MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 1st September 2026 in Much Hadham Village Hall, at 7.30 pm.

* Cllr B Bird	* Cllr B O'Neill
* Cllr T Bond	* Cllr S Smith
* Cllr I Hunt (Chair)	* Cllr J Westlake (Vice-Chair)
* Cllr D McDonald	* Cllr M Scarlett

* Denotes present

In attendance: V Mazza (Clerk) & 1 Resident.

26/124. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr M Pope (HCC)

26/125. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr I Hunt declared a non-financial interest in item 26/135(ii) and will therefore leave the meeting for that item.

No other declarations were made or applications for dispensations sought.

26/126. NOTIFICATIONS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

26/127. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair congratulated the organisers of the Tractor Rally and Classic Car Show held at the Mission Hall the previous day and hoped it had been financially successful in raising funds for a new roof and other upgrades

26/128. TO CONSIDER APPLICATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF PARISH COUNCILLOR AND TO CO-OPT A CANDIDATE TO FILL THE EXISITING VACANCY

The Chair reported that a vacancy arose following Penny Taylor's resignation. An application form had been received from Mr Alan Love. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend the meeting in person.

RESOLVED. Alan Love was duly co-opted as a Parish Councillor and will need to sign the Declaration of Acceptance.

26/129. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 7th July 2026 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

26/130. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS

The report was updated and distributed with the agenda. Policy reviews have now been added. The Clerk mentioned that the Asset Management Register is now on the accounts management system, Scribe.

26/131. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS' REPORTS

(i) COMMUNITY

Recreation Ground / Pavilion

Cllr D McDonald and Cllr T Bond reported that pre-application planning advice had been received from East Herts Planning regarding the feasibility of changing the current use of the pavilion from a sport/community facility to commercial or mixed use.

The advice in a letter dated 18 August, identified significant evidential requirements. As the Pavilion is identified as a 'Valued Community Asset' within the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan, EH Planning would require evidence that it is no longer required, is not in use, or that suitable alternative facilities are available locally.

Cllr D McDonald, Cllr T Bond and the Chair will meet to consider whether a credible case can be made for a change of use, most likely to mixed use, and to identify the evidence required to support any future application.

The three interested commercial users will continue to be kept informed. The outcome of the discussions will be reported to the Council at the next meeting.

Sports Association

Cllr D McDonald reported that a request had previously been received from an adjacent property owner seeking permission to connect to the Bowls Club's electricity supply to facilitate the installation of lighting and a powered gate system at the adjacent driveway entrance. Concerns had been raised regarding potential ownership, regulatory, metering and billing issues. No further communication had been received from the applicant, and the matter was considered closed.

Cllr D McDonald reported that loss adjusters had previously indicated that, subject to August measurements confirming that the Bowls Clubhouse building was stable, arrangements could be made for repair works to commence. No timetable for the commencement of repair works had been confirmed as yet.

Cllr T Bond reported that following the Sports Association AGM, work has been completed to establish a simple website providing an official, permanent source of information about the Sports Association, including its role, responsibilities and contact details. A new logo was created, free charity web hosting arranged, and the website developed using content provided by the SA Chair. The site is now live at **https://www.mhsportsassociation.org/** and will be linked to from other village organisations' websites and signage where appropriate.

Cllr S Smith reported that the defibrillator was potentially used on 11th August. A new battery has now been installed; it has an expiry date of December 2030. Cllr T Bond commented that the Defib number had faded and could a new one be requested.

Cllr S Smith also reported that the work to trim the remaining trees to the right of the entrance and behind the Bowls Club will commence in October at half term.

Cllr T Bond also reported that roadside signage for Recreation Ground and AED Defibrillator has now been installed at the foot of the drive on the righthand side

Village Hall
Last meeting was on 14th July. Nothing to report.

(ii) PLAYGROUND WORKING PARTY

Cllr B Bird reported that progress had been delayed due to the recent drought conditions, hosepipe ban and the holiday period. The proposed community clean-up has been postponed due to the hosepipe ban. Outstanding maintenance and repairs to the existing playground equipment have yet to be arranged. Work to obtain suitable contractors and quotations for resurfacing the basketball area remains ongoing.
Two playground equipment contractors have visited the site to assess the existing equipment and requirements. A report is awaited from The School Playground Specialists, and a follow-up visit with Playdale is scheduled for 23 September 2026. Once the contractors' recommendations have been received, a meeting of the Playground Working Party will be arranged to consider the options and agree the way forward.

Timescales and targets for completion were discussed. It is still being considered whether the works should be completed in stages or as a single project. To help manage residents' expectations, it was agreed that an update should be provided on the playground section of the Parish Council website.

A resident had very kindly offered to buy a new composite bench for the playground.

(iii) ENVIRONMENT (INCLUDING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY)

Nothing to report

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

Cllr S Smith reported a planned two-week road closure of Danebridge Road. The ongoing National Grid upgrade works have resulted in several road closures, causing concern for residents. The main contractors are now providing weekly updates on planned closures, which should assist with keeping residents informed. The works are expected to continue for a further 2–3 months.

Cllr D McDonald reported that following a review of the Speed Management Strategy Consultation launched by Herts County Council (HCC), the Parish Council completed and submitted the response questionnaire expressing its "strong agreement." While the proposed policy guidelines significantly improve the prospects of establishing a 20 MPH speed limit in Much Hadham, the procedural steps required to progress the case remain unclear. Having received no initial response to guidance requests sent to the Highways Dept, a follow-up inquiry has been sent requesting the appropriate contact details of whoever has relevant responsibility.

(v) MEDIA

Cllr T Bond reported that promotional material and updates had been published across the PC and Much Hadham Community social media pages, with corresponding news articles and banners uploaded to the MHPC website. Key topics covered

included:

- Reminders for Council meetings
- Advertisement for a Parish Councillor vacancy
- Public consultation on proposed yellow lines at the Kettle Green Lane/High Street junction
- The *BetterPoints Herts* initiative
- Updates regarding National Grid Road closures
- Thanks to outgoing PC Chair, Penny Taylor

Cllr T Bond also reported that the process for a new website has progressed. Detailed questionnaires evaluating design, resilience, domain ownership, flexibility, timescales, and cost were submitted to four candidate companies. All four responses have been received. A comprehensive review and formal proposal will be presented to the Council next month.

Website traffic figures show a significant overall increase in site activity during 2026 compared to 2024 and 2025.

(vi) SECURITY

Cllr I Hunt reported that the East Herts Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team (9 officers covering 180+ square miles and 40+ parishes) briefed members that while they strive to attend Parish Council meetings, operational demands and resourcing constrain regular attendance. To maintain communication, monthly Crime Reports will continue—shifting to a single, combined East Herts Rural report from September 2026—and residents are encouraged to join *Herts Connected* to receive updates and participate in the four-monthly Local Priority Setting Survey. Specific issues should be submitted directly to the team, while standard emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) reporting channels remain unchanged.

For online reporting https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/

(vii) STANSTED AIRPORT

Cllr D McDonald reported that the next (second) meeting of the Stansted Airport Parish Council Forum has now been fixed for 22 October.

He previously expressed reservations about whether any benefit was likely to be derived from attending future meetings unless attendee Parish Council representatives agreed in advance on a limited number of shared priorities, such as out-of-hours night-time flights and transport capacity. Cllr D McDonald wrote to the Parish Councils which had attended the inaugural meeting of the Forum to suggest that we unite around this approach. The response was limited. A further request has now been sent, following confirmation of the next meeting date, in the hope of encouraging wider engagement.

(viii) OTHER

Cllr S Smith had been updated by the Head of Planning Enforcement at EHC regarding

the enforcement action on the land at Danebridge Road. The appellant's agent had requested a site meeting to discuss a potential compromise. This was declined, with the agent reminded of the requirement to restore the land to its former state within the specified timeframe. It was also noted that there had been considerable activity on the field over the past month, although it was unclear whether this was related to the restoration works.

Cllr J Westlake reported that a screening of the National Emergency Briefing will be taking place at Much Hadham Village Hall on Tuesday 15th September at 7.30pm. Cllr J Westlake encouraged Cllrs and residents to attend this event, which will look at issues arising from climate change.

26/132. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr M Pope had sent his apologies along with a short update. He reported that the Consultation for the double yellow lines at the bottom of Kettle Green Lane, which is funded from his Highway Locality Budget, was underway. A site notice should be on display on a lamp column nearby and will be advertised in the Bishop's Stortford Independent. The highways officer has arranged a localised letter drop to properties within the immediate vicinity. The required work at Snell's Corner has been factored into next year's programme.

Carriageway patching and road marking works at the junction of Danebridge Road and Stanstead Hill were awaiting a commencement date. Discussions are also ongoing regarding resurfacing on Winding Hill and the possible introduction of a 20mph zone in the village, although this remains at an early stage.

26/133. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

A resident reported that a hedge on Kettle Green Lane had been removed and expressed concern that this could lead to the creation of an entrance and potentially the siting of caravans especially after the issues that have arisen in neighbouring villages. He asked whether the ownership of the land between the road and the hedge was known.

The resident also advised Councillors to remain vigilant regarding businesses claiming to be locally based when searching online and to check that such businesses are legitimate.

26/134. KETTLE GREEN LANE DOUBLE YELLOW CONSULTATION

Cllr D McDonald would compose a response on behalf of the PC to the HCC consultation once its details were published.

26/135. GRANTS:

(i) RESOLVED to approve the revised Grants Policy

(ii) RESOLVED to approve Grant request from Citizens Advice East Herts for £500.

26/136. FINANCIAL

(i) Payment of Accounts

There were no payments to be authorised at the meeting. Payments authorised by Clerk/Chair and automated payments were noted. See Appendix A.

(ii) Financial Statement

The financial statements for 2026/27 to date were received. The summary financial position was as below.

The Chair confirmed that a bank reconciliation was included in the financial statements and was signed by Cllr M Scarlett.

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	37,129.08	-25,215.92 (-40%)			0.00 (N/A)	-25,215.92
02 Administration			0.00 (N/A)	9,660.00	4,890.77	4,769.23 (49%)	4,769.23
03 Burial Authority	4,400.00	2,028.00	-2,372.00 (-53%)	6,602.00	460.59	6,141.41 (93%)	3,769.41
04 Staff			0.00 (N/A)	14,191.00	4,784.31	9,406.69 (66%)	9,406.69
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			0.00 (N/A)	51,033.00	10,175.07	40,857.93 (80%)	40,857.93
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**	**39,157.08**	**-27,587.92 (-41%)**	**95,608.00**	**24,371.79**	**71,236.21 (74%)**	**43,648.29**

Total for ALL Cost Centres	39,157.08	24,371.79
V.A.T.	210.00	1,821.52
GROSS TOTAL	**39,367.08**	**26,193.31**

(iii) Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

The Clerk noted that the external auditors had completed their review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2026. They reported it was prepared in accordance with proper practices and no other matters gave cause for concern or required to be drawn to the Council's attention.

A 'Notice of Conclusion of Audit', which detailed the public rights of inspection, would be published for 14 days from 4 September, and the audit certificate added to the website.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for a successful audit outcome.

26/137. STAFFING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED to approve new Terms of Reference.

26/138. PLANNING

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th July 2026 were received and the decisions taken were noted.

26/139. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

26/140. CLERK'S INFORMATION

RESOLVED that the proposed Calendar of meeting dates for 2027 which was circulated with the agenda be approved.

26/141. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 6th October 2026, Much Hadham Village Hall at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:45pm

APPENDIX A

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2027

Payments authorised by Clerk/Chair and automated payments -July & August 2026
Excluding Payroll Costs

Month	Ref	Payable to	For	Amount £
July	DD	Scribe	Accounting Software - Monthly Fee	44.40
	DD	Castle Water	St Andrew's Burial Ground	55.11
	DD	Nest	Pension Contributions	
	48	Tom Walker	Rec Ground Work	330.00
	49	Cllr T Bond	Pavilion Supplies	28.10
	50	MHSA	Grass Cutting	882.00
	51	Numerus	Payroll Services	92.70
	DD	Lloyds	Corp Card Service Fee & Clerk mobile	9.00
	DD	Npower	Electricity	7.28
	SO	M Windmill	Litter Picker	110.50
	55	Dell Corp Ltd	New laptop for Clerk	921.08
	DD	HMRC	NI Contributions	
	57	Sulve Ltd	Cleaning of Pavilion	75.00
	58	Clerk	Salary - July 2026	
	59	MHSA	Castle Water bill Contribution	299.54
	Internal Bank Transfer	Unity Bank	Transfer from Savings Acc to Current Acc	3000.00
	SC	Unity Bank	Service Charge	7.00
August	DD	Scribe	Accounting Software - Monthly Fee	44.40
	DD	Nest	Pension Contributions	
	SO	M Windmill	Litter Picker	110.50
	65	T Walker	Work on Causeway at St Andrew's Chuch	155.00
	66	HAPTC	New Cllr Training Course	17.00
	67	PKF Littlejohn	AGAR 2025/26 Audit Fee	378.00
	68	Wight Computers	Renewal of Domain	111.59
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