciliations

The Chair highlighted that the September 2020 bank reconciliations had been reviewed by Cllr Mrs J Liversage, as required by the Financial Regulations, and no issues were identified.

20/174. STAFFING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr S Smith as a member of the Staffing Committee to replace Cllr I Hunt.

20/175. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 6th October 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/176. BURIAL AUTHORITY

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 6th October 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/177. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/178. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk reported the following matters:

- A120 bypass newsletters continue to be added to the Parish Council website with the latest being September's; and
- she would be on leave from the 14th December 2020 until the end of the year, recommencing work on the 4th January 2021. However, should the need arise, Burial Authority work would be undertaken during this period.

20/179. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 1st December 2020 at 7:30 pm. Arrangements to be confirmed but likely to be in the same format as tonight. The Chair also encouraged Cllrs to ensure that the dates for 2021 meetings were in their diaries. The Clerk confirmed that all rooms had been provisionally booked.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:17 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 3 NOVEMBER 2020

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO	COMMENT
	2021	DATE	
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	
	£	£	
INCOME			
Precept	43,000.00	43,000.00	
Litter Agency	4,235.00	4,272.66	
New Homes Bonus	10,000.00	15,389.00	
Pavilion income	1,000.00	780.00	
Grant	300.00	297.00	
Other	60.00	10.80	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	12,381.76	Reclaim for 2018/19 + 2019/20
TOTAL INCOME	63,595.00	76,131.22	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,000.00	4,067.70	
PWLB loan repayment	5,387.46	5,387.46	
Administration costs	3,300.00	1,086.00	
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	3,665.48	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	2,672.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,100.00	102.86	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Street lighting (replacement programme)	6,100.00	-	
Pavilion	3,400.00	1,827.90	
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	595.18	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	71,060.46	20,285.58	