

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the fourth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2007 – 2011 Session)
held on Monday 3rd September at 9:31 p.m. in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present: **Mr M Fairchild** **Chairman**
 Mr N Darken)
 Mr A Morris)
 Mrs C Piccolo) **Councillors**
 Mr J Purvis)
 Mr T Skidmore)
 Mr G Williamson)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 6 members of the public.

- 4.1 Public session.** The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public to ask questions and make comments on agenda items.
A resident said that the pavement along the C15 from the village hall to the traffic lights had become difficult to pass, especially for children going to and from school. The hedges were overgrown and these, together with the nettles and other weeds growing at the bottom, partially blocked the path. The Clerk said that he thought the owners of the hedges were responsible. The Council was responsible for the playground hedge. The Chairman asked the Clerk to arrange for the playground hedge to be strimmed. Cllr Morris said that he would report the matter to Herts Highways and make enquiries as to who owned the remainder of the hedges. The Chairman said that he would ask the owner of the hedge between the war memorial and South Cottages to clear the nettles from the footpath.
A resident said that he thought the Council should work within the district planning regulations. Cllr Morris agreed but thought the Council should concentrate on giving local knowledge and leave the technicalities to the planning office.
- 4.2 Absent** None.
- 4.3 Declarations of interest** Cllr Darken said he had an interest in Bury Green Farm as he lived at Bury Green.
- 4.4 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting** held on Monday 2nd July 2007 having been previously circulated were agreed as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Piccolo and seconded by Cllr Williamson.
- 4.5 Matters arising from the Council minutes**
- 4.5.1 Upkeep of Westland Green.** Cllr Purvis thanked Mr Stigwood for having ‘topped’ the grass on the Green. Cllr Purvis said that what to do about the ruts and informal signage was still under consideration.
- 4.5.2 Clearance of scrub from around the western entrance to the new housing site at Bury Green Farm.**
Cllr Darken said that residents were concerned that the new houses should be screened from the rest of the green. The developers had assured him that they would not carry out any clearance without consultation. He understood that the planning consent limited the amount of clearance allowed.
- 4.5.3 Consultation on the quality of local health provision.**
Cllr Skidmore said that he had received information from the NHS and he would circulate a draft response to councillors.
- 4.6 Road works**
- 4.6.1 Road repairs.** Cllr Morris encouraged residents to report road problems to Herts Highways either by phone or online and obtain a reference number.

Cllr Morris said that the Ford Hill to Bury Green road had been resurfaced. Some gullies had been blocked and he would report these. Warning of closure of Chapel Lane for resurfacing had been received.

- 4.6.2 Hazardous sites on the A120.** Cllr Morris said that there was little more to add to what had been said at the last meeting. Cllr Darken said that he thought the Cradle End junction with the A120 was the most dangerous site though he was unsure as to what could be done. It was agreed that Cllr Morris would consult County Cllr Mrs Bayes about what action to take.

Cllr Fairchild said that the A120 near the Albury End turning was also dangerous – the ‘slow’ signs on the road were unreadable. Cllr Morris said that it would be more productive to concentrate on one problem at a time.

- 4.6.3 Meeting with Herts Highways to discuss flooding on the C15 near the village hall.** Cllr Morris said that the meeting was between Herts Highways, a number of residents and the Clerk to consider flash flooding on the C15 near the village hall. Herts Highways considered that they had done all they could to prevent the flooding. It was agreed to monitor the situation to see if the new works had solved the problems.

- 4.6.4 Reducing rat running through Bury Green, Ford Hill and Westland Green.** Cllr Morris said that he would draft a petition asking Herts Highways to install traffic calming measures on these rat runs. If he could collect a minimum of thirty signatures, the case for a number of specific proposals could be presented to the Herts Roads and Transportation Panel. Cllr Morris challenged the Council and local residents to come up with suitable proposals. The Chairman asked Cllr Williamson to draft a list of possible proposals. Cllr Williamson said that part of the problem was deciding what aspect of the problem to concentrate on – weight of traffic, speed of traffic, traffic at specific times of day. It was agreed that Cllrs Morris and Williamson would produce draft petition and calming proposals for the next meeting.

- 4.6.5 Undergrowth in the bed of the Ash**

Cllr Morris said that the Environment Agency strimmed the bed of the Ash twice a year, the next cut being due shortly. He personally doubted that the cut vegetation significantly affected the flow of the river but the agency said that the cuttings would be cleared to above the expected waterline.

4.7 Village Hall playground

- 4.7.1 Opening of the reequipped playground**

The Chairman said that the opening had been very successful. Mrs Stockley, Head of the village school, had cut the ribbon and a number of the sponsors had attended. He was pleased to see that local young people were using the playground on a regular basis.

- 4.7.2 Grants for the playground.**

The Chairman said that the Biffaward had been banked. About £690 remained and Biffa had agreed that this could help pay for the new gateway and signs.

The Community Grant remained for paying for other works in the playground.

- 4.7.3 Further works in the playground.** The Chairman said that the Community Grant could be used to make a proper 5-a-side football pitch including a security screen. He said that a resident had suggested a tennis court and the Chairman wondered if a dual-purpose surface was available. The idea could be tested in the Newsletter. Cllr Mrs Piccolo asked if there was sufficient funding for a tennis court. The Chairman said that if not the project could be a challenge for future fund-raising. It was agreed that Cllr Williamson would investigate different surfaces with the Sports Council.

- 4.7.4 Insurance to cover the new equipment.** The Clerk said that he had increased the Council’s insurance cover to include the new apparatus.

- 4.7.5 Repairs to the Ridgeway playground gate.** Cllr Williamson said that Mynott & Son had carried out the work.
- 4.8 Hadham Water and Church End Farm**
The Chairman said that he was sorry to hear that Hadham Water had been forced to cease trading. He had written to the owners asking for information about their future plans for the site but had yet to receive a reply.
Cllr Morris said that Hadham Water had recently received planning consent for 30,000 square feet of warehouse space. The Chairman proposed that the Clerk write to the planning office to find out if the warehouse could still be built. Cllr Morris said that there were two shops using former farm buildings at Church End Farm. This was classed as A1 development and the planning consent was for B1 and B8 use. It was agreed that this should be included in the letter to the planning office and that the letter should be copied to the owners of the site.
- 4.9 Parish plan**
- 4.9.1 Family event at Bury Green.** The Chairman said that the picnic at Bury Green had been very successful and a large number of local people had attended. The Parish Plan Group would have to consider what event to hold next year. Cllr Skidmore, on behalf of the Council, thanked Cllr Fairchild and the Parish plan Group for all their hard work.
- 4.9.2 Housing needs survey.** Cllr Skidmore said that this had been covered in the public meeting held before the Council meeting.
- 4.10 Stansted Airport.** The Chairman said that the enquiry into the expansion of Stansted Airport using the existing runway had reopened after the holiday. Much Hadham Parish Council would soon have a day to state its case against expansion.
- 4.11 Chairman's report.**
- 4.11.1** The Chairman reported an invitation to a Local Access Forum – ‘Paths in parishes for people’. No councillors were available to attend.
- 4.11.2** The Chairman said that the Council was invited to vote for a Parish Council Representative on the EHDC Standards Committee. However as little information about the two candidates was available he proposed that the Council abstain. Agreed.
- 4.11.3 Crime in Little Hadham.** The Chairman said that suspected drug dealing in the village hall car park had been reported to the police. The local sergeant said that the patrol cars would pay particular attention to the car park.
The Chairman said that two cars had been broken into in the village and a number of articles stolen.
He also reported that a number of local youths had been riding motorbikes around the village that were not street legal. From the floor a resident said that at least one bike had been confiscated by the police.
It was agreed that Cllr Darken would talk to the local PSO and possibly invite him to a Council meeting.
- 4.11.4** The Chairman noted that an Albury resident was trying to get support for an alternative to a bypass. He was proposing that a number of houses at the Ash be demolished and a roundabout be installed. The Chairman said that he agreed with the detailed objections Mrs Anne Feather had sent in reply to the proposal. The Herts Cabinet was due to confirm the longer northern route as the preferred route for the bypass at their meeting on 5th September 2007.
- 4.11.5** The Chairman reported a newspaper article saying that £20 million was to be made available for spending by town and parish councils.
- 4.11.6** The Chairman reported that EHDC had invited councillors to a rural parish conference. He proposed that the Council wait for details of the programme before accepting. Agreed.

4.11.7 The Chairman said that he had received a copy of the EHDC response to the HCC consultation on sites for gypsies and travellers. Currently sites were concentrated at four sites in the Eastern region and 1200 extra places were required though these need not be at the existing sites. The Chairman said that he would seek clarification and provide a briefing for the next meeting.

4.11.8 Consultation on Parks and Open spaces. Cllr Purvis proposed that there be no response. Agreed.

4.12 Democratic 10 minutes

The meeting closed at 10:15 p.m.

There were no comments.

The meeting reopened at 10:16 p.m.

4.13 Clerk's Report

4.13.1 Financial statement

Period ending 3rd September 2007

Barclay's Bank C/Acc	£52,849.48
High Rate BP Acc	£5.03
BP Acc	£166.32
Petty cash	-£22.72
Total	£52,998.11

Included above

Biffaward grant for play equipment [received 28/8/07]	£44,764.73
Miss A Windmill Litter picking (July)	£93.65
Allianz Insurance plc additional premium for play equipment [paid 31/7/07]	£410.21
Mokut Ltd 2 cuts in July [paid 3/8/07]	£232.65

To be approved for payment

Mr B Evans	P/Clerk - (August)	£267.70	
	Exp (August)	£63.85	
	Float	£50.00	£381.55
Mrs K Green	Grass bins (August)		£41.85
Miss A Windmill	Litter picking (August)		£93.65
Mrs E Booth	P.O. cleaning		£30.00
SMP (Playgrounds)			£52,598.55
LubbockFine	Audit		£334.88
Mynott & Son	Repair Ridgeway gate post		£185.10
Cllr M Fairchild	Opening of playground		£123.15
L.H.Village Hall	Meetings		£17.37
	Total payments		£53,806.10

Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills -£757.99

4.13.2 Resolved to accept payment of accounts. Agreed.

4.13.3 Resolved to accept accuracy of financial statement. Proposed Cllr Darken, seconded Cllr Mrs Morris. Agreed.

4.13.4 The Clerk reported that the Audit was complete and the Auditors had approved the Council's accounts.

4.13.5 The Clerk said that the accounts showed a large deficit. This was because the Council had to pay the VAT on the new play equipment. The VAT could be recovered but this would take some time. However he had persuaded EHDC to pay the second half of the precept a month early so the accounts could be paid as soon as the EHDC cheque had cleared.

4.13.6 The Clerk said that the Council would have to carefully consider its spending on the playground. The Community Grant required the Council to find 50% of each cost and the Council's finances had insufficient funds to qualify for the whole grant.

4.14 Planning matters. The transactions of the Planning Committee were noted.

- 4.15 Correspondence.** The Clerk distributed items of correspondence to relevant councillors
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| Councils & Direct magazines July and September | MF |
| Herts Local History newsletter | CP |
| HAPTC newsletter | MF/CP |
| HATPC Annual Report | MF |
| CDA for Herts | MF/TS |
| East of England Assoc. of Parish and Town Councils | MF |
| CPRE Yearbook | JP |
| CPRE Fieldwork magazine | MF/TS |
| NALC Local Council Review magazine | MF |
| EHDC Sawbridgeworth Community Voice meeting notice | CP |
| Herts Local Access Forum 6th Oct 2007 10:00 a.m. The Radlett Centre | |
| SSE newsletters | MF |
- 4.16 Any other business.** None.
- 4.17 Date of the next meeting Monday 1st October 2007.**
- 4.18 The Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 10:57 p.m.**