

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 6th July 2021, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, 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

In attendance: F Forth, Clerk and 8 members of the public.

21/111. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absences were received and approved from Cllr D McDonald and Cllr S Smith.

21/112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr K Twort declared a non-registrable interest in the land at Kettle Green Lane (agenda item 21/121).

No other declarations were made or applications for dispensations sought.

21/113. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

21/114. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

21/115. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1st June 2021 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

21/116. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report on outstanding matters had been circulated and the following updates were provided:

- bins – dog bin was expected around 16th July and the rubbish bins between the 20th July and 3rd August;
- overgrown hedge letters – these were issued on the 9th June. Further areas have been identified for letters to be sent;
- water testing at the Pavilion – Clerk to catch up with the cleaner on this;
- village sign copyright – developer has been periodically chased and now identified that person being chased was on maternity leave. A new contact has been provided and will be chased;
- bus shelter repairs – an earlier start date of 19th July had been offered with a request to pay 50% of the estimate. The earlier start date would be accepted, and the payment will be made once the invoice is received. It was noted that the contingency included in the quote would be used as the shelters had deteriorated further since the quote was approved; and
- village sign refurbishment – the sign will be taken down for refurbishment this month although no clear date for this as yet.

21/117. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

Cllr K Twort reported that there had been no recent meeting of the Sports Association.

Pavilion

Prior to the meeting, Cllr D McDonald had circulated a note on how to improve the management and maintenance of the Pavilion and the Chair outlined the key suggestions from this. It was also highlighted that the current cleaner was considering giving notice.

Following discussion, the following points were agreed:

- Cllr Mrs J Liversage would be responsible for seeking quotes and a quote for revised signage was currently being sought;
- Cllr D McDonald would be responsible for dealing with contracts/long term hirers;
- Clerk would continue to be responsible for managing casual bookings;
- EMC Contracts would continue to be used for repairs and maintenance work; and
- consideration be given to using commercial cleaners.

In terms of repairs and maintenance, whilst recognising that the building continually moves, the following actions were required:

- visual inspection to identify any proactive work that can be undertaken;
- changing room doors need attention as they are sticking;
- investigate placing timers on the immersion heaters; and
- plan to undertake a twice-yearly spring clean of the building exterior – jet wash, clear gutters etc.

It was also highlighted by the Clerk that the Parish Council's Financial Regulations requires orders for work to be placed through her.

Village Hall

Cllr Mrs K Hamilton reported that she had attended the last Management Committee meeting, held on 21st June 2021. The key points were:

- the Hall was back in use with most sports groups back and most other groups returning from September. The Horticultural Society were hoping to hold their Autumn Show in September and the Drama Group were planning to put on their play in November;
- development of a 5-year plan for repairs and maintenance is continuing;
- cars parking in the car park when not using the Village Hall is becoming an issue. The sign had been cleaned telling drivers the Village Car Park is for those using the Village Hall only and the option to place a chain across the entrance in between bookings is being considered. This may have implications for local roads.

Playground

The Clerk reported that the quarterly maintenance inspection of the playground had been undertaken. The maintenance report, and an update on the repair to the Woodland Cottage, were expected shortly.

Cllr Mrs J Liversage confirmed that the quote to repair in front of the basketball area was still awaited.

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

General

On behalf of Cllr S Smith, the Clerk reported that the combination of rain and sunny periods had produced an unusual abundance of growth in the parish during the last month. This had resulted in a significant increase of foliage in trees, shrubs, and hedgerows.

Public Rights of Way

On behalf of Cllr S Smith, the Clerk provided the following update:

- Footpath 10 – where it crosses Moor Place estate and grounds: works required had been completed by Herts County Council's contractor, namely:
 - removal of unwanted and dangerous concrete from the old stile area;
 - way marker posts installed where needed; and
 - footpath mowed to indicate the route to be followed by users.The groundsman for the estate was in attendance to ensure the owner's requirements were met. The owner is responsible for any further signage to indicate 'Private Property' and to remind dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads, pick up mess etc;
- Footpath 11 diversion order at Kettle Green Lane: consultation is expected to begin on 6th July. Herts County Council apologised for the incorrect information reported to the last Parish Council meeting. Given the safety concerns for this diversion, the Parish Council's response should include a request for the installation of a safety barrier;
- Footpath 22: large hole caused by a burrowing animal (species unknown) had been repaired;
- Footpath 45 - byway at Brook Lane: overhanging branches need to be cut and removed, and this will be undertaken once it is established that bird nesting sites are no longer in use; and
- annual maintenance of footpaths: first stage of the annual maintenance of footpaths had been completed but, due to the June weather, a few paths would need an intermediate cut before the second round which starts in August. Footpath users are asked to provide details to Cllr S Smith of any footpath where action is needed. Herts County Council had been clear that it will only respond in exceptional circumstances due to its cost cutting.

Tower Hill Phone Box

Cllr Mrs J Liversage thanked a resident and his wife for taking responsibility for the converting the Tower Hill phone box into a library to be known as the Book Box. The phone box will be painted, and an attempt made to replace the windows. A quote for the shelving is being sought.

(iii) Highways

The Chair reported that a meeting had taken place on 1st July 2021 between the Parish Council, Highways and Cllr G McAndrew (HCC). The key points from this meeting were:

- Watery Lane/Sidehill House junction – signage and the road markings do not match, and the road markings have been washed away again. A Herts County Council engineer's visit is urgently needed;

- Bollards:
 - Moor Place Gate – still being chased but a plan had been obtained showing the definitive area that Herts County Council is responsible for – right up to the gates themselves;
 - Hill House/Tower Hill – post to be replaced with a wooden one and a white line will be drawn around the extended pavement as an added precaution; and
 - Broadfield Way – bendy posts being installed in due course;
- St Thomas' triangle – the edging works are scheduled to be undertaken between 26th and 30th July; and
- Snells Corner – top road had been resurfaced as a result of being on the schedule for a number of years.

In addition, the Chair stated that a further meeting would take place on 16th July 2021 with Highways to walk Kettle Green Lane to confirm which passing bays need to be included in the proposed works, and the work itself would be undertaken this financial year. At this meeting, the Hadham Cross junction would also be covered in terms of the double yellow lines and a warning of hidden turning as there is danger for Kettle Green Lane drivers exiting on to the B1004 of traffic in the middle of the road.

Cllr B O'Neill reported that he had received enquiries regarding the columns that had been removed but no offers as yet. Cllr I Hunt added that a new lamppost had been installed today at Malting Lane.

On behalf of Cllr S Smith, the Clerk reported the need for hedgerows alongside and at the top of several country lanes in the Parish to be cut back by farmers, residents or Herts County Council (where they own the land). In particular, the area at the top of Danebridge Road at the junction with the B1004 where cars turning right into the B1004 have very poor visibility of traffic approaching from the left. Several near misses had been reported as the traffic on the B1004 from Much Hadham was not slowing down when approaching the junction. It was agreed that this needed to be reported on fault reporting. In addition, nearby landowners should be contacted to cut back vegetation.

(iv) Media

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that 35 new Facebook viewers had been reached over the last month and post engagement was up 100% from last month to this month. This coincided with most recent engagement on the Recreation Ground post regarding dog fouling to which no comments have been received as yet.

In addition, Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that the Social Media Policy would be ready for next month's meeting.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that East Herts Council had passed 43 responses to the Regulation 16 consultation to the Examiner. In addition, he stated that he had seen these responses and a few policy proposals had attracted adverse comments, the most frequently mentioned were:

- the extension of the village boundary around Nimney House after the Pre-Submission consultation;
- the development at the Priest House, because of traffic congestion and parking concerns in Ash Meadow; and
- the absence of the land directly behind the War Memorial, to the left of the drive, from the list of sites proposed to be designated as Local Green Space.

Cllr I Hunt concluded that these points would be addressed, and any other points, as and when required by the Examiner.

The Clerk confirmed that the application for the remaining grant was being progressed this week.

(vi) Security

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that details of one crime had been provided by PCSO Leon de Bruyn: criminal damage at the Pavilion where unknown persons had damaged the toilet door by jamming a screwdriver into the lock. The lock had been removed for forensic examination.

PCSO Leon de Bruyn had also commented that a crime survey had been completed at the Recreational Grounds to reduce anti-social behaviour and criminal activity but as far as he was aware, no improvements to site security had been made. The Chair confirmed that this was correct.

From OWL (Online Watch link) reports, Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that there are now over 170,000 members reaching over 36% of the community, which is a tremendous effort to provide residents with the reassurance of policing in the community. Residents are encouraged to sign up to the Police OWL messaging system at www.owl.co.uk/herts.

(vii) Other

Cllr B O'Neill commented that the open gardens event on 4th July had been very successful.

21/118. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) highlighted that the former Barn School site had been split into two sites for planning purposes – the house and the field – as the developer believes planning permission can be obtained for the latter.

Cllr I Hunt commented that the Neighbourhood Plan is not in place yet therefore none of its policies are currently applicable. Developer considering around 30 houses, near Ash Meadow, but access would be an issue and it is sited in the rural area where development would not normally be permitted.

21/119. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Tower Hill phone box

The resident working on the Tower Hill phone box commented that the phone box was more noticeable now that the bushes had been cleared back. The intention is to ensure that the phone box library is successful before painting the phone box. In addition, it was clarified that the phone box will be kept fully stocked so people would be able to keep books taken. It is hoped that it will be kept tidy and not become a dumping point for unwanted books.

(ii) Station Road phone box

A resident highlighted that the inside light of the Station Road phone box is on during the day. Potentially the sensor for the light needs adjusting.

21/120. DEFIBRILLATOR AT THE PAVILION

The Chair reminded those present that a proposal for a defibrillator at the Pavilion had been circulated by Faraway Tree Kindergarten, with the cost being shared between the Kindergarten and the Parish Council. Subsequently, the Kindergarten decided it needed a portable version and would obtain that themselves.

Options and costs for a defibrillator are:

- maintained version where cost is £123 per month for 5 years leading to a total cost of £7,380; or
- outright purchase, approximately £1,000, with an annual maintenance costs of £300 leading to a total cost of £2,500 over 5 years.

Following discussion, it was agreed to approach St Andrew's School to determine whether a joint initiative to obtain a defibrillator might be appropriate.

21/121. LAND AT KETTLE GREEN LANE (“NATURE RESERVE”)

Cllr I Hunt provided the background to the land for sale at Kettle Green Lane (“Nature Reserve”), highlighting that there was an opportunity for the Parish Council to own this land and maintain it as an open space.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to Cllrs I Hunt and D McDonald to make enquiries for the purchase of land.

If the enquiries gave encouragement to proceed, any purchase decision would have to follow a period of consultation to obtain public support.

21/122. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - JULY 2021

Ref	Payable to	For	Amount
OP54	E.ON	Lighting for war memorial	35.48
OP55	HAPTC	Training	30.00
OP56	MH Sports Association	Alarm system support charge	196.80
OP57	BA MH Landscapes	Maintenance at burial grounds Jan - Mar '21	540.00
OP58	Mr C Copper	Cut front hedges & strim grass verges at Recreation Ground	210.00
OP59	MH Sports Association	Pavilion electricity	138.20
OP60	MH Sports Association	Pavilion water	18.90
OP61	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (June)	80.00
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (July)	334.00
OP62	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (July)	597.13
Total payments			<u>£2,180.51</u>

Payments will be authorised online following the meeting by Cllr B O’Neill and Cllr S Smith.

(ii) Financial Statement

The financial statement for 2021/22 to date was received. The summary financial position is detailed overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A.

At the last meeting, the Clerk had highlighted that the borrowing approval for the parish lighting project was only valid for a year, and she now confirmed that the loan for this project needed to be drawn down before the 16th October 2021. Cllr B O’Neill confirmed that no extra costs were currently known so the original estimate could be used as the basis for the loan draw down.

In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that the New Homes Bonus is usually paid at the end of July.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 6 JULY 2021

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2021	81,111.38	24,744.29	105,855.67
Income	26,345.24	-	26,345.24
Expenditure	- 20,205.80	- 880.95	- 21,086.75
Closing balance	<u><u>87,250.82</u></u>	<u><u>23,863.34</u></u>	<u><u>111,114.16</u></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	11,100.00
(3) Open spaces	18,650.00
	<u><u>34,320.00</u></u>

21/123. PLANNING

(i) Planning Committee Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1st June 2021 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

(i) Substitute Member

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Mrs P Taylor as a substitute member to the Planning Committee with immediate effect.

Note – Cllr Mrs P Taylor did not participate in the vote.

21/124. BURIAL AUTHORITY

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 1st June 2021 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

21/125. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

21/126. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk reported on the following matters:

- The Queen's Green Canopy - a UK-wide tree planting initiative to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 had been launched, and individuals through to organisations are encouraged to get involved. Further details are available from the Clerk for anyone wishing to get involved;
- East Herts Community Benefit Lottery – a reminder that East Herts Council run this lottery to help organisations raise funds for a good cause. Details can be found on East Herts Council's website; and
- Devolution – at a previous meeting it had been indicated that devolution was being considered in Hertfordshire – the establishment of a unitary authority – but this was no longer likely as the leadership at Herts County Council had changed so the existing arrangements would remain.

In addition, in response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that a number of policies would be circulated in advance of the August meeting for approval at that meeting.

21/127. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 3rd August 2021 at 7:30 pm at the Much Hadham Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:44 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 6 JULY 2021

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO	COMMENT
	2022	DATE	
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	
	£	£	
INCOME			
Precept	42,000.00	21,000.00	
Litter Agency	4,275.00	-	
New Homes Bonus	9,097.00	-	
Pavilion income	7,020.00	2,340.00	
Grant	300.00	164.00	
Other	60.00	0.03	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	2,841.21	
TOTAL INCOME	67,752.00	26,345.24	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,200.00	2,388.52	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	2,693.73	
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	2,768.00	-	
Administration costs	3,100.00	947.79	
Insurance	3,250.00	722.25	
Audit fees	830.00	445.00	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	-	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	13,400.00	3,202.69	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	1,336.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	700.00	33.79	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Pavilion	3,500.00	1,075.47	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	-	
Neighbourhood Plan	-	-	
Revenue - Maintenance of Village sign	4,000.00		
Revenue - Maintenance of bus shelters	8,000.00		
Capital - Playground equipment	8,000.00	5,578.53	Cost less than expected.
VAT	5,000.00	1,782.03	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	72,178.46	20,205.80	