

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 1st November 2022, in the Green Tye Mission Hall, at 7:35 pm.

*Cllr B Bird

*Cllr K Hamilton

*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)

*Cllr J Liversage

*Cllr D McDonald

*Cllr B O'Neill

*Cllr S Smith

*Cllr P Taylor (Chair)

*Cllr K Twort

* denotes present

In attendance: F Forth, Clerk and 5 members of the public.

22/173. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

22/174. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr I Hunt declared an interest in a payment to be approved (agenda item 22/183 (i)) and would therefore not be participating in nor voting on the related motion.

No other declarations were made or applications for dispensations sought.

22/175. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

22/176. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair stated that it was nice to be back in the Mission Hall and welcomed those present. In addition, she highlighted that Cllr B Bird had joined the Parish Council at the last meeting which meant that the Parish Council was at its full complement. Cllr B Bird would become a member of Burial Authority and be the community liaison point for residents in Perry Green and Green Tye.

Finally, the Chair highlighted that the Remembrance Service would be taking place at the War Memorial on Sunday 13th November at 10:50 am at which the Parish Council would be laying a wreath. The Chair thanked Cllr B Bird for supplying the wreath.

Note: PCSO Leon de Bruyn and PC Jack Culverhouse attended the meeting and whilst Leon's report was taken after this agenda item, it has been recorded as part of the "Security" item – Minute ref 22/179 (v)

22/177. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Chair highlighted that the draft minutes circulated with the agenda had omitted to reflect her declaration of an interest in a payment being made that month. Amendments had been made by the Clerk as follows:

- 22/159: to reflect the Chair's declaration and that no other declarations were made or dispensations requested; and
- 22/168 (i): to reflect that the Chair did not participate in the payment of accounts item nor vote due to her declared interest.

In addition, it was noted that Cllr K Twort had been listed as being present twice and the Clerk would correct this.

Subject to the above amendments, RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 4th October 2022 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

22/178. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The following updates were provided:

- the "Hadham Hopper" is potentially being replaced by a similar service being offered by Herts County Council;
- quotes are still required to resurface the basketball area;
- further details are required for the Fixed Asset Register in terms of benches. The Clerk will recirculate for Cllrs to provide location information and photos; and
- the landowner of the strip of land between the war memorial and the recreation ground will be undertaking maintenance work shortly.

22/179. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Cllr D McDonald reported that Faraway Tree Kindergarten Limited had gone into administration and would, therefore, not be renewing the agreement to hire the Pavilion. Arrangements are being made in relation to vacating the building. Options for alternative tenants will be sought and the Clerk will re-provide the details of other interested parties.

Cllr K Twort reported that the Sports Association had met in the previous week. It had been a short meeting and the key points to note were:

- the existing Tennis Club representative stood down, and a new representative introduced;
- concern still remains regarding the future funding of the Association; and

- the Bowl's Club introduction of croquet had been successful this year.

The Chair confirmed that the investigations into the future funding of the Sports Association were in hand.

Cllr S Smith reported that 25 people had expressed interest in the defibrillator awareness training and 4 suitable dates had been supplied to Community Heartbeat Trust. Once a date is agreed, this will be circulated.

Village Hall

Cllr K Hamilton provided the following update:

- decoration of the Main Hall had been completed and new curtains were up;
- the online booking system was working smoothly and bookings for the hall are going well. As Covid is still around, some bookings have been cancelled due to organisers being unwell;
- someone to take on the post of Bookings Secretary is being sought; and
- the car park continues to cause problems periodically -on one occasion there were 16 cars in the car park none of which were using the hall. There is now a small working group looking at the design and future use of the car park.

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

General

Cllr S Smith commented that last month's weather had been extremely pleasant. At this time of the year, fallen leaves block drains and gullies and swift clearance is required on a repeated basis, accommodating each tree species' own time cycle.

In addition, Cllr S Smith reported that the Environment Agency had still not taken any action in relation to the more than 50 used car tyres that had been dumped in the stream by the side of Danebridge Road around 6 weeks ago. After several heavy bouts of rain, these tyres have now been flushed downstream and are scattered over a 150 metre stretch of the river. Action from the Environment Agency is being pursued.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided the following update:

- Footpath 11 diversion: there are still issues outstanding regarding the gradient of the path where it meets the south side of Kettle Green Lane (discussed by Cllrs – see comments below this update). There are also issues with the top of the new path on the south side where an attempt has been made to cut down bushes there for the new route. Unfortunately, the stumps for the bushes and resulting trimmings were

not removed. With the newly installed fence and the mound of earth excavated to make the ramp, walkers will be forced to travel across this littered area. Herts County Council (HCC) have stated that this situation is unsatisfactory and cannot certify that the new route is acceptable until something is done;

- Footpath 7 (Cox's Lane): fallen branches and trees have been cleared but several branches and other debris was still hampering the progress of walkers and horse riders. The new Farm Manager will look into clearing the debris once the Chaldean vineyard has been harvested. The Farm Manager is to undertake a full survey of all trees in the new year in a big effort to tidy up the whole area;
- Footpath 29: a quotation for repair to both bridges on this footpath is still being sought. The bridge that crosses the River Ash will need either plastic or hardwood struts as the current softwood solution cannot cope with the damp conditions there;
- Bridleway 28: large tree blocking the bridleway has been cleared.
- way marker posts and metal signs: the initiative to replace several of these may be delayed until the spring due to the departure of staff from HCC;
- Bridleway 5 (New Barns Lane to Standon Lodge): two collapsed way marker posts have been replaced and the gap in the hedge widened to allow horses to pass through more easily; and
- Byway 47 (Southend to Actons Farm): heavy bout of fly tipping which has been duly reported to East Herts Council.

In relation to the Footpath 11 diversion, Cllr B O'Neill challenged whether enough was being undertaken to ensure that the gradient would be suitable for those with mobility issues, with particular reference to wheelchair users (pushed and motorised). In discussion, it was noted that the potential barrier at the bottom of the slope may also hinder those with mobility issues and it was not clear that the footpath would be accessible at the top of the slope. It was agreed that Cllr S Smith would find out what type of barrier was proposed as well as whether the wheelchair user issues raised could be addressed.

(iii) Highways (inc street lighting)

The Chair reported that the meeting with Herts County Council Highways was due to take place on the 8th November.

In addition, the Chair reported that the works planned for Kettle Green Lane 2 weeks ago had not taken place.

Cllr B O'Neill reported that a parishioner had been marooned due to the flooding in Danebridge Road being too deep to walk through. It was noted that the channels that drain into the river are blocked.

(iv) Media

Cllr S Smith reported that a review of the Parish Council website had taken place and several changes had been identified. He would produce a mock-up of the updates to the site for agreement prior to being passed to the developer for the upgrade. The possible cost of this is currently unknown.

(v) Security

PCSO Leon de Bruyn and PC Jack Culverhouse attended the meeting and provided the following update:

- attendance at Parish Council meetings had been hindered by shift changes earlier in the year. Leon apologised for being absent for a number of meetings, indicating that he hoped to attend more in future;
- only one crime had been reported in the last month: criminal damage to a vehicle in Windmill Way;
- increase in thefts of keyless vehicles, particularly Land Rovers, has been seen;
- police have been focusing on domestic oil thefts, providing additional assistance to schools in particular;
- speed patrols have been undertaken in Little Hadham as the speed of traffic through the lights has increased as people seek to “beat” the bypass;
- parking patrols outside schools are increasing; and
- the police have been busy as a result of Halloween and Guy Fawkes but this mainly affects the towns and not rural areas.

In response to questions relating to domestic oil thefts, Leon clarified that locking the oil tank had not necessarily been a barrier to the theft. Funding is being sought for alarmed padlocks and fuel caps. In addition, it was noted that using video deterrence similar to a “Ring” doorbell can be useful.

Cllr J Liversage reported that the nature of the information from OWL now seems to focus on advice to the public which this month included:

- be safe and considerate during the annual period of Halloween, bonfires and fireworks. Look after yourself as well as others and be respectful of your neighbours and the community;
- free cybercrime advice and tips will be available on Wednesday 23rd November from 10.45 am to 4.45 pm at Bishop’s Stortford Library. If you believe that you are a victim of fraud or cybercrime, please contact Action Fraud on 0300 1232040 to report your concern; and
- make sure your homes are secure at all times, but especially in the coming darker months. Consider installing security devices such as security lights, wi-fi enabled doorbells and interior cameras.

Finally, Cllr J Liversage reminded those present that for all non-emergency matters, call 101.

Following discussion, it was agreed that consideration would be given to including these security matters on the Parish Council's website.

(vi) Stansted Airport

Cllr D McDonald reported that he was still waiting for the changes which Stansted Airport propose to make to flights paths to be announced.

(vii) Other

Jolly Waggoners

Cllr I Hunt reminded those present that a planning application for The Jolly Waggoners site was being considered at the subsequent Planning Committee meeting. This application includes the creation of a wildflower meadow and a woodland copse and he posed the question of whether the Parish Council should become involved in this, perhaps by taking over the site and managing it as a community asset.

Discussion highlighted that insufficient information about this proposal was known. It was also felt that the burden for the creation of the meadow and copse, and subsequent management and maintenance thereof, should be placed on the developer.

It was agreed to keep the proposal under review but further information on what the developer proposed was required. It was also suggested that an alternative use for this land could be as a car park for walkers.

Nature Reserve Asset of Community Value (ACV)

As an update, Cllr I Hunt reported that the Nature Reserve ACV had been approved by East Herts Council (EHC) but EHC had been unable to register it as the landowner had changed. The application needs to be resubmitted but as yet, the new title number for the land is not available.

22/180. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) reported that East Herts Council (EHC) are working to balance its budget with focus on 2 major areas that impact on residents.

Firstly, there will be no increase in parking charges in Bishop's Stortford, with the free half hour remaining, but a flat fee of £1.50 is being introduced for Sunday parking. In addition, the hours that parking charges apply will be extended from 6:30 pm to 8 pm.

Secondly, changes are being made to refuse collection. In 2025, food waste collection will be reintroduced but black bin collections will move from fortnightly to every 3 weeks. It is anticipated that food collection will be weekly, with smaller boxes that snap shut to prevent animal intrusion.

Cllr I Devonshire also highlighted that the adult care facility at St Elizabeth's Centre is not now closing this November but is likely to next year. The outcome of an appeal into the closure is awaited but alternative providers are currently being identified for the residents. Facilities for 18-25 year olds and the school remain.

In response to a question, it was clarified that there is a possible risk that the Jolly Waggoners developer could keep the land designated as a potential meadow and seek further houses in the future but this is not what is proposed by the current application and existing policy for rural development should prevent it.

Cllr I Devonshire also agreed to investigate the following matters:

- whether the new arrangements for emptying litter bins will include those that are not on the roadside – Cllr I Hunt to email details;
- reinstatement of pavements where verges have slipped over them - the Chair to email details; and
- arranging for the pavements to be swept, from Ash Meadow to Moor Place gate.

22/181. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Assets of Community Value (ACV)

Now ACV process had been completed for The Bull, a resident reminded the Parish Council that it had agreed to submit applications for other sites.

(ii) Parish Council actions in Neighbourhood Plan

A resident asked what progress, if any, the Parish Council had made in relation to the actions identified for the Parish Council in the Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed that these actions would be on the agenda for the next meeting in order to identify priorities and next steps.

22/182. TREE MANAGEMENT

Following discussion, RESOLVED to approve the quote from Alexander Machinery Limited for the following items:

- tree management work in accordance with plan for £1,095 + VAT; and
- lightly prune/shape the Holly Tree in St Andrew's Burial Ground for £190 + VAT.

It was noted that given the trunk of the Holly Tree was in the Parish Council's Burial Ground, no contribution towards this cost to be sought from the church.

22/183. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown below, be duly authorised for payment. Cllr I Hunt did not participate in this item or vote due to his declared interest. (Minute ref: 22/174)

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - NOVEMBER 2022

Ref	Payable to	For	Amount
OP193	I Hunt	NP photocopying	294.46
OP194	Home & Office Fire Extinguishers Ltd	Annual service	231.54
OP195	BA MH Landscapes	Maintenance at burial grounds Jul - Sep '22	540
OP196	MH Sports Association	Pavilion electricity	347.79
OP197	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (Oct)	80
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (Nov)	334
DD	PWLB	Loan repayment (Pavilion)	2693.73
OP198	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (Nov)	729.04
Total payments			5,250.56

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

(ii) Financial Statement

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 A. No matters were highlighted by the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that, although no formal letter had been received, the Parish Council's external auditor remains PKF Littlejohn for 2022-23 through to 2026-27. In addition, the fees have gone up 5% for this period.

In response to a question, the Clerk stated that the appointment is made by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments body.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 1 NOVEMBER 2022

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2022	44,158.77	29,970.81	74,129.58
Income	68,353.68	6,825.00	75,178.68
Expenditure	- 35,917.57	- 3,433.90	- 39,351.47
Closing balance	<u><u>76,594.88</u></u>	<u><u>33,361.91</u></u>	<u><u>109,956.79</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) Open spaces	<u>18,650.00</u>
	<u><u>20,220.00</u></u>

(iii) Bank reconciliation

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

22/184. PLANNING

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 4th October 2022 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

22/185. BURIAL AUTHORITY

The minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 4th October 2022 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

22/186. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

22/187. CLERK'S INFORMATION

None.

22/188. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 6th December 2022 at 7:30 pm at the Much Hadham Village Hall.

The Chair also highlighted that the agreed dates for the 2023 meetings had been circulated and the Clerk confirmed that these dates were available on the Parish Council website.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:02 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 1 NOVEMBER 2022

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2023	2023	
	BUDGET £	ACTUAL £	
INCOME			
Precept	42,000.00	42,000.00	
Litter Agency	4,275.00	4,884.58	
Pavilion income	9,660.00	4,804.00	
Grant	300.00	300.64	
Other	60.00	4.18	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	16,360.28	
TOTAL INCOME	61,295.00	68,353.68	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,200.00	6,041.24	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	5,387.46	
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	2,734.64	2,734.64	
Administration costs	2,960.00	1,860.02	
Insurance	2,650.00	1,337.13	
Audit fees	850.00	845.00	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	35.00	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	7,000.00	6,159.42	
Litter Agency	4,008.00	2,672.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	805.00	163.01	
Pavilion	4,000.00	2,887.58	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	-	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-	-	
Neighbourhood Plan	-	1,245.38	
Capital - Playground equipment	5,000.00		
Capital - Defibrillator		2,440.00	
Revenue/Capital Projects (to be allocated)	10,000.00	-	
VAT	5,000.00	2,109.69	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	58,630.10	35,917.57	