

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 2nd December 2025, in Green Tye Mission Hall, at 7.30 pm.

Cllr B Bird	*Cllr B O'Neill
*Cllr T Bond	*Cllr S Smith
*Cllr I Hunt (Vice Chair)	*Cllr P Taylor (Chair)
Cllr J Liversage	*Cllr J Westlake
*Cllr D McDonald	

* Denotes present

In attendance: V Mazza Clerk, 1 member of the public

25/167. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr B Bird and Cllr J Liversage.

25/168. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr T Bond declared an interest in a payment to be approved agenda item 25/176 (i) and would therefore not be participating in or voting on the related motion.

25/169. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

25/170. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Green Tye & Perry Green continue to host excellent events, mostly organised by the Preservation Society. The recent fireworks night was a major success.

Carols around the Christmas Tree will take place on 21 December at 5:20pm, in the field next to the Mission Hall, followed by refreshments for everyone.

Parish Council Planning for 2026/27 and Beyond

Councillors are reviewing plans for the next financial year to determine an appropriate precept (the parish council's portion of council tax).

Residents are invited to share their thoughts on potential new projects and whether the precept should be increased to fund. Residents are encouraged to send in suggestions and views on any of the ideas listed.

Possible projects for consideration include:

- Upgrading and possibly repositioning the parish "entrance gates" to be more impactful and carry speed-awareness messages.
- Investing in and maintaining new and improved planter schemes, similar to "Ware in Bloom."
- Expanding the car park at the Recreation Ground.
- Installing information boards at key parish sites, highlighting local history and the natural environment, inspired by recent examples in Little Hadham.

25/171. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 4th November 2025 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and were signed by the Chair.

25/172. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

None

25/173. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) COMMUNITY

Recreation Ground

A Working Group of the Parish Council and interested residents will review the playground, explore update or replacement options, gather costs and funding information, and prepare a proposal for full council. Cllr J Westlake and Cllr B Bird are leading the launch. If you have suggestions or wish to join, please contact them. Cllr J. Westlake reported that she had spoken with a group of parents from the school, who expressed a desire for additional equipment suitable for younger children. A working group meeting to be arranged for January 2026.

Sports Association

Cllr D McDonald reported the passing of resident Barry Brett on 21 November and acknowledged his long-standing contributions to the village.

An update was requested from the Recreation Trust regarding the SA Committee's proposal to appoint a community representative in a consultative role.

A meeting with an experienced local businessman to discuss commercial use of the Recreation Ground and pavilion has been arranged for 8 December; an update will be provided at the next meeting. The Sports Association AGM will take place on 3 January. An enquiry has been received regarding the possible formation of a Sunday League football club.

Progress on the Bowls Club pavilion subsidence insurance claim remains slow; underwriters have been pressed to ensure repairs are completed by April 2026.

The Bowls Club has requested that the Parish Council fund half of the £1,800 cost of major hedge-cutting work between the bowling green and the Recreation Ground, in addition to the annual grant. Cllr T Bond suggested an application to the Recreation Trust. The Parish Council requested that contractor quotations be obtained before any decision is made.

Pavilion

Cllr T Bond reported that the Pavilion has been refreshed, including a full clean of the kitchen, main room and accessible toilet, completion of the electrical safety certificate, rationalisation of internal locks, installation of a new external entrance light, and a timer added to the hot water system. Further improvements are still needed to enhance its appeal as a hireable venue including, detailed report with recommendations has been submitted. Our new hirers, Home School Tutoring, are pleased with the space, and we will soon discuss extending their contract into next year.

It was noted and appreciated that Cllr T. Bond had worked hard to bring the pavilion into excellent condition.

Village Hall

Cllr I Hunt reported that there were no updates since last meeting.

(ii) ENVIRONMENT (INCLUDING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY)

Cllr S Smith reported the following:

- Bridleway 28 – Fallen branch blocking the path has been cleared by HCC contractors.
- Footpath 4 – HCC PRoW still to investigate surface issues and arrange corrective action.
- Bridleway 17 – Gate adjacent to GHGC difficult for horse riders; investigation required and landowner to be approached if remedial action is needed.

Cllr B O'Neill mentioned that he will be completing a river test this week.

(iii) HIGHWAYS (INCLUDING "20'S PLENTY")

The Chair reported a meeting was held on 26 November with HCC Cllr M Pope and HCC Highways representative Tom Lesurf. Tom had reviewed all outstanding parish issues in advance and provided detailed, up-to-date information. Cllr M Pope also showed strong engagement with the parish's concerns, and the Council expressed its appreciation for their efforts.

An engineer's update was received on the roadside slippage on Danebridge Road. Multiple agencies are involved, and while works will take time, a permanent repair is planned, hopefully before the financial year-end.

Highways confirmed that current road works on Tower Hill and the High Street are focused on inspecting drains and addressing potential blockages, with a full schedule of works planned for Spring 2026.

Other ongoing matters include the overgrown pavement near Bromley Lane, new parish welcome signs, double yellow lines at Kettle Green Lane, and the broken rails opposite the Village Hall. The rails were removed from the standard works list, but Cllr M Pope has agreed to fund their replacement via his Highways Locality Budget.

Cllr M Pope has also allocated a significant portion of this budget toward long-requested remedial works at Joyce's Corner. These works will widen the road and add a protective curb, addressing a long-standing safety issue. The Council expressed gratitude for this support.

Cllr S Smith was encouraged by the signs of progress on these matters, though it remained unclear to him whether these will be escalated sufficiently to meet expectations. He noted that direct communication with the relevant Highways officer with regards to the Danebridge Road works, would be beneficial and will contact Cllr Pope to arrange this.

"20'S PLENTY"

Further to the news that the new Lib Dem/Green leadership at Herts County Council were reviewing their speed management policy, at the meeting with Cllr M Pope and Thomas Lesurf, the PC hoped to learn whether the revised policy might support a 20 MPH limit in Much Hadham. However, as neither is involved in drafting the policy, they were unable to advise and are awaiting its release. It was agreed to reconvene once the new policy is published.

(iv) MEDIA

Cllr T Bond reported all eight parish notice boards have been assessed, and a detailed report prepared. Overall, their condition is poor, with weathering, rotten posts, water ingress and cloudy glass. The Parish Council now needs to review the findings and decide on next steps, including reducing the number of boards, replacing them with modern weather-resistant units, and possibly relocating some to higher-traffic areas. It was suggested to install a notice board on Tower Hill.

In regard to Social Media, posts have been uploaded across Parish Council and Much Hadham Community pages covering reminders for postal-vote registration and the December PC meeting, and Online Safety Advice.

The website has been regularly updated with news articles and banners in line with social media activity. Latest statistics show steady growth in engagement: unique visitors rose from 1,074 in February to a peak of 2,212 in November, while total visits were highest in October (5,673), likely driven by interest in major planning applications. Most sessions (85–88%) lasted under 30 seconds, indicating users typically access specific information quickly, such as agendas or minutes. Mobile use has stabilised at around 8%, with Windows remaining the dominant platform at just under 60%, reflecting a mainly mature user base that favours laptops or desktops. Pages and Downloads remains relatively consistent with users mostly viewing and downloading minutes, and agendas for planning and burial meetings. Direct links from social media content also features e.g. waste and recycling, and the job application for the clerk's role. Download numbers are relatively small however topping 40 a month for each download.

Parish Council details have been updated on the East Herts Council portal, and an incorrect Cyclex listing has been removed. Work is ongoing to update Google Maps and local listings, which currently display outdated contact information for the Clerk.

(v) SECURITY

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

From November's crime report: Apart from 1 business burglary in Furneux Pelham and 1 incident of criminal damage in Stocking Pelham no crimes were reported in our area.

Hare coursing was reported in Eastwick, and in October the police caught some hare coursers in Hunsdon.

Shift patterns by police are changing in the area to patrol hotspot areas for hare coursing and fly tipping at key times when these types of incidents occur.

Following relevant intelligence reports they stopped vehicles and suspects of interest over 3 nights which saw several seizures of drugs, four vehicles and an e-scooter seized, and a drug driver arrested. These exercises send a warning to suspects to stay out of Hertfordshire.

If you a member of Herts Connected (replaced OWL) then log in as Neighbourhood Watch are promoting an AlarmID – for Laptop & Bag Portable Security at a special discount price.

Remember to report all incidents and crime so that resources can be appropriately allocated. For all non-emergency matters please call 101 OR online reporting via <https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

(vi) STANSTED AIRPORT

Cllr D McDonald reported that he continued to press the Airport's Noise and Track Keeping Working Group for clarification on the apparent increase in older, noisier aircraft using Stansted, contrary to the assumptions in the 2024–2028 Noise Action Plan. His original request had been declined as “commercially sensitive”, but following further pursuit he received updated fleet-mix data showing that newer, quieter Ryanair aircraft accounted for 19% of operations between June–September 2024, rising only slightly to 24% in the same period in 2025.

Cllr D McDonald noted that while this indicates a small improvement, it is too limited to have any real impact on parishioners' experience of aircraft noise and would be outweighed by any growth in overall flight numbers.

(vii) OTHER

None

25/174. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

HCC Cllr M Pope has sent his apologies, as he is attending Little Hadham, which also meets on the first Tuesday of the month.

25/175. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

A resident raised concerns about street furniture, noting that hazard and road signs—particularly chevron signs—were broken, missing, or had lost their posts. They asked whether HCC could be urged to repair them. The Chair responded that it is the responsibility of residents to report issues via the Fault Reporting Portal, and suggested that increased reporting by residents may help prompt action.

25/176. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED that the accounts, as shown below, be duly authorised for payment.
Cllr T Bond did not participate in this item or vote due to his declared interest.

Payment of Accounts – December 2025

Ref	Payable to	For	Amount £
OP432	HAPTC	New Clerk Training	50.00
OP433	Nicholas Electrical	EICR Test on Pavilion	200.00
OP434	Tom Walker	Maintenance of footpaths	750.00
OP435	Tom Walker	Maintenance of War Memorial	770.00
OP436	HAPTC	Basic Planning & New Clerk Finance Course	70.00
OP437	Cllr T Bond	Reimbursement for Pavilion keys & cleaning supplies	65.46
SO	M Windmill	Litter picking (Nov)	106.17
SC	Unity Trust Bank	Service Charge	6.00
OP438	Nicholas Electrical	Sensors for lights on Pavilion	190.00
OP439	Clerk	Salary Nov 2025	743.60

Total payments **£2,951.23**

DD = Direct Debit | SO = Standing Order | OP = Online Payment

Payments to be authorised online following the meeting by Cllr I Hunt and Cllr S Smith.

(ii) Financial Statement

The financial statement for 2025/26 to date was received from Cllr I Hunt. The summary financial position was as below and comparison to the annual budget is attached at Appendix A. It was noted that admin costs were higher than budgeted due to consultancy and advertising relating to the recruitment of a new Clerk. The cash book and bank account had been reconciled and all agreed.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 27 November 2025

	Parish Council £	Burial Authority £	Total £
Opening balance - 1 April 2025	55,308.40	23,948.58	79,256.98
Income	52,719.46 [▼]	3,200.00	55,919.46 [▼]
Expenditure	- 34,402.51 [▼]	- 1,652.48	- 36,054.99
Closing balance	<u>73,625.35</u>	<u>25,496.10</u>	<u>99,121.45</u>

FUND BALANCES

Unity Trust Instant Saver			91,182.33
Unity Trust Current Account		10,890.35	
Add: Outstanding deposits		-	
Less: Unpresented items		<u>-2,951.23</u>	7,939.12
Total Fund Balances			<u>99,121.45</u>

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

Parish Council closing balance	73,625.35
<u>Earmarked Reserves:</u>	
None	-
General balance available for Parish Council	<u>73,625.35</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) Initial 2026/27 Budget

Cllr I Hunt reported that Cllrs had been circulated with an initial draft of the budget for the next financial year. Discussions were taking place on projects to be included. For the January meeting it was expected that an updated budget would be presented, together with a 5-year forecast, a plan for earmarking reserves and proposals for the level of precept for 2026/27.

25/177. PLANNING

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 4th November 2025 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

25/178. BURIAL AUTHORITY

The minutes of the Burial Authority meeting held on 11th November 2025 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

25/179. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

25/180. CLERK'S INFORMATION

The Clerk asked if the budget for 26/27 can include cost of additional courses and qualifications. Cllr I Hunt asked The Clerk to provide these costs.

25/181. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 6th January 2026 at Much Hadham Village Hall for 7.30pm start.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

BUDGET TO ACTUAL COMPARISON AS AT 27 NOVEMBER 2025

(Parish Council only)	FULL YEAR	YEAR TO DATE	COMMENT
	2025/26 BUDGET £	2025/26 ACTUAL £	
INCOME			
Precept	45,000.00	45,000.00	
Pavilion income	300.00	499.00	
Grant	-	-	
Other	605.00	695.50	Bank interest
VAT reclaimed	7,705.00	6,524.96	
TOTAL INCOME	53,610.00	52,719.46	
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	10,607.00	5,831.94	
PWLB loan repayment - Pavilion	5,387.46	5,387.46	
PWLB loan repayment - Street lights	2,734.64	2,734.64	
Administration costs	3,830.00	3,472.17	
Legal costs	-	-	
Insurance	3,545.00	1,249.72	
Audit fees	820.00	815.00	
Election expenses	-	-	
Maintenance of open spaces	13,390.00	8,969.61	
War memorial (lighting and maintenance)	1,055.00	963.02	
Pavilion	3,840.00	1,040.98	
Grants and donations (Section 137 expenditure)	1,000.00	500.00	
Sport and recreation grants (Section 106 funded)	-	1,570.00	
Replacement bench	-	530.00	For Ash Meadow
Revenue/Capital Projects (to be allocated)	5,000.00	-	
VAT	5,000.00	1,337.97	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	56,209.10	34,402.51	