

## MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, 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 5 members of the public.

### 21/162. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### 21/163. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

### 21/164. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

### 21/165. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair highlighted that the two events referred to at the last meeting had been huge successes: the outdoor cinema event and the 800<sup>th</sup> celebration of St Andrew's Church. Over 400 people had enjoyed the good weather and "Mamma Mia", raising community spirits after the last 18 months and also raising £1,500. The 800<sup>th</sup> celebration was equally blessed with good weather. The nearly 200 people who attended enjoyed a lovely tea, watched the planting of a mulberry tree, and benefitted from an interesting and relevant address from the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally.

The Chair reported that there are now three circular walks described on the Hundred Parishes website, in and around our parish, no. 122 (along the High Street), no. 168 (a circular walk of some 7 miles to Standon and back) and just recently no. 172 (from the Village Hall to Green Tye and Perry Green and back). These walks are recommended, including reading the guide, and any comments are welcomed by the Hundred Parishes organisers.

The Chair stated that the project to refurbish the two Queen's Silver Jubilee bus shelters had been completed, in time for the 70<sup>th</sup> celebrations next year, and will be reported on during the meeting. However, she took the opportunity to thank Cllr S Smith for the hours of work he put into this project and to a resident for his invaluable help.

Finally, the Chair highlighted that two planning applications had been submitted for Old Station Yard, Millers View, and these would be fully considered at the Planning Committee which follows this meeting.

#### 21/166. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

#### 21/167. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following updates were provided in relation to outstanding matters and resolutions:

- bus shelters – a maintenance contract for the refurbished bus shelters was being prepared and a contract to ensure the vegetation was kept at bay was already in place;
- defibrillator – still being progressed;
- Pavilion – maintenance works at the Pavilion are in progress;
- bins – the new rubbish bins and dog bin had been installed at the Recreation Ground;
- tree work – quotes for the next tranche of tree work to be requested once the Clerk has clarified whether a quick update to the tree plan should be undertaken;
- playground – Broadmead Leisure had been instructed to undertake the maintenance items as agreed at the last meeting but the playground noticeboard, additional seats and the bins still need to be progressed;
- Village sign – it was likely that the refurbished sign would be back within the next 1 or 2 weeks but the action in terms of the post was still being progressed; and
- Pavilion agreement – the agreement was eventually fully signed last week and all parties to the agreement have their own original copy.

#### 21/168. MEMBERS' REPORTS

##### (i) Community

##### Recreation Ground

Cllr Mrs J Liversage provided an update on the proposed lights at the Recreation Ground car park. The proposed lights could not be solar powered due to the close proximity of the trees and a fixed timer could be installed at the factory but if that were done, it would not be able to be altered subsequently. The merits of using motion sensor lights versus a timer were

discussed but no final decision reached as yet. It was noted that the Sports Association had expressed concerns on this proposal and it was agreed that the next step would be to discuss the options with the Sports Association and the police. It was noted that the next Sports Association meeting is on 19<sup>th</sup> October.

Note – funding for the proposed project to be sought from East Herts Council’s New Homes Bonus pot.

Work is still required to define the content, style and budget for the proposed new sign at the Recreation Ground. A number of options had been circulated for consideration.

Cllr B O’Neill highlighted that some tree branches at the front of the Recreation Ground were overhanging the road. The Clerk will discuss this with PR Newsoms.

Finally, Cllr K Twort noted that this was also the case for the frontage at Moor Place Park and the Chair agreed to liaise with the landowner on this matter.

### Village Hall

Cllr Mrs K Hamilton reported that the news from the Village Hall is generally very good. Most clubs and organisations are back, and it was pleasing to note that “new management” had emerged for the Mother and Toddlers Group. Several children’s parties had taken place, and Much Hadham Drama Group had been very busy rehearsing for their November play.

In addition, Cllr Mrs K Hamilton reported that the Village Hall finances were sound at present. However, like many other village groups, funding options would be looked at carefully given the likely continued absence of the considerable funds from the Fete which had benefitted the Village Hall for many years. Progress has been made on producing a 5 year maintenance and development plan. First year priorities are within existing funds and will go ahead (with the formal approval of the Management Committee to the major expenditures) and include redecoration of the main hall, replacement of the side curtains in the main hall, and replacement of the water heater for the Green Room kitchen and toilets.

Finally, it was noted that COVID rules continue to evolve and revised guidance, with an emphasis on ventilation and continued vigilance, will be issued soon.

The Chair requested that the annual accounts for the Village Hall be obtained, as well as those for the Sports Association.

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

#### General

Cllr S Smith commented that it had been mixed weather in the last month: warm, sunny periods with the occasional rain shower. Farmers had harvested most of their crops and fields had been ploughed in readiness for next year’s planned cultivation. In addition, the

twice a year cycle of trimming and clearing of hedgerows and undergrowth had been completed. The contractors have been asked to undertake work on specific paths that remained heavily overgrown using monies from the Government's COVID allocation to fund such work.

### Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided the following update:

- Footpath 11 diversion order at Kettle Green Lane – nothing new to report as yet;
- potential diversion orders – a few residents are considering applying for diversion orders where a footpath crosses their land, namely Footpath 37 (Danebridge Lane / Glendale Cottage), Footpath 39 (Dane Wood / Sidehill House) and Footpath 44 (Old Park Farm);
- additional maintenance work – residents identified footpaths that required additional maintenance work and work has been completed on Footpaths 33, 57 and 45. Work will also be undertaken on Footpath 23 (Two Bridges), Footpath 37 (Danebridge Lane) and Footpath 32 (Henry Moore Foundation); and
- bridge repairs - the following bridge repairs are currently in progress or will be:
  - Footpath 29: no closure as yet and repairs are on the way;
  - Footpath 44 (& High Wych Footpath 16): decking has collapsed and the bridge has been closed. Repairs are expected soon;
  - Footpath 20: complicated situation involving cables, gas pipes and the Environment Agency, Highways and Ringway. Work is in progress;
  - Footpath 23: handrail needs repairing;
  - Footpath 4: minor repairs along with overgrown vegetation and an issue with the field gates; and
  - Footpath 25, at the ford: Highways to action a repair here.

Cllr Mrs J Liversage commented that the bridge on Footpath 20 is no longer closed as someone has cut the tape down. Cllr S Smith will follow this up and report it.

### (iii) Highways (inc street lighting)

The Chair stated that the next quarterly meeting with Highways had been requested, with the signage for Malting/Danebridge Lanes being top of the list for action.

In discussion, it was confirmed that the Parish Council did not need to request any further salt from Herts County Council.

The Clerk highlighted that the salt bin on Winding Hill had been knocked into and severely damaged and Cllr B O'Neill agreed to report this via Highways Fault Reporting.

### Street lighting

Cllr B O'Neill reported that the project was creeping towards completion. The remaining work was being undertaken on 15<sup>th</sup> October and Ringway had requested support from the Parish Council in stopping people parking in front of street lights to be worked on. It was also noted that a number of columns and lanterns had not been delivered to him but it was possible that this was due to these being unsafe to re-use.

#### (iv) Media

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that the Facebook page had maintained its level of page likes and its popularity with women over men. In addition, it was highlighted that a fair portion of readers are from neighbouring areas: Ware (22%); Bishop's Stortford (8%) and London (7%).

In addition, Cllr Mrs M Maduhu reported that a business on Facebook had asked if details of their activities at the Village Hall could be posted on the Parish Council's page. It was acknowledged that the Parish Council's policy is not to do this. Following discussion, it was agreed that the request would be circulated for Cllrs to consider and approve the proposed content.

#### (v) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr I Hunt reported that the contract with the new Examiner had been signed last week and the examination was now progressing.

In response to questions, Cllr I Hunt indicated that the examination could take around 3 months, and in the following 6 weeks, East Herts Council would organise the referendum.

#### (vi) Security

Cllr Mrs H Maduhu reported that discussions with Herts CCTV Partnership were in progress in relation to a proposal to install CCTV at the Recreation Ground. An on-site meeting would be held in the coming weeks to obtain a quote. Prior to that, input from PCSO Leon de Bruyn would be obtained. The Sports Association will be kept informed and consulted when a proposal has been developed.

#### (vii) Other

### Nature Reserve

Cllr I Hunt confirmed that an offer had been accepted for the Nature Reserve on Kettle Green Lane and the sale was moving towards completion.

## Stansted Airport

Cllr B O'Neill highlighted that a proposal had been made by Stansted Airport to fly throughout the night and suggested that this should be opposed. It was agreed that Cllr D McDonald would contact the Stansted Airport Watch (formerly Stop Stansted Expansion) Chair to identify what further action the Parish Council could take.

In addition, the Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council had not made a donation to Stop Stansted Expansion for a number of years and queried whether Cllrs wanted to consider a donation in the future. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the letter received.

## 21/169. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) provided an update on the following matters:

- Grange Paddocks: there will be an open day on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, from 10 am, at the new Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre. There will be a number of free activities available over the weekend to try although participants will be encouraged to donate £2 per activity in support of the McMillan Cancer charity. The facilities in the new Leisure Centre were highlighted as well as details of the fitness membership offer available during the opening weekend;
- Herts Lynx shuttle bus: whilst the shuttle bus does not include Much Hadham, it is accessible at Little Hadham and allows for on-demand travel across to Letchworth, Stevenage and Buntingford;
- Old River Lane: consultation on the proposed Arts Centre is continuing. The multi-storey car park will be open next April/May and will include 54 electric vehicle charging points; and
- New Homes Bonus: the Parish Council were encouraged to access the New Homes Funds bonus being held by East Herts Council as there have been no applications to this as yet.

In response to a question regarding the Local Government Boundary Commission review, Cllr I Devonshire commented that the number of Cllrs would remain at 50 and no changes to the ward boundaries had been proposed prior to the public consultation.

## 21/170. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

### (i) Recreation Ground carpark

A resident asked whether the Recreation Ground carpark was being re-surfaced following a reference earlier in the meeting. It was confirmed that this was not taking place.

(ii) Bus shelters

In relation to the concern raised about possible vandalism to the recently refurbished bus shelters, a resident commented that no such activity had taken place in the last 50 years.

(iii) Pavements

A resident highlighted that it was not possible to walk along the pavement from Spindle Bridge to Lordship Farm due to the overgrown vegetation. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the owners of the two affected properties.

(iv) Street lighting

Following comments on the new street lighting, Cllr B O'Neill confirmed that it was expected that the brightness would be balanced out once the project was completed and light settings adjusted from the current level of full brightness. In addition, he advised a further resident that a new lamppost said to have been installed at an angle may be straightened, if that was indeed the case.

21/171. STREET LIGHTING

RESOLVED to approve the PWLB loan of £25,000 over the borrowing term of 10 years for the purpose of the Much Hadham Parish Lighting Project. The repayments of the loan and interest will be approximately £2,800 per annum and it is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

Note: the Parish Council has approval to borrow £40,000 for this project

The Clerk highlighted that the interest rate had continued to drop: 1.97% in July 2020 and 1.61% at towards the end of September.

21/172. PAVILION ROLLER SHUTTER

The Chair highlighted that it had not been possible to obtain 3 quotes, only 2. The proposed roller door shutter would be constructed of galvanised steel and the power supply was satisfactory so no additional electrical costs would be incurred. Once the shutter was in place, the boarding from the top and sides could be replaced with glazing to allow more light into the Pavilion. No quote had been obtained for this as yet.

Following discussion, RESOLVED to approve quote B for the installation of an electric roller shutter at the Pavilion for £1,760 + VAT.

Quote B was from LPS Shutter Doors Ltd.

## 21/173. FINANCIAL

### (i) Payment of Accounts

The Clerk highlighted that whilst the balance of the bus shelter repair was higher than the approved quote, detailed explanations had been provided to explain the additional costs. RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown below, be duly authorised for payment.

#### **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - OCTOBER 2021**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Payable to</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Amount</b>
OP84	HAPTC	Training	30.00
OP85	Mr C Copper	Cut front hedges & strim grass verges at Recreation Ground	210.00
OP86	Broadmead Leisure Ltd	Quarterly playground inspection (September)	60.00
OP87	Gooch Carpentry & Refurbishments Ltd	Balance of bus shelter repairs	7,141.31
OP88	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit 2020/21	360.00
OP89	MH Sports Association	Pavilion electricity	194.65
OP90	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (September)	80.00
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (September)	334.00
OP91	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (October)	597.13
<b>Total payments</b>			<b><u>£9,007.09</u></b>

Payments will be authorised online following the meeting by Cllr B O'Neill and Cllr K Twort.

### (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. No matters were highlighted by the Clerk.



## SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 5 OCTOBER 2021

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2021	81,111.38	24,744.29	105,855.67
Income	55,166.93	540.00	55,706.93
Expenditure	- 46,433.89	- 918.71	- 47,352.60
Closing balance	<u><u>89,844.42</u></u>	<u><u>24,365.58</u></u>	<u><u>114,210.00</u></u>

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

(1) Section 106 receipts for sport or recreation	1,570.00
(2) Streetlights	11,100.00
(3) Open spaces	18,650.00
	<u><u>31,320.00</u></u>

### (iii) Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21

The Clerk reported that an unqualified opinion had been issued on the Parish Council's AGAR. However, the external auditor had raised an "other matter", which did not affect their opinion, but drew attention to the street light insurance claim received in 2019/20 – the prior year - being included as a receipt when, in their opinion, it should have been netted off the cost of the replacement street light. The external auditor did acknowledge that their advice was not supported by the Practitioner's Guide which the Parish Council is required to comply with. In addition, they commented that by not following their advice, the Parish Council faced the risk of moving into a higher band for its audit fee. The Clerk highlighted that this was not a significant risk and that the Parish Council would hit a higher fee band for the next audit due to the parish lighting project which would increase the external audit fee by £100. It was also noted that this point had been raised with HAPTC and subsequently NALC so that future guidance can be amended if necessary.

As required, the audited AGAR had been published, on the website and noticeboards, on 30<sup>th</sup> September, along with the notice concluding the audit. Finally, the Clerk reported that next year's submission deadline is likely to be 1<sup>st</sup> July, expected to be easily achieved as the draft AGAR and accounts will be considered at the May meeting, and the local electors inspection period would be 3<sup>rd</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July.

(iv) Bank reconciliations

The Clerk highlighted that the September 2021 bank reconciliation had been reviewed by Cllr Mrs J Liversage prior to the meeting, as required by the Financial Regulations, and no issues were identified.

21/174. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

21/175. BURIAL AUTHORITY

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

21/176. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

21/177. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk reported on the following matters:

- the next East Herts Council engagement event, via Zoom, with town and parish councils is planned for the evening of Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November;
- a reminder that the meeting dates for 2022 had been circulated and were available on the website;
- opportunity exists to have a say on the electoral review by the Local Government Boundary Commission being undertaken at East Herts Council; and
- the Albury Road will be closed overnight on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October between 10 pm and 5 am so that road markings can be amended. Overall, the A120 bypass and flood alleviation project is expected to be completed this coming winter.

21/178. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 at 7:30 pm at the Green Tye Mission Hall.

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:50 pm.

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

### BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 5 OCTOBER 2021

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO	COMMENT
	2022	DATE	
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	
	£	£	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Precept	42,000.00	42,000.00	
Litter Agency	4,275.00	4,272.66	
New Homes Bonus	9,097.00	-	Bonus no longer being paid
Pavilion income	7,020.00	4,764.00	
Grant	300.00	164.00	
Other	60.00	1,125.06	Sale of 5 old streetlights
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	2,841.21	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>67,752.00</b>	<b>55,166.93</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Staff costs	7,200.00	4,179.91	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	2,693.73	
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	2,768.00	-	
Administration costs	3,100.00	1,169.77	
Insurance	3,250.00	722.25	
Audit fees	830.00	745.00	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	35.00	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	13,400.00	6,965.90	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	2,338.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	700.00	67.95	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	-	
Pavilion	3,500.00	2,392.85	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	900.00	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-	3,000.00	
Neighbourhood Plan	-	90.00	
Revenue - Maintenance of Village sign	4,000.00	-	
Revenue - Maintenance of bus shelters	8,000.00	10,439.09	£1,463.09 over approved quote of £8,976 due to additional cost of materials and labour, plus a pavement licence
Capital - Playground equipment	8,000.00	5,578.53	Cost less than expected
VAT	5,000.00	5,115.91	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>72,178.46</b>	<b>46,433.89</b>	