

## **MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 4th March 2025, in the Green Tye Mission Hall, at 7:30 pm.

\*Cllr B Bird

\*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)

\*Cllr J Liversage

\*Cllr D McDonald

\*Cllr J Pillai

\*Cllr B O'Neill

\*Cllr S Smith

\*Cllr P Taylor (Chair)

\* denotes present

In attendance: 4 members of the public.

### 25/33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### 25/34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

### 25/35. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

### 25/36. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the Clerk was unwell and therefore meeting minutes would be produced by her and Cllr I Hunt.

The new addition of a QR code to the agenda by the Clerk was noted and Cllr I Hunt explained that it linked to agendas and minutes on the Parish Council's website.

The Chair reminded Cllrs of the Annual Village/Parish meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May, which needs organising. There is a pretty comprehensive list of invitees. Help was requested with advertising the event, once a suitable poster has been devised. Ideas on how to increase awareness of the meeting and improving the occasion, would be very welcome.

The Chair reminded everyone that there is still a casual vacancy on the Parish Council, and it would be lovely to have another Cllr from Perry Green or Green Tye.

### 25/37. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

## 25/38. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report had not been circulated, but Cllr D McDonald provided an update on the renewal of the footbridge lease at The Hoops. One last point was still outstanding, but agreement was expected by the end of this week.

Cllr J Liversage confirmed that the outstanding tree work at the Recreation Ground would be carried out this Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> March, now that the soft ground has hardened up a bit recently.

## 25/39. MEMBERS' REPORTS

### (i) Community

#### Recreation Ground

Cllr D McDonald reported that the underwriters had accepted the claim for the subsidence at the Bowls Club. Investigations were to be carried out on behalf of the insurers, into any effect the surrounding trees may have had. Cllr I Hunt congratulated Cllr D McDonald on a very successful outcome.

Cllr S Smith reported the extra improvement works to the path were still outstanding, due to a bereavement suffered by the contractor.

#### Pavilion

Cllr D McDonald reported that he and Cllr J Pillai were meeting the next morning, with a potential new user for the Pavilion. There was also a possible suggestion of a mobile coffee shop in the car park a couple of days/mornings per week.

#### Village Hall

There was nothing to report, but the next Management Committee meeting is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> April.

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

#### Public Rights of Way

Cllr S Smith reported that according to the weatherman Spring is formally here and we are blessed with a week's worth of some pleasant warm, dry days, though we also have cold, sub-zero nights and frosty mornings to contend with. At least the ground underfoot is less muddy for those using the countryside.

Specific PRow updates were:

- Cox Lane/Bridleway 7: a way marker post has been replaced;
- Footpath 32 (opposite Hoops Inn): two trees that were blocking the path have been cleared, and
- Footpath 25 (High Street to the Ford): a large bush is currently blocking this path. Herts County Council (HCC) PRow inspection is imminent, and appropriate action will be taken to remove the obstruction in due course.

(iii) Highways (inc “20s plenty”)

The Chair reported that just as Cllr I Devonshire (EHC) had informed the Parish Council last month, Cllr G McAndrew (HCC) will be stepping down from his role as a County Cllr in May. He had invited the Parish Council to join a meeting before 21<sup>st</sup> March, (when the pre-election period of sensitivity will start) to ensure a smooth handover of Highways. However, a date had not been received as yet.

Cllr S Smith reported there had been no change to the status of Danebridge Road’s dangerous subsidence issue. Herts County Council (HCC) Highways appear to be no longer repositioning the closure signs each week. This has resulted in increased traffic using the road, which is somewhat worrying.

The Chair confirmed she would be chasing up HCC Highways for the updates to their meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

“20s plenty”

Cllr D McDonald reported that he had attended a “20’s plenty” webinar on the 20<sup>th</sup> February which had discussed the effect that the adoption of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas in Wales had had on road safety.

The meeting reported that there had been a reduction of around 30% in injuries and fatalities on roads where the speed limit has been reduced – the first decrease since records began. Where the limit was not been reduced, the rate had remained static.

Welsh police, which originally had been against a blanket reduction in the speed limit now are in favour because they have found they are having to spend less time in dealing with accidents.

Cllr D McDonald also drew attention to the fact that NHS have estimated that the average cost to the taxpayer of each fatality on the roads is around £2 million, whereas the cost per serious injury is significantly less – about £200,000.

However, despite the now widespread adoption of 20 mph speed limits throughout the UK, Herts County Council (HCC) continues to apply an extremely restrictive policy which has made it impossible to give effect to the result of the referendum conducted in

Much Hadham to adopt a 20 mph speed limit in the village. As it appears that the only realistic way in which this position can be changed will be if there is a change of policy by HCC, Cllr D McDonald reported that he had written to each of the parties which has candidates standing in the forthcoming mid-term elections for Bishop's Stortford Rural (the electoral division into which Much Hadham falls) to seek to ascertain their positions on the introduction of 20 mph limits.

The election will take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> May. Should the parties provide the information requested in time, Cllr D McDonald proposed that the Parish Council make the information available to residents before casting their votes.

Cllr J Liversage would bring up the topic of "20s plenty" at the next Rural Policing meeting.

Finally, Cllr D McDonald requested that the danger of the Kettle Green Lane T-junction with the B1004 be raised at the next HCC Highways meeting.

iv) Media

Cllr S Smith confirmed the PC meetings were continuing to be promoted on the village Facebook.

(v) Security

**Important Notice:** Join 'Herts Connected': The 'Neighbourhood Alert' that replaced OWL Visit [www.herts.police.uk](http://www.herts.police.uk) and sign up under 'Campaigns'. Once signed up you can follow neighbourhood alerts, as before.

Based on information from Herts Connected, Cllr J Liversage stated that:

- beware of callers posing as Police or Bank Staff, and Sim card scammers have perfected a transfer to take control of mobile phones enabling access to online banking details, password (by passing 2 step verification); and
- the following crimes was reported: between the 14<sup>th</sup> February and 2<sup>nd</sup> March - a shed burglary was reported, which took place in Moor Place Park when gardening equipment and tools were stolen.

**Remember to report all incidents and crime so that resources can be appropriately allocated. For all non-emergency matters please call 101.**

(vi) Stansted Airport

Following last month's report to the Parish Council on flight noise data collected from Cllr J Liversage's property, Cllr D McDonald and Cllr J Liversage had emailed the Community Engagement Manager at Stansted to ask a series of questions about how the data will be used. They will report back on any response received.

(vii) Other

(i) Land to the Rear of Hill House

Cllr I Hunt reported that a group of Cllrs met representatives of the Hill Group on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> February in the Village Hall. The meeting was called by the Hill Group to update the Parish Council on the progress of their development plans.

In response to a question in that meeting as to where the Parish Council stood at present with regard to the proposals, Cllr I Hunt had replied that the development did not seem to comply with Neighbourhood Plan (NP) policy for this site (*which was intended to permit only rural exception housing coming forward through a Neighbourhood Development Order*). As the NP was created by the Parish Council, it would be difficult to support such development if it was not compliant. Hill Group are, however, confident that NP policies have been complied with in every respect.

A slide pack primarily comprised of CGI (computer generated images) views of the proposed site from various points had been discussed. Some points covered included; there are now 31 units, including 2 bungalows and 2 shared ownership houses and there are to be 10 affordable rented units, including six 1-bed flats, as preferred from the recent public survey; designs have more village-inspired detailing; there is now parking provision for 6 visitor / school drop off cars, but no turning circle for those entering the development to park temporarily; Herts County Council (HCC) would not be adopting the road, other than the junction; the suggestion of a spine road acting as an east-west route from the ford to the B1004 was discussed, but was felt to be incompatible with the principles of the development. Destroying a significant stretch of the existing hedgerow and banking would compromise the biodiversity and landscaping gains, have a detrimental impact on the view from Steep Jack Hill, and bring throughflow traffic to a residential area.

Next steps:

- a public presentation of the proposals by Hill Group, with an open Q&A session chaired by the Parish Council, is to be held (date to be confirmed) once pre-application discussions with East Herts Council (EHC) are complete. The Parish Council would urge as many residents as possible to attend and will be promoting the event through social media, noticeboards etc;
- submission of a planning application is now expected to be no earlier than June 2025. The earliest date for work to commence if the application were to be approved would then be 12 months later and would take a minimum of two years; and
- the Parish Council is considering what it would wish to have funded by s106 developer contributions should the application be successful, in addition to the provision of an outdoor classroom for the school and affordable housing for local people. Residents' thoughts on this are welcomed.

It is emphasised that the Parish Council has taken no decision on whether to support the development, which, as noted earlier, appears to be contrary to our NP.

(ii) Ash Meadow bench

Cllr J Liversage reported that a composite plastic bench had been identified, and she would request the Clerk to order the bench which should be delivered to her home address. A contractor had been employed to install the bench, and remove the old one to Cllr J Liversage's home for disposal.

25/40. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

No reports received.

25/41. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

(i) Bromley Lane drainage

A resident brought to the notice of the Parish Council the appalling state of the gullies/drains at the bottom end of Bromley Lane, which turns into a river on occasions, and then an ice-rink if it freezes, as happened recently causing a cyclist to fall off their bike. The Chair said this would be raised at the next meeting with Herts County Council (HCC) Highways.

(ii) Annual Village/Parish Meeting

Following the reference to the Annual Village Meeting by the Chair, a resident suggested connecting the VE Celebrations in May, with the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May, perhaps with the involvement of St Andrew's school children. The Chair thanked them for their suggestion.

25/42. RISK REGISTER

Cllr I Hunt explained that the Risk Register covered all areas of Parish Council activities that might incur risk, and the recommended actions to be taken. The Risk Register is reviewed each year and updated as appropriate.

RESOLVED to approve the Parish Council Risk Register for 2025/26.

25/43. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

The Chair noted the Clerk's annual expenses were more than usual, as they included the charges for the "brown bin" at the Burial Grounds for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 years. This was due to the fact that East Herts Council could not send the required "sticker" to any specific address, except the Clerk's, which entailed her paying the annual fees herself, and claiming back.

Cllr I Hunt explained that the invoices for the three payments regarding the MH Village Hall had not been received yet. It was requested these payments be approved now (so that they would be accounted for in the correct year), but be authorised for payment from the bank account, only once the invoices were received.

RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown below, be duly authorised for payment, with OP367, OP368 and OP369 to be released only once invoices received and details matched.

#### **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS - MARCH 2025**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Payable to</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Amount</b>
OP365	MH Sports Association	Pavilion water	£85.22
OP366	East Herts Council	2023 election recharge	£54.15
OP367	MH Village Hall	Share of 1100 ltr bin costs (used by Litter Picker) (Relates to 2023/24)	£230.10
OP368	MH Village Hall	Buildings insurance	£946.43
OP369	MH Village Hall	Hall hire Jan to Mar 25	£44.00
OP370	FM Forth	Clerk's expenses 1 Mar 24 to 23 Feb 25	£817.81
SO	M Windmill	Litter picking (Mar)	£99.67
OP371	FM Forth	Clerk's salary (Mar)	£865.80
SC	Service charge (Feb)	Bank charges	£6.00
<b>Total payments</b>			<b>£3,149.18</b>

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

RESOLVED to approve the standing order payment to the litter picker of £106.17 per month for the 2025/26 financial year.

#### **(ii) Financial Statement**

The financial statement for 2024/25 to date was received. The summary financial position is as below and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A. No queries were raised.

## SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 4 MARCH 2025

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2024	72,174.89	29,297.53	101,472.42
Income	48,935.80	4,230.00	53,165.80
Expenditure	- 58,654.26	- 10,148.95	- 68,803.21
Closing balance	<u>62,456.43</u>	<u>23,378.58</u>	<u>85,835.01</u>

### FUND BALANCES

Barclays Bank Business Reserve Account: CLOSED		-
Unity Trust Instant Saver		50,170.96
Unity Trust Current Account	39,685.03	
Add: Outstanding deposits	-	
Less: Unpresented items	<u>-4,020.98</u>	35,664.05
<b>Total Fund Balances</b>		<u><b>85,835.01</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		62,456.43
<u>Earmarked Reserves:</u>		
(1) Legal fees	2,350.00	
(2) Section 106 receipts for sport or recreation	1,570.00	
(3) Open spaces	1,173.33	
(4) Community Football Coaching grant (balance)	50.40	5,143.73
General balance available for Parish Council		<u><b>57,312.70</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.



25/44. PLANNING

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

25/45. BURIAL AUTHORITY

The minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

25/46. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

25/47. CLERK'S INFORMATION

None.

25/48. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 at 7:30 pm at the Much Hadham Village Hall, preceded by a meeting of the Burial Authority at 6:45 pm.

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:20 pm.

# MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

### BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 4 MARCH 2025

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2025	2025	
	BUDGET £	ACTUAL £	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Precept	44,000.00	44,000.00	
Pavilion income	300.00	364.00	
Grant	300.00	2,624.20	Grant from Stansted Airport for football goals (£2,400)
Other	60.00	213.50	
VAT reclaimed	5,000.00	1,734.10	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>49,660.00</b>	<b>48,935.80</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Staff costs	10,496.00	10,389.60	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	5,387.46	
PWLB loan repayment - Parish lights	2,734.64	2,734.64	
Administration costs	3,880.00	2,746.08	Underspends due to: website not changed (£500), limited training taken up (£178), less additional meetings (£116); reduced stationery (£206); no minutes bound (£65)
Legal costs	-	-	
Insurance	3,355.00	2,814.00	Reduced insurance costs, primarily in relation to the Pavilion etc (£775), offset by an increased Village Hall cost (£371)
Audit fees	815.00	695.00	External audit fee in lower band than anticipated
Election expenses	-	54.15	
Maintenance of open spaces	18,515.00	22,810.93	Now includes litter picker payments. £13,731.67 tree work funded from Earmarked Reserve.
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,085.00	1,056.22	
Pavilion	4,390.00	997.22	Savings primarily in relation to utility costs (£1,330) and no repair work undertaken (1,830)
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	3,423.00	Donated football goals to Community Football Coaching (£2,423); Grant to Station Road Resident's Association (£1,000)
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-	-	
Revenue/Capital Projects (to be allocated)	5,000.00	-	For the footpath resurfacing which has not been invoiced.
VAT	5,000.00	5,545.96	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>61,658.10</b>	<b>58,654.26</b>	