

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 7th March 2023, in the Green Tye Mission Hall, at 7:31 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 8 members of the public.

23/32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllr K Hamilton and Cllr I Hunt. Cllr B O'Neill also apologised for his late arrival (7:37 pm).

23/33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

23/34. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

23/35. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

23/36. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7th February 2023 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

23/37. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report on outstanding matters and resolutions was noted.

The Clerk reported that the tree survey had been arranged for April at a cost of £260 + VAT. Whilst the staff undertaking the work had not changed, the company undertaking the work was now Tree Fusion Ltd, previously PR Newson.

23/38. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Cllrs D McDonald and K Twort confirmed there had been no Sports Association meeting but the Sports Association Annual General Meeting would be held next month.

Cllr D McDonald also confirmed that review of funding for the Recreation Ground was still in progress.

Pavilion

Cllr D McDonald reported that some obstacles had arisen in relation to the proposed long term hire of the Pavilion, mainly planning issues. Further discussions would be taking place to identify a way forward, together with a consultation with the community on how the Pavilion should be used.

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

Note: for practical reasons, the minutes for this section are not set out in the order covered at the meeting.

Litter bins

The Chair reported that she and Cllr S Smith, in conjunction with the Shared Waste Team, had inspected all the litter bins in the parish to identify those that will transfer to the street cleaning contract and whether any others needed to be moved. A couple of bins were identified for replacement, and it is hoped that the 3 bins in the hamlets will also be included in the collection round.

It was noted that the separate litter and dog bins at Green Tye would be replaced with a single litter bin since dog poo can be placed in litter bins.

The new arrangement starts from 1st April, with the Parish Council retaining responsibility for the Recreation Ground litter bins.

The Shared Waste Team promised provision of hi-vis jackets, litter grabbers and sacks to allow the Parish Council to undertake its own litter picking.

Finally, the Shared Waste Team agreed to investigate the pavement cleaning in the parish which is supposed to be undertaken quarterly.

Litter bins on Recreation Ground

The Chair outlined the proposal to replace the 2 old open bins by the playground with 1 much larger covered bin, using the funds raised by St Andrew's School Yr 6, under the Young Leaders fundraising project for the environment. In addition, it was proposed that the bin by the tennis courts would also be replaced by a similar round, plastic covered 120 litre bin with any costs in excess of the donation received being covered by the Parish Council, expected to be approximately £150.

The Clerk confirmed that funds were available in the open spaces budget to cover this.

RESOLVED to install 2 new litter bins on the Recreation Ground (as outlined above).

The Chair stated that the Parish Council was extremely grateful for the children's efforts and their wish to help keep the playground nice for everyone. It was agreed that a plaque would be added to the litter bin to reflect their donation.

Public Rights of Way

(i) Footpath 11 Diversion

Cllr S Smith reported that the pre-order consultation documentation from Sworders, the agents for the applicant, had been received and circulated to all Cllrs. The documentation detailed the required changes to the route, the gradient of the path, and safety barriers. If the proposal is accepted in principle, the next stage is the publication of the order to all interested parties and the start of a 6-week period of public consultation. If no objections are received at the end of that stage work can start on the path, signs can be changed and the definitive map updated.

Note: the proposal does not impact Footpath 10 as this was removed from the original application.

In discussion, it was noted that the original proposal had been improved significantly, with the latest proposed gradient the best that could be achieved.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council had no objections with the current proposed diversion of part of Footpath 11.

The Clerk will notify the agents accordingly.

(ii) Other footpath matters

Cllr S Smith provided the following update:

- Footpath 20 bridge repair: Herts County Council (HCC) Highways have completed all the necessary surveys at the location and, in essence, now know the size of the problem and the requirements for undertaking the work. The design of the solution is still unknown, so the required materials have not been acquired. The final solution is complicated as several third parties need to be involved, including the Environment Agency and a couple of utility companies. In addition, work cannot start before the fish breeding season is over, i.e. late Spring;
- Bridleway 7: all clearance work has now been completed, but a damaged way marker post will be replaced next month. Traditionally March sees the end of the current financial year and with it there is a drive to finish a number of outstanding jobs in the environment/PRoW sector and a wait to start new projects from the 1st April; and
- motorcycles: there have been reports of youngsters on motor bikes on bridleways and footpaths, which is illegal. Residents in Danebridge Lane have witnessed this happening on Bridleway 38 and as far south as Bluebell Wood. For the safety of walkers, horse riders and anyone using the paths, this activity, which is deemed to be a criminal offence, needs to be stopped. Future instances should be reported to the Police.

Cllr J Liversage reiterated the need to report issues to the police as they can only take action on reports received. If possible, it would be helpful if registration plates details were provided with any reports, ideally a photograph of the plate. It was noted that the scrambling runs tended to take place on Sunday mornings in particular.

Sewage

Cllr B Bird reported that he had spoken to a number of people locally to investigate this issue and possible future actions for the Parish Council to consider.

Cllr B O'Neill reported that a further survey of the River Ash was taking place in the coming week.

(iii) Highways (inc street lighting)

The Chair reported that the pavement from Bromley Lane junction towards the golf course had been completely cleared by East Herts Council and is much more useable. Part of the path is still overgrown in one section by a hedge which will, hopefully, be cut back by the landowner shortly.

In addition, the Chair reported that the very bad potholes in Watery Lane and Stansted Hill had been filled very promptly, although to a poor standard.

However, no communication had been received from Highways since the last meeting, apart from the receipt of a further closure notice for Kettle Green Lane, most likely for top dressing in the spring. It is looking less likely that the work in relation to the passing places in Kettle Green Lane will be undertaken before the end of this financial year.

It was noted that other closure notices in the parish had been issued, the purposes of which were not known.

“20s plenty”

Cllr D McDonald reported that he had not been able to attend the latest “20s plenty” campaign Zoom meeting although he now had the material from the meeting to review. It was agreed that it was important to know whether the community supported this campaign so a consultation would be undertaken, probably using SurveyMonkey.

Hadham Hopper

It was noted that the loss of the Hadham Hopper service was a concern for the residents affected, particularly as the service represented more than just transporting people. The Chair was aware of some ideas being considered but at this stage, there was nothing further that the Parish Council could do.

Street lighting

Cllr B O’Neill reported that he had surveyed the street lighting to confirm that the snagging identified at the end of the project had been completed. Some of the outstanding work had been completed but some additional work still to be done. The schedule per light had been updated and would be provided to the Clerk for incorporation into the transfer agreement (Minute ref: 23/41).

(iv) Media

Cllr S Smith highlighted that the need for voters to have photographic proof of identify to vote in the May elections had been posted on the Parish Council’s Facebook page.

In addition, Cllr S Smith reported that he was investigating, as part of the website upgrade, what the Parish Council wants the website to be i.e., a source for static information and/or a useful method of communication.

(v) Security

Cllr J Liversage reported the following items from OWL messaging and PCSO Leon de Bruyn's crime report for last month:

- crimes reported in the last month were:
 - no date given but a number plate was stolen from a parked vehicle in Ferndale;
 - 25th February: 2 steel container tanks were taken from an open carport in Ferndale; and
 - 11th /18th February, 15th /16th February, 20th / 21st February: theft of sit-on mowers from out-buildings in 3 different properties in Much Hadham;Residents are reminded to mark machinery, have good outdoor lighting and use CCTV for the prevention of crime;
- an (OPALS) Older Persons Activity Learning and Safety event is taking place at Much Hadham Village Hall on Tuesday 18th April at 10am. There will be stalls and talks to offer advice. All event guests will be seated and served with refreshments and a free hot meal. The event will finish at 2pm when 'Acts of Kindness Bags' will be handed out; and
- beware of scammers requesting charitable donations, presenting as HMRC or seeking relationships.

Finally, Cllr J Liversage reminded those present to report all non-emergency matters by calling 101.

Cllr D McDonald highlighted that one of the properties affected by machinery theft was near him and PCSO Leon de Bruyn had canvassed the local area following this incident, handing out reminders of how to protect equipment etc.

(vi) Stansted Airport

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

(vii) Other

Defibrillator training

Cllr S Smith reminded those present that the final defibrillator training event was taking place on Saturday 11th March at 10 am at the Pavilion. Those present were asked to promote this event.

23/39. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) provided the following update:

- all the fly tipping in the parish had been dealt with;
- work on the footpath from Spindle Bridge to the golf course had been undertaken by East Herts and not Herts County Council;
- the Highways work mentioned earlier for Kettle Green Lane (Minute ref: 23/38 (ii)) related to surface dressing and not the passing places; and
- the Hadham Hopper service had been replaced, in effect, by the Herts Lynx service as this now goes through to Ware and to Lister Hospital.

In addition, Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) acknowledged that he was aware, following community engagement work in Bishop's Stortford, that residents' key concerns were parking, the Old River Lane project and Planning. He add that the East Herts Council Leader was standing down, so in all likelihood, a new Leader and Executive would emerge as a result of the upcoming May elections.

23/40. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Village Hall

The Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee raised the following points:

- given that the arrangements for the local rubbish bins was changing, would the Parish Council still be seeking to use the 1100 ltr bin at the Village Hall;
- the payments listing included a payment to the Village Hall for 2022 hall hire but the amount quoted was not in line with the invoice issued; and
- the Village Hall's AGM is taking place on the 18th April and the Parish Council was asked invited to submit a nominee to be a Much Hadham Village Hall Trustee.

The Chair responded that the rubbish bins at the Recreation Ground would still be emptied locally and therefore access to the 1100 ltr bin would still be helpful. It was noted that only 1 of the 2 bins the Village Hall was being used and paid for.

The Clerk explained there was a query on the Village Hall hire invoice and apologised for not having raised the issue with the invoice to the Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee. A corrected invoice would be provided to the Parish Council.

The Chair agreed to arrange a Parish Council nominee to act as a Trustee.

(ii) Road repairs

A resident highlighted that problems were caused recently when both Bromley Lane and Kettle Green Lane were closed for roadworks. Whilst it was recognised that this is the

responsibility of Herts County Council, the Chair stated she would write a letter of complaint to the relevant Department.

(iii) “20s plenty”

A resident commented that although they had not lived in the parish for long, they felt that it was impossible to go over 30 mph anyway so was there really a need for “20s plenty”.

Cllr D McDonald stated that the “20s plenty” campaigners would be happy to undertake presentations locally to provide information on the issue.

(iv) Pavilion

The partners involved in negotiating a long term hire of the Pavilion introduced themselves and thanked the Chair and Cllr D McDonald for the work undertaken to date on their proposal. The proposal is to open a café, and they had received positive feedback from locals regarding the idea.

They acknowledged that planning issues had arisen that need to be discussed further, in addition to issues relating to parking.

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) agreed to help seek an answer in relation to the planning issue and Cllr D McDonald would liaise with him on this.

23/41. STREET LIGHTING TRANSFER

The Chair outlined the purpose of the agreement, confirming that this had always been the intention when the street lighting project had been initiated.

The Clerk confirmed that the street lighting had effectively been transferred to Herts County Council at the beginning of April 2022 and the Parish Council was no longer responsible for the energy or maintenance costs.

RESOLVED to enter into an Agreement pursuant to s270 Highways Act 1980 to transfer the Parish Council’s street lighting to Herts County Council with effect from 1st April 2022.

The Clerk stated that the agreement would be signed once Herts County Council had completed its review of the document.

23/42. KING’S CORONATION

The Chair reported that a group had formed to plan a simple “Bring Your Own Picnic” on the Recreation Ground, with the possibility of music being provided. Funding was requested to cover the cost of this and a few other expenses such as publicity, prizes etc.

It was highlighted that the Perry Green & Green Tye Preservation Society were also organising a Coronation event and could also ask for a grant.

The Parish Council's grant budget of £1,000 was available until the end of March. Any subsequent requests would fall under the £1,000 and could be approved by the Chair and Clerk.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to approve £500 for the event at the Recreation Ground. Those organising the event at the Recreation Ground can ask for an additional sum and this, together with any request from the Preservation Society, would be from the remaining £500 in the budget.

23/43. RISK REGISTER

The Risk Register, with amendments highlighted in red, was circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED to approve the Parish Council Risk Register.

23/44. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

Following the issue raised earlier with the payment to the Village Hall for hall hire (Minute ref: 23/40 (i)), it was agreed to continue with the existing payment and to pay an additional sum subsequently when a corrected invoice is provided to the Parish Council. This additional sum would be less than £1,000 which the Chair and Clerk can approve.

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

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - MARCH 2023

Ref	Payable to	For	Amount
OP217	MH Village Hall	Hall hire 2022	247.00
OP218	MH Village Hall	Share of 1100 ltr bin costs (used by Litter Picker) [Jul 22 to Mar 23]	300.09
OP219	MH Village Hall	Buildings insurance	493.48
OP220	Green Tye Mission Hall	Hall hire (7 Mar 23)	43.75
OP221	FM Forth	Clerks expenses 6 Aug 22 to 28 Feb 23	361.13
OP222	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (Feb)	80.00
SO	M Windmill	Litter Agency (Mar)	334.00
OP223	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (Mar)	781.04
Total payments			2,640.49

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 as below and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A.

The Clerk highlighted that this report essentially reflected the outturn for the financial year and would, therefore, form the basis of the annual accounts being prepared for the May meeting.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 7 MARCH 2023

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2022	44,158.77	29,970.81	74,129.58
Income	68,360.60	7,810.00	76,170.60
Expenditure	- 47,702.60	- 4,381.09	- 52,083.69
Closing balance	<u>64,816.77</u>	<u>33,399.72</u>	<u>98,216.49</u>

FUND BALANCES

Barclays Bank Business Reserve Account		47.46
Unity Trust Current Account	100,809.52	
Add: Outstanding deposits	-	
Less: Unpresented items	<u>-2,640.49</u>	98,169.03
Total Fund Balances		<u>98,216.49</u>

Earmarked Reserves are excluded from the Parish Council balance to identify the general balance available for the Parish Council:

Parish Council closing balance		64,816.77
<u>Earmarked Reserves:</u>		
(1) Section 106 receipts for sport or recreation	1,570.00	
(2) Open spaces	9,905.00	11,475.00
General balance available for Parish Council		<u>53,341.77</u>

Note: general balance not to fall below £30,000 unless due to cash flow, or in the case of unexpected events or emergencies.

23/45. PLANNING

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held 7th February 2023 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

23/46. BURIAL AUTHORITY

The minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held 7th February 2023 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

23/47. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

23/48. CLERK'S INFORMATION

As reported to previous meetings, the Clerk reminded those present that the Parish Council election was taking place on the 4th May. East Herts Council (EHC) manages the election process and although there is no information as yet on EHC's website, early information has been provided to Cllrs and will be posted on the Parish Council's website and social media.

This year, use is being made of standard information on the Electoral Commission's website <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-council-elections-england> and the election timetable, nomination papers and information about standing for election as a parish councillor is available on this website. Be aware that there are two versions of the nomination pack on the website - standing as an independent candidate (part 2a) and standing as a party candidate (part 2b). The information on the website is easy to read and understand, and reading online allows use to be made of embedded links.

The **key date** at this stage is that nomination papers have to be hand delivered to EHC's offices in Hertford by 4 pm on the 4th April. Although the nomination paper can be filled in electronically, a hard copy must be submitted.

Although not a significant issue for this Parish Council, it is important to note that the "Pre-Election Period of Sensitivity", previously 'Purdah' starts on the 22nd March. During this period, restrictions apply to the way in which councils operate, including the use of council resources and the publicity they can issue. This period ends once the polls close on the 4th May.

The Clerk agreed to re-circulate the key information to all Cllrs.

23/49. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 4th April 2023 at 7:30 pm at the Much Hadham Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:01 pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 7 MARCH 2023

(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	FTKL ceased hire of Pavilion October 2022
Grant	300.00	300.64	
Other	60.00	11.10	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	16,360.28	
TOTAL INCOME	61,295.00	68,360.60	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7,200.00	9,581.40	Budget excludes increase in hours and pay awards
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	2,945.08	
Insurance	2,650.00	3,130.61	Due to timing, 2 years of Village Hall insurance included in this financial year
Audit fees	850.00	845.00	
General Data Protection Regulation compliance	35.00	35.00	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	7,000.00	8,244.51	Tree work (£1,095) + part of noticeboard repairs (£1,000) funded from "Open Space" earmarked reserve
Litter Agency	4,008.00	4,008.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	805.00	879.62	
Pavilion	4,000.00	3,765.65	
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	2,460.25	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	58,630.10	47,702.60	