

# LITTLE HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the 109th Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday 24th April 2003 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present: Cllr Tony Skidmore - Chairman  
Cllr Mrs Ward  
Cllr Steven Stigwood  
Cllr Mrs Barter  
Cllr Graham Pearson  
Cllr Mike Fairchild  
Cllr Robert Sewell  
C/Cllr Mrs Mary Bayes

Donald Gibson - Clerk and 38 Members of Public were also present.

1. Apologies for Absence – Cllr F Escott and Mrs E Booth
2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd May 2002 having been previously seen, agreed and signed at the Parish Council Meeting on 5th June 2002 were placed on the Chairman's Table for examination by anyone present.
3. **The Chairman** welcomed all those present. He mentioned that the Parish Council (PC) was not a major spending authority - an income of only £8,500 this year - and had to rely on others for the provision of services in the Parish. A good working relationship is maintained with these other groups and they are invited to the monthly meetings of the PC to update and appraise councillors of progress. The Chairman touched briefly on the major events of the previous year: flooding, resurfacing of the A120 (to a high standard), Stansted Airport and the problems associated with May Cottage where the assistance of Police and the Planning Dept had been sought, the closure of Glaxo's, the purchase of Jubilee mugs for children in the village and at the school (all under the age of 11 years) and the attempt by the Parish Clerk to relinquish his role - no takers at the moment. The previous PC Chairman, John Haines, having resigned in October 2002, sold his house, hitched up his caravan and 'rode into the sunset' after 12 years as the leader of the PC. His replacement as a Councillor, Mike Fairchild, was co-opted in December. The Highways Partnership (HCC, Amey and Mouchel) were represented at our February 2003 Meeting by Danny Kyan to answer some burning questions - the results of this meeting were slowly emerging. The Farmers' Market, recently introduced in the village, was under threat from a 12th century ruling but the PC was supporting the FM and hoped it could remain trading from the village hall. Chairman then named the new PC Members as from 1st May 2003, there being an uncontested election; Tom Feather, Graham Pearson, Mike Fairchild, Steven Stigwood, Brenda Kain, Margaret Gibson and Tony Skidmore. He paid tribute to the three councillors who were 'standing down'; Anne Barter, Bob Sewell and Joan Ward, and presented each with a bouquet of flowers. Chairman then paid a special tribute to Miss Ruth Hughes (aged 91 years and still driving) who attended all our PC Meetings and gave valuable advice and guidance in connection with events often going back to the beginning of the previous century - a present of a Bellini music tape will be given to her when it is located. The Chairman sat down to applause for his and the Parish Council's work in the past year.
4. **Finance Report by Parish Clerk.** Copy attached.

## 5. REPORTS:

**Inspector Paul Lawrence** informed his audience that PC Chris Hunt would, in future, be able to devote more time to the village needs as he no longer had to police Sawbridgeworth. A Mobile Police Station was soon to be brought to the area and, from time to time, parked in the car park and used as a 'surgery'. The County had suffered a recruitment problem in the past as seasoned officers were sometimes poached by The Met and other Police Forces - the situation would improve. Community Safety Officers were to be employed by the Constabulary to assist with local problems but would not have the same powers as police officers. Close co-operation was maintained with many local authorities. In March some 30 calls were made to police by residents of Little Hadham (LH) and in the last three months 3 crimes had been reported.

**County Councillor Mrs Mary Bayes** reported on behalf of herself and her District colleague, Cllr Frank Escott. The A120 going through the village is a Primary Route Network which means that traffic and, more importantly, HGV's are directed onto it rather than using local roads. There are no plans to change its status unlike the Essex side of the A120 where the road is being 'trunked' and responsibility is passed to Government. The flow on the A120 is 'reasonably high' - 16,500 a day crossing the traffic lights. Queueing problems were recognised and new electronic control systems would be used in the next year. In the longer term the only solution will be to 'bypass' Little Hadham, the current five years plan, however, does not include the bypass in its programme of works. Turning to Airport matters she confirmed that a great deal of traffic using the A120 through the village was heading for the airport. If four runways are built then 20% of the traffic using A120 would be airport related. BAA have earmarked £50,000 towards improvements in Little Hadham. A hotline direct to the East Herts Highways has been set-up where road faults may be reported and formal involvement in the preparation of Local Plans to consider new schemes would take place commencing in the Autumn of next year. Studies of the M11 corridor: Herts Structure Plan has finished its consultation and is preparing for an Examination in Public. A new Planning Bill will come into force in 2004 which hopes to abolish structure and local plans and replace them with regional strategies. For the purposes of this new Bill Herts is now placed in the East of England. Harlow is has been designated a priority area for economic regeneration and looks at expanding towards Hunsdon, Gilston and Eastwick. Spring next year will be the time for consultation on these matters when the Minister for State, Lord Rooker, will be working under the premise of John Prescott's announcement that 200,000 new houses will be built in the south-east. Mrs Bayes indicated she would fight hard on behalf of local people which words were greeted with warm applause.

The **Environment Agency** was represented by **Mr Ian Davis** who is the Flood Defence Officer for the area. Flooding is nothing new even in Little Hadham, he reported. Decisions on what action should be taken in the wake of a flood must not be taken rashly or too quickly. The first steps after of the 2001 floods has been a lot of work to remove obstructions. The twice a year trim of the river banks was not completed. He had attended a number of meetings since the last APA and could report that some parts of the river had been desilted and a major strategy study was being carried out. A comparison between the cost of works with savings has to be done. There has to be a financial justification for costs. Desilting north of the A120 and at Hadham Ford had been successfully completed and since then there had been no serious flooding events - this may have been due to the absence of flood waters of the extent experienced in 2001. Mr Davies' report was given polite applause

**Mr Max Ashley**, Little Hadham Charities, gave details of the Annual Meeting of the Charity Committee and monies disbursed. Report attached.

**Mr Norman Mead** of Stop Stansted Expansion reported on the current situation of his group's efforts to encourage local people to write letters of objection to their MP's and Alisdair Darling, Minister of State. The Extended Consultation Period finishes in June and it is not SSE's intention to push any proposed new runways onto Gatwick. Any expansion will be intolerable, noise levels would exceed 54 - 57 decibells and atmospheric pollution would increase dramatically. Sir Alan Hazelhurst MP, Deputy Speaker of the House will be giving evidence at the Hearing on our behalf. Money needs to be raised to support SSE's work and various events are being organised to this end. Westminster thought that this part of Herts/Essex would be an 'easy touch' - they have been proved wrong. He recommended that everyone should become a Member of SSE and they could join by filling-in a form after the Meeting and by speaking to him and his colleagues at the back of the hall. He again reminded the audience to write to Alisdair Darling and their MP. His report was received with applause.

**Mrs Pam Newman**, Headmistress at Little Hadham School for many years now, thanked the PC for supplying the Jubilee Mugs last year and reported that the school was trying to obtain 'Health Status' accreditation in 2003/04 for physical activity which involved at least 2 hours of this type of work a week. Citizenship was recently introduced into the school whereby the children appointed their own councillors for certain meetings and decisions and they try to sort out their own problems. The 'loo' has been refurbished! Drug education for the older children has been introduced and WPC Yvonne Hines has attended the school and been very helpful. The floods affected the school and children too, especially those children whose homes were flooded. Mrs Newman ended her report on a poor note; the recent opening of Hillmead school at Bishop's Park resulted in a loss of 7 children from her school to the new one. This small drop in figures had a significant impact on the school's budget - this year the budget dropped by £35k! £10k is needed to balance the books and a teacher will probably have to go! The management at Hillmead feel very badly about the situation. Any donations would be gratefully received. As always Mrs Newman's presentation was received with much applause for the work she carries out at the village school.

**Mr Martin Yeadon** the project manager of GlaxoSmithKline (Glaxo's) reminded his audience of the decision last year to close the Bury Green site and sell. Only a skeleton crew now remains - security and engineering. Until the sale the Millennium Wood is safe and when a sale occurred his firm would try to ensure its future. The recent grass cutting of the Green was a mistake! However, that would be the last cut his company would undertake. Glaxos have attempted to sell the site to a similar type of user, at present, there are no takers and his organisation will now have to talk to other groups. He is not aware of how long the sale will take but in the meantime they will continue to manage the site and he will report to the Parish Council if a buyer emerges. Cllr Stigwood enquired what future there was for the cricket club? Mr Yeadon replied that for this season the club could continue to use the ground.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS - None**

There being no other business the Chairman Closed the Meeting at 9.19pm