

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council virtual meeting held on Tuesday,
1st December 2020 at 7:31 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

In attendance: F Forth, Clerk and 3 members of the public.

20/180. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

20/181. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr S Smith declared an interest in the grant application from the Tennis Club (agenda item 20/189). 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)

20/182. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/183. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

As the last meeting for 2020, the Chair thanked all Cllrs for carrying on with Parish Council business all year despite the various restrictions and limitations imposed during these difficult times. In particular, the Vice Chair, Cllr I Hunt, was thanked for covering during her illness and the Clerk was thanked for her hard work. In addition, the Chair stated it was good to end the year with a full complement of Cllrs and on their behalf, she wished all residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Finally, the Chair highlighted that Cllr Mrs K Hamilton would be joining Cllr B O'Neill as a Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee.

20/184. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd November 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

20/185. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report circulated by the Chair was noted and a number of matters will be covered by specific agenda items. The following matters were specifically considered:

- copyright ownership of the village sign – the Clerk reported that the developer had recently responded, apologising for not replying before the 24th November, the last deadline set. A detailed response is expected in the next couple of weeks; and
- village sign repair quotes: - Cllr D McDonald reported that the preliminary cost to strip down and repaint the sign would be in excess of £2,000 and this cost excluded removing the sign from the post. 3 quotes to be obtained to enable a decision to be made at a future meeting.

20/186. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

Cllr K Twort stated that there had been no recent Sports Association meeting.

Playground equipment

Cllr Mrs J Liversage provided the following update:

- basketball - a quote is being obtained to scrape back the mud and lay down tarmac in front of the hoop. The Clerk highlighted that a quote had been previously received for this work and she would provide that;
- manhole covers – these are being replaced with lockable covers where a tool is required to open as opposed to a key;
- playground equipment survey – mini survey had been completed with parents and children present in the area one Sunday. Equipment requested related to a spider's web swing/cradle and a set of rungs to swing from like "monkey bars", as well as having the zip wire back; and
- play equipment providers – appointments have been arranged with two providers in the coming weeks.

It was suggested that £5,000 be set aside in the financial plan for each of the next 3 years to allow for new play equipment and the Clerk confirmed there was scope to do this.

Cllr B O'Neill reported that the wooden structures within the trees are not easy to play on as too slippery and consideration should be given to adding a non-stick surface to these items.

Pavilion

Cllr Mrs J Liversage reported that she had found a company that provides Legionella Testing Kits that could be used for the testing at the Pavilion. A kit for testing 3 outlets would cost £43.75 + VAT which includes receiving a certificate that can be printed and displayed. It was agreed that the Clerk would organise this with the caretaker.

Village Hall

Cllr B O'Neill made the following points:

- there had been no Management Committee meeting in the last month;
- moving the bench in front of the Village Hall to allow for emergency access is in hand; and
- the potential for an electrical car charging point is being explored by Herts County Council.

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

Cllr S Smith commented that November's weather was similar to the preceding month's - high winds and extensive rainfall resulting in fallen trees, branches and local flooding.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided an update on the following matters:

- Footpath 51 – large fallen tree cleared;
- Footpath 7 (Cox Lane) – fallen tree has been reported to the Chaldean Estate for clearance;
- kissing gate at Stansted Hill where Footpaths 26 and 27 meet – repairs are required to the gate and walkers are encouraged to leave the gate in a closed position using the loop of rope that someone has kindly left there;
- diversion order for Footpath 11 at Kettle Green Lane – an officer of Herts Council Council's Definitive Maps Team is progressing the diversion order, liaising with the developer's agents and the owner of Dell Cottage. Once the safety of the crossing at Kettle Green Lane is checked with Highways, the consultation stage will begin.

Bus shelters

Cllr S Smith reported that a specification to repair the two bus shelters had been developed, with assistance from two knowledgeable residents. Quotes for the repair work had been sought from three local builders and during this process, it was determined that the degree of deterioration of the shelters was more than anticipated. In addition, it was highlighted that the shingles on the roofs could be replaced although better options are available, and any structural repair would not be long term.

Cllr S Smith had also obtained quotes to replace the two shelters with designs suitable for a rural environment, with differing roof styles.

The quotes to date are:

- repair Church Lane (opposite Red Lion) range of £3,000 - £5,000
- repair Broadfield Way range of £1,500 - £3,000
- new shelter with tiled pitched roof £19,786 + VAT (each)
- new shelter with flat roof £14,469 + VAT (each)

In terms of the repair quotes above, removal and off-site repair of the roof was expected therefore road safety matters may need to be considered such as temporary traffic lights during removal and/or a temporary bus stop.

The Chair reported that a rough quote of £300 had been received to have the vegetation surrounding both bus shelters cut back and removed. It was agreed that this should be done. In addition, consideration to be given to having this work added to the routine work undertaken in the village.

(iii) Highways

The Chair reported that no progress had been made on the items reported at last month's meeting.

Cllr S Smith highlighted that it had taken 3 weeks to remove the vehicles from Watery Lane following the flooding.

(iv) Media

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu provided the latest statistics for the Parish Council Facebook account, highlighting that more women than men had "liked" the page. In addition, she reported that information on Cllrs and their portfolios had been added to "About" section of the page.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that new proposals for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan were discussed at a Steering Group workshop on 16th November relating to priority views and the village boundary. Full details are available in the workshop notes available on the NP website [<https://www.muchhadhamnp.com/supporting-material>] and these proposals will be decided upon at the next Steering Group meeting, provisionally set for 16th December.

In summary, these proposals are:

Priority views

Two additional priority views looking into the field behind Hill House, the former Barn School:

- from the top of Steep Jack Hill to the north of Chalkdells Farm, from which the position of the field as part of the green corridor running the length of the Ash Valley to the east of the village is abundantly clear; and
- from the bridleway through Sidehill Wood just before reaching Stansted Hill and looking north-west across the ford, from which the view through to St Andrew's School is unimpeded at this time of year, when the leaves have all been shed.

One consequence of these views being designated would be to constrain the location of any future development of the Barn School field to areas out of range of the views. The policy for the Hill House / Barn School site is being amended to make it clearer what constraints there are on the site and also what opportunities there are for improving the natural environment in and around it.

Village boundary

A proposal for Nimney House to be included within the village boundary, thus treating it consistently with all other housing along the B1004 from New Barns Lane to Station Road (with the exception of The Hall, which is Grade 1 listed, and Front Lodge which is already earmarked in the Pre-Submission version of the Plan for inclusion within the boundary). Nimney House currently is in the rural area beyond the green belt, despite being in the centre of the village, which is anomalous.

One consequence of this change, should it be approved by the Examiner of the Plan, would be to remove the rural policy objection to development and permit further housing to be built in the grounds of Nimney House should the owner wish to. In the interests of transparency, it is noted that the owner is a Parish Councillor.

Finally, Cllr I Hunt reported that owners of one of the site allocations in the Plan, Hopleys, had submitted a planning application, which will be considered at the Planning Committee's January meeting. No changes to the Plan itself are proposed as a consequence of this application which, at first sight, appears to be substantially consistent with the proposals in the Plan.

(vi) Security

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu highlighted the following advice from OWL reports:

- very convincing scam texts and email messages from various parcel delivery companies like DPD and Royal Mail are on the rise. Everyone is advised to carefully check their details in the message but if in doubt, do not click on any unknown or suspicious links, and contact the vendor directly;
- vehicle theft (also attempted theft) has increased so remember to be vigilant and any information on any incidents can be reported online at herts.police.uk/report or via online web chat at herts.police.uk/contact. Alternatively, anonymously contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111; and
- if you or someone you know is struggling this wintertime or any time, as a crisis intervention service, HertsHelp is available to offer help and support - a countywide information, advice, signposting and support service available from 8am-8pm Monday-Friday (10am-6pm weekends/bank holidays) on 0300 123 4044 or visit hertshelp.net/winter-health.aspx, www.hertshelp.net or email info@hertshelp.net.

In addition, Cllr B O'Neill reported that a helpful leaflet of useful phone numbers had been prepared by CareBank and was available locally.

(vii) Other

Stansted Airport

Cllr D McDonald stated that, working in conjunction with Cllr B O'Neill, a draft submission from the Parish Council objecting to Stansted Airport's proposals was in hand. The submission would be in line with neighbouring bodies' objections but include details of the local impact.

20/187. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

No reports received as Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) had given his apologies for tonight's meeting and Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) was not present.

20/188. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Railings outside Green Shutters

A resident reported that the railings outside Green Shutters had been hit by a lorry and broken. Highways have put a temporary barrier in place which has also been hit a couple of times. In the meantime, Highways are being actively encouraged to fix the broken railings. It was noted that the problem may be linked to the number of parked cars in the area.

(ii) QR codes

It was highlighted by a resident that QR codes have been put up at Chaldean Farm, near Barwick Ford, which provide information about the farmland, trees etc. The suggestion was made that this system could be used for the historic houses/places of interest in the village to provide information. The Chair was aware that nine QR codes had recently been placed around the Chaldean Estate.

(iii) Village sign

In response to a resident's query, it was confirmed that the village sign did not need merely cleaning but did require refurbishment as the paint is peeling off although no-one has been up a ladder to inspect closely.

(iv) Assistance

A resident offered their assistance in relation to considering construction matters with respect to the bus shelters, and also to inspect the village sign up close. In addition, the suggestion was made that perhaps the local Fire Service could treat getting the village sign down for repair as a training exercise.

20/189. GRANT APPLICATION FROM TENNIS CLUB

The Chair highlighted that this grant application had been considered at the previous meeting where a number of queries had been raised and these had subsequently been answered by the Tennis Club.

In discussion, it was recognised that the Tennis Club is one of the largest recreation groups in the village and qualifies as a recipient of the s106 monies held by the Parish Council. It is a thriving Club with a large membership and the capital investment being made by the Club will increase the usage of the courts which has health and welfare benefits for the players. The Club has never sought funds from the Parish Council before and the grant being requested will cover a small proportion of the total project cost, and the Club itself is investing £10,000 and undertaking fundraising activities.

Note – at the November meeting, it was highlighted that grants from other bodies were also being sought by the Club (Minute ref: 20/168)

The discussion also highlighted that the Parish Council itself needs to invest funds on the Recreation Ground, to repair elements of the existing play equipment and invest in further equipment. It was noted that the Club has had financial support from the Recreation Trust, through the Sports Association. In addition, it was noted that money is tighter this year given that it was not possible to hold the annual bank holiday Fete.

The Clerk clarified that the majority of the s106 monies spent to date by the Parish Council has been on remedial works at the Pavilion as it is acknowledged that buildings are included in the provision of sport and recreation.

The Chair concluded that there was a consensus that a grant should be awarded to the Tennis Club but not at the amount requested.

RESOLVED to amend the amount of £4,500 in the motion on the agenda to £3,000.

RESOLVED to approve a grant request for £3,000 from Much Hadham Tennis Club, funded from Section 106 monies.

20/190. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

In response to a question regarding online banking, the Clerk stated that online payments are set up by her and future dated payments, for example the Clerk's salary, can be authorised at the same time as all other online payments. RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown below, be duly authorised for payment.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - DECEMBER 2020

Chq etc	Payable to	For	Amount
1039	MH Football Club	Part refund of Pavilion hire 2019/20	60.00
1040	Auditing Solutions	Internal Audit review 2019/20	534.00
1041	HAPTC	Training (1 online course)	30.00
1042	C Copper	War memorial maintenance - annual charge	550.00
1043	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (November)	80.00
1044	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (November - including backpay)	709.34
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (December)	334.00
Online	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (December)	597.13
Total payments			<u>£2,894.47</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.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 1 DECEMBER 2020

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2020	43,057.54	18,742.76	61,800.30
Income	76,881.24	8,082.00	84,963.24
Expenditure	- 23,180.05	- 1,050.63	- 24,230.68
Closing balance	<u>96,758.73</u>	<u>25,774.13</u>	<u>122,532.86</u>

Note: the following items are included in the Total Fund Balances:

(1) Section 106 receipts for sport or recreation	4,570.00
(2) Streetlights	5,000.00
(3) Open spaces	3,650.00
	<u>13,220.00</u>

In addition, the Clerk reported that after issuing the agenda for this meeting, the external auditor had provided the audit report for last year's accounts and annual governance statement. The audit report raises no concerns with the accounts or governance statement. The audit, however, is not complete as the inspection period for local government electors does not end until 16th December and the audit cannot be completed before this date.

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

The Clerk had circulated an updated initial 2021/22 Budget and Forward Financial Plan with the agenda papers. Cllr I Hunt reminded those present that the decision will be made at the January meeting and the financial costs of the projects mentioned earlier in the meeting need to be finalised for inclusion prior to that meeting. The projects are: repair the village sign; repair or renew bus shelters and provide additional playground equipment.

20/191. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3rd November 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/192. STAFFING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 10th November 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

20/193. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20/194. CLERK'S INFORMATION

None.

20/195. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 12th January 2021 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 8:47 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 1 DECEMBER 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	1,530.00	
Grant	300.00	297.00	
Other	60.00	10.82	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	12,381.76	Reclaim for 2018/19 + 2019/20
TOTAL INCOME	63,595.00	76,881.24	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,000.00	5,374.17	
PWLB loan repayment	5,387.46	5,387.46	
Administration costs	3,300.00	1,116.00	
Insurance	3,900.00	756.00	
Audit fees	730.00	445.00	
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	3,006.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,100.00	652.86	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Street lighting (replacement programme)	6,100.00	-	
Pavilion	3,400.00	1,967.90	
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	684.18	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	71,060.46	23,180.05	