

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 110th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 29th April 2004 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:

Mr T Skidmore	– Chairman
Mr M Fairchild)
Mr P Foreman)
Mrs M Gibson) – Councillors
Mr G Pearson)
Mr S Stigwood)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and **32** members of the public.

1. **Apologies** for absence from Cllr Feather and Mrs E Booth
2. **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 24th April 2003 having been previously seen, agreed and signed at the Parish Council Meeting on 2nd June 2003, were placed on the Chairman's Table for examination by anyone present.
3. **The Chairman** welcomed new councillors: Cllrs Tom Feather, Mrs Mags Gibson and Mrs Brenda Kain were elected in May 2003. Cllr Mrs Kain has subsequently resigned and Cllr Paul Foreman has been recently co-opted. Mr Don Gibson, Parish Clerk for over ten years, retired at the end of September 2003 – the Chairman thanked him for his loyal service. Mr Bev Evans was appointed as the Clerk from October 2003.

The Chairman recounted some of the work done by the Council in the past year.

Cllrs Feather and Pearson have been actively involved with the Flood forum and continue to work to remove the risk of flooding from the Ash and its tributaries as they pass through the village.

Cllr Pearson continues his work of ensuring that repairs to roads are completed efficiently by Herts. Highways including the upgrading of the A120 traffic lights.

The Chairman and Cllr Mrs Gibson are in negotiations with EDF about the removal of a dangerous electricity pole from the Village Hall Playing Field. Cllr Mrs Gibson is also involved in applications for grants needed to repair or replace some of the climbing apparatus in the playground.

The Council continues to oppose the expansion of Stansted Airport and Cllr Fairchild is an active participant in the 'Stop Stansted Expansion' campaign.

The Council supports the creation of the Parish Plan and is working to qualify as a Quality Parish. Cllr Fairchild is deeply involved in both initiatives.

The Council works closely with the Police on traffic and public order matters and the Chairman welcomed them to the Assembly.

Bury Green Farm has been taken over by Romehold who have kindly offered to cut the grass at Bury Green.

4. **Financial Report by the Parish Clerk** – Copy enclosed
5. **Presentations**
 - a. **Mr Max Ashley Little Hadham Charities** gave details of the Annual Meeting of the Charity Committee and monies disbursed. Report attached.
 - b. **Cllr Mike Fairchild – Quality parish and Parish plan**

Cllr Fairchild Referred to the packed meeting in November where residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of a Parish Plan. This was a joint meeting with Albury who have since decided to produce their own plan and collaborate with us in areas of mutual interest. Cllr Fairchild gave the benefits of the Parish plan. It is a road map for the future describing where we want to go and how to get there. It will give a bigger say for the local community and help conserve the things it likes about living here. It will help change the things we don't like and encourage us to be more of a community. The Government wants to give more power to local communities. This is important as the East of England Regional Assembly, an un-elected body based in Bury St Edmunds, is already making momentous decisions on our behalf, including approving half a million houses in this region – it is over-riding (and over-ruling) county and district councils (which ARE elected). Because of this, in theory at least, the Regional Assembly will be more reliant on parish councils to give them access to the views of local communities. The Parish Plan is therefore vital in helping the parish council to understand and represent your needs and interests.

With the help of a Parish Plan, if the village can show it has the required skills, your parish council

may be able to assume some of the responsibilities of the district council in matters such as roads maintenance and small scale planning issues, without necessarily incurring the budgetary and administrative responsibility.

A parish plan won't happen without the full support and practical assistance of local residents and there has been a good response to appeal for volunteers. There is a second group of local residents willing to 'get stuck in' and help. One of the first actions was to form a steering group, members chosen to give the broadest representation of the parish but small enough to be effective. Cllr Fairchild chairs the group and thanked all the members of the steering group for their commitment, time and hard work.

Support has been given from other quarters: Our local Rural Enterprise Project [CDA for Herts] (Alex McGolpin), Aston Parish Plans Group (Stephen Sypula) and the East Herts DC Environmental Planning Team (Claire Sime).

Letters of Support have come from: East Herts Council, The Police, Tony Raven on behalf of the Benefice of LH with Albury, the Village Hall Committee, Our local primary school, LH Flood Group, the Gardening Club, the Cricket Club and the W.I.

The Steering group has put together an application for a grant from the Countryside Agency to prepare our Parish Plan. The initial grant is to fund the cost of producing the plan, the biggest element being the audit and questionnaire, to discover what people think of Little Hadham today and what changes they would like to make (or what they want to preserve) in the next 10-15 years. The estimated cost of producing the plan is around £5,000, of which we are seeking £3,800 from the CA, the balance being made up of donations in kind, fund raising and small-scale sponsorship from local businesses. The Parish Plan can unlock other funds, from other Government agencies and Lottery money, to pay for the implementation of the plan and the improvements you want to see. We have a final draft of the questionnaire – we have had assistance from the University of Hertfordshire Business School, one of whose senior lecturers, Brandon Crimes, is on our committee. We have also bought into software produced by the Countryside Agency to help formulate the questions and analyse the answers. The views of younger members of our community - our future generations – are important: there is a special version of the questionnaire for children.

Cllr Fairchild supplied copies of the draft plan for people to study.

Also on display, a map of the area covered by the Parish Plan, and an indication of the various areas which we will ask our other volunteers to cover as street stewards to distribute the questionnaire and collect completed ones, and generally act as link between Parish Plan committee and people we represent.

One of the criteria for a Parish Plan grant is that we intend to become a Quality Parish. The Quality Parish Scheme is sponsored by the CA and by the Department for the Environment and is designed to help the parish council engage more effectively with the local community. One of the key requirements is for our parish clerk to acquire formal qualifications. At this moment, our Clerk, Bev Evans, who recently assumed the role from his worthy predecessor, Don Gibson, is undertaking the AQA Certificate in Local Council Administration (in his own time!). Another criterion is effectiveness of communication with the community, which is very much the spirit behind the Parish Plan.

The application was submitted last month. We expect to hear next month if we've been successful. We expect the questionnaire to be piloted in June to make sure it is easy to complete. Depending on the outcome of the pilot, the questionnaire will go out either in June with the aim of getting replies before the summer holidays, or – more likely - in September. We will allow two months to analyse and publish the results, including a public meeting for feedback from the community. We plan to publish the final plan ahead of the next Annual Parish Assembly 12 months from now.

The Rev Tony Raven spoke of the need for Albury and Little Hadham to work closely together and to concentrate on local interests involving people of all ages in the community.

c. **Cllr Michael Tindale – District Councillor for Little Hadham**

Cllr Tindale spoke of the work of the District Council. Its areas of responsibility are to collect finance, protect the environment and community and control of development. Recently it has become responsible for licensing.

The Council is responsible for collecting the Council Tax on behalf of the District, the Police, Herts CC and the Parishes – 14% goes to the District Council. The District charge increased 6 ¼% this year due to the increased cost of environment issues, refuse handling and recycling, street cleansing, dealing with abandoned vehicles and grass cutting.

District Council matters that affect Little Hadham include the option of local bottle/can banks – there is an objective of having kerbside recycling by 2005.

Cllr Tindale referred to the “Adopted Plan Dec 1999” that will become the “Local Plan Second Review Deposit Version”. In this the Ash area of the village will be changed from Cat 1, allowing limited small scale development, to Cat 2, allowing only limited infill development.

d. **Inspector Paul Lawrence – Herts Constabulary**

Insp Lawrence introduced PC Chris Hunt, the constable with special responsibility for the area, and Julie Cooke who is a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

Herts County Council financed 12 PCSO's throughout the county and they started work 6 months ago. The area was lucky to be in the initial pilot scheme and as a result, Julie Cooke came to work with us. Julie has been successful providing a visible presence and reassuring the local rural communities. The feedback so far has been very positive.

The mobile Police Station has been a success and visits the village every 1st and 3rd Tuesday, parking in the village hall car park. There are plans in the near future to regularly have two members of staff with the Mobile Police Station so while one staffs the desk the other can patrol the village.

Rural Intelligence Gathering System (R.I.G.S) was launched in January and has proved to be very popular and successful. The system allows information to be passed quickly between people on the scheme so they are aware of criminal or suspicious activity taking place in the local area. There are currently 32 pagers in the system and there are plans to extend it further in the near future.

The mobile speed sign was displayed at the meeting. There are plans to allow each Parish make use of the equipment on a rotational basis. The sign flashes up the speed of vehicles that are exceeding the speed limit along with a slow down message.

Insp Lawrence was asked from the floor about speeding through the village. He is aware of the problem and PC Hunt would occasionally patrol with a speed gun though this was very time consuming. He hoped the use of the mobile speed sign might encourage drivers to think about their speed.

e. **Mrs Linda Dent – South East Essex Primary Care Trust (SEEPC).** She has had a long career in the NHS, her husband and older son are doctors - the latter just qualified and a younger son is training to be a paramedic.

The Trust is in effect the local health authority and has nearly £150 million to spend on health services for those in South East Herts. It is the umbrella organisation for GPs, dentists and pharmacists and it runs health centres and community hospitals. It also buys hospital services from local hospitals.

Mrs Dent referred to the leaflet ‘Guide To Local Services’ which gives useful telephone numbers for getting information and advice about local health services; In particular the Patients Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) for those with a concern and who want information or advice.

She introduced the ‘Expert Patient Programme’ that is aimed at helping people with a long-term medical condition cope better with it. This new programme is free – Mrs Dent said that she would organise it in the village if there were a demand.

Mrs Dent spoke of some of the main developments on the local NHS:

There has been a major two-year countywide review of hospital services with a decision to build a new hospital and cancer centre at Hatfield. Plans have now been submitted to the DoH. We wait to hear whether the £700m development bid has been successful.

Every GP practice has been involved in negotiations for a new GP contract.

Over time there should be more local services such as chronic disease management clinics with greater emphasis on quality, leading to even better care. There should be better management of your health through greater use of information technology and a greater opportunity to attract and retain doctors in the practice. Over time, there will be a transfer of responsibility for out of hours care to the primary care trust.

Redevelopment of local community hospitals and treatment centres has taken place at: Herts and Essex Hospital and Hertford Hospital has been rebuilt. Cheshunt Community Hospital has had a £1.5m development while Western House in Ware has been replaced by a new nursing home/continuing care and rehabilitation service.

Finally, Mrs Dent referred to the increasing numbers of members of the public sitting on groups within the PCT such as clinical priorities forum, users of cancer services forums, new community hospital board.

f. **Mrs Pam Newman – Head Teacher of Little Hadham JMI School** Mrs Newman reported that the situation of the School is much improved from the gloomy picture painted last year., School numbers remain stable at 140 pupils. The Nursery is oversubscribed this year. There is every confidence that the school will continue to thrive.

Referring to the curriculum, Mrs Newman said the school’s focus for the year has been ICT and developing the interactive classroom. The ICT suite with new computers also has a projector and

screen for interactive lessons. Staff has had training in using interactive whiteboards, leading to the school having two classrooms with interactive whiteboards installed. This is adding a very positive extra dimension to the class curriculum. All classes would benefit from this teaching-aid. One board alone costs £2000!

Another curriculum initiative has been Monday afternoons for KS2 children when they do Games, dance and drama - all taught by professionals in these fields.

The classes have had Living History workshops, theatre group visits, 'Be Safe' meetings for parents and children, drug education sessions one of which was delivered by the local police and various other trips. There has been the Isle of Wight school journey for Year 6 and Cuffley camp for Year 5.

A strength of Little Hadham School is the strong sense of community and citizenship. For example the children have organised cake stalls for Children in Need and raised £157 for the Blue Peter Appeal. They have organised various events, including a Talent Contest, to buy bricks, which cost 50p, for a hospital to be built in Uganda at Jinja. Fund raising at Little Hadham School isn't just for the school! The school has been involved in a project called Young Enterprise, an initiative started in America, when people from business or industry come and deliver a six week programme to the children. Two people from Herts County Council visited and worked in two classes around the subjects of Our Family and Our Community.

The school recycles what it can – cans, compost. A pupil in Year 6 last year won a national competition to design a poster to recycle rubbish. The child received vouchers for a bike and reflectors for the whole class.

Children are encouraged to write to local MPs and councillors about issues concerning them. A few weeks ago a child wrote to Tony Blair protesting at having to develop a 'joined up handwriting style' saying that all print that you see isn't joined up! He has received a standard reply from the prime Minister saying he would pass his concerns on but at least he wrote!!

The school has had a new slate roof funded by County for over £50,000!

The school is very grateful for the support it receives from Little Hadham. The money donated helps to provide support for music within the school. People are most welcome to offer some time to the school - it is much appreciated.

Mrs. Baker comes every week to hear readers. Mrs. Anderson, who lives in Hadham Hall, comes once a week to teach Spanish to all the classes.

Mrs Newman announced that this was her last report. It has been a privilege to be the head at Little Hadham School. The village must feel proud of a special school. She was confident that Liz Stockley the new head teacher, who was present at the assembly, would take the school on from strength to strength.

- g. **Cllr Mike Fairchild – Stop Stansted Expansion.** Cllr Fairchild explained that the proposed expansion of Stansted Airport would eventually make it the world's largest airport. He discussed the various ways of measuring aircraft noise and displayed maps revealing the extensive areas, including Little Hadham that will be seriously affected by the increased noise of a larger airport. The Airport will need over 50,000 houses in the area and will greatly increase traffic and pollution. The local schools, hospitals and other services will not be able to cope.

The expanded airport will occupy an area of land the size of the City of London and the West End together.

The Government Aviation White Paper is merely a proposal, not law. BAA must pay for any development without cross-subsidy from Heathrow. The major airlines are against Stansted expansion as are the budget airlines currently using the airport.

BAA will have to cross many hurdles. There will be periodic reviews, a public inquiry and legal challenges. They must keep the City and their shareholder confidence. Finally, they must face planning appeals both local and national.

SSE are involved in several legal challenges. They are using lobbying and publicity to build a supporter base. They are working with councils and communities including the Hadhams.

Cllr Fairchild encouraged people to keep themselves informed. They must make a noise and take an active part in the campaign – they should join SSE. Above all, they should stay optimistic – **we can stop Stansted Expansion.**

6. **The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:00 p.m.**

Clerk's Report

The Parish Precept for 2003/04 was £8,500 – an increase of £1,100. The precept for the current year is £9,150 – an increase of £650. This increase is to cover the expected increases in salaries, services and materials as well as the costs involved with the Parish Plan. Some money has been budgeted for the training of the new Clerk and new Councillors.

The total Council Tax for a Band D home for this year is £1152.17 of which only £18.71 comes to the parish – about 36p a week.

A detailed breakdown of the accounts is shown over the page and the Council's books will be available for inspection later this year.

Last year the Council gave donations totalling £700 to Little Hadham JMI School for the supply of ICT equipment and to help pay for music teaching. The costs for cutting the grass and hedges at the playing fields has increased this year to £880 – an increase of £116. We are grateful to Romehold, the new owners of Bury Green Farm, who have agreed to cut the grass at Bury Green saving the Council a great deal of money.

At the close of business on 31st March 2004, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £1,289 in its Bank Account and bills of about £1,100 to be met in early April (before our first precept payment from East Herts is credited to our account at the end of the month).

East Herts DC still funds our Litter Picker, Mr Michael Baker (£993 pa) – if you have any places near you that need his attention let me know and I will make the necessary arrangements. Our Village Handyman, Mr Danny Barnes, has resigned following an increase in hours at his main work – please tell me if you know of a possible replacement. Thanks, as usual, are due to the residents of 'Marshalls', opposite the War Memorial, who voluntarily plant out the beds at the War Memorial and generally keep it in pristine condition.

Financial position for the year 2003 to 2004

Income

	2003 to 2004	2002 to 2003	
Brought forward	£1,265.59	£1,632.07	
Precept	£8,500.00	£7,400.00	
Rent	£324.00	£324.00	Allotments, Westland Green and way-leaves
VAT refund	£398.41	£286.90	
Parish Plan	£205.00		Share of cost from Albury
Interest	£0.79	£2.24	
Other	£1,167.20	£34.76	Includes donation from PCC and an easement
Litter Picker	£993.51	£969.28	From EHDC
Sale of Jubilee Mugs	£0.00	£115.00	
Total credit	£12,854.50	£10,764.25	

Outgoings

	2003 to 2004	2002 to 2003	
Pay	£5,486.03	£5,197.30	To the Clerk, litter picker, handyman and Post Office cleaning
Maintenance	£763.74	£692.24	Mainly hedge and grass cutting at playing fields
Expenses	£559.57	£554.29	Including mileage
Telephone	£57.71	£30.70	
Rent	£100.63	£116.13	Hire Village Hall and allotments
P/News	£91.35	£202.70	Mainly paper
Donation	£945.00	£450.00	Mainly to the Village school and graveyard upkeep
Subscriptions	£431.21	£319.20	Such as HALC and CPRE
Insurance	£602.50	£409.59	
Banking costs	£0.00	£2.87	
Repairs	£597.55	£104.32	Mainly to the playing fields
Parish Plan	£415.79	£0.00	Partly paid for by Albury PC
Notice Boards	£742.54	£0.00	For the local PCC - they gave a donation in gratitude
Post	£21.36	£18.09	
Copying	£52.51	£61.80	
Misc	£142.28	£73.26	Refreshments, gifts, etc.
Training	£195.00	£0.00	New Clerk and councillors
Election	£80.27	£0.00	
Jubilee Mugs	£0.00	£1,051.27	
Audit	£150.98	£152.98	
Office supplies	£175.63	£118.82	
Total	£11,611.65	£9,555.56	

Carried forward to 2004/05	£1,242.85
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