

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council virtual meeting held on Tuesday, 12th January 2021 at 7:35 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 9 members of the public.

21/1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

21/2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

21/3. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

21/4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all those present to the first meeting for 2021, highlighting that the Parish Council would continue as best it could in the current circumstances. Meetings would continue to be virtual, via Zoom, and residents' understanding sought if the actions that the Parish Council planned for this year took longer than expected.

21/5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1st December 2020 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

21/6. 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 Clerk confirmed that the water testing kit for the Pavilion had been received and would be passed to the caretaker to action in due course.

21/7. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

Both Cllrs D McDonald and K Twort confirmed that there was nothing to report regarding the Recreation Ground.

Playground equipment

Cllr Mrs J Liversage reported that one quote had been received (circulated prior to the meeting) and other quotes are still being pursued. In addition, she highlighted that playground suppliers had stated that it is better to have equipment constructed from wood rather than metal. Whilst metal will last around 50 years, wood will last around 20 years at which point it is likely that changes to the playground may be desired.

Financially, the quote received was reasonable, including potential additional installation costs, and within the sum allocated of £8,000 in the proposed budget for the next financial year.

Cllr Mrs J Liversage also reported that the ground needs to be harder before taking any action in respect of the basketball area so quotes have not been pursued for this as yet.

The quarterly playground inspection report from Broadmead Leisure was noted. The inspection had been undertaken in December 2020.

RESOLVED to approve the quote to renew very worn bearing in Rotaplay (medium risk) from Broadmead Leisure for £780 + VAT.

Pavilion

As reported earlier, the water testing kit has been ordered and will be passed to the caretaker to use in due course.

Village Hall

Cllr Mrs K Hamilton stated that a meeting had taken place between the Village Hall Management Committee Chair, Cllr B O'Neill and herself on 5th December 2020.

The following matters were discussed:

- the tiled roof over the entrance to the Village Hall needs to be replaced but obtaining quotes is proving difficult as it is suspected that the wooden supports underneath could be rotten and this can't be quantified at the quote stage;
- at the front of the Village Hall, the Parish Council's noticeboard will be moved back against the fence on the right side of the Hall, with the bench being moved in front of this. This will enable those waiting for the bus to sit;
- in the car park, fly-tipping is still occurring as one of the rubbish bins is still locked; and
- a suggestion has been made to install a bike shed at the back of the Hall, adjacent to the bins.

The Clerk reported, in her role as Village Hall Treasurer, that she will investigate why the bin is still locked as it was supposed to have been unlocked from July.

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

Cllr S Smith commented that the increased rainfall leading up to Christmas had resulted in flooding in many areas. Whilst the weather had been mainly dry since then, the water table had remained high and a number of footpaths and bridleways were difficult to traverse.

In addition, Cllr S Smith reported that many country lanes had lost their verges, especially where vehicle overtaking had occurred. It is unclear if and when Herts County Council Highways would be able to address this, and likely not to be before most of the winter weather is over.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided an update on the following matters:

- fallen trees – a large fallen tree was promptly cleared from Footpath 22, just at the entrance from Oudle Lane, and Chaldean Estate cleared the previously reported fallen tree on Footpath 7 (Cox Lane);
- diversion order for Footpath 11 at Kettle Green Lane – the Herts County Highways Safety Team have approved the diversion which means that Herts County Council can create the formal order for the diversion. The formal order is subject to a 4 week public consultation period, following which, a final decision will be made;
- Footpath 10 – discussions are to take place in the coming weeks with the landowner regarding their plans for fencing along this footpath, where it crosses their land; and
- mowing/maintenance schedule – changes have been made to the schedule, primarily to ensure that Footpaths 18, 19 and 20 (Church Lane to Winding Hill) are tackled on a regular basis and not just when requested as it is now.

The Clerk highlighted that a resident had reported to her that the landowner of Footpath 10 had stopped residents going from the footpath at Moor Place to the Recreation Ground as barbed wire had been added to the fence. Cllr S Smith agreed to look into this.

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu asked whether the wording regarding dog fouling had been resolved so that information could be posted on Facebook. It was confirmed that East Herts Council signs were being used and the Clerk would provide this information.

Finally, it was noted in discussion that a tree was leaning into the phone wires along Church Lane and Cllr S Smith agreed to look into this.

Bus shelters

Cllr B O'Neill confirmed that he was still seeking a further quote for repairing the bus shelters. In addition, he reported that the vegetation around the Broadfield Way bus shelter had been cleared that day. An additional pile of vegetation was present at that location that the contractors agreed to take away at a later date, although this was not in their original quote.

Cllr S Smith commented that whilst a number of quotes had been received for repairing the 2 bus shelters, it was felt that a number of the smaller local contractors were reluctant to carry out such a large job. It was suggested that quotes from bigger companies should be sought.

(iii) Highways

Cllr B O'Neill reported that the salt bin on Winding Hall had fallen into the road and would be reported in due course.

The Chair highlighted that a further meeting with Highways would be organised in the coming weeks, but that it needed to be noted that Covid was causing delays in action being taken.

(iv) Media

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu provided the latest statistics for the Parish Council Facebook page, indicating that page likes had increased. She highlighted that the Parish Council's November report had been viewed 50 times and had resulted in 4 unique engagements to the page.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt highlighted that the intention had been to ask the Parish Council, at this meeting, to approve the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to East Herts Council (EHC). However, as explained the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Minutes for December 2020 [Minute ref: 21/14 below], a last minute additional policy requirement by EHC prevented the Steering Group from signing off the draft.

A further virtual public meeting of the Steering Group will take place on Tuesday 19th January to enable the draft Plan to be signed off for the February Parish Council meeting to approve for submission, in advance of EHC's deadline of 31st March.

(vi) Security

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that the spread of Covid-19 is being used to facilitate various types of fraud with reporting numbers expecting to rise. 2 specific examples were cited:

- coronavirus-themed phishing emails are being sent using organisations like Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in an attempt to trick people into opening malicious attachments or revealing sensitive personal and financial details; and
- potential victims are being contacted by email with an offer of a list of coronavirus infected people in their area, obtainable through a link to a malicious website where payment details are requested.

In light of these scams, residents are strongly advised to research these email requests before responding and/or to involve friends or family members before deciding to click on any links and/or make any purchases online through even seemingly trustworthy emails.

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

- 2 crimes had been reported for December: theft of a front number plate from a vehicle parked in Ferndale and theft of scrap metal from a residential address on Widford Road. Although no progress was possible for the number plate theft, 2 suspects were arrested for the scrap metal theft; and
- speeding and fly-tipping remain as local policing priorities with regular patrols being carried out in the local areas as well as policing Covid breaches.

(vii) Other

None.

21/8. 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.

21/9. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Drainage in the village

A resident highlighted that the floods over the past winter have highlighted that many of the drains in the village are blocked, noting that water had been seen bubbling out of the drain by The Bull Inn. Other flood spots include by the Hall, near the fire station, by Nimney House and the Recreation Ground as well as by Bromley Lane.

The Chair commented that drains are only cleared when required, as part of the maintenance schedule i.e. it is not possible to report a blocked drain and have it cleared. If the drain outside the Hall is blocked, this would be the responsibility of the landowner.

The Chair reassured those present that issues with blocked drains are known of and efforts will continue to get resolution.

(ii) Hopley's planning application

Concerns regarding the lack of affordable housing in the Hopley's planning application were raised by a resident. This was noted by the Planning Committee Chair for the subsequent meeting where this application would be considered.

21/10. STANSTED AIRPORT

The submission made by the Parish Council to the Stansted Airport Inquiry, made under delegated authority, was noted. The Chair thanked Cllrs D McDonald and B O'Neill for their work in making this submission.

In addition, the Chair highlighted to those present that Cllr D McDonald would be speaking at the Inquiry and wished him well.

Finally, the Chair stated that the Inquiry was being held virtually and is accessible to all. Access details can be obtained from the Clerk or by searching "Stansted Airport Public Inquiry" on the internet.

21/11. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - JANUARY 2021

Ref	Payable to	For	Amount
<i>From NatWest Current Account</i>			
DD	BA Castle Water	Water for St Andrew's Burial Ground	22.66
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (January)	334.00
<i>From Unity Trust Bank Current Account</i>			
OP2	Lynne Mills	Website hosting and domain name (NP)	143.12
OP3	Shaw & Sons Ltd	Ashes Plots Register (BA)	195.60
OP4	Brace Engineering	Blocked drain + manhole lids	474.00
OP5	Seated Furniture Ltd	New bench - Perry Green Burial Ground	500.23
OP6	Broadmead Leisure Ltd	Playground inspection Dec '20 [£50 + VAT] + reattach zip wire seat [£45 + VAT]	114.00
OP7	MH Sports Association	Pavilion electricity [£466.19 + VAT £6.30] + Pavilion water [£534.66]	1,007.15
OP8	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (December)	80.00
OP9	FM Forth	Clerks expenses 25 Feb 20 to 31 Dec 20	629.12
OP10	E.ON	Lighting for war memorial	36.27
OP11	EMC Contracts Ltd	Repair leak at Pavilion	162.00
OP12	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (January)	597.13
Total payments			<u>£4,295.28</u>

Payments from the Unity Trust Bank Current Account will be authorised online 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. The Clerk highlighted that the NatWest Business Reserve account had been closed and the balance of that account had been transferred to the Unity Trust Bank Current Account. The switch process to transfer the NatWest Current Account to the Unity Trust Bank had been initiated and should be completed on the 20th January.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 12 JANUARY 2021

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2020	43,057.54	18,742.76	61,800.30
Income	78,472.07	8,082.00	86,554.07
Expenditure	- 26,873.74	- 1,670.22	- 28,543.96
Closing balance	<u>94,655.87</u>	<u>25,154.54</u>	<u>119,810.41</u>

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

(1) Section 106 receipts for sport or recreation (£3,000 of this awarded to the Tennis Club December 2020)	4,570.00
(2) Streetlights	5,000.00
(3) Open spaces	3,650.00
	<u>13,220.00</u>

Cllr I Hunt highlighted that the Parish Council balance was high, clarifying that it was unlikely that all expenditure expected for the current financial year would be incurred before the end of March.

(iii) Precept 2021/22 and Forward Financial Plan

The Clerk had circulated the 2021/22 Budget and Forward Financial Plan with the agenda papers. Cllr I Hunt highlighted that the financial plans had been amended as follows:

- a reduction in the precept from £43,000 to £42,000, reflecting that the council tax base had reduced;
- small changes to some payment headings; and
- better estimates included for the proposed revenue and capital projects.

He also highlighted that the Forward Financial Plan was simply a roll forward of the proposed budget and that the Parish Council balance would reduce to around £35,000.

RESOLVED to approve the budget presented for 2021/22 and determine the precept at £42,000.

RESOLVED to approve the Forward Financial Plan.

Note: the Forward Financial Plan, which includes the budget for 2021/22, is attached at Appendix B

21/12. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1st December 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

21/13. BURIAL AUTHORITY

Deferred until the next meeting.

21/14. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 16th December 2020 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

21/15. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

21/16. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk reported on the following matters:

- Village sign – the developer had responded, confirming acceptance that the Parish Council has copyright for the village sign and that they would be removing their sign as well as taking the image off their marketing literature; and
- A120 bypass newsletter – the latest newsletter had been received and would be added to the website.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a further letter to the developer was required as not all matters raised by the Parish Council had been addressed.

21/17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 2nd February 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 8:29 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 12 JANUARY 2021

(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	3,120.00	
Grant	300.00	297.00	
Other	60.00	11.65	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	12,381.76	Reclaim for 2018/19 + 2019/20
TOTAL INCOME	63,595.00	78,472.07	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,000.00	5,971.30	
PWLB loan repayment	5,387.46	5,387.46	
Administration costs	3,300.00	1,666.03	
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	4,155.48	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	3,340.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,100.00	687.40	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Street lighting (replacement programme)	6,100.00	-	
Pavilion	3,400.00	3,227.50	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	-	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	1,500.00	-	
Neighbourhood Plan	2,000.00	233.12	
Capital - Roller shutter at Pavilion	2,000.00	-	
Capital - Bollards at Moor Place Gate	800.00	-	
VAT	5,000.00	969.45	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	71,060.46	26,873.74	

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

FORWARD FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 TO 2025/26

ASSUMING PRECEPT REDUCES TO £42,000 IN 2021/22 & REMAINS AT THAT LEVEL
RECEIPTS - CAUTIOUS APPROACH
PAYMENTS - LIMITED INFLATION + PAST SPEND OR KNOWN CHANGES

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	ACTUAL	EXPECTED	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS							
Precept	39,000.00	43,000.00	42,000.00	42,000.00	42,000.00	42,000.00	42,000.00
PWLB loan - Parish lights	-	25,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
Litter Agency	4,209.51	4,272.66	4,275.00	4,315.00	4,355.00	4,395.00	4,395.00
New Homes Bonus	13,467.00	15,389.00	9,097.00	8,808.00	3,585.00	-	-
Pavilion income	971.00	4,680.00	7,020.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Grant	1,562.25	2,297.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00
Burial fees (ring fenced to Burial Authority)	5,000.00	9,190.00	2,640.00	2,640.00	2,640.00	2,640.00	2,640.00
Other	2,373.47	60.00	60.00	60.00	195.00	60.00	60.00
VAT reclaimed	-	12,381.76	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
	66,583.23	116,270.42	70,392.00	64,123.00	59,075.00	55,395.00	55,395.00
PAYMENTS							
Staff costs	6,973.20	7,166.00	7,200.00	7,272.00	7,344.00	7,417.00	7,491.00
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	5,387.46	5,387.46	5,387.46	5,387.46	5,387.46	5,387.46
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	-	1,384.00	2,768.00	2,768.00	2,768.00	2,768.00	2,768.00
Administration costs	2,804.40	3,100.00	3,100.00	3,000.00	3,050.00	3,100.00	3,150.00
Insurance	3,764.27	3,200.00	3,250.00	3,300.00	3,350.00	3,400.00	3,450.00
Audit fees	730.00	790.00	830.00	730.00	740.00	750.00	760.00
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00
Election expenses	51.15	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maintenance of open spaces	4,368.80	21,100.00	13,400.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Litter Agency	4,008.00	4,008.00	4,008.00	4,008.00	4,008.00	4,008.00	4,008.00
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	685.60	1,100.00	700.00	710.00	720.00	730.00	730.00
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,444.95	2,000.00	2,000.00	-	-	-	-
Pavilion (running expenses and maintenance)	4,191.46	3,800.00	3,500.00	3,550.00	3,600.00	3,650.00	3,700.00
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	-	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	1,500.00	3,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
Neighbourhood Plan	11,422.49	2,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
Streetlight (capital)	11,079.62	43,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
Capital - Roller shutter at Pavilion	-	2,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
Capital - Bollards at Moor Place Gate	-	800.00	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue - Maintenance of Village sign	-	-	4,000.00	-	-	-	-
Revenue - Maintenance of bus shelters	-	-	8,000.00	-	-	-	-
Capital - Playground equipment	-	-	8,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	-	-
Revenue/Capital Projects (to be allocated)	-	-	-	5,000.00	5,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
Burial ground (ring fenced to Burial Authority)	3,294.70	3,250.00	2,510.00	2,550.00	2,590.00	2,630.00	2,670.00
VAT	6,214.17	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
	68,955.27	113,120.46	74,688.46	59,310.46	59,592.46	59,875.46	60,149.46
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	- 2,372.04	3,149.96	- 4,296.46	4,812.54	- 517.46	- 4,480.46	- 4,754.46
BALANCE BOUGHT FORWARD	64,172.34	61,800.30	64,950.26	60,653.80	65,466.34	65,466.34	64,948.88
Add SURPLUS/less DEFICIT	- 2,372.04	3,149.96	- 4,296.46	4,812.54	- 517.46	- 4,480.46	- 4,754.46
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	61,800.30	64,950.26	60,653.80	65,466.34	64,948.88	60,985.88	60,194.42
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD RELATES TO:							
Parish Council	43,057.54	40,267.50	35,841.04	40,563.58	39,996.12	36,073.12	35,271.66
Burial Authority	18,742.76	24,682.76	24,812.76	24,902.76	24,952.76	24,912.76	24,922.76
	61,800.30	64,950.26	60,653.80	65,466.34	64,948.88	60,985.88	60,194.42
Remember in relation to the Parish Council balance:							
~ Section 106 monies	4,570.00	1,570.00	1,570.00	1,570.00	1,570.00	1,570.00	1,570.00
~ New Homes Bonus	-	389.00	9,097.00	8,808.00	3,585.00	-	-
~ Streetlights	5,000.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
~ Open spaces	3,650.00	3,650.00	-	-	-	-	-
LEAVING AVAILABLE FOR PARISH COUNCIL	29,837.54	34,658.50	25,174.04	30,185.58	34,841.12	34,503.12	33,701.66
Tax base	974.57	974.57	956.43	956.43	956.43	956.43	956.43
Band D equivalent	£40.02	£44.12	£43.91	£43.91	£43.91	£43.91	£43.91