

## **MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, at 7:30 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 4 members of the public.

### 23/50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Cllr K Hamilton.

### 23/51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

### 23/52. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

### 23/53. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair stated that this was the last meeting of the current administration of the Parish Council. The deadline for nominations for the 4<sup>th</sup> May election had now passed and it would be known in a few days' time whether the Parish Council election would be contested or not. She thanked residents and fellow Cllrs for their support, concluding that she felt that the Parish Council had accomplished a few things that benefitted the village during this administration.

The Chair also expressed her personal thanks to the King's Coronation event organising group as she appreciated their efforts for the 7<sup>th</sup> May celebration.

Finally, the Chair highlighted that the Annual Parish Meeting, hosted by the Parish Council, would take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, in the Main Hall. It would follow the style adopted last year and everyone is encouraged to attend to find out what has happened in the community over the last year.

23/54. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

23/55. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Chair stated that the report on outstanding matters and resolutions had not been circulated as nothing had changed.

23/56. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) Community

Recreation Ground

Cllr K Twort reported that the Sports Association AGM was taking place on the 27<sup>th</sup> April.

Pavilion

Cllr D McDonald reported that the café proposal was no longer being pursued as the planning issues were too difficult to overcome. In addition, the Sports Association had expressed significant concerns regarding the use of the car park. Any similar future proposal would also have an impact on parking and a resolution to this matter would be pursued.

In addition, given that there is limited use of the Pavilion, the role of the cleaner needs to be revisited.

Funding of Recreation Ground

Cllr D McDonald confirmed that the funding review had been paused whilst the negotiations regarding the long term hire of the Pavilion were being progressed.

Village Hall

Cllr B O'Neill stated that the Village Hall Management Committee AGM was taking place on the 18<sup>th</sup> April.

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

General

Cllr S Smith commented that, following the long dry spell in the new year, there was a significant amount of rainfall last month which led to flooding in a number of areas. Thankfully, in time for Easter, the weather has shown that Spring has actually begun although several footpaths and bridleways are still very muddy in places.

Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith provided the following update:

- Footpath 11 Diversion: the pre-order consultation documentation has now been approved by the Ramblers Association as well as the Parish Council (Minute ref: 23/38 (ii)(i)) but an objection may have been raised by a local resident;
- Footpath 20 bridge repair: the old bridge has been removed and the area fenced off. The design and manufacture of the replacement bridge is expected to take place in the next few months, with possible installation late summer. With several parties involved in the process, the overall timetable may well be longer than anticipated;
- Footpath 24: the 150 metre stretch from Danebridge Road to the centre of the village, where it passes Hill Farm, requires several trees and fallen branches to be removed. Herts County Council (HCC) have been notified, including photos, and HCC will assess what is required regarding remedial activity;
- Footpath 32 (Hoops Inn to Bourne Lane): fallen trees and branches have damaged a bridge on this route. The area has been tidied up but the damage to the bridge needs to be inspected and repaired; and
- annual mowing and strimming cycle: – cycle will begin in mid-May and will continue in two separate tranches through to September.

Litter bins / litter picking / street cleansing

Cllr S Smith reported that the new contract for litter picking for the village had been signed and the new regime starts on the 6<sup>th</sup> April. The Shared Waste Team also start emptying roadside bins in the next few days, including the 3 bins in Green Tye and Perry Green.

Cllr B Bird confirmed that a litter pick had also been completed recently in Green Tye and Perry Green.

## River Ash

Cllr B O'Neill reported that he would be undertaking an e-coli test in the river which will assess the level of faecal matter present as this was quicker than monitoring river fly. He intended seeking financial support from Cllr G McAndrew (HCC).

Cllr I Hunt reported that the data for the sewage discharges into the River Ash from the Hadham Mill pumping station was now available. There had been 21 spills, totalling 90 hours, which was lower than the previous year, possibly due to the drought conditions reducing the opportunity for overspill events. In addition, it was noted that there had been further discharges, for over 24 hours, in the recent heavy rainfall. In discussion, it was identified that this information was recorded automatically and does not measure the concentration of the discharge which could, potentially, be mostly rainwater.

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

Cllr S Smith reported that no further information had been received regarding the forthcoming work required to improve the surface and general condition of Danebridge Road, in particular, the date when the work would be undertaken and the road closed.

The Chair reported that she had attempted to obtain updates from Herts County Council (HCC) Highways on all outstanding matters. It was noted that the company which produces signs was facing some challenges and behind schedule. The HCC staff member who could provide other updates was currently on leave.

The Chair also reported that:

- the trees opposite North Leys had been trimmed at the base but not the 8 trees nearest the bus shelter. In addition, the adjacent ditch needed to be cleared and the pavement from the B1004 junction to Church Lane reinstated to its proper width; and
- the flooding on the Widford Road by the 3 new houses had been reported on HCC's fault reporting as well as directly to Cllr G McAndrew (HCC).

In discussion, it was noted that there had not been a flooding issue near the Jolly Waggoners recently, no further progress had been made in relation to "20s plenty" and possible vandalism to the 'welcome to the village' sign, at the north end of the village, had been reported.

### (iv) Media

Cllr S Smith reported that he would be leading a team to investigate how best to modernise the Parish Council's existing website as well as adding new means of communication to ensure that the parish is informed of forthcoming events in a suitable manner. It is recognised that not everybody has a device that can receive social media communications.

(v) Security

Cllr J Liversage reported that there had been an increase in the number of crimes, as evidenced by the following reports from OWL messaging:

- between 28<sup>th</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> March: outbuilding broken into - ladder and crow bars stolen;
- between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March: theft from a residential construction site of power tools, accessories and batteries;
- between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March: farm broken into off the B1004 in Little Hadham - various items were stolen;
- between 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March: outbuilding broken into at a property in Westland Green - mower and tools stolen;
- on 25<sup>th</sup> March between 17.00 and 17.30: steel tank stolen from a Little Hadham farming property and the offenders left in a white van; and
- between 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March: set of number plates were taken in Church Lane, Much Hadham.

Consequently, residents are reminded to lock outbuildings, mark machinery, have good outdoor lighting and use CCTV for the prevention of crime.

Cllr J Liversage also highlighted the following matters:

- a new Watch Liaison Officer had been appointed for Broxbourne and East Herts;
- the (OPALS) Older Persons Activity Learning and Safety event was taking place at Much Hadham Village Hall on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 10am (see Parish Council website for more information [<https://www.muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk/opals-free-event-18-april-2023/>]); and
- beware of scammers requesting charitable donations, presenting as HMRC or seeking relationships and those trying to login into your WhatsApp account in order to log you out.

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

(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.

He also explained that he had recently surveyed Cllrs regarding aircraft noise to identify if there had been any noticeable increase in frequency and/or noise, receiving varied responses with no clear consensus. The view of a nearby Parish Council was that the flight paths had been changed on an experimental basis without permission.

(vii) Other

None.

23/57. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) reminded those present that he was hosting a charity garden party on the 15<sup>th</sup> April at Carldane, Bromley Lane, and everyone was welcome to attend.

23/58. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) King's Coronation

A resident highlighted that posters for the King's Coronation event, as detailed in the latest Parish Magazine, were being put up around the village.

23/59. LOCATION OF TELEPHONE BOX AT GREEN TYE

The intention is to place the telephone box on the common land, along the verge where the existing noticeboards are, and potentially use it for a book exchange.

RESOLVED to reaffirm the Parish Council's decision in March 2017 to approve locating a telephone box on the common land at Green Tye.

In addition, it was noted that the Perry Green and Green Tye Preservation Society were taking responsibility for any associated costs.

23/60. MUCH HADHAM VILLAGE HALL TRUSTEE

The Chair explained that the Much Hadham Village Hall Management Committee had updated its Trustees and require a member of the Parish Council to be Trustee, in line with the scope of the 1947 conveyance.

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr I Hunt as a Trustee of the Much Hadham Village Hall Charity.

23/61. KING'S CORONATION

The Chair and Cllr I Hunt highlighted that whilst a group of volunteers had already started organising the local King's Coronation event, a more formal approach was required to enable the event to be insured through the Parish Council's insurance.

It was agreed that the Chair and Cllr B O'Neill would assume responsibility for supervising the volunteers organising the event. A risk assessment will be completed and, together with the names of volunteers, be provided to the Clerk. Any future publicity will highlight that the event is being organised by the Parish Council.

The Chair intends to write to the organising volunteers to formally set out the requirements that will need to be in place going forward.

RESOLVED to approve the Parish Council organising, with volunteers, a “Big Lunch” event in support of the King’s Coronation celebrations on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at the Recreation Ground.

Cllr J Liversage commented that the Parish Council’s formal processes for grants and donations need to be followed properly in future.

## 23/62. FINANCIAL

### (i) Payment of Accounts

Since issuing the summons for this meeting, the Clerk reported that the invoice from HAPTC had been received but not the invoice from Much Hadham Landscapes. However, she requested that this payment was still approved so that it could be processed once the invoice was received.

The Clerk also highlighted that at the last meeting, it has been agreed that the volunteers organising the King’s Coronation Event in the village would receive a grant of £500 and that a further sum could be requested. In conjunction with the Clerk, the Chair approved a further £200 and the total of £700 was paid to the Recreation Trust’s bank account on the 10<sup>th</sup> March, from where the volunteers would be able to settle expenses. In addition, it was agreed that the Perry Green and Green Tye Preservation Society could also apply for a grant. The Society applied for a grant of £300 before the end of March but the payment was not made until April and, therefore, came from the 2023/24 budget and not the anticipated 2022/23 budget.

Finally, the Clerk stated that the Parish Council could decide to pay more than the grants and donations budget remaining if any grant requests were received this financial year in excess of £700. However, the Parish Council needs to ensure that any future grant or donation payment is only made after a properly completed form is received for consideration.

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

## PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - APRIL 2023

Ref	Payable to	For	Amount
OP226	HATPC	Subscription 2023/24	814.18
OP227	Business Services at CAS Ltd	Insurance Parish Council 2023/24	1,089.75
OP228	Broadmead Leisure Ltd	Quarterly playground inspection (March)	60.00
OP229	BA MH Landscapes	Maintenance at burial grounds Oct - Dec '22	540.00
OP230	MH Village Hall	D Billson - Pavilion cleaning (March)	80.00
SO	M Windmill	Litter picking (April)	91.00
DD	PWLB	Loan repayment (Lighting)	1,367.32
OP231	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (Apr)	781.04
Total payments			<b>4,823.29</b>

Payments will be authorised online following the meeting by Cllr I Hunt and Cllr S Stewart.

### (ii) Financial Statement

The Clerk highlighted that the financial statement information would be reported by year: 2022/23 and 2023/24.

#### 2022/23 – new financial year

The financial statement for 2022/23 was received. The summary position is detailed overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A. The Clerk highlighted that this was the final position for the year and, together with the final financial statement for the Burial Authority (Burial Minutes ref: 23/19 (ii)), would form the basis of the detailed annual accounts that would be presented to the next meeting as no further transactions had been processed through the bank account since issuing these reports.

The Clerk also reported that the process for drafting the annual accounts was in progress, as was the Internal Audit review.

Finally, the Clerk stated that the financial statement report for the Parish Council also included the final position in relation to the Earmarked Reserves, attached at Appendix B. The information provided was similar to that seen for setting the budget at the January meeting, with the only change being that less expenditure had been funded from the open spaces reserve than anticipated during this financial year.



## SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION - FINAL

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2022	44,158.77	29,970.81	74,129.58
Income	68,360.60	7,880.00	76,240.60
Expenditure	- 48,460.60	- 4,381.09	- 52,841.69
Closing balance	<u>64,058.77</u>	<u>33,469.72</u>	<u>97,528.49</u>

### FUND BALANCES

Barclays Bank Business Reserve Account		47.46
Unity Trust Current Account	97,499.03	
Add: Outstanding deposits	-	
Less: Unpresented items	<u>-18.00</u>	97,481.03
<b>Total Fund Balances</b>		<u><b>97,528.49</b></u>

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

Parish Council closing balance		64,058.77
<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><b>52,583.77</b></u>

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

### 2023/24 – new financial year

The financial statement for 2023/24 to date was received. The summary financial position is as overleaf and comparison to the annual budget is detailed in Appendix C.

## SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 4 APRIL 2023

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2023	64,058.77	33,469.72	97,528.49
Income	-	-	-
Expenditure	- 4,373.29	- 450.00	- 4,823.29
Closing balance	<u>59,685.48</u>	<u>33,019.72</u>	<u>92,705.20</u>

### FUND BALANCES

Barclays Bank Business Reserve Account		47.46
Unity Trust Current Account	97,499.03	
Add: Outstanding deposits	-	
Less: Unpresented items	<u>-4,841.29</u>	92,657.74
<b>Total Fund Balances</b>		<u><b>92,705.20</b></u>

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

Parish Council closing balance		59,685.48
<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><b>48,210.48</b></u>

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

### (iii) Bank reconciliations

CLlr J Liversage reported that she had reviewed the March 2023 bank reconciliation prior to the meeting, as required by the Financial Regulations, and no issues were identified.

23/63. PLANNING

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

23/64. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

23/65. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk reported that she expected to post the statement of persons nominated for the 4<sup>th</sup> May election on the noticeboards tomorrow, as well as circulating to all Cllrs.

The Clerk also reminded Cllrs that before the next meeting starts, governance documentation will need to be signed, primarily the acceptance of office, as well as the election expenses return. She will liaise with Cllrs prior to the meeting to ensure this is organised as it was noted that at least two Cllrs would not be at the May meeting.

23/66. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7:30 pm at the Much Hadham Village Hall. Prior to that, the Planning Committee will be meeting on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 7:30 pm in the Much Hadham Village Hall.

The Chair also highlighted that the Annual Parish Meeting, hosted by the Parish Council, would be held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023, in the Main Hall, Much Hadham Village Hall.

---

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:25 pm.

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

### BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON - FINAL

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2023	2023	
	BUDGET £	ACTUAL £	
<b>INCOME</b>			
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	Prior year VAT reclaim included VAT reclaimed on significant projects: replacement street lights (£8,703); bus shelter repairs (£2,088); new play equipment (£1,116)
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>61,295.00</b>	<b>68,360.60</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
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	2,995.00	3,038.08	Hall hire increased as 4 additional meetings at the Village Hall + increased cost at Green Tye Mission Hall.
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	
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	700.00	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-	-	
Neighbourhood Plan	-	1,245.38	
Capital - Playground equipment	5,000.00		Decision made not to purchase new play equipment this financial year
Capital - Defibrillator		2,440.00	
Revenue/Capital Projects (to be allocated)	10,000.00		Used to fund defibrillator. Remainder of £7,560 unused
VAT	5,000.00	2,460.25	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>58,630.10</b>	<b>48,460.60</b>	

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

### EARMARKED RESERVES - FINAL

Earmarked reserve	Comments including purpose	Balance 31 Mar 22 £	Being used during 2022/23 £	Released back to the General Fund £	Balance carried forward to 2023/24 £
Section 106 monies for sport or recreation	Funds available to use for sport or recreation purposes. In the past sums have been used to support local sports clubs.	1,570.00	-	-	1,570.00
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>1,570.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,570.00</b>
Open spaces - tree work	Unspent balances for tree maintenance work set aside from 2020/21 (£10,000) and 2021/22 (£5,000). In addition to these sums, the approved budgets for these years included £2,000 in each year for general tree maintenance and these general sums were used for tree maintenance work undertaken prior to 31 March 2022. The approved budget for 2022/23 stated that tree maintenance work in the current financial year would be funded from this reserve. Based on existing knowledge of the level of tree maintenance work in the last few years, this element of the earmarked reserve has been set too high therefore proposed that £5,000 is released back to the General Fund.	15,000.00	- 1,095.00	- 5,000.00	8,905.00
Open spaces - street furniture repairs	Noticeboards repaired during 2022/23 at a total cost of £1,540.	1,000.00	- 1,000.00		-
Open spaces - signage	Unspent project balance for signage at the Recreation Ground.	1,000.00			1,000.00
Open spaces - litter bin replacements	Rubbish (2) and dog (1) bins purchased in 2021/22 for £920.68. A replacement dog bin purchased in the current financial year. Funds to be returned to the general balance.	1,000.00		- 1,000.00	-
Open spaces - Planters in Tower Hill phone box	Unspent project balance to place planters in the Tower Hill phone box. Phone box subsequently turned into a "book box" therefore funds to be returned to the general balance.	650.00		- 650.00	-
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>18,650.00</b>	<b>- 2,095.00</b>	<b>- 6,650.00</b>	<b>9,905.00</b>
<b>Earmarked reserves total</b>		<b>20,220.00</b>	<b>- 2,095.00</b>	<b>- 6,650.00</b>	<b>11,475.00</b>

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

### BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 4 APRIL 2023

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO	COMMENT
	2024	DATE	
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	
	£	£	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Precept	43,000.00	-	
Pavilion income	300.00	-	
Grant	300.00	-	
Other	60.00	-	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	-	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>48,660.00</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Staff costs	9,844.00	781.04	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	-	
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	2,734.64	1,367.32	
Administration costs	3,015.00	814.18	
Legal costs	1,000.00	-	
Insurance	2,850.00	1,089.75	
Audit fees	815.00	-	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	7,500.00	50.00	
Litter	2,000.00	91.00	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,085.00	-	
Pavilion	5,550.00	80.00	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	-	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-	-	
Revenue/Capital Projects (to be allocated)	5,000.00	-	
VAT	5,000.00	100.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>52,781.10</b>	<b>4,373.29</b>	