

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 2nd June 2026 in Much Hadham Village Hall, at 7.30 pm.

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

* Denotes present

In attendance: 2 residents.

26/87. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and approved from Cllrs T Bond and S Smith

26/88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

26/89. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

A letter from EHDC requesting a response from the PC by 11 June, considered under Agenda Item 98.

26/90. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair explained since the Clerk was taking annual leave this week the Chair and Vice-Chair would take the Minutes.

She also reported on the new approach to the Annual Parish/Village Meeting, which had been held on Tuesday 19th May. Very pleasingly, 50 residents gathered in the village hall and enjoyed the free bar, and a good chat, before presentations on the Recreation Ground were given, followed by an interesting Q&A generating open discussion. She thanked all those who attended, and the minutes were now on the PC website for those interested.

26/91 CO-OPTION

Alan Love and Marcus Scarlett were welcomed to the meeting and given an opportunity to introduce themselves as candidates for co-option to fill an existing vacancy. Following confirmation that each were eligible it was RESOLVED that a vote take place to choose which candidate to co-opt. Marcus Scarlett was duly co-opted as a Parish Councillor and signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

The Chair welcomed Cllr M Scarlett to the Parish Council and he confirmed he had no interests to declare.

26/92. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Chair reported that Appendix A of the minutes of the last meeting had not been updated for two amendments reported in item 26/75.

RESOLVED that subject to the required amendments being made to Appendix A, the

minutes of the last meeting held on 5th May 2026 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and were signed by the Chair.

26/93. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

An updated version has been circulated, and the few revisions had been noted. Cllr D McDonald reported a correction to the reported status of the lease agreement with The Hoops, which remains to be completed and this is in hand.

26/94. MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) COMMUNITY- RECREATION GROUND & VILLAGE HALL

Recreation Ground

The revised quote obtained by Cllr S Smith for £3,420 from Maskalls Tree Surgery for outstanding works to trees on right hand side of the Recreation Ground drive, listed in the agenda under 26/94(iii), was considered. Since the Insurers had completed their works behind the Bowls Clubhouse, these works could now go ahead. Maskalls had carried out the original works to this area of the woodland, so it seemed appropriate to engage them to complete the task. The quote was less than the original and in line with competitors. Cllr S Smith had checked availability with Maskalls and they are able to commence around mid-July.

RESOLVED To approve the quote 605e from Maskalls Tree Surgery for outstanding works to trees at the Recreation Ground in the sum of £3,420.

Sports Association

Cllr D McDonald reported that as agreed at the last Sport Association meeting, Cllr T Bond set up a simple website to outline the role and responsibilities of the Sports Association, with contact details and links to associated facilities at the Recreation Ground, including the Bowls Club, Tennis Club and Pavilion. He has secured the domain name mhsportsassociation.org and will now investigate a cost-effective hosting solution.

Cllr D McDonald also reported further to a neighbour's approach to the Bowls Club to request permission to connect to its electricity supply in order to install "lights and a powered gate system" at the adjacent driveway entrance. He had written to the BC to say that, as responsibility for the management of the Recreation Ground rests with the Sports Association, the matter should be handled at SA level rather than through the Bowls Club alone. He again highlighted that this is not a straightforward matter as there may be planning and listed structure considerations relating to the proposed gate automation equipment, particularly as the gate posts are Grade II listed. The adjacent War Memorial may also introduce curtilage considerations depending on the nature of any lighting or other proposed installations. In light of these complications, the matter may require consideration by the Parish Council as a whole, and a collective view to be expressed by the PC's representatives to the SA.

Pavilion

Cllr D McDonal reported that he and Cllr T Bond are still awaiting an update from EHC Planning regarding a date for an initial pre-application meeting to discuss the possibility of a change of use of the pavilion.

In response to a resident's request for toilet access during girls' football training sessions, the external accessible toilet at the pavilion has now been serviced and is fully operational and clean.

Village Hall

Cllr I Hunt had nothing to report. The next Management Committee meeting was on 14th July.

PLAYGROUND WORKING PARTY

Cllr B Bird reported the Playground Working Party had met on 15th May 2026 and discussed the potential s106 funding (from Hill House Development). It was decided to defer major capital expenditure until s106 funding is confirmed, while continuing essential maintenance and site improvements during 2026/27.

Current priorities were identified and a proposed programme of Maintenance and Remedial Works for 2026/27:

- Resurface the playground and basketball court, subject to funding.
- Repair and clean existing equipment.
- Undertake wider site maintenance and cleaning.
- Install picnic tables and replace worn benches.

Several playground equipment companies have expressed interest in the project and site visits will be arranged to obtain ideas and indicative costs for future improvements. East Herts District Council has agreed to support the project, and the Parish Council will work with local groups to organise a community playground clean-up event.

Priorities for Future Development 2027/28 were identified as follows:

- Subject to s106 funding, deliver a wider playground improvement scheme.
- Retain and refurbish existing equipment where appropriate.
- Review the play area layout to improve accessibility and play value.
- Invite tenders for the supply and installation of any new equipment.

(ii) ENVIRONMENT (INCLUDING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY)

Cllr S Smith reported that the recent mini-heatwave has brought drought conditions to the area and water conservation requests are being published by the respective water companies. Although there has been rain and thunderstorms throughout the rest of the UK our area unfortunately remains dry.

There are no new instances to report this month regarding PRoW.

Since the main contact at HCC PRoW recently retired, the Team Leader at HCC PRoW has promised to keep us informed if anything urgent or significant occurs in our area. He also reminded us that the annual trim, which is just one cycle this year, will begin in June and will last until September. HCC are currently seeking new contractors to reduce costs.

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

Nothing to report. However, the Chair stressed that regular contact should be maintained with HCC Highways through the good offices of HC Councillor Mark Pope, since face-to-face meetings were no longer a realistic possibility. Cllr D McDonald kindly offered to extend his involvement with the Highways portfolio, to support Cllr S Smith.

(iv) MEDIA

Cllr T Bond's report stated that the roadside signage for Recreation Ground and AED Defibrillator had been ordered and an installation date was awaited.

He also reported that images and posts had been created on Parish Council and Much Hadham Community pages covering the usual PC meetings, events, road closures and scams, and news articles and banners had been added to the website to match the social media posts.

The PC website Accounts page had been updated with the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025-26, and the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting had been added under the About Us page.

(v) SECURITY

The Chair reported that she had unfortunately missed the Rural Priority Setting Forum meeting for EH Rural area with the Neighbourhood Policing Team Friday 15th May. However, the East Herts Police are particularly keen for local people to give them feedback on policing priorities via the Herts Connected surveys. They will be looking to set their policing priorities for the upcoming quarter and would very much appreciate if the PC could share the link and QR code below on their social media:-

<https://bit.ly/hertspolice-psf>



The Crime Report received from our local PCSO also stated that vehicle thefts increased last month across the area. In Much Hadham, one theft from a motor vehicle and one theft of a motor vehicle were recorded. No other neighbouring villages had any recorded crimes except Little Hadham had 1 Theft and 1 Fly-Tip.

If you need to report a crime in progress, please call 999. For all others, please use 101 or online reporting <https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

(vi) STANSTED AIRPORT

Further to Cllr D McDonald's attendance at the first meeting of the Stansted Airport Parish Council Forum he had identified two questions to ask at the next meeting, date TBC.

Cllr D McDonald thought there was a risk that no issue raised by a PC would be explored in sufficient depth or detail, or would be postponed to be taken "offline", for the discussion to be worthwhile. He has therefore written to the Forum's organisers requesting contact details of all of the participating Parish Councils, in order to approach them and suggest they agree together a few questions of common interest (e.g. out of hours night-time flights and transport capacity issues) and pursue those issues alone, without distraction, at the next meeting.

(vii) OTHER

None

26/95. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

[Cllr M Pope joined the meeting during the following agenda item so 26/95 and 26/96 were considered in reverse order]

Cllr M Pope confirmed that HCC's planning for works at Snell's Corner, the 3-way junction at the foot of Stansted Hill, and parking restrictions at the Kettle Green Lane junction with the B1004 was progressing satisfactorily. Cllr B Bird and the Chair expressed their appreciation to Cllr M Pope on behalf of the PC and residents, for providing the large amount of funding from the Locality Budget for the successful works at Joyce's Corner. They were also grateful for his engagement with HCC Highways in addressing the other matters and committing to using the fund for the potentially extensive work at Snell's Corner, as well as the patching and white lines at the Stansted Hill 3-way junction and the yellow lines at the Kettle Green Lane junction.

Cllr M Pope reported that the road from Hadham Ford approaching the Little Hadham lights was to be resurfaced. Also, a resident had drawn his attention to a pavement bollard knocked over at the junction of Kettle Green Lane. Finally, he was also encouraging HCC to expand its 20mph initiatives to include village roads, and Cllr D McDonald offered to liaise further on this with him.

26/96. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

A resident reported that the bin store at Perry Green cemetery was no longer fit for purpose and that consequently litter problems were evident. The Chair advised that the Burial Authority had already decided to remove it.

A resident asked what efforts were being made to monitor noise levels at the construction site behind The Bull, where lorry movements from 8.00am were disturbing neighbours. He asked if F10 conditions were being enforced *[An F10 form is a legal document used in the UK to notify the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of notifiable construction projects under CDM 2015 Regulations.]*. Cllr I Hunt replied that it was for the contractor to observe planning conditions relating to construction management, and that any complaints could be made to Environmental Health to investigate. The resident offered to explore further whether F10 conditions applied.

26/97. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

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

Payment of Accounts – June 2026

Payable to	For	Amount £
Cllr S Smith	Reimbursement for Village Meeting Refreshments	82.99
EHDC	Dog Bins	1834.20
MHVH	Council meeting bookings	114.00
		Total: £2,031.19

Payments to be authorised online following the meeting by Cllr I Hunt and Cllr B O'Neill. Payments authorised by Clerk/Chair and automated payments were noted.

(ii) Financial Statement

The financial statements for 2026/27 to date were received. The summary financial position was as below. Cllr I Hunt reported that £618 income shown alongside cost centre 06 Open Spaces and Buildings would be corrected as it should be included in cost centre 01 Income.

28 May 2026 (2026 - 2027)

Much Hadham Parish Council
Summary of Receipts and Payments
Summary - Cost Centres Only

Cost Centre	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
01 Income	62,345.00	33,200.62	-29,144.38 (-46%)			0.00 (N/A)	-29,144.38
02 Administration			0.00 (N/A)	9,660.00	3,283.22	6,376.78 (66%)	6,376.78
03 Burial Authority	4,400.00	640.00	-3,760.00 (-85%)	6,602.00	110.00	6,492.00 (98%)	2,732.00
04 Staff			0.00 (N/A)	14,191.00	2,467.40	11,723.60 (82%)	11,723.60
05 Loan Repayments			0.00 (N/A)	8,122.00	4,061.05	4,060.95 (50%)	4,060.95
06 Open Spaces and Buildings		618.00	618.00 (61800%)	51,033.00	6,236.89	44,796.11 (87%)	45,414.11
07 Grants Given			0.00 (N/A)	6,000.00		6,000.00 (100%)	6,000.00
08 Other Items			0.00 (N/A)			0.00 (N/A)	0.00
NET TOTAL	66,745.00	34,458.62	-32,286.38 (-48%)	95,608.00	16,158.56	79,449.44 (83%)	47,163.06

Total for ALL Cost Centres	34,458.62	16,158.56
V.A.T.		1,189.40
GROSS TOTAL	34,458.62	17,347.96

Cllr I Hunt confirmed that a bank reconciliation was included in the financial statements.

26/98. URGENT BUSINESS

A letter had been received, too late to make the agenda in time, from EHDC Chief Executive outlining options for the timing of parish council elections through the period of the forthcoming local government reorganisation. The options were:

1. To extend current town and parish members to 2028 (mirroring the Districts') then hold elections in 2028. Not recommended as the new unitary council is unlikely to be able to run numerous elections a few weeks beyond vesting day
2. Continue with town and parish elections in 2027, but elected members will sit for a 5-year term to 2032. Recommended as it will retain the alignment of election cycles between the new councils and the towns and parishes
3. Keep the existing 4-year cycle (i.e. do nothing), which is not recommended due to incurring greater costs to the public purse.

RESOLVED To approve Option 2. Cllr I Hunt undertook to reply to the letter accordingly.

26/99. CLERK'S INFORMATION

Cllr I Hunt confirmed that the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return had been posted on noticeboards and the website with effect from 27 May 2026.

26/100. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 7th July 2026 at **Green Tye Mission Hall** for 7.30pm start.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.34pm.