

## **MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, at 7:32 pm.

\*Cllr Mrs K Hamilton  
\*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)  
\*Cllr Mrs J Liversage  
\*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 7 members of the public.

### 22/49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### 22/50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

### 22/51. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

### 22/52. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair highlighted that the Annual Village or Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May in the Much Hadham Village Hall. The first part of the evening will be a conference style format, involving all the usual contributors, so that attendees can wander and chat to those who run activities throughout the parish - from St Elizabeth's and The Forge, to the Scouts and the WI. Following this, a short, more formal meeting, will take place to gather together and share ideas and comments. Refreshments will be available during the evening.

### 22/53. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

## 22/54. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report on outstanding matters and resolutions have been circulated with the agenda. The following updates were provided:

- Asset of Community Value (ACV) nomination for The Ley – Parkland and Nature Reserve – the official East Herts Council response had been received today and a Panel Board meeting was being arranged to consider the application;
- ACV nomination for The Bull Inn – progress is being made on this application;
- cowling for the roller shutter at the Pavilion – installer still being chased to install the cowling; and
- tree quotes – waiting for quotes to be received.

## 22/55. MEMBERS' REPORTS

### (i) Community

#### Playground

The latest playground inspection report from Broadmead Leisure Ltd was received. The Clerk highlighted it was a good report which should result in fewer issues being identified in the ROSPA report in July. Quotes are being sought for the two issues that need to be addressed relating to reinstatement of the ground beneath the hurricane swing and in front of the basketball wall.

Cllr Mrs J Liversage commented that she would undertake a mini survey of users over the summer months in order to identify a possible new piece of equipment for next year.

#### Recreation Ground

Cllr K Twort commented that no issues had arisen at the recent Sports Association meeting.

Cllr D McDonald reported that the quotes for the CCTV, lighting etc were still being pursued.

#### Parish Council noticeboards

The Chair highlighted that a quote had been received and circulated to repair the noticeboards, amounting to £1,540. In accordance with the Financial Regulations, one quote is acceptable for this work and sufficient budget provision exists for this expenditure (£1,200 in the current budget and £1,000 included in the Open Spaces Reserve) therefore the quote can be accepted by the Chair and the Clerk without a formal resolution. All those present agreed that the quote should be accepted.

### Pavilion

The Chair reported that progress had been made on the Pavilion snagging works. The internal doors now stay closed but some of the other work is potentially outstanding.

### Village Hall

Cllr Mrs K Hamilton commented that the only matter to highlight was an invitation to the Cheese and Wine Party prior to the Village Hall Management Committee AGM on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April.

### Cinema event

Cllr B O'Neill reported that another cinema event was being organised by the Recreation Trust for Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September. Volunteers to help at this event are needed.

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

#### General

Cllr S Smith commented that a welcome dry spell for the most part of last month had allowed better access into the countryside, even if a tad cold.

#### Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided the following update:

- fallen trees and branches - many fallen trees and branches that were blocking roads and footpaths have now been cleared. Landowners who took the trouble to remove trees from their own land were thanked;
- Footpath 46 and Footpath 51 - one existing fallen tree (FP46) at South End is still to be cleared and low branches (FP51) at Green Tye need to be cut back. It is expected that this work will be undertaken this week;
- Footpath 20 bridge - bridge remains closed but funds are available to cover the repair work by Herts County Council Highways and Ringway. A start is expected soon; and
- Footpath 11 Diversion Order – no change.

Cllr B O'Neill reported that he had spoken to the Herts County Council Countryside Management Officer regarding the bridge on Footpath 20. A more structural approach to the repair is planned as the central pillar, mid-stream, is to be removed so that the water flow is not impeded.

### Litter bins

The Chair sought agreement to proceed with the removal of the agreed litter bins. A quote for this work had been received for £400. No objections were raised.

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

The Chair reported that no meeting had been arranged as yet with Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) as he had been away a fair bit recently. An update to a limited number of key actions had been sought but no response as yet.

In terms of street lighting, Cllr B O'Neill reported that the following actions were outstanding:

- balancing the light output from the new lights;
- removal and scrapping of the column in Church Lane;
- painting of columns; and
- completion of the formal handover process to Herts County Council.

In addition, the Chair highlighted that the letter to Clarion regarding improving the lighting near 91 Windmill Way had not been completed as yet.

Cllr S Smith also highlighted that a number of potholes still needed to be dealt with as well as the clearance of debris from roadsides following the recent storms.

### (iv) Media

Cllr S Smith reported that the following key items had been posted on the Parish Council's social media pages:

- Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal;
- nomination of the Ley (Nature Reserve) as an Asset of Community Value; and
- completion of the Examiner's Report on the Neighbourhood Plan.

### (v) Neighbourhood Plan

See specific agenda item: Minute ref 22/58

(vi) Security

Cllr Mrs J Liversage provided the following update from OWL reports:

- 1.4.22: silver van Reg LM10 WXW suspected in the involvement of gardening, farming and agricultural equipment theft;
- 31.3.22:
  - 2 thefts from motor vehicles during March on Much Hadham High Street and in Windmill Way; and
  - theft of mail from External Post Boxes with advice to remove mail promptly;
- 18.3.22: fraud alert with attempted sale of electrical items via an on-line platform;
- 16.3.22 recent increase in Keyless entry vehicle theft with advice to keep fob in faraday bag or metal tin;
- 10.3.22: theft from vehicle in Windmill Way (7.3.22) after smashing rear window
- 7.3.22: van broken into on Widford Road – tools and machinery removed;
- 5.3.22: fraudsters targeting Ukraine donations posing as charity workers; and
- 1.3.22: anti- social behaviour reported at St Andrews School where youths climbed on the low - level roof and sprayed graffiti.

In addition, Cllr Mrs J Liversage reminded all those present that for all non-emergency police matters, call 101

The Clerk also reminded those present that the Police were undertaking a community engagement event on the 30<sup>th</sup> April and further details were available in the Parish Magazine.

(vii) Stansted Airport

Cllr D McDonald reported that Stansted Airport has now submitted documents to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to complete Stage 2 of the process to determine its application to revise local flight paths. The key document, “Initial Options Appraisal Report”, sets out a number of possible flightpath change options, following an initial consultation process with local stakeholders. Once approved by CAA, Stansted Airport will propose specific route changes and set out its case in support of them, for public consultation – Stage 3.

The Initial Options Appraisal Report is lengthy and highly technical, and almost impossible to understand. Consequently, the potential impact of the various possible route changes on the parish has not been identified. The Stansted Airport Watch (SAW) Noise Advisor confirmed that this is a common response to reading this report. The Department for Transport (DfT) had been lobbied to provide finance and an independent advisor to assist local communities to make sense of proposals put forward for airport expansion and changes to flightpaths, but the request was declined.

Cllr D McDonald concluded that expert assistance is required, and reliance will be placed on SAW for guidance on the technical data and implications for the parish once Stage 3 is reached – not expected for several months.

(viii) Other

White Cottage

The Chair reminded those present that a request had been received from the residents of White Cottage to carry out some improvement works (at their own cost) to the driveway to the property, which crosses the green at Perry Green. There is no permission for cars to park on the green, but this family do require vehicle access and the suggested works will be an improvement all round. These works were urgently needed during bad weather, and following consultation with all Cllrs, were approved. RESOLVED to ratify this decision.

22/56. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) had given his apologies for this meeting. There were no reports from either Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) or Cllr G McAndrew (HCC).

22/57. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Neighbourhood Plan

A resident again expressed their view that the Neighbourhood Plan should be withdrawn as the land at Hill House site should be included and The Bull Inn site excluded. Whilst recognising that the draft Plan was impressive in many ways, it fails to deliver affordable housing and compromises the viability of The Bull Inn. Concern was also expressed that recent correspondence to the Parish Council had not been circulated to all Cllrs. In addition, the resident challenged a number of statements detailed in correspondence received from the Chair and Cllr I Hunt regarding these sites. The resident's conclusion was that the Plan supported landowners and not residents.

Two present members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group expressed their support for the Plan, highlighting the consultation that had taken place on the sites in the Plan, and exclusion of the Moor Place Gate site which would have provided affordable housing. The view that the Plan helped landowners was rejected. In addition, it was highlighted that definition of "affordable housing" is detailed and difficult to implement.

A further resident claimed that it is noisy living in the vicinity of The Bull Inn, adding that any housing placed there would not be suitable for downsizers.

(ii) Dog bin in Church Lane

A resident drew attention to the fact that dog poo, in bags, was being placed in the wheelie bins at St Andrew's Burial Ground and requested that the Parish Council consider placing a dog bin in that area.

(iii) Stansted Airport

A resident supported the use of SAW's Noise Advisor, commenting that the Advisor was very knowledgeable.

22/58. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Before considering the Examiner's Report, Cllr I Hunt responded to the points raised as part of Residents' Comments:

- Barn School – during the time taken to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan, this site was never ready to come forward as a housing allocation site. The Plan includes two Priority Views across the site and independent consultants, completing a Strategic Environmental Assessment, emphasised the difficulty of developing the site given the constraints and sensitivities around it. The future of this site is again uncertain as the former owner's will is being disputed in the High Court; and
- The Bull Inn – building bungalows on unused land behind the pub for elderly residents wanting to downsize is not a threat to the pub's commercial viability. This view is supported by the three local planning consultants on the Steering Group and the Examiner. The Parish Council has already demonstrated that it will only support a planning application that meets the requirements of the Plan, as evidenced by the objection to the recent planning application.

In addition, Cllr I Hunt stated that affordable housing was an objective that was always considered as the Plan was developed. However, this objective was set before the sites allocated for development were known and it was unfortunate that none had been found. Cllr B O'Neill commented that they may still be provided at the Priest House site.

Cllr I Hunt reported that the Examiner has concluded his work on the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan. In doing so, he considered all the representations to the Regulation 16 consultation conducted by East Herts Council (EHC) and other written submissions such as the Consultation Statement. As reported last month, he also made a detailed visit to the parish on a working day so that issues such as traffic and parking could be considered.

The Examiner observed that public consultations were taken seriously by the Parish Council and were sufficient. He concluded the Plan's policies met the requirement to be in conformity with the district's strategic planning policies. They do not constrain sustainable development, they comply with legislation to conserve habitats and species, they preserve human rights and meet other legal requirements.

Cllr I Hunt was delighted that the Examiner had preserved all the areas proposed as Local Green Spaces, Priority Views and housing site allocations. He also commented that, unusually, there were no significant modifications to the Plan, testimony to the thoroughness with which it was prepared over several years by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Examiner's Final Report can be found on EHC's website: [https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/2022-04/MuchHadham NP Final-%20Accessible.pdf](https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/2022-04/MuchHadham_NP_Final-%20Accessible.pdf).

Cllr I Hunt highlighted that the final public stage of this process, to incorporate our local policies into the planning decisions taken by EHC, would be a Yes / No referendum on a date to be determined by EHC. The Steering Group will hold a workshop to discuss how to ensure all residents are aware of the referendum and Cllrs are encouraged to attend and contribute their ideas too.

Those present were reminded that the modifications were:

- Policy MH H7 is to be deleted – this related to the development of land south of Culver and subsequent events have overtaken this policy so it is now redundant; and
- Policy MH D3 is to be amended – this related to a requirement for new housing to have more vehicle parking provision than required by EHC's policy. The Examiner saw this as conflicting not only with EHC's policy but also Herts County Council's sustainable transport strategy and he could not therefore support it. Instead, the wording is revised to welcome the provision of more parking spaces, rather than requiring it.

All other modifications either flow from these two changes e.g. updating the number of houses to be built over the Plan period to 55 from 54 as a consequence of the extra house at Culver, or are updating references e.g. to the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 rather than 2019.

The opportunity is also taken to correct any outstanding typos, spelling etc and adapt the document to make it Accessible so that it can be read aloud by software used by partially sighted and blind people.

Finally, Cllr I Hunt noted that, technically, it is for EHC to accept and incorporate the modifications into the Plan and whilst formal approval of the modifications is not required by the Parish Council, doing so removes any potential for ambiguity.

Cllrs present expressed thanks to Cllr I Hunt and the Steering Group for their efforts in developing the Plan. In addition, comments in support of the development behind The Bull Inn were made as the view is that the pub owners need to invest more.

RESOLVED to acknowledge receipt of the Examiner's Report from East Herts Council.

RESOLVED to confirm that the Parish Council supports the modifications proposed therein.



22/59. LAND AT KETTLE GREEN LANE ("NATURE RESERVE")

Cllr I Hunt reported that a resident had advised that The Ley was being marketed again for sale for £200,000. This was the guide price when the land was first marketed by Sworders, but including the additional strip behind the allotments. At that time, it was agreed that the Parish Council could not justify paying over the odds for agricultural land nor would it be able to act swiftly enough given the requirements to be met for such a purchase, including obtaining loan financing. Since then, the land was sold and several attempts have been made to auction the land, in its entirety or divided into plots.

Cllr I Hunt sought views on whether the Parish Council should again consider purchasing this land and turning it into a nature reserve. During the discussion, the following salient points were made:

- purchase could facilitate the relaunch of the Fete by providing land for car parking;
- costs to service and repay a loan for £200,000 over 25 years would be approximately £11,000 per annum and would result in the precept being increased by potentially 25%;
- additional costs would be incurred for managing the land;
- cautious approach needed in current economic climate; and
- purchase may lead to an unrealistic expectation that other sites ought to be bought too.

Cllr I Hunt concluded that the current approach to deter developers should be continued.

22/60. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

The Clerk confirmed that the payments to Herts County Council referred to at the last meeting had been made in March following:

- receipt of the official invoice for the street lighting capital project; and
- Cllr approval by email of the invoice received for the streetlighting annual charge which was £2,570.15 + VAT.

In addition, the Clerk explained that the insurance premium had increased due to market circumstances as well as the number of underwriters withdrawing from the business. The Parish Council's increase was less than potentially would have been due to the underwriter being used for the coming year. In a few months' time, a quote will be provided for the likely 2023/24 insurance cover to inform the 2023/24 budget as well as for market testing purposes.

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

## PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - APRIL 2022

Ref	Payable to	For	Amount
OP136	HATPC	Subscription 2022/23	810.08
OP137	Npower	Lighting for war memorial	21.76
OP138	Broadmead Leisure Ltd	Quarterly playground inspection (March)	60.00
OP139	EMC Contracts Ltd	Pavilion repairs	510.00
OP140	Business Services at CAS Ltd	Insurance Parish Council 2022/23	831.60
OP141	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (March)	80.00
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (April)	334.00
DD	PWLB	Loan repayment (Lighting)	1,367.32
OP142	FM Forth	Clerk's salary + 2021/22 backpay (April)	732.33
Total payments			<b><u>£4,747.09</u></b>

Payments will be authorised online following the meeting by Cllr S Smith and Cllr K Twort.

### (ii) Financial Statement

The Clerk highlighted that the financial statement information would be reported by year: 2021/22 and 2022/23

#### 2021/22 – financial year just ended

The financial statement for 2021/22 was received. The summary financial position is detailed overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A. The Clerk highlighted that this was effectively the final position for the year and the actual figures will be reported in the draft Financial Accounts at next month's meeting.

In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that the year end processes for completing the Annual Governance and Accountability Return were in hand. She added that the Internal Audit review was currently in progress, as was the preparation of the fixed asset register.

## SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION - FINAL

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2021	81,111.38	24,744.29	105,855.67
Income	87,272.72	9,470.00	96,742.72
Expenditure	- 124,225.33	- 4,243.48	- 128,468.81
Closing balance	<u><b>44,158.77</b></u>	<u><b>29,970.81</b></u>	<u><b>74,129.58</b></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	-
(3) Open spaces	18,650.00
	<u><b>20,220.00</b></u>

### 2022/23 – new financial year

The financial statement for 2022/23 to date was received. The summary financial position is detailed below and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix B. There were no matters to highlight.

## SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 5 APRIL 2022

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2022	44,158.77	29,970.81	74,129.58
Income	-	-	-
Expenditure	- 4,747.09	-	- 4,747.09
Closing balance	<u><b>39,411.68</b></u>	<u><b>29,970.81</b></u>	<u><b>69,382.49</b></u>

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

(1) Section 106 receipts for sport or recreation	1,570.00
(2) Open spaces	18,650.00
	<u><b>20,220.00</b></u>

(iii) Bank reconciliations

Cllr Mrs J Liversage reported that she had reviewed the March 2022 bank reconciliation prior to the meeting, as required by the Financial Regulations, and no issues were identified.

22/61. PLANNING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

22/62. BURIAL AUTHORITY

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 be received and the decisions taken be ratified.

22/63. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

22/64. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, a further Freedom of Information request had been responded to relating to the Neighbourhood Plan.

22/65. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 at 7:30 pm at the Much Hadham Village Hall. This is the Annual Parish Council meeting where Cllr portfolios and Committee memberships will be approved. Consequently, the next Planning Committee meeting will be Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 instead.

---

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:57 pm.

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

### BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON - FINAL

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2022	2022	
	BUDGET £	ACTUAL £	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Precept	42,000.00	42,000.00	
PWLB Loan Advance (Parish lights)	-	25,000.00	
Litter Agency	4,275.00	4,272.66	
New Homes Bonus	9,097.00	-	Bonus no longer being paid
Pavilion income	7,020.00	10,106.00	Budget did not assume renewal of long term hire contract
Grant	300.00	277.50	
Other	60.00	2,775.19	Sale of old streetlights
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	2,841.21	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>67,752.00</b>	<b>87,272.56</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Staff costs	7,200.00	7,165.56	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	5,387.46	
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	2,768.00	-	First loan repayment will be in the next financial year
Administration costs	3,100.00	2,434.64	Overall, budget underspent due to low demand for training and a reduction in printing & stationery usage
Insurance	3,250.00	2,022.25	Budget primarily underspent as lower premium obtained in relation to the Recreation Ground and Village Hall contribution paid in the next financial year
Audit fees	830.00	745.00	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	35.00	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	13,400.00	8,838.56	Budget underspend primarily due to less tree work undertaken than expected.
Litter Agency	4,008.00	4,008.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	700.00	690.49	
Street lighting (energy and maintenance)	2,000.00	2,570.15	Higher energy cost than anticipated.
Pavilion	3,500.00	4,899.38	Additional maintenance work undertaken
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	900.00	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-	3,000.00	Budget provision made in earlier year.
Neighbourhood Plan	-	209.27	
Revenue - Maintenance of Village sign	4,000.00	3,665.00	Cost of refurbishing sign plus new post and installation
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
Capital - Roller shutter at Pavilion	-	1,760.00	Budget provision made in earlier year.
Capital - Parish lights	-	43,516.67	Final cost
VAT	5,000.00	16,360.28	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>72,178.46</b>	<b>124,225.33</b>	

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

### BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 5 APRIL 2022

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2023	2023	
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	
	£	£	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Precept	42,000.00		
Litter Agency	4,275.00		
Pavilion income	9,660.00		
Grant	300.00		
Other	60.00		
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>61,295.00</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Staff costs	7,200.00	732.33	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46		
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	2,734.64	1,367.32	
Administration costs	2,960.00	810.08	
Insurance	2,650.00	831.60	
Audit fees	850.00		
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00		
Election expenses	-		
Maintenance of open spaces	7,000.00	50.00	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	334.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	805.00	20.72	
Pavilion	4,000.00	505.00	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00		
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-		
Neighbourhood Plan	-		
Capital - Playground equipment	5,000.00		
Revenue/Capital Projects (to be allocated)	10,000.00		
VAT	5,000.00	96.04	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>58,630.10</b>	<b>4,747.09</b>	